



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES
COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMMUNIQUE

March 2022



STRONGER TOGETHER

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STRONGER TOGETHER



ABOUT FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL OF BC

Fisheries and aquatic resources are foundational to First Nations' communities, culture, well-being, identity, and way of life. We work to protect aquatic resources and habitat and help First Nations build a strong, coherent voice on Pacific fisheries and aquatic resources by:



Facilitating strong province-wide collaboration



Building and maintaining First Nations capacity



Amplifying the voices of rights holders

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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT UNIT

Message from the Executive Director

ʔi ʔə ce:p ʔəw ʔəy ʔaí, Si:ýém nə Siyeýe?

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

At long last after approximately two years, we are seeing the possibility of returning to in person gathering and collaboration, which is very promising and a welcome relief. A lot has transpired over those two unprecedented years. Although we were extremely limited in terms of convening BC First Nations, the FNFC was able to keep our operations going, and in fact we actually had to expand to meet the demand of emerging issues. Significant activities we have been working on that you can read about in following sector reports include:

- The alarming acceleration in the decline of Pacific Salmon. This resulted in all levels of government seeking a strategy to address this decline. DFO identified the PSSI, the province identified a recent Salmon Strategy and identified it as a priority for Parliamentary Secretary attention. The FNFC has launched the Salmon Action Dialogue series in partnership with the Pacific Salmon Foundation with the notion that a strategy to protect and recover Pacific salmon will take EVERYONE. The dialogue series will be the space to identify needed actions and to explore the required processes for collaboration.
- Salmon require water and habitat for survival. The FNFC has made significant progress in envisioning a provincial Water Table in collaboration with the province of BC. Best practices and expertise in different regions of the province need to come together and develop best practices and collaboration where improvement is needed. A First Nation Caucus will identify how BC First Nations can be situated in a meaningful role in meeting the DRIPA and UNDRIP intentions, and meet reconciliation objectives.

- A responsible plan to transition open net pens was mandated by the federal government, the FNFC has an Aquaculture coordinating committee hosting regional workshops, to hear from BC Nations, and develop and inform the Transition Plan. This same initiative may also assist in supporting a new national Aquaculture Act.
- The FNFC is also working to review the role of BC First Nations in the international scope at the Pacific Salmon Treaty scale. We are working with the 26 members of the First Nations Caucus of the Pacific Salmon Commission to lay out a roadmap for more effective Indigenous participation in the international conversation and negotiations before the next 10-year renewal of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

There is so much more to share, – but I will allow for staff to report out on some of these other activities. In the meantime, take good care and we hope to soon see all of you in person!

Jordan Point

Executive Director,
First Nations Fisheries council of BC

FNFC is creating a Policy Analysis Group

In June of 2021, FNFC's Executive identified a need to increase our presence in Ottawa to more effectively influence decisions regarding First Nations' Rights (including priority access), and advance the application of Bill C-15 and relevant case law.

In response to this gap, the FNFC is creating a Policy Analysis Group (PAG). This group will conduct analysis of legislation, policy, regulation, and operations, and provide strategic recommendations to government decision-makers. PAG's analytical work will be advanced against the backdrop of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Canada's 10 Principles, and relevant Supreme Court case law.

FNFC's proposed approach supports a 2010 All Chiefs' Task Force recommendation to build structure and process to coordinate BC First Nations' political and technical capacity and develop a coherent voice to advance the interests of BC First Nations.

The passing of federal Bill C-15 presents an opportunity for First Nations to inform Canada's policy direction and guide the application of these core legislative documents in reshaping and adapting existing policies, laws, regulations, and operations. First Nations are the Rights holders, but no one group has the capacity to review the many Acts and policies that impact fisheries, the marine environment and its stewardship. Through the FNFC, the PAG will provide a space for First Nations to advance their collective interests and speak to government harmoniously. The PAG will meet its objectives by:

- Developing analytical tools that can be used collectively by BC First Nations.
- Building consensus and relationships with First Nations and First Nations organizations, as a mechanism to support the PAG's analytical work.
- Developing clear and coherent recommendations to governments.
- Developing communication strategies to inform and unify First Nations around broad policy priorities, analyses, and subsequent recommendations.

**For more information, please contact FNFC' Policy Analyst Cassandra Jeffer.y
Contact e-mail: Cassandra@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.**



CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

This team is essentially the engine room of FNFC, they keep the operations on track, the bills paid, and ensure work plans, and budgets are developed and followed. They ensure things run on time, – we couldn't do what we do with out them! They also support our Human Resourcing actions.

