

Regional Fish Organizations Conference Call

November 26, 2008

9:00am-10:06am



FIRST NATIONS
FISHERIES COUNCIL

AGENDA

1. PICFI Update
2. FNFC meeting in Ottawa
3. WSP Benchmarks Paper
4. ISDF and Native Fishing Association Coastal Communities Meetings
5. Recreational Fisheries
6. Fraser Annex Renewal

ATTENDANCE

Brenda McCorquodale, Mark Duiven, Cheri Ayers, Roy Alexander, Mike Staley, Susan Anderson-Behn, Neil Todd, Marcel Shepert, Abel Hood

1. PICFI Update

- Roy has been working with First Nations on PICFI. Clarity is needed around PICFI policies.
- The PICFI session in Nanaimo was not well publicized (host First Nation was not aware of the meeting), and was poorly attended. This was the only chance for a First Nations only session. Didn't get much input.
- A major issue is whether PICFI is separate from treaties. The impression is that PICFI won't affect future treaties, but this needs to be clarified. The question has been asked, but not answered so far. People have heard off the record that PICFI and ATP resources will affect treaty talks.
- Concern that if people are not going to meetings with people in the field, the effects of the policies will not be seen. This could advance the destruction of stocks.
- The US just released \$170M in Washington and Oregon for charter boats, fuel docks, gear businesses, fishermen, etc. on the whole Pacific coast. In Canada, we're looking at a program that may not see progress until the season is over. Last year a lot of licenses weren't fished and were wasted; they could have been given to fishermen.

2. FNFC Meeting in Ottawa

- FNFC reps are going to Ottawa to meet with politicians and the deputy of DFO. Had a brief strategic discussion on this call, but will plan another conference call before the meeting.

ACTION #1 – Brenda McCorquodale: Organize another conference call to discuss the strategy for the Ottawa meeting.

- Brenda will follow up with Rick Morales on the implications of DFO paying for PICFI licenses, and how it will affect treaty talks.

- Concern about work the FNFC might do in the context of rights based fisheries. If doing technical work, will not be negotiating or looking at sharing arrangements that involve giving up rights.
- Fishermen have not been involved in PICFI; huge impacts are hidden in the fine print. It could decimate the few existing fishermen. First Nations should be consulted, but nobody has approached fishermen's associations, etc. The issue is how to provide meaningful input.
- The FNFC recommended further discussions with leadership to understand the context of the work being undertaken. Looking at shares within the context of a rights-based fishery. It takes the FNFC to a higher level in terms of involvement.
- Mike and the PICFI technical working group proposed what a technical analysis could include. It was summarized in the Watershed Talk newsletter. People want to see examples and possible scenarios, and have the process described in as much detail as possible. Currently don't have the resources to do the analysis that needs to be done. Environmental groups and the conservation caucus are putting a plan together to move forward as well. Jeff Young is working on a plan, how to design a marketplace for shares, etc.
- DFO is saying if they can get the PICFI trading mechanism, everything will fall into place; however, it will be very costly. Salmon licenses are at an all-time low, and fishers might not even sell their licenses.
- A perspective on the river is that the only way to get fish inland for economic purposes is to take from commercial shares.
- Have not had a commercial First Nations fishermen's perspective on the PICFI working group. Possibly partner with the First Nations fishermen's association?

ACTION #2 – Brenda McCorquodale: Follow up with Violet and Roy about involving the First Nations fishermen's association in the PICFI working group.

3. WSP Benchmarks Paper

- A paper is coming out next week on the benchmarks methodology for the Wild Salmon Policy – how to use science to assess the health of various stocks under various CUs in the WSP to influence the management of those stocks.
- The FNFC was trying to arrange a WSP workshop in conjunction with the FWJTC meeting in December. The in-person meeting was cancelled because little response was received. Would like to have a web-based presentation if Al Cass will agree to that. Will follow up.
- Will also discuss WSP at the FNFC fisheries assembly in February.
- Clarity is needed on how DFO will incorporate social and economic factors into WSP – so far DFO has not been able to answer that question.
- People are not engaged in WSP at the moment; need people to understand why it's important.
- The fisheries assembly in February will be held in conjunction with the all Chiefs meeting in Nanaimo (technical meetings on Wednesday Feb 25th while Chiefs are in resolution, and a meeting including leadership on Thursday Feb 26th). A fisheries theme will run through the all Chiefs meeting for the first part of the week.
- Will be looking for input for the fisheries assembly agenda.

