



First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

MARCH 2020



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Northern Transboundary: **Cheri Frocklage**
Haida Gwaii: **Shawn Cowpar**
North Coast: **In Progress**
Central Coast: **Rich Chapple**
North Vancouver Island: **John Henderson**
South Vancouver Island: **Larry George**
West Coast Vancouver Island: **Hugh Braker**
Lower Mainland: **In Progress**
Fraser Valley: **Ken Malloway**
Mid-Fraser 1: **Dawn Machin**
Mid-Fraser 2: **Richard Wimbush**
Upper Fraser: **Thomas Alexis**
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FNFC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Like many of you, the FNFC is taking necessary precautions to keep our team, and by extension their families, safe and healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Effective March 18, 2020 the FNFC's physical office is closed until further notice and all in-person meetings and events that were scheduled within the next 30 days have been either changed to teleconference/web conference format or postponed until further notice. Staff will work remotely during the office closure and the FNFC's work will carry on uninterrupted as best as possible under the circumstances.

Rather than calling the office, we encourage you to contact us via email during this time. All staff email addresses can be found on our staff page at www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/about/staff, or email us at info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca to reach our general mailbox.

Teleconferencing and web-based conferencing systems are being heavily used by many people across BC and Canada who will also be working remotely for the foreseeable future, so please be patient with any technological challenges we may collectively experience.

We are all in this together and we wish everyone safety, health and wellness.

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SALMON COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The First Nations Salmon Coordinating Committee (SCC) is a province-wide advisory process consisting of delegates from the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) Regions. The Committee was formed in 2011 in response to ongoing frustrations expressed by First Nations with DFO's Pacific Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs) and DFO's Salmon Integrated Harvest Planning Committee (IHPC) processes. Over the last few years, the work of the SCC has evolved from IFMP development toward engaging in province-wide salmon management and planning initiatives. Since October 2013, the committee has participated in larger policy initiatives such as updating DFO's Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework (CSAF) and the Wild Salmon Policy (WSP).

Bill C-68 – Fisheries Act Amendments: Fish Stock Provisions:

The *Fisheries Act* amendments include new provisions that require the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to implement management measures to maintain major stocks prescribed in regulation to promote sustainability and to develop and implement rebuilding plans for depleted major fish stocks prescribed in regulation. DFO is currently developing the regulation that will prescribe the first batch of fish stocks as well as set out required contents and timelines for developing a rebuilding plan for prescribed stocks that have declined to or below their Limit Reference Points. DFO is expected to publish the proposed regulation in Spring 2020 in *Canada Gazette* Part 1, prior to finalizing and regulation coming into effect in Fall 2020.

Last year, the SCC provided recommendations to DFO on the draft regulation and continue to engage with DFO on how the new provisions will be applied in the context of Pacific salmon (and other fish stocks). Of priority to the SCC and First Nations will be how First Nations are engaged in:

- how 400+ Pacific salmon Conservation Units will be grouped into Major Fish Stocks for listing;
- how the list of Major Fish Stocks will be batched for listing under the regulation; and
- how Limit Reference Points will be developed collaboratively with First Nations for each listed Major Fish Stock.

This work is anticipated to take place over the next four years, as Major Fish Stocks will be listed in batches (timing and number of batches to be determined). The SCC will continue to provide further updates and recommendations on this work as these activities will be important steps towards rebuilding local salmon populations and implementing *Wild Salmon Policy* rebuilding strategies.



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Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework:

The SCC has been engaging with DFO on implementation of the Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework since 2018/19. Over the next few weeks, SCC members will be providing recommendations on submitted proposals from First Nations and commercial harvesters, utilizing the Evaluation Framework tool that was developed with SCC, DFO and Commercial Salmon Advisory Board members. In pilot areas, Local Area Committees continue to be supported to promote dialogue between local First Nations, DFO staff and commercial fishers in the implementation of approved demonstration fisheries and support effective fisheries for all participants. These

discussions will help inform the CSAF activities moving forward to support First Nations that are seeking support with developing and implementing demonstration fisheries.

For more information on the First Nations SCC and its activities, please contact Janson Wong, Operations Manager, at janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

The Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) oversees implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST). The PSC First Nations Caucus (FNC) consists of First Nations participants who have been appointed by Canada to participate in the PSC at the Commissioner, Panel and Technical Committee levels. The FNFC provides administrative support to the FNC, and assists with coordinating First Nations nominations toward DFO's appointments to the PSC.

