



# First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

JULY 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**  
Upper Skeena: **Stu Barnes**  
Transboundary Columbia: **Shayla Lawrence**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ʔi ʔə ce:p ʔəw ʔəy ʔaí, Si:yém nə Siyeʔe?

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

I trust that you are all working hard to stay safe and healthy in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The FNFC has managed to keep our operations underway, as we continue working with a core minimum of fulltime office staff at our office, and the rest continuing to work remotely and rotating 2 days per week in the office.

Unfortunately for us, last month we bid farewell to a long-serving senior manager here at the FNFC. Deana Machin, of the Okanagan Indian Band, had given us notice last year that she was moving in a new direction in life, and while we respect it fully, we nevertheless will miss her greatly! All of us here at the FNFC also want to thank her, and recognize her publicly, for all of the fantastic work and leadership she provided over the past decade! Due to the COVID environment we had a smaller luncheon farewell in Vancouver on June 25, 2020 for Deana to wish her luck in her new journey, and well-deserved summer vacation. Subsequently, we held a competitive process to backfill the position (as we will never be able to replace Deana herself!), and we have determined that Janson Wong will be developed internally to the position of Acting Senior Manager of Policy and Fisheries Management to begin to assume many of Deana's files. Please help us welcome Janson to this new role. Concurrently, we have also adjusted our organizational structure to achieve equitable division of labour across all of our program lines.

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Recognizing that over the past 10 years the FNFC has grown the scope and span of activities and operations, we share work on many issues at the national, provincial, watershed, and local scales across diverse areas of respective priority and governing Nations, which are far more complex than we can articulate on this page. I would like to express that the more we continue to collaborate and work together, the better results we will see.

**Executive Management Unit:** This is the support team for the Regional Fisheries Council delegates, who will advance to Crown governments (federal and provincial) the issues provided to them by our management units based on the Nations' feedback and that of their respective fishery organizations. This is also the area of Joint Executive Dialogue between DFO, Transport Canada's Commitment to Action, and the emerging Provincial MOU.

**Fisheries Policy and Management Unit:** This team will coordinate and consolidate the dialogue and issues which continue to contribute to the decline, stressors, and scientific impacts affecting Pacific salmon such as low ocean productivity due to climate change, ocean conditions, and threats along the migratory routes by fish farms, non-selective fisheries, and increased pinniped predation. This unit will also introduce as a priority in 2020 the Indigenous Technical and Advisory Network (ITAN). The FNFC continues to collaborate and coordinate with many partners to address these concerns, including the Oceans Research Initiative exploring the high seas for impacts and effects to wild salmon populations. We will be coordinating BC First Nations collaboration in science and technical capacity as a priority workplan activity over the next 6 months.

**Economic Opportunities and Partnerships Unit:** We have heard from close to 100 BC First Nations that they are not achieving food security needs, and that they are frustrated with the IHPC/IFMP process as a mechanism that annually provides recommendations to the Minister – mainly because it is not in keeping with First Nations priority access required by case law and the Constitution under Section 35(1). We have initiated dialogue with DFO to address this issue, and discuss the required changes in order to be consistent with UNDRIP, commitments to reconciliation, and the 10 principles of Canada. Further, we have heard that Nations seek greater economic returns to their communities from the activities that take place in their territories. This unit also works on the Oceans Protection Plan initiative, the PICFI program, and emerging opportunities for an MOU for collaboration with the various provincial Ministries with involvement in habitat, fisheries, and Indigenous Rights (Ministries of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Agriculture, and Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development).

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**Charity and Financial Oversight Unit:** We have recently been incorporated as a charitable entity under the societies act, and will be working to develop a strategy that assists in supporting BC First Nations interests that are not limited to government programs. More information to follow as this evolves.

As we move forward this year and learn new ways of working together, and convening and consolidating our positions in a virtual environment, I would like to thank our friends, colleagues, and partner organizations for their work in helping the FNFC to continue to advance your interests in a united and coherent voice. We look forward to our continued work together.



