



# First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

NOVEMBER 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**

## Contact Us:

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

Phone: 778-379-6470  
Fax: 778-379-6469

Email: [info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca)  
Website: [www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca](http://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca)

## Virtual FNFC Annual General Assembly 2020

A BIG thank you to those who were able to attend the FNFC Virtual 2020 Annual General Assembly, and to our presenters! In these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've had to find new ways of carrying on our work and connecting with our network from a safe distance. This fall doesn't feel quite the same without seeing everyone in person, but hopefully by this time next year we'll be able to travel and gather once again. In the meantime, we were so glad to have had you join us online, and we hope you enjoyed the presentations and discussions.

We have posted the following on the Assembly page on the FNFC website at <https://bit.ly/36owc9W>:

- **Presentations** (PDF format)
- **Assembly videos**
- **Participant feedback survey** (please complete by **Dec 4, 2020**)

Thanks to our participants for submitting great questions during the event! We received over 300 questions and comments over the 3 days, and weren't able to get to them all. But we will be compiling the **unanswered questions** over the coming weeks and will share responses back with registered participants after the holidays. We will also be putting together a **Virtual 2020 FNFC Annual General Assembly Summary Report**, which we will share with registered participants and on our website.

Thanks again to our presenters, the production team at Oh Boy Productions, and to our participants. We wish you all a safe and healthy fall and winter 2020!

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## Tripartite Alliance to Recover Interior Fraser Steelhead (IFS)

In an effort to recover Interior Fraser Steelhead populations, the FNFC is facilitating a new tripartite process between First Nations, the Province of BC and DFO. A key goal of this project is to foster a new relationship between the three parties and promote a collaborative environment based on mutual respect and working together on common objectives to promote IFS recovery and work together on management and recovery strategies for IFS.

A first workshop was held on September 17, 2020 which focused on identifying our respective interests and roles, and brought together experts to discuss common understandings. Future workshops are currently being planned which will focus on specific technical and management topics.

For more information or to get involved please contact Richard Sparrow at [richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Rebuilding Pacific Salmon Initiative

The FNFC and the Salmon Coordinating Committee (SCC) are in the early stages of developing the Pacific Salmon Rebuilding Initiative (PSRI) to bring together BC First Nations to develop a collaborative strategy for Pacific salmon recovery. The collapse of Pacific salmon has been decades in the making, the result of multiple cumulative stressors that impact salmon survival at each life stage including changing ocean conditions, predator-prey relationships, open net-pen fish farms, fisheries, etc.

PSRI will aim to amplify the voices of BC First Nations to promote salmon rebuilding activities. Through this year, the FNFC will be working with the SCC to identify key elements of what a coherent strategy could look like. On November 17, 2020 the SCC met to discuss building the foundation for a proposed draft evaluation framework to assist First Nations in identifying stocks that could be listed in the new *Fisheries Act's* Fish Stock Provisions.

The SCC's Wild Salmon Policy (WSP) small working group met with DFO on October 27, 2020 regarding the WSP Implementation Plan. This work is focused on identifying key topics/interests of First Nations from the new *Fisheries Act* to update the WSPIP, and will continue throughout the fiscal year.

For more information please contact Kimbaya Carriere at [kimbaya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:kimbaya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN): Fostering province-wide Indigenous science and technical capacity

The Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN) is an FNFC-supported initiative that aims to provide a platform for BC First Nations to connect with Indigenous-centered scientific expertise, information, and resources regarding priority technical issues. As such, ITAN will also seek to build associated First Nations technical and science capacity. Over the summer, FNFC began surveying BC First Nations to better understand existing technical capacity and priorities. On October 22, 2020 we built on this survey information to host a preliminary workshop with science and technical experts from BC First Nations communities and regional organizations, to further scope ITAN approaches and priorities. The FNFC officially launched the ITAN at our Annual General Assembly in the first week of November.

We are currently working to report out on findings from these initial project stages, as well as scoping methods and ITAN topics for workshops over the coming months. We continue to seek feedback and engagement from science and technical experts working with/for First Nations to co-develop an ITAN that can support efforts province-wide.

