

## **A Rolling Dialogue among Sport Fishing Interests and First Nations in the Lower Fraser River**

### **Summary Notes: Wednesday November 4, 2009**

**This meeting:** November 4. 2PM – 5 PM. Abbotsford Ramada Plaza. Valley Room.

**Purpose:** To explore implementation of plans from group ideas to “Get along on the river”.

A rolling dialogue was initiated late in the summer of 2009 by sport fishing representatives and First Nations in the lower Fraser River for the purpose of finding workable solutions to conflicts on the lower Fraser River. A joint working group generated a summary of “hot button issues” and potential solutions, organized possible solutions by theme, and then ranked and prioritized their ideas for potential solutions. This meeting was convened by the working group to explore implementation ideas in the area. A table is provided in Appendix 1 with a synopsis of the ideas and their rankings.

**Next meeting: Wednesday December 2, 2009. 2PM – 5 PM. Abbotsford Ramada Plaza, Valley Room.**

### **Participants**

Dave Moore, Fraser River Salmon Table Executive Director – Facilitator/notes

Dave Barrett, President, Fraser River Salmon Table

Frank Kwak, Fraser River Salmon Table Sport Fishing File Manager

Ed George, BC Wildlife Federation

Murray Ned, Sumas Band

Kim Charlie, Chehalis Indian Band

Martha Fredette, Sto:lo Tribal Council

Ernie Crey Sto:lo Tribal Council

Robert Reyerse, Angling Guides Association

Terry Tebb, Pacific Salmon Foundation

Rod Clapton, BC Federation of Driftfishers

## 1. Ongoing participation and request by the Metis Nation of BC

The participants acknowledged the importance of ongoing leadership of sport fishing organizations represented by the BC Wildlife Federation, the BC Federation of Driftfishers, and the Angling Guides Association, and the First Nations represented largely to date by the Sto:lo Tribal Council and Chehalis Indian Band, and most recently by the Sumas First Nation. The process has also enjoyed the support and attendance by the Pacific Salmon Foundation/Fraser Salmon and Watershed's Program and the RCMP Native Liaison. The Fraser Salmon Table continues to function as a facilitative and organizational service. To be successful going forward, those present emphasized the need to encourage more First Nations, particularly as the group begins to explore ways to implement their ideas. A growing number of First Nations participants in this meeting was acknowledged and encouraged.

Gary Biggar of the Metis Nation of BC (MNBC) participated in the previous meeting of this group in September, though it was unclear at the time what the nature and scope of the Metis interests in this forum would be, and if this forum would be addressing a specific conflict on the River affecting the Metis. Participants agreed that this process was about managing people fishing. The central issue for the group is sport fishing-First Nations access conflicts in the lower Fraser River and revolves around addressing First Nations territory and fishing access rights and the growing salmon sport fishery. Therefore Metis access to the lower Fraser salmon fishery was first a First Nations-Metis issue and second one of sports fisheries, and that the question of participation in this forum should be referred to the area First Nations leads in this process on a point of protocol. It was acknowledged that Metis issues may become topical in this forum and that this was designed as an open process. Though Metis function in the process as a participant or observer could both be considered, this should only be constructive if it did not broaden the scope of the discussion beyond that agreed to originally by the lead participants.

Action: Those present requested that Gary Biggar be requested to write a letter to the group on behalf of the MNBC through the Salmon Table and that this be forwarded to the First Nations involved for advise back to the group. The response of First Nations leads to this process could be then reviewed by the group at a subsequent meeting, with the intent of preserving the support of those that designed the process to meet a specific purpose.

## 2. Implementation of Working Group priorities

### i) Etiquette on the River (River Manners) – a behavioral first step in getting along

The incident late this summer on the Fraser involving Chief Willie Charlie, Chehalis fishers and a sport fishing boat was considered an isolated incident caused by ignorance and bad behavior of the particular sport fishers involved. However, there have been other reports of conflicts between the two fisheries as the areas fishery grows and competition over good fishing sites is increasing. The Chehalis Indian Band representatives agreed with this group that one of the most important outcomes from this process for the Band's fishers would be to find ways for the two fisheries to get along on the river, starting with basic manners and the behavior of both sport and First Nations fishers when they interact.