Hych'ga Siem (Thank you),  
Jordan Point  
FNFC Executive Director



## Annual Report on Wild Salmon Policy Implementation Plan Published

DFO has released the *2019-20 Annual Report on the Wild Salmon Policy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan*. In summary, DFO completed four activities with target dates by end of March 31, 2020 (one in advance of targeted completion year) but experienced delays on four additional activities. While several of the completed activities involved the Salmon Enhancement Program’s planning and decision-making processes, the Salmon Coordinating Committee (SCC) remains concerned with how First Nations enhancement priorities are incorporated and supported. FNFC and the SCC will continue to advance these concerns with DFO staff to identify clearer, more transparent ways to incorporate First Nations priorities into SEP enhancement workplans and will provide further updates on activities when available.

Over the next several months, the SCC will also be reviewing and updating the Wild Salmon Policy Implementation Plan to be consistent with *Fisheries Act* amendments. In conjunction with new Fish Stocks Provisions under the *Fisheries Act* amendments, the objective will be to support collaboration and support for First Nations-led initiatives to rebuild wild Pacific salmon stocks.

A copy of the WSPiP Annual Report can be found here: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/salmon-saumon/wsp-pss/annual-annuel/2019-2020-eng.html#conclusion>

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## Expressing concerns with the IHPC/IFMP Process

The FNFC sent a letter to the DFO Pacific Regional Director General (RDG) on June 2, 2020 expressing the need to identify a mechanism, solutions, and recommendations to move forward with a revised IFMP process that better meets the needs of BC First Nations. This letter was further discussed at the FNFC’s Joint Executive Meeting with DFO and at the time, the RDG acknowledged BC First Nations’ concerns around the IFMP/IHPC processes and decision-making. The RDG expressed her desire for DFO to work together with FNFC and BC First Nations to come to an effective process that works for First Nations, but noted that there could be limitations based on DFO workplans and timeframes. Both parties at the Joint Executive Committee committed to further discussing the process to identify gaps and explore the scope of what needs to be done to bring about positive change. Advancing this concern remains a priority for the FNFC and both parties recognize the need to bring together an effective process at the provincial scale that can meet and support the needs across different regions in BC. We keep BC First Nations informed as the situation develops.



## Developing the Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN)

The FNFC is taking steps to develop the Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN), a new process that coordinates collective First Nations’ provincial science and technical capacity related to fisheries and aquatic habitat issues. As an initial activity, the FNFC is seeking to better understand the capacity and priorities of different First Nations and First Nations organizations. We are looking to interview interested First Nations and First Nations organizations to help develop and participate at ITAN. If you are interested in contributing to the survey, please reach out to the FNFC by emailing [info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) with subject line **ITAN Survey**, with your name, Affiliation/First Nation, and contact information. Thank you for your participation!



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## Aquaculture

Following the FNFC's Aquaculture Forum that was hosted in Nanaimo on March 5-6, 2020, the FNFC has been finalizing a report that reflects the direction from over 90 delegates who contributed to the discussions. The report identifies dialogue on strategic concepts for First Nations to advance their interests in aquaculture and specific recommendations to the FNFC on where to prioritize resources and capacity. This report will be distributed in the next few weeks, and we wish to thank the participants for their valuable contributions and feedback.

The FNFC, through a collaborative process with the Aquaculture Coordinating Committee and DFO, have identified priority aquaculture activities that will guide activities and objectives for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Through a collaborative process, the FNFC will be advancing Aquaculture initiatives through a series of virtual engagements on regional and national scales.

For more information on the First Nations Fisheries Council's work with Aquaculture, please contact Richard Sparrow at [richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) or 778-379-6470.