For more information or to get involved with the ITAN initiative, please contact Tanya Tran at [tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Promoting First Nations Involvement in Aquatic Species-at-Risk Processes

FNFC and DFO are collaborating on a 5-part virtual workshop series from November to March to share information and create dialogue to improve BC First Nations engagement in aquatic species at risk conservation processes under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The project aims to a) raise awareness on the listing process and recovery efforts broadly for aquatic species-at-risk, b) provide information to First Nations on the species listed or under consideration for listing within a First Nation's geographic area, and c) support opportunities to provide input into improving the SARA process overall. The workshops include opportunities to have discussions with DFO's SARA team (Tier 2) and First Nations-only (Tier 1) discussions. The first workshop was hosted on November 19, 2020 with over 20 participants from across the province. The FNFC will develop a publicly-available workshop series report to share insights and advice to improve BC First Nations' involvement in aquatic species-at-risk processes.

For more information please contact Tanya Tran at [tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Cultivating First Nations Engagement in Aquaculture

With DFO’s announcement of the development of a new federal *Aquaculture Act*, FNFC will be engaging with DFO to inform their engagement process with BC First Nations. Development of the Act is still in its early stages, and FNFC will be working with the Aquaculture Coordinating Committee (ACC) on an engagement plan to develop a coordinated response to DFO. The approach will draw on the successes of the *Fisheries Act* review process from 2016 to 2018, which was effective in advancing the collective interests of BC First Nations. As more information is unveiled by DFO on activities to develop the *Aquaculture Act*, FNFC will engage with BC First Nations broadly on what the new Act should include and ways to be involved.

The impacts of open net-pen fish farms remain a major concern for many BC First Nations. DFO has committed to developing a transition plan for open net-pen fish farms by 2025, and work is anticipated to begin this year on the development of the transition plan. FNFC will be supporting DFO engagement with BC First Nations to ensure their concerns are heard and considered in this process.

At a provincial-scale, FNFC is also collaborating with DFO to host information sessions and dialogue on three initiatives: 1) area-based aquaculture management (ABAM), 2) changes to shellfish conditions of licence, and 3) changes to marine finfish conditions of licence. On November 16, 2020 FNFC hosted a Tier 1 and 2 virtual information session and dialogue on ABAM and shellfish conditions of licence, which was open to all First Nations in BC. The next province-wide meeting will be on December 10, 2020 and will focus on proposed Indigenous engagement for finfish conditions of licence.

With these many aquaculture initiatives unfolding, there is much work ahead and many opportunities for BC First Nations to shape aquaculture management and governance. To support these efforts and advance shared interests, FNFC is working with the ACC as well as hosting online meetings open to interested First Nations across BC to share information, generate discussion, and gather feedback over the coming months. FNFC also aims to collaborate with the National Aquaculture Working Group to streamline engagements.

For more information please contact Richard Sparrow at [richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).



## Aquatic Habitat Restoration Fund

The Aquatic Habitat Restoration Fund (AHRF) is one of Canada’s eight accommodation measures available to eligible Indigenous communities along the energy corridor. AHRF is a four-year initiative (2020-2024) that aims to support communities in developing programs around the restoration of fish and fish habitat and capacity development. A key first step to AHRF will be the collaborative development of a process to identify restoration priorities, project priorities, project selection process, and a long-term plan to support BC First Nations leadership in aquatic habitat restoration initiatives.

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As part of the FNFC's mandate to safeguard habitat and respond to threats as described the BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan, FNFC has been supporting DFO in advancing engagement with impacted First Nations and advocating for a strategic long-term program vision to sustain and empower long-term aquatic habitat restoration activities led by BC First Nations.

An AHRF information launch was held on November 24 and 26 to introduce AHRF opportunities to eligible First Nations communities. The launch provided an opportunity for early information sharing and for First Nations to provide feedback and collaboratively inform the design of the AHRF program.

For more information please contact Nina Nichols at [nina@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:nina@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Oceans Protection Plan Initiatives

FNFC has continued to bring South Coast BC First Nations together with federal partners to promote their interests and collaboratively advance three regional priority initiatives under the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP): 1) ship movement and vessel management, 2) marine research and science, and 3) emergency preparedness and response.

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

- FNFC has been working closely over the last few weeks with Transport Canada (TC) to develop and revise the draft CEMS Living Workplan to better reflect the VMCC's concerns and interests they heard through a Tier 1 workshop held in October. The draft workplan document has been circulated to the committee for final review.
- The FNFC-OPP team has been collaborating with TC to develop an understanding of how we will transition from this early planning phase to the scoping phase, and ensure the availability of funding for meaningful VMCC participation. They are developing helpful tools to assist participants through the application process.
- The FNFC-OPP team is now considering ways to organize a Tier 1 workshop that will bring the OPP Coordinating Committees together to help identify shared Indigenous marine and coastal values. Within this space, there will be opportunity for the VMCC to discuss priority impacts from marine shipping, and issues of concern for a regional cumulative effects assessment based on past, current and forecasted levels of marine traffic (e.g. vessel traffic impacts on Indigenous marine uses including traditional harvesting areas). The result of this workshop could be to develop a list of Indigenous values and marine shipping issues/impacts from VMCC's perspective for use in impact assessment, management, and decision-making. More information on this will be shared as details are confirmed.

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## **Marine Research and Science Coordinating Committee:**

### **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Initiative with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

- On September 19, 2020 the Marine Research and Science Coordinating Committee (MSCC) met with the Province of BC to learn more about Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP), a co-led marine spatial planning process between 16 First Nations and the Province which has allowed for the collaborative development and implementation of marine use plans on BC's North Coast.
- An outcome of this meeting was a request from the MSCC to meet with First Nations members of MaPP and learn about their experiences and perspectives working with government on marine planning, and better understand the potential benefits of developing MSP in the South Coast context. This meeting was held on November 26, 2020.
- Moving forward, the FNFC-OPP team will be working with consultants to develop a template for both community-level marine use plans as well as a broader regional plan to support participating communities on this work.

## **Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinating Committee (EPRCC):**

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

- A joint EPRCC-ECCC workshop was held on November 10, 2020 to learn of the progress of the federal review on recovery and hear a summary of their preliminary analysis that seeks to understand and clarify the roles and responsibilities for recovery aspects from marine environmental emergencies.
- The next step for this Committee is to meet at a Tier 1 level to discuss the presentation from ECCC and seek feedback on future opportunities for collaboration on marine oil spill recovery and the development of the Indigenous Oil Spill Response and Recovery Framework. Based on feedback received from the EPRCC, FNFC will put forward recommendations and identify an engagement strategy in collaboration with ECCC on the development of the Framework as it relates to recovery activities.
- FNFC is now considering ways to organize further Tier 1/2 workshops to support dialogue between EPRCC members as a means to help identify shared priorities in each of the key focus areas and develop an understanding of how this work will be advanced.

To learn more about these OPP initiatives or to get involved in one of Coordinating Committees, please contact Astrid Niemann-Zajac at [Astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:Astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

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## Water for Fish

### **New Resource: Environmental Flow Needs Primer**

Is your community interested in starting an Environmental Flow Needs program? We can help! At the FNFC's Virtual 2020 Annual General Assembly, we launched a new resource on Environmental Flow Needs for BC First Nations. This publication is available on the FNFC website here:

<https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FNFC-EFN-Primer-November-2020.pdf>

If you would like FNFC to host a virtual workshop based on the Primer and the value of EFNs and strategies that is tailored to your staff and/or Chief and Council, please get in touch! We don't often get a chance to work one-on-one with communities, and we have some funding to allow us to do this.

If you're interested in a virtual workshop, or for more information, please contact Susi Porter-Bopp at [susi@fnfisheriescouncil.ca](mailto:susi@fnfisheriescouncil.ca).

### **Thank you to WFF Coordinator Genevieve Layton-Cartier!**

Genevieve Layton-Cartier left the FNFC in October 2020. We would like to thank Genevieve for being a valued member of the Water for Fish team for nearly 5 years, and we wish her much success in her future endeavors!



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