



First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

MARCH 2013 ISSUE



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings to all,

As we approach the fiscal year end, we continue into the busy meeting schedule known as “March Madness”. Since the last FNFC Communiqué, we have had extensive meetings at the local, watershed, regional, and national scales. We can’t say we don’t live in interesting times. We saw little in the way of improved clarity on the federal agenda to the environment with elements of Bill C-38 still unfolding, including Fisheries Act modernization and changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which significantly change the focus of both DFO and Environment Canada toward supporting economic development.

The FNFC continues to build a First Nations framework through our Charter process to consolidate and advance First Nations interests regarding Title and Rights concerning fisheries, aquatic management, and fish habitats.

Here is snapshot of the current issues we’re working on at the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) from the perspective of the Executive Director, and the Executive Council. We hope that these updates will help to keep BC First Nations informed about the initiatives and activities of our organization.

Recent strategic meetings of the Council have included:

- The Fisheries Council 2 day planning meeting in January
- Aquaculture and salmon advisory panel meetings with regional fishery groups
- Regional fisheries update to the UBCIC and to the FN Summit
- The National AFN Fisheries Committee in Calgary
- We have also just concluded a First Nations Fisheries Summit between First Nations fisheries organizations, which was very productive; presentations and meeting summary to be posted soon on our website

Strategic Planning:

The FNFC continues to build on the strategic objective and direction of the First Nations Fisheries Action Plan, and the 2010 All Chiefs Task Force Report. These reports both mandated recommendations to develop formal MOUs for a cohesive voice for First Nations.

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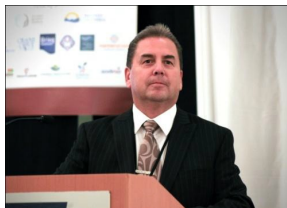
We currently have 6 signed Charter documents, and 6 more in the final approval stages (pending local community approvals). This initiative has been laid out earlier in our communiqués and in Tier 1 meetings.

The FNFC has been working with a number of you, to elicit information and feedback for the purposes of building out the 3 year strategic plan for the FNFC, and to develop a broadly supported approach to working effectively together at a regional/provincial scale.

Institute on Governance:

The establishment of regional/local advisory boards at the local and watershed levels was a key step for moving forward that was identified in the report commissioned early in 2012 from the Institute on Governance. Dana Bellis is currently working with the regional First Nations fisheries organizations to develop Charters that will set out common principles and objectives, and will describe how the local/regional groups will direct the FNFC to address matters of importance in their respective areas. To move the Charter process forward, we have begun a number of direct community engagement meetings to articulate the direction and framework for developing a cohesive voice.

If you would like more information about our organization, or to join our email list to stay informed on First Nations fisheries issues in BC, please get in touch with us by emailing info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



Thanks,
Jordan Point
FNFC Executive Director

AQUACULTURE UPDATE

The First Nations Fisheries Council continues to work with DFO to develop a process for First Nations participation in the development of the Integrated Management of Aquaculture Plans (IMAPs). The FNFC has been working with regional First Nations fisheries organizations to inform them about the Aquaculture Management Advisory Committees (AMACs), and has received the following direction and guidance for consideration.

The AMAC committees will advise the development of the 3 IMAPs (marine finfish, marine shellfish, and freshwater aquaculture). The IMAP for each sector will be a yearly guidance document, which will shape the management of the sector. There will be an AMAC for each IMAP (total of 3 IMAPs and 3 AMACs). 7 of the 19/20 seats on each of the AMACs will be for First Nations delegates.

The FNFC has hosted various meetings across the province, and we have heard concerns about the number of AMAC seats for First Nations and how the broad interests and views of First Nations can be represented through this process. There are various constraints to the AMAC process that will affect First Nations participation:

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1. The level of resourcing to support First Nations engagement will be modest;
2. The AMAC will be an ADVISORY table, not a decision-making forum;
3. The AMAC will be Tier 3, and all members will have equal stance;
4. Capacity – some of the 14 geographical regions may not have interest and/or capacity to participate in 3 AMAC tables.

The AMAC Terms of Reference refer to another table, the First Nations Aquaculture Advisory Process (FNAAP), which will be a Tier 2 forum for First Nations to work directly with DFO. The Terms of Reference for the FNAAP have yet to be finalized (First Nations hold the pen), and therefore, the composition and purpose of the FNAAP can be defined by First Nations. Given the concerns with the AMAC process and representation, members at the regional meetings recommended prioritizing our limited resources and capacity to building the Tier 1 and Tier 2 structures associated with the FNAAP, while keeping up to speed on the discussions at the AMAC.

The FNFC is developing a discussion document to further explore these concepts and proposals that will be available for distribution very soon. For more information about the aquaculture file, please contact Michelle Tung at Michelle@FNFisheriesCouncil.ca.

SALMON COORDINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The purpose of the Salmon Coordinating Committee (Salmon CC) is to advance First Nations' priorities and recommendations in the management of salmon and to inform DFO's salmon IFMPs. Salmon CC delegates accomplish this through the advancement of strategic technical and management priorities at a tier 2 level, while contributing to building a functional tier 1 where First Nations can build their own recommendations and harvest plans.

The Salmon CC is making excellent progress in developing its internal structure, strengthening external relationships, and developing a strategic approach to engagement in the salmon IFMPs. Key activities and accomplishments to date include the following.