An expression of interest to the Fraser Salmon and Watershed's Program (FSWP) was prepared by the Chehalis Indian Band based on this priority with the assistance from the Fraser Salmon Table, proposing to develop a short video production illustrating the correct way the interaction should have occurred. Model behaviors to be developed can target the uninformed or unfamiliar in hopes of avoiding conflict through modeling appropriate behavior before interactions occur, and may be used beyond the video project in and included in sport fishing regulations, magazines, pamphlets, and on access point kiosks. The proposal was designed as an exercise involving both sport and First Nations participants to this process to generate a short "Youtube" or local TV clip that would demonstrate by example the correct way for this interaction to have occurred. Outcomes could also model behavior (both sport and First Nations) that could be widely adopted as "river manners" brought into play when the two fisheries intersect. A call for proposals sent out by the Salmon Table to video producers received 4 responses, and an expression of interest was submitted to the FSWP based on the scope of work and costs by production companies.

Action: Volunteers from this process agreed to review the proposals and provide editorial input on the formal proposal from the Band in partnership with this group, due December 11.<sup>1</sup> If successful, the participants to this process would be asked to volunteer their time in the production of the video that would illustrate by example to the public the most appropriate behaviors for the two fisheries to follow. The RCMP has also planned a Crime-stoppers video next summer that will provide a useful compliment to this educational production. Outputs should be considered in subsequent communications plans (see mapping high-use conflict areas).

---

<sup>1</sup> Volunteers: Ernie Crey, Frank Kwak, Rod Clapton, and Kim Charlie.

**ii) River-side infrastructure** – enhancing access to sport fish landings for better accounting and a possible First Nations tool to access economy from the sport fishery

Participants identified effective monitoring of the areas fishery as a key in achieving levels of monitoring and compliance that will enable the different interests in the Fraser River salmon fishery to get along. More effective catch accounting may assist in achieving Marine Stewardship Council certification and will assist the groups to embark on more sophisticated harvest management in the future.

The group discussions have identified the lack of “developed” landing sites/launches, secure parking, campsites, and washrooms as a limiting factor in the accounting of the areas popular salmon sport fishery. Participants agreed that developed sites would attract a large proportion of the angling public that would likely increase the coverage of creel surveys and its accuracy. The sites may also be of use to the First Nations fisheries, and organized sites may contribute as well to the ongoing work to achieve traceability and quality objectives in the First Nations economic fishery.<sup>2</sup> It was also identified that the development of this fishery “infrastructure” could also provide a tool for First Nations to access some of the significant sports fishing economy, particularly if developed on reserve, generating greater First Nations interest and possibly support for the areas sport fishery.

This spring, the BC Government introduced a financial investment of \$2.5 million with Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley Regional District and Trails BC for planning a river-based infrastructure program for the lower Fraser (Appendix 2: Experience the Fraser). The participants agreed that this was consistent with their priority for increasing the number of developed sites in the lower Fraser area and suggested inviting a representative of the BC Government project to discuss this with this group.

**Action:** Rod Clapton agreed to find a representative of the project/project partners to come to a future meeting of this working group to explore the project further.

---

<sup>2</sup> Participants also identified that if desired, they could assist First Nations in developing agreements with the Fraser Valley Regional District to access developed sites like Island 22.

**iii) Joint monitoring** – collaboration in an enhanced sport fishing monitoring program to enhance First Nations monitoring program

The group discussed the idea of a joint monitoring program aimed at enhancing the sport fishery monitoring in the area by using the areas aboriginal fisheries monitors. The goal would be to increase the scope and frequency of the catch monitoring of the sport fishery to achieve common monitoring standards as a key step in building trust in one-another's catch accounting. For clarity, the group agreed that this idea was about a collaborative monitoring effort leading to common standards and trust in catch accounting in the areas salmon fishery, not an independent monitoring program conducted by another body, and not a joint monitoring program aimed at putting sports fishers and First Nations monitors out on the water together.

Ernie Crey reflected upon the experiment approximately a decade ago where aboriginal fisheries officers (AFO's) employed in the Lower Fraser Fisheries Authority (LFFA) undertook sport fishery monitoring as a function of regular monitoring duties in the area Sto:lo salmon fishery. The program built a higher level of credibility of the monitoring program over-all and the additional work was considered an important part of building careers among part-time aboriginal fisheries monitors that were involved. The program experienced some union resistance from within DFO's Conservation and Protection staff (C&P) that may have limited the continuation of this program. However, the presence of AFO's in the fishery was well received by both sport fishers and First Nations on the water, the data collection and even enforcement proved to be unbiased and sensitive to each fishery, and the AFO's demonstrated the ability to be fair in their data collection from FSC, sport and economic fisheries.

Currently the First Nations monitors are not tasked with monitoring the sport fishery. This is done by contractors hired by DFO to monitor landings at key landing sites, and the data is complimented by a series of periodic over-flights. The First Nations monitors are employed part time when there is an organized FSC or economic fishery. Neither the First Nations or sport fisheries groups are involved in this program.

