

North Coast Sport Fishing Advisory Committee Meeting

**Summary Report
10/11 April, 2010 – Prince Rupert**

Attendees

From the SFAB

Terri O'Neill
John McCulloch
Ken Franzen
Urs Thomas
Tom Protheroe
Larry Proteau
Doug Daugert
Mike Rough
Kevin Wiley
Gord Wolfe
Tracey Hittel
Ev Person

From Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Denis Burnip
David Einarson
David Peacock
Devona Adams
Mark Reagan

Saturday April 10, 2010

08:30 – Meeting called to order with Urs Thomas in the Chair.

Introductions

Adoption of Agenda

Remembrance of Tom Bird

Acknowledgement of Bill Otway's retirement from the SFAB mainboard. Bill will still be involved in the Cohen inquiry on Fraser River sockeye.

Administration – Update on SFAB Advisor travel rules and completing travel claims.

Mark Reagan provided an update on the motions from the last meeting.

Local Committee Reports

Central Coast – Mike Rough

Meeting fairly well attended.

Locals are buying into the process and are communicating concerns to members.

Discussed First Nation protocols, lodges have provided comments and concerns.

4 motions to introduce.

Upper Skeena – Gord Wolfe

Meeting was well attended and most of the discussion was around Skeena sockeye decision rules.

C&P provided an update on expected staffing levels for the upcoming season.

Quality Waters review appears to be in limbo at this time.

No motions to introduce.

Lower Skeena – Tom Protheroe

Meeting fairly well attended and happy that both local DFO C&P staff and the local Conservation Officer were again in attendance which has been the occurrence for quite a few years.

Executive Report – Halibut, Vision document, PSC update and IHPC 2010 plans.

Discussed NC Salmon IFMP and in particular Skeena sockeye decision rules.

Quality waters review – Conservation officer staff is currently reviewing from an enforcement perspective.

Discussed eulachons and the rules in freshwater for recreational harvesting.

Tom Protheroe and Urs Thomas will be having a conference call on Monday, April 12 with the Skeena Fisheries Commission.

No motions to introduce.

Kitimat – Tracey Hittel

Meeting was well attended including the Mayor and some council members.

C&P provided an update on staffing and also pointed out that king crab poaching was becoming a concern.

Had a report from the hatchery, production is being decreased on chum and increased on Chinook.

No motions to introduce.

Prince Rupert – Kevin Wiley

Discussed Skeena sockeye decision rules.

Discussed the Area 3&4 creel survey, there were issues with participation in 2009 and are working on options to increase participation for 2010.

Bryan Rusch provided an update on crab reform and pointed out that local First Nations are requesting FSC harvest only areas.

Clarence Nelson provided an enforcement update.

Discussed eulachon regulations in freshwater.

1 motion to introduce.

QCI/Haida Gwaii – Doug Daugert

Meeting was fairly well attended but no one from Masset was in attendance.

Had an update on the Tlell fence but there were no changes in the preliminary numbers provided at the fall meeting.

Pallant Creek Hatchery – The future is up in the air but are looking for long term direction on the plans for the facility.

Discussed crab reform and halibut.

Scott Keehn gave an enforcement report and overall compliance was fairly good in the recreational fishery.

Discussed the Area F troll fishery but the northern AABM allocation was not yet available.

Discussed PNCIMA.

No motions to introduce.

Regional Report – Devona Adams

Catch Monitoring – It is consistent with the Vision document to manage with the best available information. Are currently going through all current programs and developing an inventory and what can DFO do to advance: Education and awareness, fact sheets on all fisheries for all sectors, educate on how creels work, methodology for various species and identify gaps.

Halibut Update – The recreational fishery opened on Feb 01 with limits of 1 (2). Anticipate that limits will stay the same until in-season catch estimates are available. There is still ~ \$400K in the SFAB trust fund and is an interest in again leasing quota this year. Deputy Minister has committed to the Stanyer process and would like to acknowledge the work of Urs Thomas and Doug Daugert from the North in the halibut process.

Enforcement Report – Denis Burnip

Currently developing work plans for 2010 and priorities are being developed.

The North is now almost fully staffed with 1 vacancy left to fill.

Fraser River – Again have had to identify Officers available to be seconded to the Fraser. Secondments may not necessarily occur as they will be sent as needed on a triage basis and the same process can be used to get extra help in the North if needed.

Skeena Sockeye issues – There is nothing that jumps off the table right now and specific to the Babine the only issue last year was the disposal of offal in the Granisle area.

