



First Nations Fisheries Council COMMUNIQUÉ

JANUARY 2021



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**
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Rebuilding Wild Salmon Stocks

FNFC continues our efforts to address the decline of Pacific salmon stocks. Through our work with the Salmon Coordinating Committee (SCC), FNFC is developing tools to assist with the assessment of wild salmon stocks and mitigation measures, which can support First Nations in their consideration of recovery planning strategies. These tools are being further refined with the Salmon Coordinating Committee, and will be shared through our Tier 1 email list when available.

FNFC and the SCC have been engaging with DFO on the new Fish Stock Provisions, which were introduced as part of the *Fisheries Act* amendment. The provisions require DFO to list fish stocks, develop limit reference points for listed fish stocks, and develop rebuilding plans for listed fish stocks that are below the limit reference point. Fish stocks will be identified for listing over the next 4 to 5 years, divided into five batches. The first batch recommended for listing can be found in the Canada Gazette and includes three Pacific salmon stocks: WCVI Chinook, Okanagan chinook and Interior Fraser coho. See the list online here: <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2021/2021-01-02/html/reg1-eng.html>

Presently, the SCC is focused on engaging with DFO to determine how the remainder of Pacific salmon stocks will be listed under the Fish Stock Provisions. They are in the early stages of developing an evaluation framework to assist with recommending fish stocks for listing.

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Wild Salmon Policy Implementation Plan: Activity 48

Activity 48 of the Wild Salmon Policy Implementation Plan (WSPIP) is to update the plan to be consistent with 2019 *Fisheries Act* amendments. FNFC and the SCC have met several times to discuss the scope of this activity, and anticipate that the update will focus on an addendum that will include new activities as a result of *Fisheries Act* changes. The SCC will continue to provide recommendations to DFO to inform Activity 48 development, and anticipate that this Addendum will be completed by March 31, 2021.

If you would like any additional information about this project or FNFC's work related to salmon, please contact Janson Wong at janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN)

In November 2020, FNFC announced the official launch of the Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN). ITAN aims to provide a platform for BC First Nations to connect with Indigenous-centered scientific expertise, information, and resources regarding priority technical issues and processes. We are currently working on communication materials and channels for ITAN. Over the coming months, we will be identifying ITAN topics for workshops for interested scientific/technical experts from BC First Nations communities and organizations. We continue to seek feedback and engagement from science and technical folks working with First Nations to co-develop how ITAN can be best shaped to assist efforts province-wide.

For more information or to get involved with the ITAN initiative (e.g. join the email list), please reach out to Tanya Tran at tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

First Nations Engagement in Aquatic Species At Risk

FNFC and DFO continue to collaborate on a virtual workshop series 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 workshop series will wrap up in March 2021. The project aims to:

- raise awareness on the listing process and recovery efforts broadly for aquatic species-at-risk;
- provide information to First Nations on the species listed or under consideration for listing; and
- support opportunities to provide input into improving the SARA process overall.

Each of our first three workshops have had over 20 participants from across BC. So far, we have touched on topics such as funding opportunities for First Nations, listing processes, and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge. FNFC will be developing a workshop series report, which will be shared through the Tier 1 email distribution list. It is our hope that this report will support First Nations involvement province-wide regarding aquatic species at risk.

For more information about this project, please contact Tanya Tran at tanya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

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Aquaculture

Though the development of the federal *Aquaculture Act* and the planning for open net pen salmon farm transition are still in their early stages, FNFC has begun working with DFO to inform their engagement process with BC First Nations. In December and January, we hosted our first workshops on the development of the *Aquaculture Act*, which were open to interested BC First Nations. FNFC is committed to collaboration with the National Aquaculture Working Group and AFN to streamline engagements on these national initiatives.

In November 2020, FNFC began engagement on the following regional aquaculture initiatives:

- emergency changes to the shellfish conditions of licence,
- area-based aquaculture management, and
- changes to marine finfish conditions of licence.

FNFC hosted a province-wide virtual workshop for First Nations to elicit feedback to provide to DFO on shellfish licensing changes. Shellfish conditions of licence are set to naturally renew in 2025, and as such, we anticipate more opportunities to support First Nations engagement on shellfish licences in the future. FNFC is continuing engagement on the other regional initiatives over the coming months.

