

Tier 2 Meeting Notes
Forum on Conservation and Harvest Planning
Wednesday, January 29, 2014
Executive Airport Plaza, Richmond, BC

1 – Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP)

Dean Allan went over the letter, dated December 18, 2013, from DFO (Pacific Region) to First Nations and stakeholders.

This letter can be viewed on the FRAFS website via this link:

<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/Salmon%20IFMP%20Process%202014.pdf>

Discussion:

Question: How will DFO distribute the IFMP?

Answer: Via email with a link to the document.

Q: If we wait for DFO's March draft, will there be enough time for DFO and FN to understand the impacts? Is there adequate time for FN technicians to do their analysis?

A: Changes DFO brings forward will be raised at bi-laterals and the Forum. The goal is to have the IFMP signed by the Minister by early June.

Q: Where is there a process to incorporate change into the IFMP? After we make our recommendations, who will follow up with First Nations?

A: DFO will provide a table of recommendations. Our intention is to provide information as soon as possible. We'll look for feedback in bi-laterals, Forum and letters. Proposals can be flagged.

Q: The letter states that the IFMP will be "flexible." Will it be as "flexible" for First Nations as it appears to be for other sectors (ex.: commercial)? How many recommendations made by First Nations at the Forum are acted on by DFO?

A: Similar to other sectors. Not every recommendation the Department receives is implemented, but, we do consider them all.

2 – Southern BC Chinook Strategic Planning Initiative (CSPI)

Jennifer Nener presented a PowerPoint update. This document can be viewed on the FRAFS website via this link:

<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/2%20-%20Southern%20BC%20Chinook%20update%20FRAFS.pdf>

Q: Who are you seeking approval from?

A: The Minister as per the approval mechanism in the Wild Salmon Policy and as noted in the Terms of Reference for the Southern BC Chinook initiative.

Observation from the floor: The technical work has yet to broach socio-economic issues; just biological to date. Right now there's more that we don't know, than we do know. We need a review of that and the strategies that will be required to address those issues. However, the current budget for that is in short supply.

Recommendation: To include CSPI on the Agenda for the March Forum.

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3 – Use of Fish

Jennifer Nener presented a PowerPoint update. This document can be viewed on the FRAFS website via this link:
<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/Use%20of%20Fish%20Update%20Jan%202014.pdf>

Q: As this is a national policy, how can BC concerns and recommendations go forward? Who is going to be in Ottawa to represent BC interests vis-à-vis mid-Canada and the east coast? Will there be room for an organization like IMAWG to have an impact?

A: (1) Paul Ryall is our regional lead. He sits on the national committee and is the lead for Pacific Region, and will bring forward issues and concerns raised. (2) Look over the draft and identify your key issues. (3) Also, consider your recommendation(s) in a broader context e.g. if implemented on a broad scale, would they result in an outcome that would be acceptable to you (in terms of numbers of fish harvested under “Use of Fish”).

Q: Section 4.2 states that it doesn’t impact FSC, except as pertains to Operational Guideline 8.3. But the Operational Guidelines aren’t available to look at.

A: Fair comment and I’ll follow up through FNFC. (Note – clarification was provided – should have referred to Section 9.3 of the draft policy document).

4 – Joint Technical Working Group

Jamie Scroggie spoke to, and answered questions about, the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG). He noted that the JTWG is just starting to identify technical discussion items for 2014.

Q: We’re waiting for Chinook information from DFO (ex.: coded wire tag). Do you have an update?

A: At DFO resources have been shrinking and some DFO work items have been re-prioritized. The changes to the JTWG TOR will help the JTWG to deal with these type of issues; the JTWG co-chairs will brief the FRAFS Executive Committee; then the EC will decide how to move forward.

Q: With respect to Interior Fraser Coho (IFC) management tools used in the past: Is that same framework going to be used going forward? And if DFO is working on something different, can the managers present tell us? First Nations on the JTWG consider it necessary to be updated; time is of the essence.

A: Too early to tell yet. The CSAP paper is yet to be expected and the resultant DFO planning work is not complete. I will follow up with DFO.

5 - Salmon Outlook (Dean Allan)

The document *Preliminary 2014 Salmon Outlook* is posted on FRAFS website at this link:
<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/7%20-%20Preliminary%202014%20Salmon%20Outlook.pdf>

Q: If there’s a better outlook, will Sporties get bigger impacts?

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A: The zone approach for Spring and Summer 5-2 will continue. In the AABM fishery for Chinook, if the recreational sector goes over their allocation, then, it comes out of commercial not the marine FSC.

Q: Should there be a recovery plan for each red zone Sockeye CU?

A: (1) The Wild Salmon Policy was written in 2005. Now DFO is asking: Is this WSP consistent with the changes today? We're working on this and hope to have an answer fairly soon. (2) There are two pieces to the WSP: policy and implementation/planning. Even if we had five times the budget, we couldn't implement everything. The WSP "guides" our management decisions and priorities as well as the IFMP. We share your concerns about red zone stocks.