Tom Protheroe – Are concerned with the printing of multiple licences and the recording of Chinook could become an issue, do you have any idea of the magnitude?

Denis Burnip – Don't know the magnitude at this time but are starting to document licences with photographs in high profile areas as well as promoting ethics.

Skeena Watershed Congress – Tom Protheroe

Ben Hoffman is the new facilitator for the process.

A draft workplan is almost fully signed off and moving us forward with the process.

Standardization of the Wild salmon Policy is taking place and steelhead conservation units are being sorted out.

Habitat issues are being identified.

This is not the place to be developing fishing plans as existing processes are the best place for this.

Still do not have a terms of reference and further discussion is taking place.

Has been discussion on Skeena River creel survey, where should occur and possible compromises for areas in the upper watershed that could be surveyed.

North Coast Salmon

North Coast salmon IFMP – David Einarson

Skeena Sockeye – Last fall Skeena sockeye were predicted to return in numbers between 300K and 1.4 million in 2010. The NC IFMP has to be constructed to take in various possibilities. Agreed last fall to include generic wording regarding recreational decision rules in the initial draft of the IFMP but want more specific wording for the Draft which will be released April 29.

Decision to have a retention fishery will be based on run size and ultimately DFO will receive advice from all groups and will make a decision.

David Peacock - Believe recreational catches are small in scope and the fact that are having a creel survey this year works in favour of the recreational sector.

What work against is the fact that potentially having a retention fishery when don't make escapement targets, commercial harvest rates have been cut in half, all First Nations have a concern and can say haven't met FSC needs, and the methods DFO uses to manage similar fisheries.

Gord Wolfe – Have wording in the allocation policy and can't see why we don't continue to operate with the existing guidelines.

David Einarson – Wording in the allocation policy is related to an escapement of 900,000. We will get advice from all sectors and hopefully there is a consensus but ultimately DFO will have to make the decision.

Terri O'Neill – Do we know the numbers of Skeena sockeye caught in Alaska?

David Einarson – Alaskans are limited in the numbers of Skeena sockeye in certain weeks. Under the Pacific Salmon Treaty they have a right to harvest certain amounts if there is a surplus.

David Peacock – On average the Alaskan's catch about 10% of Skeena sockeye but in the past few years have been getting about 4%.

Tom Protheroe – Have a difficult time in grasping the fact that the recreational fishery catching 5000 out of a million affects First Nations ability to harvest FSC. We are missing the fact the 2010 is an opportunity to allow the collection of accurate catch numbers in an expected lower Skeena sockeye return.

Gord Wolfe – Should clarify that 900,000 is the conservation limit rather than target escapement and 400,000 is the limited reference point.

Central Coast Coho – David Einarson

From 2006-2008 had three years of poor returns, which resulted in the closure of the troll fishery and by-catch retention in commercial net fisheries and also worked with the Nuxulk to minimize impacts in the Bella Coola River FSC fishery. In 2010 if returns are similar to 2009 intend to re-open outside portions of the central coast to commercial troll and allow retention of by-catch in some commercial net fisheries. We are going to start with troll closed and will review in-season.

John McCulloch – it's important to once again have weekly conference calls this summer. Have concerns with the plan for Coho and will need to have good dialogue.

David Peacock – We are going to have some Bella Coola and River's Inlet tag returns this year.

Chinook – David Einarson

Although the Draft IFMP shows setting aside 40,000 Chinook for the QCI sport we are going to be cautious and set aside 50,000 which was the same as set aside last year. Will re-assess during the August troll closure and possibly reassign to Troll if need be.

There is the potential that there will be a buy back of commercial troll licences with money from the WCVI AABM reduction compensation package.

Tom Protheroe – The Skeena Fisheries Commission has stated that they want Freshwater Skeena and Marine recreational Chinook fisheries reduced by 50%. If that is the case, reductions should occur in accordance with the allocation policy and directed commercial fisheries should be closed first.

Gord Wolfe – Received a number of complaints of issues at the Meziadin Fishways that fences were tore out and blocked with plywood during First Nations harvests, last year it seemed to be out of control.

David Einarson – We had a high enforcement presence during the Gitanyow demonstration fishery.

Gord Wolfe – There is a potential area on the Meziadin River above the fishway to have a recreational sockeye fishery, will DFO look at this possibility?

Mark Reagan – We can definitely look at and it would be helpful to bring forward as a motion.

PST Update – John McCulloch

Meetings were held in January and February. The Northern panel agreed there is a need to gather better data, especially for Coho before the treaty expires in 8 years. Are going to do an update on catch and escapements for Coho in both northern BC and Southeast Alaska. Need to do the same thing with Northern chum and have also asked for an exchange of steelhead information.