Pacific Salmon Treaty Implementation Funding:

With the conclusion of PST negotiations and renewal of the treaty, the attention of the PSC and FNC have shifted towards PST implementation and new Canada obligations. As part of Canada's ratification of the PST, DFO has committed new PST implementation funding over the next five years to support Canada in meeting its new PST obligations, including ongoing funding to support salmon programming towards stock assessment, escapement monitoring, expanding coded wire tag and recovery programs and improving catch monitoring and sampling. The FNC has been meeting with DFO at the January and February PSC sessions to better understand how DFO plans to roll out funding programs, and to provide initial recommendations toward supporting First Nations fisheries programs that are well-situated to lead and support monitoring and assessment programs throughout BC. The FNC has voiced that DFO must engage broadly with BC First Nations to develop new programs, and anticipates further working with DFO on a more transparent planning process to identify and develop research priorities and coordination of salmon programs. The FNC will look to provide further updates over the next few months as more details are provided by DFO.

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PSC First Nations Caucus Strategic Planning Initiative:

Over the last year, the FNFC has supported the PSC FNC in kickstarting a strategic planning initiative to help facilitate discussions on the long-term growth of the FNC and bringing forward BC First Nations priorities to the PSC process. To date, the FNFC and FNC have conducted three workshops internal to the FNC to gather participant feedback and evaluation of its activities. Moving into 2019/20 and into the next phase of the strategic planning initiative, the FNFC and FNC will be seeking additional resources to support broader engagements with BC First Nations to review outcomes from 2018/19, as well as seeking further feedback and input to develop the FNC Strategic Plan. Further information will be circulated as resources are confirmed to support this important initiative and engaging with BC First Nations more broadly.

The FNFC and FNC recognize increasing interest from BC First Nations to participate at the PSC and has been communicating to DFO about the need for broad succession planning initiatives at the PSC and to increase the number of First Nations participants at various levels of the PSC. It is anticipated that this Strategic Planning initiative will incorporate succession planning objectives and help identify short- and long-term opportunities for First Nations to take on a larger role in the PSC.



Photo by Aiden Fisher

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AQUACULTURE

On March 5 and 6, the FNFC invited First Nations from across BC to attend the Aquaculture Forum in Nanaimo. Over 80 First Nations and government delegates attended to discuss aquaculture priorities and strategic ideas to help advance First Nations interests for aquaculture initiatives.

After a welcome to Snuneymuxw Territory by *Tzuq'nustun* Paul Wyse-Seward, a panel with Jordan Point (FNFC), David Didluck (DFO), and Brenda Gaertner (Mandell Pinder LLP) discussed DFO's involvement with First Nations in Aquaculture, the unique positions of Indigenous peoples related to aquaculture, and working collaboratively toward reconciliation. Day 1 of the Forum also included breakout groups to discuss i) Governance and Management, ii) First Nations in Business, iii) Science and Monitoring, iv) Agreements and Partnerships, v) Engagement on the new *Aquaculture Act*, and vi) New Directions and Approaches. Participants from Day 1 provided feedback on the benefits of information sharing and networking, and highlighted communication as an important piece to move forward on building First Nations capacity.

Day 2 of the Aquaculture Forum continued to build on the momentum of the previous day and was organized into three session groups that participants rotated through. The sessions posed the following questions:

- What might the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* look like in action?
- There have been expressions of interest on a provincial level for a mandated First Nations body for aquaculture. What should its mandate be?
- What are the capacity needs of First Nations to participate in policy change, decision making, etc.

Participants expressed that all aquaculture topics are interconnected and amplified in First Nations communities. They also noted how federal government may have positive intentions to change aquaculture management in a positive direction, and that First Nations must organize and build capacity to engage. Participants further stressed the importance of keeping information flowing between First Nations and government, and how aquaculture is an opportunity for change. In the next several weeks, FNFC will be compiling notes and information and will communicate the outcomes in a report. In the meantime, we invite feedback on the Forum.

Thank you to all those that attended the Forum. Your participation and presence were very much appreciated and we look forward to following up with you soon. For more information on the First Nations Fisheries Council's work with Aquaculture, please contact Richard Sparrow at richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The FNFC Economic Coordinating Committee (ECC) in collaboration with the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute (NIFI) have been working together with BC AAROM organizations and First Nations to develop salmon restoration projects that may be funded through the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) in its next call for proposals. Eight innovative project concepts have been developed that focus on restoring and conserving BC's wild salmon stocks while fostering innovation, infrastructure and science partnerships for BC First Nations. FNFC and NIFI met with interested Indigenous organizations on February 20-21 and March 12 to further develop expressions of interest for the projects. The project concepts can be viewed on the NIFI website at <https://indigenousfisheries.ca/en/projects/salmon-restoration/>

The FNFC continues to work with UBC on the development of a socioeconomic valuation tool, which is meant to help First Nations communities describe the holistic value of their fisheries. The valuation method was demonstrated at the January 31 ECC meeting. The committee was supportive of continued development of the methodology and was encouraged by the possible application of this tool by First Nation communities. The FNFC and ECC will be looking to further test the socio-economic valuation tool with a potential pilot project in 2020.