Hiring for the future: Meet the team supporting FNFC's growth.

FNFC has doubled in size last year. Over the past twelve months, FNFC has grown to 26 positions with 5 sectors! We are building a team of motivated professionals who work together to accomplish FNFC's strategic objectives. The diverse skill set of our staff has always underpinned FNFC's development since its early days, allowing us to steadily broaden the scope of work supporting First Nations capacity and collaboration. We are building an organization that will sustain the new FNFC Strategic Plan (2022 – 2024) and future growth!

As we are working in a rotational, hybrid team office environment, we were happy to have had a safe way for all staff to meet each other in person at the annual FNFC Christmas Luncheon Event. This was an awesome way to end the year before FNFC staff left for a break and came back refreshed in the new year.

HIRES IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS:

EM UNIT:

Olga Shuvalova, Comms & Marketing Mgr.
Patricia Vyskocova, Executive Comms Coord.

CS UNIT:

Chandrang Makwana, Financial Officer

PFM UNIT:

Mike Gray, Aquaculture Mgr.
Surbhi Ratti, Coord.

Claire Crowley, OPP Consultant

PIR UNIT:

Cassandra Jeffery, Policy Analyst

HEP UNIT:

Jacquelyne Fitchell, HEP Mgr.
Katherine Van Dam, Coord.

Thanks for joining the FNFC Team!



Photo credit: Rachel Elliott

POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

New MOU with PSC's First Nations Caucus

Working towards effective Indigenous participation in international fisheries management.

Aquaculture in B.C. is diverse and sustainable aquaculture can provide opportunities for interested First Nations. In 2021, the FNFC signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pacific Salmon Commission's (PSC) First Nations Caucus (Caucus) to work more closely together to review and map out a process for First Nations to more effectively participate and influence international conversations and negotiations in fisheries management.

With this new MOU, the FNFC and Caucus will align under the FNFC's governance framework. This alignment will provide greater opportunities to

- develop Caucus capacity and accountability with First Nations in B.C.;
- work with Governments and the Pacific Salmon Commission to review how the Caucus can more effectively support Indigenous participation in international fisheries management and in the Pacific Salmon Treaty process;
- improve coordination for First Nations in B.C. helping them work together across international and domestic scales;
- increase the accountability and communications of the First Nations Caucus (FNC) to First Nations in B.C. broadly.

The Pacific Salmon Treaty is 10-year international fisheries agreement between Canada and the United States and the treaty process regulates catch sharing, monitoring, and allocation mechanisms in each Parties' bilaterally agreed fisheries. While the Treaty and the PSC process are not set up to negotiate and manage by individual Pacific salmon stocks (e.g. Conservation Units), it is imperative that the Treaty and process upholds, reflects and accommodates First Nations rights and priorities.

Similarly, the PSC process is not able to accommodate direct participation of 200+ First Nations, which means effective coordination is required to identify appropriate participation processes that is in line with economies of scale, and accountable to the groups they are associated with.

In that lens, the Caucus recognized the importance of preparing First Nations in B.C. for the next round of negotiations of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. This includes developing a Strategic Plan and Succession Plan to bring accountability to the PSC process to First Nations in B.C., identify opportunities and mechanisms for First Nations to effectively participate, and supporting knowledge transfer for new participants to the PSC process. This year, the FNFC and the Caucus hosted regional workshops to begin to introduce the work of the FNC and released the Sociocultural Value of Pacific Salmon to Tribes and First Nations report developed in collaboration between the Caucus and US Tribes.

We will continue to share the aspirations and vision of the Caucus to re-position its role at the PSC process and working with Canada. Ultimately, we recognize that solutions might not meet all the needs of First Nations across B.C. equally but only by working collaboratively together can we identify solutions that can serve the best interests of First Nations in B.C. collectively.

**For more information about the First Nations Caucus or about other FNFC activities in fish and fisheries management, please contact Janson Wong, Senior Manager, Policy and Fisheries Management.
E-mail: janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.**

Importance of working with First Nations in the development of BC's aquaculture strategy

Aquaculture in B.C. is diverse and sustainable aquaculture can provide opportunities for interested First Nations to protect food security and economic opportunities. FNFC's role as conveners is to support First Nations in B.C. to work together on matters of common interests and in aquaculture. This requires a balanced approach to developing aquaculture opportunities, to operate in a sustainable manner while also acknowledging and respecting First Nations self-determination and what they choose to do in their territories. We do this by working with the Aquaculture Coordinating Committee (ACC), to collectively understand the different interests and concerns in aquaculture, and how we can work together to improve the management of aquaculture to provide sustainable opportunities for future generations.