On December 17, 2020, the Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard, announced her intention to phase out existing open net pen salmon farming facilities in the Discovery Islands. She has mandated that all farms in the Discovery Islands region shall be free of fish by June 30, 2022, and that in the meantime, no new fish of any size are to be introduced into these facilities. These measures were the result of consultations with First Nations and with the aquaculture industry. The recovery of Pacific wild salmon stocks remains a top priority for BC First Nations, and FNFC continues to broadly support strategies to recover salmon. Over the next 18 months, First Nations, industry and the Province of BC will continue to work together with DFO to phase out salmon farming in the Discovery Islands region, as well work toward a broader transition plan for open-net pen salmon farms.

FNFC continues to work with the Aquaculture Coordinating Committee (ACC) on all of these initiatives, as well as hosting workshops open to interested First Nations across BC to share information, generate discussion, and gather feedback. In early January 2021, FNFC opened registration for the various aquaculture workshops scheduled between January and March 2021. FNFC anticipates many of these conversations will continue beyond 2021.

For more information on FNFC's work with aquaculture, please contact Richard Sparrow at richard@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



Water for Fish Initiative

New! Recommendations to Bring BC’s *Water Sustainability Act* into Alignment with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*

In December 2020, FNFC’s Water for Fish team released a direction paper with a number of recommendations to bring BC’s *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) into alignment with the new *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The direction paper sets out why water and the WSA should be a priority for legislative reform under DRIPA. The paper outlines necessary reforms along the following 3 themes:

1. **Recognition and respect** for Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights;
2. **Decision-making** processes for water; and
3. **Aquatic ecosystem protection** and environmental flows.
- 4.

A draft of the paper was shared with the First Nations Leadership Council, FNFC’s First Nations Water Network list, as part of our Water Wednesday webinar series, and with the BC First Nations Water Governance Roundtable for feedback in Summer and Fall 2020. The final version was shared with the new BC provincial government in December 2020.

FNFC Direction Paper: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and High Priority *Water Sustainability Act* Reforms is available on our website at:

<https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DRIPA-WSA-paper.pdf>

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CALLOUT: Regional First Nations Water Roundtables

FNFC’s Water for Fish team is looking to hear from First Nations who are interested in starting a Regional Water Roundtable in their area. FNFC has funding to support convening Nations within a watershed to connect with each other and identify shared freshwater management interests. Examples of Roundtable projects could include: advancing collective water monitoring across territories; establishing environmental flow needs thresholds for critical streams; coordinating land use or other planning initiatives; or identifying shared strategies for protecting aquatic habitat in the watershed.

A Regional Water Roundtable can support communities to: advance collective issues in the watershed by speaking with a unified voice; increase information flow and knowledge sharing; increase capacity to implement management strategies across territories; and pool resources and expertise.

Please contact *Water for Fish* Project Coordinator Kimbaya Carriere at Kimbaya@fnfisheriescouncil.ca if you’re interested in participating or would like additional information.

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“Working Together on Water” Initiative with BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

In November 2020, BC’s new government announced significant commitments to freshwater and reconciliation through ministerial mandate letters. These commitments include the creation of a new Watershed Security Strategy and associated Watershed Security Fund, a new reconciliation secretariat, and two new appointments: [Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations](#), and [Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture](#).

Through our ongoing “Working Together on Water” initiative, FNFC will work with First Nations and BC to explore meaningful and efficient provincial- and watershed-scale processes for collaboration on water policy and management issues. This initiative will include continued work with the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) to implement recommendations endorsed in the May 2019 report *Towards a Water Sustainability Act First Nations Engagement Framework: Working Group Recommendations for Collaborative Development of Regulations and Policies*. The report available on our website at: https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Letter-FNFC-to-BC_July-2019.pdf

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Welcome Kimbaya Carriere!

FNFC’s Water for Fish team is thrilled to welcome Project Coordinator Kimbaya Carriere. Kimbaya will transition to Water for Fish from her existing role with FNFC’s Policy and Fisheries Management sector in the coming months. For those who have not yet had an opportunity to meet her, here’s a quick introduction to Kimbaya in her own words:

I was born and raised in Treaty 1, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Located on the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. I am currently living on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the x^mməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. I finished my Environmental Science and Biology degree at the University of Winnipeg in April 2020. Through my academic and recreational activities, I decided to focus my time and energy on water topics from wetland courses to volunteering with ocean bridge and wa ni ska tan. Through my work, my passion and admiration for water continued to flourish which led to my decision that I wanted my career to be by the water, conserving water, learning about the water and strengthening my and others’ relationship to water. I’m very glad to have the opportunity to continue to work at the First Nations Fisheries Council moving from the Policy and Fisheries Management team to my new role as the Water for Fish Project Coordinator.

I am of Metis-French-Canadian and Mayan-Spanish-Mexican heritage. I try every day to honour my heritage and cultural background and I love to learn and understand other cultural backgrounds. I believe there is power in collective knowledge and in combining various worldviews to meet the challenges of today. I love learning about different cultures, their languages, their food and their traditions and how that interacts and is interrelated to the environment, conservation and sustainability. I am especially passionate about promoting Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge as I believe this will help myself, other Indigenous, mixed heritage and non-Indigenous people to reconnect, re-learn and re-shape a new relationship of belonging, love and respect to our land and water.

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Oceans Protection Plan

FNFC continues 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).

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

The VMCC last met in early October to seek feedback and gain consensus on the Living Workplan, which is now being implemented. The Community Participant Funding Program (CPFP) is now available for Committee members to apply for capacity funding to support Living Workplan activities to the end of this fiscal year. The FNFC-OPP team and TC developed materials to assist VMCC members in applying for CPFP funding to support the implementation of the Workplan, and these have been shared with the Committee.

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

The MRSCC has met with DFO, the Province and First Nations involved in the MaPP initiative to gain a better understanding of MSP processes and how they may impact or benefit South Coast communities. The FNFC-OPP team is working to contract support to develop an oceans survey, as well as a community-level MSP template and guidebook for South Coast BC First Nations. The survey will consolidate input from the MRSCC and help to identify short-term and long-term oceans and MSP objectives. The responses from the survey will help shape the development of a community-level MSP template and associated guidebook intended to support communities in building a vision around marine planning in their territories.

FNFC has developed a Living Workplan that is currently being reviewed internally before presenting to the Committee for feedback. DFO and FNFC have worked collaboratively to offer capacity funding to MRSCC participants through the Oceans Management Contribution Program and are now developing tools to support Committee members in applying.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinating Committee – Recovery from Environmental Emergencies from Ship-source Oil Spills Initiative with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

The EPRCC had a Tier 2 workshop in November to discuss progress on a federal review and analysis of the roles and responsibilities for recovery aspects from marine environmental emergencies. The FNFC-OPP team continues to collaborate with our federal partners to support engagement on the Recovery initiative as a working group, which is discussing existing federal policy and legislation that supports recovery activities and whether amendments may be proposed as a result of the federal analysis.

The FNFC-OPP team is drafting a Living Workplan that will support the development of an **Indigenous Oil Spill Response and Recovery Framework** in four areas: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in South Coast BC. Based on the feedback we receive from the EPRCC, we will also put forward recommendations and



identify an engagement strategy on the development of the Framework as it relates to recovery activities. FNFC is considering ways to organize further Tier 1 and 2 workshops intended to support a 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 we will advance this work.

FNFC-OPP Joint Coordinating Committee

All three Coordinating Committees are currently working to identify key components of Indigenous marine values and areas of shared interest and concern. As there is overlap in participation on the three Committees, we will be bringing the Committees together to jointly begin this important aspect of the work. Two workshops are scheduled for February 17 and 24, the purpose of which is to come to a clear understanding of marine and coastal Indigenous values in the FNFC-OPP context, and identify common interests and concerns in the South Coast region.

If you are interested in learning more about these OPP initiatives or would like to become involved in one of Coordinating Committees, please contact Astrid Niemann-Zajac at Astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.

Aquatic Habitat and Restoration Fund

On November 24 and 26, 2020, FNFC held information launch sessions to re-introduce the Aquatic Habitat Restoration Fund (AHRF). The purpose of the sessions was to share information with communities and begin to collaboratively develop key aspects of the AHRF program. The Tier 2 morning session provided time for DFO to share information around the four-year initiative and for communities to pose questions directly to government. In the afternoon, Tier 1 sessions used breakout rooms to discuss key topics like governance, long-term strategy, and priorities. FNFC also developed a follow up survey to receive further input on key topics.

Interest was expressed in additional AHRF workshops to provide more clarity and focus on specific aspects of program delivery. The majority of participants expressed a need for ongoing capacity support in order for their communities to implement projects and participate in the AHRF program. On the subject of governance, most participants communicated the need for more information and time to discuss potential governance models. A common theme that was discussed was incorporating Indigenous governance structures or models that center traditional knowledge and community-based decision making.

An AHRF summary report and recommendations based on the Tier 1 sessions and survey will be completed in early February.

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