Q: There's red zone status sockeye in the headwaters. Is there a plan for that? DFO should provide an update.

A: Although we manage to 4 aggregates we consider the weaker stocks within the aggregates when developing escapement options as well as during in season management. .

Q: We're concerned in the upper Fraser that stocks are being forgotten. Is DFO considering coded wire tags for Chinook?

A: The issue of a CWT indicator for Fraser Spring and Summer 5-2 Chinook is an ongoing discussion with the Southern BC Chinook discussions.

Comment from the floor: There are red zone Sockeye in each management group. The JTWG has asked for report on this from DFO. This should be on the Agenda for the February Forum.

6 – 2013 Fraser River Summary: Chinook, Coho and Chum.

Marla Maxwell presented a PowerPoint. This document can be viewed on the FRAFS website at:

<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/5%20-%202013%20Post-season%20Fraser%20CN%20CO%20and%20CH%20FORUM%20%2828-Jan-2014%29.pdf>

Q: Does DFO have estimates of steelhead encounters?

A: Yes. Those numbers are included in extra slides at the end of the presentation which has been provided to FRAFS.

Q: My concern is about the mortality rate of other stocks in the approach areas during the commercial pink fishery, while First Nations were tied to the docks

A: For Interior Fraser Steelhead, the current management approach is based on the 80/90 rule: protect 80% of the stock, 90% of the time. The Department continues to work with the Province on the development of a more flexible approach to inseason management for the 2014 season.

Q: What's the timeline for DFO decision-making (before impacts on Chinook)?

A: Step one is to communicate as soon as possible, then brief the FRAFS EC.

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Q: What's the DFO process for making this decision?

A: The BCI Chinook Analytical biologist hadn't been re-staffed until this year. But he's involved in CTC and we've made formal requests to bring him in.

Interior Fraser Coho Exploitation Rate

Les Jantz presented a PowerPoint that be viewed on the FRAFS website at:

<http://frafs.ca/sites/default/files/6%20-%20Interior%20Fraser%20Coho.pdf>

Q: If you bump the exploitation rate up from 3% to 4%, that's a 33% increase. Shouldn't we first look at this year's return on a brood year before increasing the exploitation rate?

A: That's a good point. We also need to consider the consequences of keeping Coho at 3% in the big year of sockeye as it will constrain opportunities for all.

Q: How will increase in sockeye affect coho? Is the ongoing work?

A: The FRSSI process is trying to model the impact of sockeye harvest on weaker stocks. There will be a FRISSI workshop in March.

Q: Re: CSAS Objective #4. Our concern is the risk to smaller sub-populations. How is DFO going to quantify that risk? Where will that trade-off discussion take place?

A: I don't view it as a trade-off. We've had three to four years of pretty good escapement. One question is: "Is 3% still required to reach objectives? Another question: "If you increase the exploitation rate, does it increase risks?" There's work to be done.

Q: There was a promise from DFO to lower Fraser First Nations to explain how in-season calculations are done. Why has that not been followed through on?

A: DFO and lower Fraser reps will meet to follow up on this.

Q: Why all this attention on IFC? No-one is reporting on Chinook.

A: We're not ignoring Chinook. We don't have the resources to do everything that we want and we're doing the best we can with information available.

Comments:

- Just when we're in recovery, we start looking at increasing exploitation.
- We're coming off of bare minimum brood years. I don't feel comfortable increasing the exploitation rate.

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2013 Fraser Sockeye Review and Framing Issues for 2014

There was discussion about the Management Adjustment. It was decided that it would be worthwhile to have a Management Adjustment 101 workshop at the next Forum. It was also suggested that this workshop be delivered at regional sessions so that fishers understand it. It's a question that comes from the communities: "Why do things happen?" One perspective offered: In-season it's a judgement call: do you stick with your model or not?

A concern was raised that the management Adjustment is having a negative impact on First Nations fisheries on the north Island.

Q: Why is the marine survival rate so much higher for pinks than sockeye?

A: Considering recent pink spawning escapement and return estimates the pink marine survival rates are likely not much different than the range of observations in sockeye in recent years.

Q: How many sockeye fell under 'Use of Fish' last year?

A: 90,000 sockeye and 38,000 pinks were caught as 'pay fish' for the test fisheries.

- A concern was raised that there was a \$450,000 surplus and that the test fisheries shouldn't kill more fish than they need. (The actual "surplus" was around \$270 K – because of how contracts work with buyers, with price adjustments made post-season, the exact amount is never known until after the fisheries are over).

Q: Is there no policy in place to transfer commercial allocation to an economic opportunity fishery, for example, for uncaught pinks?

A: Yes there was a process in place last year to enable transfer of commercial allocation – this was an interim process to allow "testing" with the longer term approach to be addressed in discussions around the Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework, and share-based management.

- A concern was raised re: the sequence of events in the decision regarding the summer run and high water temperatures. The seine fishery was closed down on August 13th, four days after the conservation was identified by the Fraser Panel (August 9th). That's coming out of conservation.
A: It was an effort to close it down in a sequenced, orderly manner.