Participants agreed that there would be value in developing the collaborative monitoring program building upon that experience of the LFFA, and that there may even be potential to employ non-aboriginal monitors in a collaborative monitoring program if this was developed with DFO. The group identified the enhanced communications links between the fisheries arising from joint monitoring and the importance of separating the enforcement components from this idea that may hinder development of this monitoring proposal; highlighted the potential for additional career benefits to First Nations monitors that would arise; emphasized the potential to access supporting grants, fees (?); and, through the Federal Procurement Policy, perhaps taking on the creel survey contracts.

Action: A sub-committee (Ernie Crey, Terry Tebb, Dave Barrett, Murray Ned) was struck to explore the possibilities further and to develop a specific business plan to bring back to this group, to communicate political common ground with Sr. Government officials, consider links to Ministry of Advanced Education (Martha will provide information for the group).

**iv) Mapping of high-use/conflict areas** – generating a map of popular fishing sites where fisheries conflict is most likely to occur

The working group identified the utility and value of creating a map that would illustrate high-use or popular salmon fishing sites in the area as a way to inform the public about where the two fisheries are most likely to intersect. The map should include both drift net sites and set net sites as well as popular salmon angling sites. The purpose of the map would be to warn sport fishers in particular, and especially new anglers unfamiliar with “river manners”, of the most likely spots for interactions so that they can be prepared. This project would operate in concert with the “River Manners” project. The map was also considered a valuable planning tool as the two interests try to organize to reduce conflict (individually or collectively) in the future.

The proposed map could be displayed at access point kiosks (proposed), in the sport fishing regulations publications (DFO or Provincial, electronic or booklets), in sport fishing magazines, and along with information “kits” used by monitors, shared with angling guides, tackle stores as well as with area First Nations.

Action: Dave Moore will explore accessibility of suitable map base (government or private fishing map host) and plan for organization of a subsequent workshop with this group and involving a broader informed group to identify the “hot spots” to include on the map. This project will also require financial resources for the workshop and professional mapping support for the generation of the base map, as well as a plan and funding for broader sharing of the final product.

**v) Night-time First Nation FSC fishing** – a pilot project to experiment with a voluntary night-time FSC fishery to reduce daytime crowding

One of the greatest challenges of the joint working group has been to identify strategies to reduce crowding and potential for conflict during times and at sites where salmon fishing is most popular in the area for both the sport fishery and the First Nations fisheries. The group considered various options to separate the fisheries from each other by space and time (left-side/right-side, even-days/odd-days, week-ends/week-days), but acknowledged that infringements upon the First Nations fisheries as well as conflicts between various sport fishing interests both would have small likelihood of success. However, it was discovered that some First Nations prefer to drift-net at night time, and that this was once a long standing practice, and offers greater success for those who participate. Even without increasing the catch objective, the benefits to the participants includes less effort, cost and stress for the same amount of fish. Some simply prefer the serenity of a much less populated fishery at night time. The potential therefore exists to reduce the crowding on the popular fishing sites for both fisheries by allowing some First Nations salmon drift fishing at night.

The working group discussed the various issues arising from this proposal and firstly emphasized that this was not a proposal requiring First Nations to fish at night, rather a voluntary night time FSC fishery to reduce daytime crowding in popular fishing sites. The First Nations participants pointed out that night time drift fishing is not preferred by everyone and can be dangerous for the young and elder fishers. In addition, it is currently prohibited by DFO as a night time drift net fishery is difficult to monitor and enforce, and such a fishery could have significant effects upon the effort and catch profile. Also, offering a night time drift net fishery to one First Nation may give them an added advantage and skew an otherwise level playing field in access to the available harvest. Some managers also argue that the close night time fishery allows a period when fish can pass through the area unhindered by nets.

It was suggested that the issues raised are not insurmountable and the group wished to explore the potential in the form of a small pilot fishery developed jointly with DFO through this group.

Action: That Dave Moore explore the policy further with DFO for clarity and propose that a small workshop be organized involving DFO and participants to this working group to try to design an experimental night time drift net fishery (one or two night event) involving volunteers that would help address any of the concerns raised. If successful, the pilot could provide a template for further expansion of the night time fishery that would help reduce day time crowding at popular fishing sites between sport fishers and First Nations.

### 3. Next Steps

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to each other in this process and agreed that there was a sense of progress in both relationship building and actions. The group requested that an effort be made to develop a set of regularly scheduled meetings over the next several months (until March 2010) so that the group would be able to organize their commitments to this group accordingly. Additional hospitality was desirable (i.e. coffee, snacks) as the meetings are taxing and made for along day.

