



First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

JUNE 2016 ISSUE



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL MEMBERS:

North Coast: **Arnold Clifton**

Central Coast: **Vacant**

South Vancouver Island: **Dan Claxton**

Lower Mainland: **Vacant**

Upper Fraser: **Thomas Alexis**

Northern Transboundary: **Keith Carlick**

Haida Gwaii: **Vacant**

North Vancouver Island: **John Henderson**

West Coast Vancouver Island: **Hugh Braker**

Fraser Valley: **Ken Malloway**

Mid-Fraser 1: **Tina Donald**

Mid-Fraser 2: **Tracy Wimbush**

Upper Skeena: **Stu Barnes**

Transboundary Columbia: **Howie Wright**

Contact Us:

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC
320-1200 West 73rd Ave.
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5

Phone: 778-379-6470

Fax: 778-379-6469

Email: info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca
Website: www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE FNFC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ʔi ʔə ce:p ʔəw ʔəy ʔaí, Si:ýém nə Siyeýe?

Are you all well, my esteemed friends (relations),

The 2016-17 fiscal year has been a little surprising for all of us, with the resignation of our Fisheries Minister catching us all off guard. We had many expectations, and perhaps he felt all of the expectations – and I can't even imagine how overwhelming that must have felt. We have sent correspondence to him from the BC level and from the AFN National Fisheries Committee wishing him the best in his time of recovery.

We immediately sent introductory correspondence to incoming Fisheries Minister Dominic LeBlanc, and also sent two further pieces of correspondence regarding the implementation of the Cohen recommendations and the need to rescind the 'Endpoint' Cabinet directive, a policy from the Harper Government which placed a hard cap allocation ceiling on First Nations' harvests without true consultation on communal needs.

This is the third and final year in the current term for the FNFC Executive, and notice will go out in September for delegate appointments for the upcoming 2017-2020 term. In addition to board re-appointments, in terms of organizational stability, the succession plan for the FNFC Executive Director was reviewed by the Executive at the May 17, 2016 meeting, and the board recommended to extend an offer to the Executive Director to consider staying through the next board term, also until 2020.

In broader developments, in light of the numerous resource extraction, infrastructure, energy, and transportation projects occurring in BC, the provincial First Nations natural resource councils have determined a critical need to coordinate their activities. After the 2014 Mount Polley incident, emergency response and environmental protection became high priority matters for the First Nations (cont.)



organizations to focus on. An integrated approach is being developed among the First Nations Energy and Mining Council, the First Nations Fisheries Council, the First Nations Health Council, and the First Nations Forestry Council, the objective of which is to develop a functioning Integrated Natural Resource Secretariat, which will create effective and efficient communication and coordination between and among the councils. First Nations Emergency Services may also join the process as discussion moves forward. The First Nations Leadership Council will be briefed in more detail about this initiative at a meeting scheduled for June 28, 2016.

The FNFC continues to focus on a number of important priorities, such as advancing our relationships with BC First Nations, supporting collaboration among the communities in support of the First Nations Leadership Council's mandates, and working with First Nations fisheries organizations through our protocols and our Charter process.

Collaboratively, we continue to focus on priority matters such as stability in funding for program delivery, aquaculture dialogue and the protection of wild salmon, economic development and the PICFI transition, and dialogue with the federal government on fisheries co-management, shared program delivery, and First Nations engagement on management and policy design and implementation. We continue to implement the FNFC 3 year Strategic Plan (2015-2018), in which we will build on the existing core foundation of the *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan* and our objectives from our 2012-15 Strategic Plan. We will also continue to focus on priorities such as fisheries court case implementation, addressing cumulative effects on water and habitat, First Nations engagement in the BC Ministry of Environment's spill response initiative, and building collaborative processes among First Nations to support engagement with federal and provincial governments.

Thank you and we look forward to our continued work together!



hay čx^w q̄ə, O' si:yem,

Jordan Point
FNFC Executive Director

Photo: Sunset over Barkley Sound, by Mark Lewis



WATER FOR FISH INITIATIVE

In 2010, the FNFC initiated a series of workshops to scope First Nations' values and involvement in freshwater governance and management. The *Water for Fish* initiative was then launched in 2012 to advance the objectives under theme of 'Safeguarding Habitat and Responding to Threats' in the *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan*. The *Water for Fish* initiative aims to enhance the participation of First Nations in governance, planning, and management of water for fish and aquatic ecosystems. Our growing water network is set up to:

- Bring First Nations together to work on water issue and facilitate peer-to-peer learning;
- Discuss water policy issues that can then be communicated to other governments and organizations;
- Share technical information, and;
- Build First Nations' capacity in water policy, planning and management.

The *Water for Fish* team hosts a Tier 1 teleconference call/webinar on the third Wednesday of every month from 10:00am-11:00am focusing primarily on the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) and freshwater issues.

Water Sustainability Act (WSA)

- The BC WSA received Royal Assent in May 2014 and came into full force on February 29, 2016, with the announcement of the initial regulations which clarify and make up the body of how the Act will function (for more information, see engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact). Groundwater for non-domestic uses will be regulated for the first time based on prior-appropriation water rights (also known as FITFIR, or First in Time, First in Right).
- The WSA does not recognize Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights, and consultation with First Nations has been inadequate both in developing and implementing the Act and its initial regulations. Aboriginal Rights to water have not been prioritized, so First Nations are not guaranteed water supplies now or in the future (i.e. First Nations are treated as other water users under the FITFIR system).
- The FNFC has completed a guidance document for First Nations on how to prepare/respond to the new groundwater licensing regulation and a template letter addressed to the Province that incorporates this guidance (please contact us if you have not seen these documents).
- Environmental flow needs¹ (EFN) are meant to be considered under the WSA as a mechanism to protect fish and aquatic health (WSA Section 15.1). The methodology or process the Province will use has yet to be determined. There was a loophole in the newly passed groundwater licensing regulation [official name is *Water Sustainability Regulation*] preventing the Province from considering EFN when converting existing large non-domestic groundwater users into licenses over the next three years (Section 55.4). On April 14, 2016, the Province made an amendment to the groundwater licensing regulation striking this loophole.
- The Province will soon initiate the development of the remaining regulations/policies required to complete the implementation of the WSA, including Water Objectives, water sustainability plans, measuring and reporting, licence reviews, designated areas, dedicated agricultural water, and alternative governance approaches.

Water for Fish Project Manager Julia Ko is on maternity leave. In the meantime please direct all questions to Geneviève Layton-Cartier, *Water for Fish* Project Coordinator, at genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

¹ **Environmental flow needs**, in relation to a stream, means the volume and timing of water flow required for proper functioning of the aquatic ecosystem. This does not include water quality.



UVIC LAUNCHES INDIGENOUS WATER STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

A new project at the University of Victoria looking at the critical issue of BC's water laws will have a vital impact on water stewardship in BC for decades to come. The project is the first to examine both Indigenous and colonial water stewardship, and will focus on three regions of the province where water use is at issue – the Similkameen Valley, the Cowichan Valley of eastern Vancouver Island, and the Nemiah Valley in the Tsilhqot'in.

UVic Law faculty members Deborah Curran and Val Napoleon received \$350,000 in funding from SSHRC and the Real Estate Foundation of BC for the three-year project, *Water Laws: Lessons from Indigenous and Colonial Stewardship*. The results will provide input into the implementation of the province's *Water Sustainability Act*, as well as highlight water user behaviour and educate both Indigenous and government water stewards on water sustainability planning.

The team will work with Indigenous communities to map their Indigenous water laws and draw parallels between Indigenous water stewardship and licensed water user behaviour in specific watersheds. They will interview agriculture sector water rights holders and water utility staff to uncover how they understand and use their water rights. They will also examine how users adjust to changes in stream flow in the context of the new *Water Sustainability Act*, demonstrating how watershed communities adapt and share water during water shortages.

Using community workshops, public materials on Indigenous water law, and a graphic water law text, the goal is to generate information and processes for moving towards collaborative watershed stewardship and water sustainability planning involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

.....

FNFC UPDATE CONFERENCE CALLS (TIER 1)

The First Nations Fisheries Council hosts First Nations fisheries teleconferences on the second Wednesday morning of every month from 10:30am to 12:00pm. We also hold topic-specific calls from time to time as needed. The purpose of these calls is for First Nations to raise issues or concerns for discussion, and for the FNFC to provide updates and seek feedback on our priorities and activities. These calls are Tier 1, and are open to all First Nations and First Nations fisheries program staff. Dial-in information and agendas are distributed prior to each conference call via our email list.

