

## Report from the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum (ISDF)

November 6 and 7, 2008 – Vancouver, BC -- By Neil Todd, Operations Manager, FRAFS

I attended, for the first time, an ISDF meeting/workshop/forum. The impetus to do so was hearing, through the First Nations Fisheries Council, that this group was working on a number of initiatives, one of which included a “case study” of Fraser Chinook management in 2008. Following is a summary account of what I consider to be the main topics, and my interpretation of what I saw and heard. I apologize to all if I have misconstrued or misinterpreted any of the discussions or the messages from the presenters.

### PURPOSE

The ISDF began in January 2007 as a result of the RDG’s interest in developing a process that would hopefully lead to a “better” fisheries management regime. The ISDF is not a decision-making place; rather, it is a forum that provides a platform for conversations, a place to generate ideas that can have impacts or influences on existing fisheries management processes.

### DAY 1 – NOVEMBER 6

Thursday morning was devoted to “context”. There were two presentations that together provided the background as to why the Forum “came to be” and why there is an opportunity for the participants to move toward a better way of managing our salmon resource.

#### 1. Wilf Luedke, DFO

- overview of general context for changes in fisheries management from DFO perspective: high productivity in the ‘80s, high exploitation rates, decline in productivity and stocks, the need to reduce fisheries, fleet buybacks, Pacific Fisheries Reform, creation of the Wild Salmon Policy, move to certify fisheries through the Marine Stewardship Council, etc.

- noted that Certification requires “good governance” – which in turn implies some form or degree of “co-management”

- presented the “governance continuum” which ranges through a number of stages or levels of involvement: information exchange with non-gov’t bodies; provision of advice by non-gov’t bodies; command/control decision-making by the gov’t authority body; participatory decision-making (authority and non-authority bodies); and delegated authority.

#### 2. Andrew Day, consultant

- overview of societal changes, and the drivers that can change governance: environmental changes, cumulative impacts on fish populations, economic uncertainties, changing technology, changing population demographics, diminishing financial resources, changes in makeup and mobility of workforces, etc. etc.

- which tend to lead to more frequent and more complex “partnerships”, more potential for collaboration, more emphasis on results-based processes and outcomes, more emphasis on monitoring and compliance systems; all of which can be summed

up by saying “there is a need for significant differences in our way of doing things compared to the ways that worked a few years ago”.

- but this creates a problem: the drivers (need) for change and new approaches is the “new paradigm”, but the response depends on the “old paradigm”. This creates a time lag for response to the need for change, which in turn leads to creation of tension and frustration.

- expressing this in terms of current salmon management: the “new paradigm” is exerting pressures to change but perhaps hasn’t worked out all the practical details to force those changes; the “old paradigm” institutions are still in command/control mode; the result is proliferation of advisory bodies, competitive roles, bodies/groups with no effective roles, and unclear relationships.

Thursday afternoon was devoted to presentations on two “co-management” experiences.

#### 1. Mike Graham, Director, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

My summary of the key points and messages coming out of this presentation and discussion about the “Washington experience”:

a) There would be no co-management without the Boldt decision. The State (equivalent to DFO re management of salmon) fought co-management re production and harvest, and has continued to fight co-management re habitat. The recent “culvert case” has changed that; the Tribes are now playing a role in management of habitat.

b) Government and the Tribes co-manage salmon. Advisory groups (sports, commercial fishermen) interests are brought to the table by the government. Nevertheless, a clear and open line of communication between the advisory groups and the Tribes contributes to good governance. It was noted that if advisory groups resist management decisions by appealing to political influences (“doing an end run”), the Tribes will “shut the door on them”.

c) Government and advisory groups are now admitting that without co-management many of the salmon stocks of southern Puget Sound would likely be lost. State governments cannot resist the pressures of development; but aboriginal people with defined title and rights can.

d) It is a tribal prerogative as to what they do with their allowable harvest. It is their decision to decide on using the fish for economic (social), cultural (ceremonial), or subsistence (food).

e) Co-management has resulted in trade-offs between native and non-native fisheries that make sense and provide benefits to both.

f) The NWIFC does not have authority over the member Tribes. The Tribes have the authority. The NWIFC provides the support and services to the Tribes that enable the Tribes to make decisions singly and collectively.