4. ISDF & Native Fisheries Association Meetings

- The FNFC is offering support for First Nations to attend the ISDF meeting next week.

- Concern that the FNFC is not moving forward in bilateral discussions while co-management processes are being developed; will outline that concern in a letter to DFO. Already sent a letter to the governance committee; the province responded with a commitment to looking at the relationship. To date there has been no response from DFO on this issue.
- ISDF meeting is Dec 3rd (evening), 4th & 5th.
- Doug Kelly will be giving opening comments at the Native Fishing Association Coastal Communities meeting. Will give a background on the FNFC and PICFI working group.

5. Recreational Fisheries

- Emergency resolution at the last Summit meeting on economic and food fish crisis. The FNFC will discuss the next steps at the all Chiefs meeting, and link in with the Coastal Communities meeting next week.
- There was an ad in the Vancouver Sun with the recreational fishery complaining about their allocation of halibut. This expanding share is affecting First Nations at the mouth of the river with their food fish (“attack on First Nations rights”). Having priority of fish in the river systems is meaningless if fish aren’t reaching the streams. Discussed protecting food fish and halibut at the AFS meeting in Nanaimo. This is an important issue.
- DFO is still working on the recreational fishery vision document, which should be wrapped up December 31st. Need to get First Nations input before this document is adopted. DFO says the vision can’t be discussed at First Nations fisheries meetings because it’s already a policy.
- FNFC have been doing Policy Analyst interviews; this was a question for those interviews. When the Policy Analyst is hired, they will be asked to provide recommendations and feedback on the rec fishery vision.
- Commercial fishermen are angry about this issue as well, could work together.
- Legal issue is important, but there is a lack of resources.
- If the minister won’t agree to a meeting with the FNFC it was suggested that they ask for a meeting with the riding. This is an important issue for the Ottawa meeting agenda.
- The Upper Fraser has prepared a response to the rec fishery vision.
- Information on this issue will be posted on the FNFC website with restricted access.

6. PST Fraser Annex Renewal

- A letter was sent out with bilateral instructions for the Fraser panel. Three areas were identified where the PSC needs advice on provisions and procedures:
 1. The 3 pages within the PST document
 2. Whether the panel will need extraordinary meetings to complete the work necessary
 3. Identify other technical work that needs to be doneThis information needs to be compiled before January.
- Need to get a legal opinion before Marcel’s group meets with some US reps from the Fraser panel (by December 10). Would like funding from the FNFC for legal costs. Upper Fraser has a small surplus to contribute.
- When other fisheries meetings take place, need to schedule a session for PSC feedback from First Nations.
- Might want to discuss this issue with Don Hall, might have already had some legal work done on this issue.
- The issue is not one of international law, it’s an issue of department obligation.

- Native Americans have true priority; it's different from the situation with First Nations in Canada.
- Neil, Marcel and Mike will discuss this and get back to Brenda.

ACTION #3 – Neil Todd, Marcel Shepert, Mike Staley: Discuss this issue via conference call. Follow up with an email to the FNFC outlining what funding will be needed.

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION #1 – Brenda McCorquodale: Organize another conference call to discuss the strategy for the Ottawa meeting.

ACTION #2 – Brenda McCorquodale: Follow up with Violet and Roy about involving the First Nations fishermen's association in the PICFI working group.

ACTION #3 – Neil Todd, Marcel Shepert, Mike Staley: Discuss this issue via conference call. Follow up with an email to the FNFC outlining what funding will be needed.