Endowment Fund – Stock markets have improved and funding is being provided for various projects in 2010 including the Skeena River creel survey.

IPHC – Doug Daugert

AGM was held the end of January in Seattle. By-catch and allocation was discussed. DFO had its act together and brought the conference board together. Chuck Ashcroft is co-chair of the conference board.

BCWF – Update – Terri O'Neill

Concerns with Fraser River gravel removal and have to make sure a similar thing never occurs on the Skeena. There is a continued want of a non-commercial crab harvest area near Port Edward. Want the Skeena and Babine sockeye fishery maintained. Steelhead fence will be run on Toboggan creek this year.

Steelhead Society – Gord Wolfe

Jim Culp is the chair of the northern branch. I formally resigned as a director a few months ago but am still a member. We recently had a meeting in Smithers and are slowly increasing membership in the North.

SFI – John McCulloch

Rob Allcock, Gerry Kristiansen and myself recently were in Ottawa and met with the Minister and Deputy. Stanyer process has been unveiled and the SFI is continuing to work on the Certified Tidal Angling Guide (CTAG) program.

BC Federation Drift Fisheries – Larry Proteau

AGM will be held next weekend in Vancouver. BCFDF has been heavily involved in the Fraser Gravel removal and sockeye issues.

PNCIMA – Urs Thomas

Have been involved but this is a stressful process. This shouldn't deal with allocation issues or fishing plans. Both NC and SC SFAC should have a representative and alternate who will be funded by PNCIMA.

16:45 – adjourned.

Sunday April 11, 2010

09:00 – meeting called to order

Ken Franzen read from a copy of the December 1998 NC SFAC meeting minutes which was attended by Tom Bird, Bill Otway and others.

Tom Protheroe announced he is 68 years old and intends on retiring from the SFAB process before he is 70.

Confirmed NC SFAC Members attending mainboard

Urs Thomas – NC Chair

Tom Protheroe – PST

John McCulloch – PST

Gord Wolfe – Group of 7

Tracey Hittel – Group of 7

Doug Daugert – Group of 7

Mike Rough – Group of 7

Terri O'Neill – Group of 7

Ken Corbould – tentative (has subsequently been confirmed)

George Cuthbert – tentative – (has subsequently declined)

Mike Rough was elected to replace George Cuthbert on SFAB Shellfish/groundfish Working group.

PNCIMA Rep

Urs Thomas

Alternates: Ken Franzen, Doug Daugert and John McCulloch.

Prawn and crab regulation proposals – Devona Adams

Proposal package to have a rot cord clasp on commercial style crab traps, prohibit the use of floating line, have phone numbers on buoys and the use of unique floats for both prawn and crab fishing.

Don't expect to rush through and agree local SFAC's should have the opportunity to review, but any that are not controversial could potentially go to Ottawa in May.

There seems to be a consensus of support for the rot cord issue at this time.

DFO should be prepared to have Shellfish staff attend local SFAC meeting this Fall.

Next NC SFAC Meeting – Tentatively scheduled for December 04/05, 2010 – Crest Hotel – Prince Rupert

Motions

NCM01 – 01 – It was moved by Mike Rough and seconded by John McCulloch that the CCSFAC is concerned about removals of crab from Rivers Inlet (Area 9) through the commercial crab fishery. If there has been an increase in commercial crab fishing effort in Area 9 over recent years, the CCSFAC requests that DFO please provide the group and Wuikinuxv Nation information outlining the following:

- how this increase will impact the abundance of crab in Rivers Inlet;
- if DFO can provide for areas designated exclusively for recreational and First Nation FSC harvest;
- the pertinent catch and effort data.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AND REFERRED TO SFAB SFGFWG.

NCM01 – 02 – It was moved by Kevin Wiley and seconded by Ken Franzen that DFO pursue it's efforts to change the law so that recreational fishers can, by dipnet, retain eulachons in the non-tidal portions of the Skeena River.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AND REFERRED TO SFAB SFGFWG.

Discussion on Motions tabled from the December 2009 NC SFAC meeting.

NCM01 – 03 – It was moved by Doug Daugert and seconded by Mike Rough that due to a high number of recreational fisher's lack of understanding for the proper release of salmon and other finfish, that causes harm and mortalities in said fish; therefore, be it resolved at the Dec 1, 2009 CC Tidal SFAC meeting that the Committee request DFO implement a program for sport fishers on the proper handling and release of salmon and other finfish. **DEFEATED**

Proper handling techniques are outlined in the TWSFG and Provincial Synopsis and DFO also have DVD's available showing proper release techniques.