## Skeena First Nations Technical Committee

Coordinated by the FNFC, the Skeena First Nations Technical Committee (SFNTC) was formally established in January 2016 to foster greater transparency and improved understanding between First Nations on technical issues related to the management of fish populations originating from the Skeena watershed. Membership of the committee is open to technical delegates from each First Nation that targets fish populations originating from the Skeena watershed.

The SFNTC has established a 2020 fishing plan that has been broadly supported by First Nations who harvest Skeena-bound salmon. The fishing plan reflects technical recommendations that prioritize conservation and First Nations target allocations. The SFNTC is collaborating with Skeena First Nations leadership to identify a meaningful process that prioritizes management practices that reflect the interests and First Nations' priority access to Skeena salmon. The SFNTC will continue to work to establish a meaningful Tier 2 process in advance of the 2021 season to refresh engagement to reflect commitments to reconciliation and case law. A series of engagement with Skeena First Nations is scheduled to take place in the fall 2020.

For more information on the First Nations Fisheries Council's work with Skeena First Nations Technical Committee, please contact Richard Sparrow at [richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) or 778-379-6470.

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## Oceans Protection Plan Coordinating Committees

The FNFC has been acting as a convening body to promote the interests of South Coast BC First Nations in oceans and coastal management through the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP). Through this process, FNFC held a series of spring meetings and workshops that focused on prioritizing OPP initiatives for the South Coast BC region.

Three FNFC-OPP Coordinating Committees were established, which are comprised of South Cost BC First Nations participants and are leading three regional priority OPP initiatives through their committee structures.

### **Ship Movement and Vessel Management Coordinating Committee: Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS) Initiative** with Transport Canada (TC)

The first CEMS workshop was held on July 10, 2020 and was focused on a) better understanding the fundamentals and key components of Regional Cumulative Effects Assessments (RCEAs), b) sharing experiences on other RCEA initiatives throughout Canada, and c) beginning discussions on the Committee's preferred approach to implementing CEMS in South Coast BC. Transport Canada will be working with this Committee to understand the effects of vessel traffic on coastal environments, and CEMS has been put forward as an approach to accomplish this goal within the region.

The integration of Indigenous knowledge, values and priorities will be key to supporting the project's framework. As part of the current early engagement process, we will be working together to discuss and reach consensus on determining and defining what values and priorities are included as part of the assessment. Some anticipated outcomes for this initiative could include the development of:

- a national cumulative effects assessment framework for marine shipping activities;
- data and knowledge amalgamation (environmental, cultural, Indigenous use, vessel activities); and
- recommendations on regional management strategies and mitigation measures that can be applied to existing vessel movements and future project developments.

As part of the Planning Phase, the Committee is now working to develop project Terms of Reference and a workplan to help identify Indigenous priorities and deliverables. We hope to hold a workshop in the fall to start collectively identifying Indigenous values that will be included as part of the assessment objectives.

### **Marine Research and Science Coordinating Committee: Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Initiative** with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

The first MSP Tier 1 and 2 workshop was held on July 28, 2020 to discuss and identify South Coast First Nations' needs, interests, and key issues on the MSP OPP initiative. The purpose of this workshop was to understand how First Nations can play a role in the planning and coordination during the early development phase of MSP and onwards through this committee structure.

MSP has been highlighted as a priority initiative for South Coast BC First Nations as it overlaps with other initiatives and work being done and can serve as a framework to coordinate these efforts for future co-

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management on our oceans. The South Coast OPP MSP is intended to be a process that brings together relevant authorities to better coordinate how we use and manage marine spaces that balances ecological, economic, cultural and social objectives.

The key outcomes of this initiative will include:

- integration of shared knowledge and data to better understand marine areas;
- development of knowledge and information tools;
- establishment of governance structures;
- development of interactive GIS maps; and
- potential to lead to the development of actual Marine Spatial Plans.