Activities of the Salmon CC in 2013:

- Ongoing identification and development of efficiencies with external processes;
- Engaging in tier 1 and 2 discussions through the Northern and Southern Salmon CC Subcommittees and through the full Salmon CC;
- Ongoing presentations of the Salmon CC's work and structure to First Nations fisheries organizations;
- Confirming priorities for advancement in tier 2 discussions in the 2013 salmon IFMP, and working to contribute to the development of tier 1 structures and processes;
- Finalizing nominations and appointments to confirm standing salmon CC delegates; nominations and appointments are organized through regional First Nations fisheries organizations, programs, nations, or representative bodies in accordance with the Salmon CC Terms of Reference and regional processes (for more information please contact Dana Bellis).

Moving Forward in 2013:

- Advancing strategic priorities in tier 2 meetings, with emphasis on priority areas: FSC, Science and Information, First Nations Economic Access, and the Wild Salmon Policy.
- Preparing a Consolidated Comment Document on the 2013 Salmon IFMP.

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FNFC CHARTER UPDATE

The Charter is a good faith document that encompasses the principles and objectives from the 2007 Fisheries Action Plan and the 2011-2015 FNFC Strategic Plan. It is designed to:

- Promote enduring relationships and constructive dialogue among First Nations, and
- Serve as the foundation for positive working relationships on the coordination of capacity and resources in matters of mutual interest.

The Appendix is the accompanying document that describes the collaborative working relationship between the FNFC and the First Nations fisheries organization through spelling out in simple terms how to best work together. This is accomplished through:

- Being customized to meet the needs of fisheries organizations through an ongoing dialogue of revisions, and
- Outlining areas such as meetings, communication and information sharing, and potential advocacy roles.

The Charter and Appendix are not:

- Legally binding documents,
- Nor will they interfere with any existing mandates, laws, agreements, treaties or policies, and
- They do not create any financial obligations.

The FNFC continues to support the strength of Title and Rights at the local level, and accomplishes this through re-affirming that the duty to consult remains with the individual nations or communities.

Charter Signings and Updates:

It is with great pleasure that the FNFC announces the successful signing of The Charter by:

1. Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance (UFFCA)
2. The Nuu-chah-nulth Nations
3. Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA)
4. Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG)
5. The Native Fishing Association (NFA)

The signed Charters include a total of 108 First Nations communities. Over the coming spring, we anticipate the signing of four to six additional Charters. Three of these have agreed to sign in principle and are in the process of finalizing the customization of the Appendix or are confirming a signing date.

WATER FOR FISH STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE UPDATE

So far the FNFC has hosted 2 of 7 regional workshops on water for fish, and we are hoping that you will have a chance to connect with an upcoming workshop in your area (dates and locations below). The ultimate objective of these workshops is to increase foundational knowledge and enable effective participation for First Nations in improving freshwater management (for fish) in BC.

The first two workshops were rated very highly. In particular, the participants said that they really like the various group exercises, which allowed them to learn from others and highlight their community considerations.

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Be sure to sign up as soon as possible for these workshops, as space is limited. Right now you can register for the next three workshops, which are in Richmond, Prince George and Penticton:

Apr 18 Richmond – registration open: <http://www.createsurvey.com/s/3ffeKT/>?

Apr 23 Prince George – registration open: <http://www.createsurvey.com/s/zTscvb/>?

Apr 30 Penticton – registration open: <http://www.createsurvey.com/s/DSI77U/>?

May/June Workshop dates and locations (registration coming soon):

May 7: Campbell River

May 14: Vancouver – tentative (Dams, Economic Development)

May 28: Vancouver – tentative (Governance, Legislation)

June 19-20: Richmond (Wrap-up workshop – Directing the Flow of our Futures)

Workshop notes will be reviewed by those who have attended workshops, and their advisement as to key points will be advanced to the June BC-wide forum. Pass the word on! Bring your colleagues – two minds are a great foundation for supporting your future community water needs; three minds is even better.

FISHERIES SUMMIT – MARCH 25-26, 2013

The FNFC hosted a “Fisheries Summit” on March 25-26, 2013 to bring together a focused group of policy and operational personnel from a number of First Nations fisheries organizations to discuss the strategic direction on a number of critical fisheries policy and management issues that affect First Nations. Participants expressed a continuing need to have focused discussion on topics such as Section 35.1 fisheries, responding to recent changes to government legislation and policy (e.g. Bills C-38 and C-45), and working together on key priorities for the coming year. The feedback and input provided at the workshop will help to guide the strategic direction of the FNFC, and we will continue to work with the regional First Nations fisheries organizations through our Charters to move forward on shared objectives. The summit discussion was very positive, and the FNFC would like to thank all who participated.

REGIONAL FISHERIES ORGANIZATIONS CONFERENCE CALLS – New Schedule!

The First Nations Fisheries Council previously hosted update conference calls for First Nations on a bi-weekly basis (every second Wednesday). However, since February 2013, we have moved to a monthly schedule for these calls. **The new schedule is the second Wednesday morning of every month, 10:30am-12:00pm.** We will 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 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.

EXPENSE CLAIM REMINDER

Please submit all FNFC travel claims for approved expenditures for the March 2012 – March 2013 fiscal year by Friday, April 5th, 2013. Claims can be submitted to Grace Point at grace@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

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