NCM01 – 04 – It was moved by Mike Rough and seconded by Larry Proteau that the current allocation of 88/12 does not satisfy the needs of the public halibut harvesting sector. The Fisheries Minister’s commitment was to avoid in season public closures, limit reductions, and to create a transfer mechanism capable of supplying a consistent expectation of catch. These commitments have failed.

To ensure consistent expectations and opportunity to individual public anglers and the businesses that support them; the CC Tidal SFAC recommends the allocation of 88/12 be rescinded. **DEFEATED**

The SFAB is already heavily involved with DFO on the halibut allocation issue.

NCM01 – 05 – It was moved by Mike Rough and seconded by Terri O’Neill that it is noted in the North Coast Salmon IFMP that a troll fishery for Coho on the Central Coast may be opened if abundance is high. The NCSFAC requests that DFO Central Coast Manager’s plus a representative of the CCSFAC be included in the consultation process for determining whether or not this fishery will open.

In the event a consultation process doesn’t happen, the CCSFAC still requests an opportunity to be consulted well in advance of a troll fishery opening in the Central Coast. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NCM01 – 06- It was moved by Mike Rough and seconded by John McCulloch that The NCSFAC requests that DFO Central Coast Manager’s plus a representative of the CCSFAC be included in the consultation process for determining whether or not retention of Coho occurs in any salmon net fisheries in Areas 7-10. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NCM01 – 07 – It was moved by Mike Rough and seconded by Doug Daugert that regarding the concern of the gifting of sport caught fish to clients from lodges or charter operators, we at the NCSFAC recommend that DFO take a look at changing the rules of this practice. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NCM01 – 08 – It was moved by Gord Wolfe and seconded by Tom Protheroe that whereas there continues to be concerns expressed by all user groups around the lack of reliable data regarding the catch of Skeena sockeye salmon by the recreational fishery and whereas reliable data on the recreational catch of Skeena sockeye in a low abundance run year, as expected in 2010, could answer this concern and as a creel survey is planned to be conducted on the Skeena River in 2010. Therefore the NC SFAC recommends that the Skeena recreational fishery for sockeye salmon be managed as follows:

1. In 2010 the Skeena River be closed to the retention of sockeye until July 15.
2. On July 15 or when the estimated run size for sockeye is greater than 650,000 fish the retention of sockeye salmon in the recreational fishery will open to 1/day and 2 in possession.
3. If and when the estimated run size is 800,000 or greater that the retention limits in the recreational fishery will be 2/day and 4 in possession.
4. If and when the estimated run size is 1.5 million or larger than the retention limits in the recreational fishery will be 4/day and 8 in possession.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

NCM01 – 09 – It was moved by Gord Wolfe and seconded by Ken Franzen that the NC SFAC recommends a portion of the Meziadin River be opened to the retention of sockeye salmon.

Information: The recommended portion of the river to be open would be from just above the White River FSR Bridge downstream towards the top of the fish ladder. This location is above the portion of the lower Meziadin River used by First Nations to catch their FSC fish as well as the sites used by the Gitanyow First Nation for their demonstration fishery.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

NCM01 – 10 – It was moved by Gord Wolfe and seconded by Tom Protheroe that the NC SFAC recommends the recreational creel survey planned for the lower Skeena River in 2010 be expanded in time and location to cover the sockeye salmon fishery and portions of the mid Skeena River near Hazelton. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NCM01 – 11 – It was moved by Gord Wolfe and seconded by Larry Proteau that in the draft IFMP document if DFO is considering or proposing to make significant changes to recreational fisheries as to whether how and any special procedures by which the fishery would be conducted, they (DFO) must clearly explain their rationale and provide relevant information supporting their position to the SFAC to allow for focused and productive discussions on the issue. This is consistent with Principle 6 of the document titled *A Vision for Recreational Fisheries*. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NCM01 – 12 – It was moved by Tom Protheroe and seconded by Gord Wolfe that whereas the current draft of the North Coast Integrated Salmon Management Plan on page 59 states under section 4.4.4.4. Recreational Fisheries: *For Babine Lake, if abundance permits (estimated in-season) a directed sockeye fishery will take place with a daily limit of 2, August 1 – September 15.*

The NC SFAC requests that DFO prior to the development of the final 2010 IFMP have discussions with the chair of the Upper Skeena SFAC in order to define the abundance trigger numbers. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**