

Greetings to the Fraser River Watershed from the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat!

To re-cap a little history, last June the FRAFS was moved from the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission to the Nicola Tribal Association (NTA). An interim funding agreement (Project Funding Agreement, or PFA) was negotiated between the FRAFS Executive Committee and DFO. That PFA was for a limited term, April 1 to July 31, 2005. Because of the change in FRAFS location, and the usual bureaucratic processes, the money for the PFA finally hit the bank account in August. Since then, we here at the NTA have been trying to identify and integrate our own bureaucratic procedures to accommodate the needs of this new responsibility, i.e. playing host to the FRAFS. This has been a bit of a struggle (Fred can say "I told you so") which is still ongoing, but we are close to having a smoothly functioning set of processes in place – one of which is getting this newsletter out on a regular basis, every Thursday from now on!

During this period of transition (June till now), Marcel and the contract biologists (Mike Staley, Pete Nicklin, and Ken Wilson) have hung in there, carrying out work for which they had no contract for the longest time, and patiently waiting for payment for an even longer time. Their dedication to the cause of First Nations' interests and involvement in Fraser River fisheries management has been nothing short of remarkable.

So, where do we go from here? FRAFS has a new funding agreement, put into place under AAROM. It is a Collaborative Management Agreement (CMA) containing funding to meet a number of objectives over its term, which runs from August 1, 2005 to July 31, 2006:

1. Enable the continuation of the technical information engagement processes with DFO, and interpretation/dissemination of that information to Fraser First Nations;
2. Provide for continuation of the technical services of a liaison person (Mike Staley) between the Fraser Panel and Fraser First Nations;

3. Provide for the continuation of a bi-lateral Executive Committee to oversee FRAFS;
4. Provide for the implementation of a sub-committee to draft a long term collaborative agreement which will identify and validate an effective and complementary role for FRAFS to play in the management of Fraser River fisheries, allowing for other current and future processes to continue to develop (sub-area organizations such as UFFCA, umbrella type organizations such as BCAFC, etc.)
5. Provide technical assistance to the "demonstration fisheries" in 2005 in order to further the emerging issues of fisheries economic opportunities in the Fraser River where those opportunities have been denied for the last 100-odd years.

Deloris Charters, an Administrative Assistant on staff at the NTA, has been assigned part time to be the FRAFS' Communications Coordinator. My role, as directed by the NTA's CEO, was to manage the transition and implementation of the CMA on behalf of the NTA as host. This is just about finished and my involvement in the operations of FRAFS will virtually cease over the next few weeks.

The Executive Committee will be meeting next week to review the new CMA, identify the range of operational issues, roles, and accountabilities for the year, and to confirm direction for the Executive Director, contract biologists, and Communications Secretary. The results of that meeting will be reported in a subsequent Watershed Talk, which will be issued on a weekly schedule every Thursday.

SOME UPCOMING MEETINGS THAT WE KNOW ABOUT AT THIS TIME:

1. FRAFS Executive Committee: October 12, 2005 in Merritt (NTA Boardroom) at 10 a.m.
2. October 25, 2005: BCAFC Coastal and Interior Caucus, AM only, Tseil-Waututh Nation Gym, North Vancouver
3. October 25-27, 2005 BCAFC Post Season Conference, Tsleil-Waututh Nation Gym, North Vancouver
4. December 12-13, 2005: Joint Policy Dialogue Forum - Tsleil-Waututh Nation Gym, North Vancouver