### **Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinating Committee:**

**Recovery from Environmental Emergencies from Ship-source Oil Spills Initiative** with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

This initiative was put forward by the Committee to develop an **Indigenous Oil Spill Recovery Framework** in collaboration with ECCC, DFO, TC, and CCG that integrates Indigenous response planning priorities supported by clear recovery policy, with consideration of legal, environmental, social, economic and human health elements in the response and recovery phases of environmental emergencies. Through this initiative, the Committee will be assembling the best available information provided by scientific and technical expertise and Indigenous knowledge to support response decision-making and clean-up priorities prior to any event to enhance effectiveness and efficiencies.

The Indigenous Oil Spill Recovery Framework will include:

- collective best practices on how to best direct emergency response initiatives and provide a structure for the government to work within;
- how to communicate and respond to environmental emergencies that impact communities;
- how to include First Nations in the triage process, and help to define First Nations roles and responsibilities in the response process;
- share recovery priorities and concerns from the community perspective; and
- potentially develop options for changes to existing legislation, policies or programs as needed.

The next steps for this Committee include an upcoming workshop (date in late August/early September to be determined), which will provide an opportunity to meet with the ECCC team and learn about the outcome of a federally-led legislative analysis on the existing regime, as well as the roles and responsibilities for recovery aspects of marine environmental emergencies that could be used to bring forward options for legislative or policy changes, if needed.

If you are interested in learning more about these OPP initiatives, would like to become involved in one of Coordinating Committees, or have questions related to the fulfillment of this work and the OPP, please contact Astrid Niemann-Zajac at [Astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:Astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Water for Fish

### FNFC Webinar on DRIPA & Expectations for the BC *Water Sustainability Act* Reform

On July 8, 2020, the FNFC's *Water for Fish* Initiative hosted a "Water Wednesday Webinar" on the BC *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) and expectations for BC *Water Sustainability Act* reform. Rosie Simms, *Water for Fish* Interim Manager, presented and sought feedback on a draft discussion paper that identifies reforms required to begin the process of bringing the WSA into conformity with UNDRIP and the BC *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). FNFC has been working on this paper since December 2019 with Mandell Pinder and a small group of water law experts.

If your First Nation wishes to review the draft paper and provide comments, please contact *Water for Fish* Project Coordinator Geneviève Layton-Cartier at [genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) or 778-379-6470.

**Water for Fish event invitation on next page....**



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FOLLOW us on TWITTER: @fnfish

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**Invitation to BC First Nations  
'Working Together on Water' Water Sustainability Act Meeting #2  
May 21-22, 2020**

The FNFC *Water for Fish* Initiative, in collaboration with BC's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), was meant to convene First Nations and provincial government staff/executive in-person to continue to explore and implement a new *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) engagement framework on July 9-10, 2020 as part of Phase II of the *Working Together on Water* Initiative.

Due to COVID-19, this will now be done via a mix of virtual engagement options. The intent is to provide a variety of ways for First Nations to participate and provide feedback depending on their level of time, interest, capacity, and digital access. Opportunities for First Nations to provide comments/feedback include:

- 1 half-day online meeting on July 23, 2020. The draft agenda will be shared soon with those who register online at the link below. FNFC has limited funds to reimburse participants with a \$150 half-day honorarium after each meeting (for one representative per community/organization);
- Online or written surveys; and
- One on one phone calls with FNFC and/or Provincial staff.

The purpose of the Forum is to facilitate dialogue between First Nations and Provincial staff on opportunities to improve First Nations' engagement on water management and governance, in particular with respect to the WSA. The Forum will explore options to progress on 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 UBCIC, BCAFN and the First Nations Summit. The Forum draft agenda and all travel/accommodation details will be shared in the next few weeks.

Link to the recommendations report: [https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Letter-FNFC-to-BC\\_July-2019.pdf](https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Letter-FNFC-to-BC_July-2019.pdf)

This Forum is open to BC First Nations.

**TO REGISTER:** <https://www.createsurvey.com/s/1vUgaz/>

*\*\*\*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](mailto:genevieve@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) or 778-379-6470.

