

Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Committee

By Pete Nicklin, Watershed Stock Management Coordinator, FRAFS

Based on feedback from several folks around the watershed, I thought that I would put a fairly informal blurb together about the Fraser Watershed Joint Technical Committee (FWJTC), for people to consider prior to the December 11th meeting in Abbotsford.

First Off: A little background information.

The FWJTC in its present form is coming up on two years old, with the majority of the progress on the structure and function of the committee happening in the last year. The committee has a FRAFS co-chair (me) and a DFO co-chair (Les Jantz). The committee operates under a Terms of Reference that went through several drafts and was approved by the FRAFS Executive Committee. This document is available upon request, and is reviewed on an annual basis.

Funding for the FWJTC: the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat pays for FRAFS contractors, the meeting room costs, and lunches for participants for 4 FWJTC meetings in a fiscal year (the December meeting is the second one). FRAFS does not pay for participant time or travel.

Now, here are a few answers to some of the questions that have been asked over the past little while.

Is the FWJTC strictly a technical forum?

Yes, the Committee is technical, and discussions at the meetings are of a technical nature. However, the meetings and the committee itself are open and inclusive to Fraser First Nations and DFO, technical and non-technical folks alike. The FWJTC table also provides a mechanism for people to share ideas on better ways to develop processes for sharing technical information amongst First Nations and DFO. Anyone can attend and observe, participate in discussions or just listen, and we welcome participation in discussions that contribute to the agenda topics.

Are the FWJTC meetings considered to be consultation?

Yikes, this question makes me want to run and hide, but I will attempt an answer anyway. The FWJTC is a forum for information exchange, and a place that individuals or First Nations can receive clarification on technical issues. The information exchange that

happens at the meeting could probably be considered a part of consultation, but certainly not the entire process of consultation that DFO is obligated to complete with First Nations. Neither FRAFS nor the FWJTC is the entity from which technical issue discussion could be considered part of consultation in the overall sense.

Can FRAFS provide notes from past FWJTC meetings in order to see what kinds of things are discussed?

Yup. Contact Aimee Arsenault, FRAFS Communications Coordinator (contact information at the bottom of this page). Also, FRAFS is working on another update to the FRAFS website, namely adding a page focused on the FWJTC. The idea is that all of the past meeting notes, the Terms of Reference, presentations and agendas would be available for download or viewing.

Well, that's probably enough of a description of the Committee. In order to really see what the FWJTC is all about, come to the Abbotsford Ramada on December 11th. Marcel Shepert will be the guest facilitator and chairperson for this meeting, which is a good thing because we have a jam-packed agenda to get through.

As always, I enjoy it when people pick up the phone or drop me a line to talk about this stuff.

Cheers,
Pete Nicklin
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or email at indiseaent@shaw.ca

**Fraser Watershed Joint Technical
Committee Meeting: Tuesday, Dec 11
Ramada Plaza, Abbotsford
Please RSVP to Aimee Arsenault,
FRAFS Communications Coordinator,
by December 3, 2007**