Next meeting: The Abbotsford Ramada Valley Room - December 2, 2009 from 2-5 PM.

DRAFT



**Appendix 1: How to Get Along on the River ~ Issues, Ideas and Summary Discussion Points**

Key Issues	Ideas	Summary Discussion	RC	EG	FK	MF	RR	WC	Score	Group Ranking
<b>Monitoring and Enforcement</b>	Develop more landing, parking, camping, and toilets	The number of developed landing sites is limited in the area. Well developed sites would attract the use of anglers and perhaps First Nations fishers to make monitoring easier	2	2	8	7	6	11	36	5
	Joint monitoring	Piloted with some success in 1990's. Good for relationship building. DFO discontinued to focus on First Nations catch.	11	4	2	1	4	1	23	3
<b>Crowding</b>	First Nations allowed to fish at night time	Preferred by many First Nations, but some enforcement issues (DFO) and safety issues (need younger people trained)	1	3	1	5	2	5	17	2
<b>Conflict</b>	Respectful etiquette for fisheries should be developed	Parties need to define appropriate communications etiquette for fishers when gear/effort intersect	3	1	7	2	1	1	15	1
	Avoid media wars	Both groups see the need to work out solutions directly	11	8	5	6	3	11	44	7
	Create a buffer Zone	Both fisheries need to be taught how to avoid conflict by staying a respectful distance	11	11	10	3	1	11	47	8
<b>Education</b>	Map high use areas	Rank site use. Include at landing kiosks, internet etc.	4	7	9	10	7	2	39	6
	Messaging and policy conflicts	Continue dialogue/ attend each other's meetings. Kiosk at outdoor show. Joint press releases. Work together on etiquette	11	6	6	4	5	3	35	4
	Video/code of conduct development	See etiquette – the exercise of creating a video on codes of conduct will engage joint-exercise without fishing pressure	11	10	3	11	8	1	44	7
	Publish timing of openings	Available on Internet – use kiosks at landing sites	11	7	11	8	9	11	57	9
<b>Stewardship</b>	Joint projects	Projects like Chehalis trail, beaver dam control, habitat	5	5	4	9	10	3	36	5

## Appendix 2: Experience the Fraser - BC Government River-based Infrastructure Program



### NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2009TCA0014-000812  
April 9, 2009

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

#### \$2.5 MILLION FOR EXPERIENCE THE FRASER PROJECT

FORT LANGLEY – The Province will provide Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) with \$1.25 million apiece to begin development of a system of inter-regional trails, river-based infrastructure and heritage features through the Lower Fraser River corridor, Maple Ridge-Mission MLA Randy Hawes announced today on behalf of Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Bill Bennett.

“Experience the Fraser is a recreation and cultural tourism partnership that extends from Hope to the Strait of Georgia,” said Hawes. “This is an excellent opportunity for the communities along the Lower Fraser River to celebrate their shared heritage, enhance recreational opportunities and promote the region as one of the great river communities of the world.”

The Province, Metro Vancouver, FVRD and Trails BC will partner with communities and First Nations to establish trail routes and utilize the natural heritage and infrastructure to develop integrated land and water-based recreation and cultural heritage opportunities along the Lower Fraser River to facilitate tourism and active, healthy living.

“Metro Vancouver looks forward to working cooperatively with our neighbours in the Fraser Valley, the government of B.C. and others in this exciting project. Enhancing the regional parks, trails and greenways system provides even more opportunities for citizens to enjoy the outdoors and access the Fraser River, one of our province’s most enduring symbols and a thread that ties together many of our communities,” said Metro Vancouver Parks Committee chair Gayle Martin.

With the goal of showcasing the Lower Fraser River as a world-class recreation, heritage and cultural tourism destination, the project will focus on the following themes:

- outdoor recreation
- First Nations, heritage and culture
- environment and nature
- industry and transportation on the river
- riverfront communities
- celebration

“This project will provide for a wide range of new opportunities for the communities in our region, not only in outdoor recreation and tourism, but also in alternative transportation and economic development,” said Mission Mayor James Atebe. “I know the partners will work well together to create a truly great experience for our residents and visitors alike.”

-more-

- 2 -

Experience the Fraser will also celebrate the Lower Fraser River wildlife, communities, people and their stories through cultural events, festivals, theatre and the arts.

-30-

Media contact: David Greer  
Communications Manager  
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts  
250 387-2799

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province’s news feeds using RSS, visit the Province’s website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca).