

Sport Fishing- First Nations Working Group – Summary Meeting Notes *(draft June 23)*

Tuesday June 22, 2010

Sto:lo Nation Government House Board Room

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Catch and release mortality study, Jim Thomas
3. Discussion on ideas towards a collaborative monitoring initiative in the lower Fraser
4. Report on progress towards an access study for boat launches etc., led by a committee of the working group

Attendance

Dave Barrett,, Facilitator/President Fraser River Salmon Table

Dave Moore , Notes/Executive Director, Fraser River Salmon Table

Louise Mussel, Fraser Valley Aboriginal Fisheries Society Monitoring Program (FVAFS)

Dale Joe, FVAFS

Kim Charlie, Chehalis Fisheries Coordinator

Murray Ned, Sto:lo Tribal Council

Leigh McCracken, Angler/BC Federation of Driftfishers

Rod Clapton, President, BC Federation of Driftfishers

Robert Reyerse, Fraser Valley Angling Guides Association

Mike Jimmie, Sto:lo Nation Fisheries Manager

Frank Kwak, Fraser River Salmon Table/Fraser Valley Salmon Society

Ken Malloway, Sto:lo/Fraser River Salmon Table

Wayne Saito, Consultant w/ history working with BC Government

Ernie Crey, Sto:lo Tribal Council

Terry Tebb, PSF

Herb Redecop, DFO C&P

Michelle Tung, Manager FSWP
Ed George, BCWF- Region 2 President

Summary Meeting Notes

1. **Welcome and history of the Sport Fishing- First Nations Fisheries Working Group – not a committee of the Salmon Table,** but an assembly of BC Sport fishing organizations and First Nations who have asked the Salmon Table, as an independent body from any single interest, to organize and facilitate meetings and projects on their behalf. Action items was developed by the group and guides their work together to “get along in the fishery” (Appended for reference) – focus on lower Fraser R.
 - **Congratulations to Rod Clapton** for receiving the Regional Director Award for his work building partnerships with First Nations (i.e. angling access trail)
 - **Congratulations to Cpl. Gosselin** on award - the Order of Merit bestowed upon him by the Governor General Michaelle Jean
 - **The lack of appropriate DFO participation in these meetings is concerning** and there is a need to follow up to determine the reasons for this – DFO was given ample notice of this meeting (2 months) and previous monthly meetings since August 2009 – acknowledged presence of Herb Redekopp C&P. No formal response from Deb Sneddon by yesterday afternoon. Collin Masson Sends regrets due to scheduling conflicts, but offered to come in by teleconference link

Action:

- Dave send out congratulations and acknowledgements from the group for Chris G.
 - The Salmon Table and members of the working group will communicate with Senior DFO and government officials to seek ways to effectively engage this group in DFO’s work.
2. **Review of the proposal to jointly plan new landing sites in the lower Fraser River** to improve catch monitoring coverage and enhance First Nations benefits.
 - The proposal involved 2 volunteers and Salmon Table President attending a workshop of Enterprising Non-Profits in order to qualify to apply for business planning funding

- The proposal was generated and submitted under tight timelines and would require revisiting any funding award with the working group for instructions on how to proceed
- General discussion about process to send in proposal before review by the whole group
- Confirmed group support for initiative and the need to formalize processes within this ad-hoc group - the initiative and efforts of the participants was acknowledged
- The proposal was not successful due to limited funds but the group will try again

Action: Given the time limitations and basic nature of the proposal, it was endorsed in principle by the group, but it was agreed that in the future, the process should include a working group review.

3. Presentation by Jim Thomas on hook and release mortalities 2008 and 2009

- Grassy bar was chosen as best location for the study due to the safety and quality of the fishing site
- Noted that those angled fish held in net pens had highest mortalities and in fact were better off released right away
- See Jim Thomas slide show provided as an annex to these notes
- Appended: summary overview provided by Deb Sneddon previously

Action/suggestions from group:

- The results appear to have been constructive for both Sto:lo and the sport fishery who now are beginning to understand each others fishery better
- Suggestion from floor to follow up with the SFAB and sockeye working group for re-endorsement in preparation for the 2010 fishery study
- Consider looking at LGL mortalities or DFO enroute mortality estimates as a contrast to the mortalities experienced - though direct comparisons may not be relevant due to the variables in the studies
- In future studies the net-pen held fish will not be radio tagged
- Observed that by-catch of pinks, even when present was minimal because they migrated closer to shore than anglers were fishing
- Plan for 2010 study – expand to 200 sockeye, follow design parameters as in 2008 and 2009: July 26 to August 27
- Raised concern that in 2010 there will be a need to educate and communicate with other anglers competing for the fishing bar during a general opening
- Consider enroute mortalities when setting objectives for reaching the spawning grounds

- Raised desire to retain the gilled Chinook jacks that will likely die for FSC purposes – to be noted on the scientific license and referred to a Sto:lo cultural institution or Band
- Considerable questions still remain and Sto:lo Tribal Council has encouraged ongoing work to better understand this fishery and possibly extending the study to include effects on spawning success as well as survival to the spawning grounds
- FSWP has set aside funding share for next 2 years – part of a 4 year program commitment