The January 31 ECC meeting also discussed the development of an Indigenous fishers association which would collectively support future efforts to further the interests of Indigenous fishers. The FNFC will work toward the organization of a workshop/facilitated space to host a BC wide discussion about the function of an Indigenous fishers' group in the upcoming year.



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WATER FOR FISH

**Invitation: ‘Working Together on Water’ Forum
May 21-22, 2020
Vancouver, BC**

The FNFC *Water for Fish Initiative* is hosting the **‘Working Together on Water’ Forum** on May 21 and 22, 2020 in Vancouver (Territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations).

We are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely and certainly recognize that much could still change in the coming months. We may need to postpone this event to June or July and we will keep everyone informed as things evolve in the next few weeks.

The purpose of the Forum is to facilitate dialogue between First Nations and Provincial staff on opportunities to improve First Nations engagement in water management and governance—in particular with respect to the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA). The Forum will explore options to progress the 2019 *First Nations Recommendations for a New WSA Engagement Framework* developed by a small group of BC First Nations water policy experts, and endorsed by the UBCIC, BCAFN and the First Nations Summit. The Forum draft agenda and all travel/accommodation details will be shared in the next few weeks.

The Forum is open to BC First Nations participants with **a good understanding of the WSA.**

➤ **TO REGISTER:** www.createsurvey.com/s/1vUgaz/

There are **limited travel/accommodation subsidies:**

- The deadline to apply is **April 10, 2020.**
- Participants must apply in advance of the meeting by contacting Geneviève Layton-Cartier at genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.
- Only one representative per community or organization can apply for travel/accommodation subsidy.
- Individuals approved for a travel subsidy will be informed by email no later than April 14.

****FNFC is collaborating with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to convene this dialogue and develop the agenda and format for dialogue; however, in doing so we are not endorsing provincial policy. Our interest and mandate is to support First Nations to engage in water governance and management processes, and to advance implementation of a renewed WSA engagement framework based on the 2019 Recommendations.****

For more information, please contact *Water for Fish* Project Coordinator Geneviève Layton-Cartier at genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

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OCEANS PROTECTION PLAN

The three FNFC OPP Coordinating Committees held a joint meeting on 28 February, 2020 to consider and discuss the **10 proposed Federal OPP initiatives** put forward by Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard and began to work towards the development of a fiscal workplan. The proposed FNFC OPP initiatives include:

1. **Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping:** To better understand the cumulative effects and stressors shipping places on marine environments. This will be accomplished by creating an assessment framework informed by input from interested parties.
2. **Regulatory Roundtable:** Pilot approach to foster early and meaningful engagement and collaboration to develop marine safety and environmental regulations.
3. **Marine Training Program:** The program's goal is to develop training programs that reflect traditional knowledge, use culturally appropriate learning material, and meet the learning needs of remote coastal communities.
4. **Collaborative Situational Awareness Portal:** CCG is seeking feedback on how to improve a new user-friendly safety system that increases access to better local maritime information, improves collaborative response capabilities, and makes navigation safer.
5. **Marine Liability/Ship Source Oil Pollution:** The ship-source oil pollution compensation funds regime is under review to consider broader scope of eligible claims.
6. **Response Organizational Standards:** TC committed to set tougher requirements on industry to provide quicker action for any spills from a ship and is now reviewing the regulations and standards that govern Canada's oil spill response organizations.
7. **Co-Developing Community Response:** Goal is to identify opportunities to increase First Nations' capacity to participate in oil spill preparedness and response as well as marine incident management in traditional territories.
8. **National Environmental Emergencies Centre Sensitivity Mapping:** Producing incident-specific Sensitivity Maps to provide emergency responders information to help guide their decisions.
9. **Recovery from Environmental Emergencies Involving Ship-Source Oil Spills:** The GoC is conducting an analysis to clarify the roles and responsibilities for recovery from marine environmental emergencies, and bring forward options for legislative, policy and program changes.
10. **Hazardous and Noxious Substances:** Development of options for a long-term strategy to implement a Canadian HNS preparedness and response program that meets the International Maritime Organization's Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation to pollution Incidents by HNS (OPRC-HNS Protocol).

The Coordinating Committees will be holding virtual workshops with Federal OPP leads over the month of April to learn more about the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the proposed initiatives. If you're interested in learning more about the proposed initiatives, taking part in the virtual workshops, becoming involved in one of coordinating committees, or have questions related to the fulfillment of this work and the OPP, please contact Loriena Melnick at Loriena@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

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