The next monthly FNFC update conference call will be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Keep up with the FNFC on Social Media!

.....

**LIKE us on FACEBOOK at www.facebook.com/fnfcbc
FOLLOW us on TWITTER at www.twitter.com/fnfish**



PSC FRASER PANEL INFORMATION FOR BC FIRST NATIONS

The first Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) Fraser River Panel (FRP) meeting season is set to begin on **Friday, July 8, 2016**. A listen-in line is provided for any BC First Nations who wish to observe these meetings. The FRP meetings follow a Tuesday and Friday schedule from July until September, and most often begin at 11:00am. Some Tuesday meetings in August will be held in person, and they begin at 10:30am. The listen-in line will still be available for in-person meetings. Dial-in numbers and schedule will be shared via the FNFC Tier 1 email distribution list prior to each call.

The Pacific Salmon Commission also sends us their info distribution packages to share with BC First Nations. These are usually available just a few minutes in advance of the meeting start time, and will be shared via our email list as they are received.

Fraser River Panel Technical Committee:

FRP Technical Committee meetings are held on Thursday afternoons. FRAFS biologist Mike Staley hosts technical update GoTo Meetings for First Nations following the FRPTC meetings on **Thursday afternoons at 4:00pm**, starting on **July 14, 2016**. Information about these sessions is shared via the FRAFS email distribution list. Those who are not on the FRAFS list but are interested in subscribing can contact FRAFS Communications Walter Quinlan at frafs15@gmail.com.

More information about the Pacific Salmon Commission and the Fraser River Panel is available on their website at www.psc.org.

Photo: Bill Voght and Isaac Aljam from Coldwater Band fishing at Jackass – by Jessie Voght



FNFC PHOTO CONTEST FOR OUR 2017 CALENDAR!

Grand Prize: \$250 Visa Gift Card – Deadline September 23, 2016

The FNFC photo contest is back and we're seeking beautiful First Nations fisheries-related photos to appear in our **2017 calendar**! Twelve winning photos will be chosen, and one GRAND PRIZE winner will be selected from among the 12 photos. The grand prize photo will be featured on the calendar's cover, and the photographer will receive a \$250 Visa gift card! Photographers who submit the other 11 winning photos will each receive a \$25 Visa gift card. All winning photographers will also receive a copy of the calendar.

Please note: Whether or not your photo is selected for the calendar, by submitting photos to the contest, you grant permission to the FNFC to use your photo for publications, newsletters, communications, etc. FNFC always prints a photo credit to recognize the photographer.

Depending on the geographic range represented in the photo entries, we will aim to select photos from as many different regions across the province as possible. We also hope to feature as many different species, aquatic resources, fishing methods and activities as possible, so you may get points for originality!

Some suggestions for photos: traditional First Nations fishing/harvesting practices, significant fishing or habitat areas, fish/aquatic resources, First Nations sustainable aquaculture activities, First Nations economic fisheries, youth fisheries engagement and learning, fisheries activities that are specific to your region, technical surveys/assessment/monitoring or scientific research activities, traditional food preparation and preservation methods using fish or aquatic resources, community feasts, cultural activities, or any other fisheries related scenes you can think of!

With each submission, please include the following information:

- Location where the photo was taken
- Brief description of what's happening in the photo (species featured, events featured, people featured, etc.)
- Name of photographer, community or organization, phone number, and email address
- Photo credit as you would like it to appear in the calendar and/or in any FNFC communications/publications

Contest Guidelines:

- Each person may submit up to 5 photo entries for consideration.
- By entering a photo, you give the First Nations Fisheries Council permission to use it in future publications, communications, etc.
- You must own the rights to all photos submitted to the contest.
- Photos must be submitted electronically via email or Dropbox link, or delivered to our office on a USB drive, and must have high enough resolution for sharp, high quality printing in sizes up to 8.5" x 11".
- **Please include name, community or organization, phone number, and email address with your submission.**
- Please send emailed submissions to info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca or deliver to Suite 320 – 1200 West 73rd Ave, Vancouver BC.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, September 23, 2016.

**For questions/comments or to submit photos, please contact us at
Tel: 778-379-6470 | Email: info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca**