4. Group discussion towards a collaborative monitoring program in the lower Fraser

- Arose from the list of action items prioritized by this group
- Reflected on the joint monitoring experiment in the 1990's then funding was removed by DFO
- At the last M&C panel meeting a joint monitoring pilot was proposed – Alternative may be in Albernie
- Need to work towards more consistent FN participation in the regular meetings of the M&C panel
- Good opportunity to work through that with this group
- Ken Malloway has had to make choices between paying meetings and those that don't – missed M&C meetings
- Clear level of support for this project to proceed – will be presented to the BCWF Board this week-end
- M&C panel is high-beam and they are looking for a place where it will be successful – this process is the low beam that is able to put this concept on the ground
- Sto:lo Nation fish management board expressed a priority to build a better understanding of the recreational fishery - support studies like this, like the River Manners video, and the Salmon Table and this working group. Need to build a broader understanding of each other's fisheries...need to build a belief of each others data in the fishery – want to improve relationships with sport fishing community
- Sto:lo tribal Council support for this working group from the Sto:lo Tribal Council President, and for the role of the Salmon Table

Action:

- **Letter to the Peter Sakich as chair of the M&C panel and RDG** to work towards a collaborative or joint monitoring program in the lower Fraser river (Salmon Table and by each group); Terry, Ernie & Rod work on the business plan; JOT can train and certify – open to collaboration; FVAS has experienced staff to meet some of the employment needs
- **Links to M&C panel** – Ken M. And Ernie Crey to sort out alternates to ensure continuity in M&C panel with First Nations

- **Practical ideas:** visit the catch and release mortality study, do a tour of sport fish creel survey and sport fishery during sockeye fishery; invite M&C panel to meet with this group; replicate last fall’s M&C/Salmon Table tour/workshop
- **Develop a business plan to undertake monitoring programming** in the lower Fraser: Terry T., Rod C., Murray Ned

Appendix 1: Action Plan from Joint Sport Fishing- First Nations Working Group

Key Issues	Ideas	Summary Discussion	RC	EG	FK	MF	RR	WC	Score	Group Ranking
Monitoring and Enforcement	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
Crowding	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
Conflict	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
Education	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
Stewardship	Joint projects	Projects like Chehalis trail, beaver dam control, habitat	5	5	4	9	10	3	36	5

Appendix 2: Catch and Release Mortality Study Overview (From Deb Sneddon)

The Fraser River supports a substantial recreational fishery directed at sockeye *Oncorhynchus nerka*. At certain times and under certain conditions, this fishery is pursued as a catch-and-release (CR) fishery. “Bottom-bouncing” is the predominant angling technique in the non-tidal portion of the Fraser River. Anecdotal observations have suggested that mortality rates of captured and released sockeye should be low for this type of fishery. However, no formal data has been collected or analyzed to quantify mortality rates to-date. In 2009, the second year of a planned four year study was conducted to monitor this fishery under typical conditions, collect pertinent catch-and-release data and to quantify short-term (24-h) mortality rates.

This year’s study was conducted using volunteer anglers over 16 days between 10 August and 28 August, 2009 at Grassy Bar in the Fraser River. In total, the study collected and analyzed data from 291 hooked and landed sockeye (angled group) and 63 sockeye captured by beach seine (reference group). All captured sockeye were floy-tagged and held in net pens for 24 h observation prior to release back into the river. Net pens were situated in a side channel close to the angling site.

Primary hooking locations were observed to be on the outside of the mouth or body (90% of all landed sockeye). Of this group, most were specifically hooked in the left maxillary bone (80%). Approximately 25% of the hooked fish exhibited bleeding at the time of capture. However, all the sockeye that were hooked, held and released alive after 24 h in the net pens showed no signs of bleeding and all but six (2%) were released in vigorous condition.

Only five mortalities were witnessed in the study and short-term (0 to 24 h) catch-and-release mortality was estimated to be 1.7% (95% confidence interval of 0% - 4.0%). The five fish that died were all initially hooked through the left maxillary bone followed by the hook either puncturing or lacerating major arteries in the gills or under the tongue. No mortalities were observed in the reference group.

Physiological sampling and radio-tagging were conducted concurrently during the study. Non-destructive and destructive physiological samples were collected to investigate physiological stressors related to hooking or capture of sockeye by beach seine and post-capture holding of the angled sockeye in net pens for 24 h. Tissue samples were also collected for DNA stock composition analysis. Tracking and analysis of radio-tagged sockeye will provide insights into migration routes and timing, survival and corroboration of DNA samples for stock composition. Complete documentation and final analysis of this data is pending and will be reported separately

These results suggest that bottom-bounce fishing in the Fraser River bar fishery has a minimal impact on short-term mortality of migrating adult sockeye however it should be noted that this study was conducted at one location with one set of environmental conditions. It is recommended that this study be conducted over the full sockeye cycle, 4 years to determine if there are inter-annual variations.

For further information: Debra Sneddon Debra.Sneddon@dfo-mpo.gc.ca or (604) 666-6509.

Appendix3: Participant Contact List

Participants List* and Contact Information

Phone (daytime)

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