

2010 Fisheries Assembly: Moving Towards Joint Management

The theme of this year's Fisheries Assembly, presented by the First Nations Fisheries Council, was *Co-Management: Developing a Shared Vision for the Future*. The Assembly, held November 2nd – 4th at Nisga'a Hall in Prince Rupert, was an opportunity for First Nations to engage in direct dialogue with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Over the three-day period a number of constructive developments emerged, including the drafting of a First Nations *Statement of Solidarity* concerning Joint Management. Participants at the meeting determined that the term 'Joint Management' was preferable to 'Co-Management', as it better reflected the shared legitimacy and respect of both parties within a Joint Management arrangement. In-keeping with the theme of the Assembly, First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided varying perspectives on potential management frameworks, governance structures, scales for decision-making, and activities and mechanisms. Finally, the First Nations Fisheries Council was able to offer an update and overview of all working groups progress and prospects. The discussions highlighted a number of commonalities, but also illustrated the complexity of integrating First Nations management perspectives with the Department's existing policy framework.

The first day of the Fisheries Assembly was classified as a Tier One meeting; therefore discussions were open to First Nations only. Discussions on Day One clarified the purpose of the Assembly. As described by the facilitator, Dr. Michelle Corfield, some objectives included the grounding of truthful information related to Joint Management while collecting feedback; developing a foundation of Tier One principles to guide fisheries Joint Management initiatives; identifying common perspectives shared by First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada on the topic of Joint Management; and building a common understanding for the refinement of working group work plans and to see how they relate to the broader Joint Management theme.

Day One also provided the opportunity for Council Members to outline opportunities and challenges in their own regions. Through this discussion a number of

common themes emerged, including the need to form a collective and unified First Nations voice; to concentrate on environmental protection, conservation and sustainability; and to engage in constructive but stalwart dialogue that moves forward First Nations interest in not simply collaborating in a management regime, but jointly managing the fisheries resource. Subsequent to the addition, clarification and revision of these concepts as well as minor editing, the majority of Assembly attendees accepted a draft *Statement of Solidarity on Joint Management* at the end of the first day.

Building on Day One, Day Two of the Fisheries Assembly explored the potential of an equitable management scheme that incorporates the interests of both First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. While providing perspectives on management, Corey Jackson of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, described the importance of collaboration with First Nations in the development of emerging management schemes. Corey explained that a collaborative process could provide a number of tangible benefits, but reiterated that a management scheme is a process, not necessarily an 'end-point'. Therefore, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is interested in supporting a broad range of activities that build capacity and increase collaboration. In a similar manner, the First Nations Fisheries Council, on a broad level, has begun to facilitate discussions related to Joint Management as a result of last year's mandate resolution (later supported by the FNS, UBCIC and BCAFN). In addition, the Wild Salmon Policy, the Oceans Act and the Ecosystem Science Framework all mention the need to undertake integrated collaborative management that actively engages First Nations. Undoubtedly, both First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada support the concept of collaborative or joint management, but approaches, scope and definition of such a future management scheme remains unclear.

As Day Two progressed the discussions shifted towards specific aspects of collaborative management, such as governance, scales, activities and mechanisms. The issue of governance, for example, is a discussion of the effective and meaningful involvement of First Nations in the decision-making process. According to Deana Machin, Co-Management Coordinator for the First Nations Fisheries Council, collaboration will require a mechanism through which Title and Rights can be reconciled with current Federal governance structures,

processes and decisions. In an ideal circumstance, governance should be predictable, structured, based on agreements, linked to appropriate capacity, and should generally improve outcomes. The issue of governance becomes complex because communities have different priorities, and limited capacities; therefore, communities will express their objectives in different ways. First Nations have developed varied and inventive governance approaches (such as Tier One, Two or Three meetings).

Another aspect of collaborative management discussed was the concept of scales (which can be linked to ecosystems, geographic, social, economic or political spaces associated with different geographic regions). Both First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada have turned their attention to scales as it provides a good conceptual framework for the building of management schemes. Corey Jackson noted that, there are important considerations related to co-management and engagement at different scales. While many discussions require engagement at the local or community level, the nature of fisheries resources as well as potential impacts of decisions on other First Nations often require discussions at a broader scale. For instance, high-level policy deliberations are held at province-wide scale. In some cases the Department noted that, adequate resources do not exist to facilitate an intricate consultation process at a local scale for every issue. The Department is interested in discussion about how engagement at different scales can be coordinated and complimentary. Following up on this notion, Saul Milne, Policy Analyst for the First Nations Fisheries Council, noted that centralized and sectoral approaches to fisheries management have proven increasingly ineffective at addressing title and rights issues, and in addressing critical social, environmental, economic or cultural values. When considering the development of a Joint Management framework, First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada will need to consider what decisions are most appropriately made at what scale.

The final discussion of the second day related to Joint Management activities and mechanisms. Both First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada outlined a number of initiatives that incorporate shared management objectives. For instance, the funding of the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance or the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat supports community engagement and technical capacity support. Both

initiatives require the participation of both First Nations and government personnel. Ultimately, adequately funded activities undertaken by First Nations such as stock assessment, science and research, habitat protection, monitoring and compliance, and policy and communications produce considerable capacity and improve collaborative relationships.



Chief Bob Chamberlin addresses the Panel.

To conclude the second day, Nadia Bouffard (Director General of Fisheries Renewal, Ottawa, Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and Sue Farlinger (Regional Director General, Vancouver, Fisheries and Oceans Canada) participated in an executive panel that answered questions from the floor. This portion of the Assembly was intended to provide an opportunity for First Nations to present questions directly to high-level personnel in the interests of identifying ongoing and emerging issues as well as clarifying objectives of First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada with respect to further Joint Management discussions. Many issues were raised, including concerns about adequate consultation frameworks, the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative, sport fisheries, individual fishing quotas, food fish, monitoring and enforcement, the localization of recreational user-fee payments, and most interestingly, the potential appointment of a second Minister of Fisheries and Oceans designated for the West Coast.

Day Three of the Fisheries Assembly further expanded on the theme of Joint Management, but was an opportunity to provide an overview and update of the joint First Nations Fisheries Council/Fisheries and

Oceans Canada *Co-Management, Aquaculture, Economic Access, and Food, Social and Ceremonial* working groups. These working groups, established under the Commitment to Action, have met throughout the summer and fall to initiate the drafting of formal work plans. The purpose of the updates was to solicit feedback and reflection on the progress, problems and prospects of each working group. The discussions also clarified objectives and priorities. In the coming months, the working groups will move forward with items outlined in the work plans as well as incorporating the feedback provided by Assembly attendees.

In the end, the Assembly demonstrated First Nations' willingness and interest in moving forward with an inventive Joint Management framework, one that incorporates the traditional, social, economic, environmental and cultural values of First Nations people. It was noted that this would require the meaningful support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada through adequate consultation, enhanced communication and capacity. As the co-chair of the Assembly, Ken Malloway, stated, the relationship between First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada has improved in recent years, but underlying disagreements persist. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of the Assembly was the discussion of common perspectives and the building of common understanding, a necessary component in the development of a future Joint Management scheme.

A comprehensive summary of the Assembly proceedings is available here: <http://goo.gl/XqWAH>



Walter Joseph discussing community fishing issues

Catch Monitoring Workshop

A reminder that the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat, in conjunction with the Fraser River and Approach Working Group, will be hosting a Catch Monitoring Workshop at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel in Richmond on November 22nd and 23rd.

The workshop will explain and discuss catch monitoring programs for Fraser River salmon in the South Coast (marine areas), the Lower Fraser River, and the Mid and Upper Fraser River areas.

The two-day workshop will highlight the concerns expressed by First Nations regarding current monitoring programs and their impacts on management. Additionally, First Nations fisheries, commercial fisheries, and sport fisheries will all be covered. It is the hope of the Fraser River and Approach Working Group that participants will gain a common understanding of monitoring while identifying gaps and opportunities.

Agenda at a Glance:

Day One (November 22nd)

- General Catch Monitoring Overview
- Role of Biological Sampling
- First Nations Food, Social and Ceremonial Catch Monitoring Programs
 - South Coast
 - Lower Fraser
 - BC Interior

Day Two (November 23rd)

- Commercial Catch Monitoring Programs
 - South Coast
 - Lower Fraser
 - BC Interior
- Recreational Catch Monitoring Programs
 - South Coast
 - Lower Fraser
 - BC Interior

Key information:

Where: Executive Airport Plaza Hotel, 7311 Westminster Highway, Richmond {Contact Number: (604) 278-5555 or toll free (800) 663-2878}

When: Monday November 22, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm and Tuesday November 23, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.

Please Note:

The Executive Airport Plaza Hotel was holding a block of 15 rooms at the rate of \$99.00 per/night. Although there is no guarantee that the \$99.00 rate will be in effect, please inquire. Upon reservation, guests are to quote "Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat" and secure their reservation with a valid credit card. **All guests are responsible for full payment of room, tax and incidental charges.** In addition, all reservations will be guaranteed for late arrival to the "the individuals Preferred Method of Payment" for the first night's room & tax. Please note that individual reservations can be cancelled up to 4pm the day prior to arrival.

If you are interested in participating, **please confirm attendance with the Secretariat** (info@frafs.ca), as we need to confirm numbers for catering.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Below are some important meeting dates for scheduling considerations.

Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat Meetings:

- **November 22-23:** Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Forum: Catch Monitoring Workshop
- **December 14-15, 2010:** Roadmap Workshop: Co-Management Development (two days of Tier One), Lower Mainland
- **January 25-26, 2011:** Forum on Conservation & Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (Richmond)

- **February 8-9, 2011:** Roadmap: Co-Management Development (two days Tier One & Tier Two) third & final planned for fiscal year (location to be determined)
- **February 22-23, 2011:** Forum on Conservation & Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (Richmond)
- **March 29-30, 2011:** Forum on Conservation & Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (Vancouver Island)
- **May 10-11, 2011:** Forum on Conservation & Harvest Planning for Fraser Salmon (Kamloops)

Other Meetings:

- **November 17, 2010:** Fraser River Salmon Table and Monitoring and Compliance Panel's workshop (location to be determined)
- **November 22-23, 2010:** Peacemaker Conflict Resolution training (location to be determined)
- **November 26:** Pacific Salmon Treaty – Chapter Renewal (Fraser River Sockeye and Pink Salmon) Conference Call
- **November 30-Dec 1, 2010:** ITO Assembly (location to be determined)
- **December 1-3, 2010:** First Nations Summit Meeting
- **December 6, 2010:** Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance Forum (location to be determined)
- **December 9-10, 2010:** Fraser Panel
- **January 10-14, 2011:** PST

For further information about important meetings please see www.frafs.ca. The Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat now has a calendar that will provide up-to-date meeting information for Fraser River processes.