In the development of a Transition Plan for open net-pen fish farms, FNFC is working with Governments and First Nations to understand what transition means, and what is the scope for transition. Similar to FNFC's approach during the Fisheries Act amendment process, the FNFC is hosting workshops this year to begin to understand from First Nations what a transition plan might look like. Through these initial dialogues, participants' feedback has highlighted that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work, and that transition will need to protect First Nations' rights, interests and socioeconomics for potentially impacted communities.

At the national scale, a new federal Aquaculture Act is the first opportunity in Canada to develop a new legislation that can fully incorporate, at the onset, the rights of Indigenous peoples as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The development of a federal Aquaculture Act is consistent with previous feedback provided by First Nations to separate aquaculture management from the management of fish and fisheries under the Fisheries Act. Through workshops this year, we have heard from First Nations about the importance of defining aquaculture, weaving UNDRIP into the legislation, examples of similar legislations internationally, and ways to support First Nations authority and management of resources and activities in their territories.

Throughout these Transition Plan and Aquaculture Act workshops and in conversations with DFO, FNFC continues to emphasize the importance for Governments to resource and engage with First Nations throughout the process, support First Nations to First Nations dialogues, and avoid making unilateral decisions that may impact First Nations rights. Close collaboration with Indigenous communities and other stakeholders is critical in ensuring the Transition Plan and Aquaculture Act developments are inclusive, and support shared decision making with First Nations that is consent-based and uphold UNDRIP and FPIC. FNFC will continue to host regional workshops with First Nations to begin the process of developing the Transition Plan and Aquaculture Act, and support First Nations by bringing coherent feedback and recommendations to reflect First Nations interests and voices.

For more information, please contact Mike Gray, Program Manager for Aquaculture.
E-mail: mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca.



Photo credit: Kuterra LP



PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

Exploring Tier 1 and Tier 2 collaboration models.

FNFC Aims to Advance First Nations' Interests on Wild Pacific Salmon Recovery Strategy.

FNFC is convening First Nations-led (Tier 1) and First Nations-DFO-BC (Tier 2) dialogues to develop a series of collaborative engagement models. These models will recommend how Tier 1 and Tier 2 dialogues can be leveraged to support the development and implementation of DFO's Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI).

This initial work intends to ensure early First Nations' involvement in the PSSI, and to capture BC First Nations' interests and priorities regarding the conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon. To facilitate this initiative, FNFC is doing the following:

1. Convening engagement sessions to explore and establish Tier 1 and Tier 2 priorities.
2. Facilitating interviews with subject-matter experts from First Nations communities and organizations in BC.
3. Distilling insights and lessons learned from these engagement sessions and interviews into a collaborative engagement options paper. This paper will analyze a Tier 1 and Tier 2 case studies, and recommend to government an approach to further the development and implementation of PSSI.

This process aims to embed First Nations' values, interests, knowledge, and priorities into government initiatives, while simultaneously advancing the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and reconciliation agendas to First Nations-government policy and operational space.

Growing collaboration in marine and coastal management

FNFC's Marine and Coastal Management Program helps First Nations and government agencies come together for ocean protection in BC

FNFC's Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) program is developing broader collaborative processes for First Nations and government agencies working on oceans protection in BC. This program is focused on building a relationship between First Nations and government partners, and enhancing capacity of First Nations to participate in marine management and stewardship. The current projects under the FNFC's MCM program are:

- Cumulative Effects of Marine Shipping (CEMS) in collaboration with Transport Canada (TC);
- Southern BC Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Province of BC (FLNRORD);
- Coastal Marine Strategy (CMS) development in collaboration with the Province of BC.



Pilot project to evaluate the cumulative effects of marine shipping

Under the Federal Ocean Protection Plan, the CEMS pilot project for the south coast of BC has completed the scoping phase, moving forward with connections identified by FNFC's Ship Movement and Vessel Management Coordinating Committee (VMCC). The initiative is now in the pre-assessment phase. The committee has been meeting on a Tier 1 level to create an Indigenous-led Cumulative Effects Framework, which is in its first draft. This framework will increase capacity for cumulative effects work at a community level.

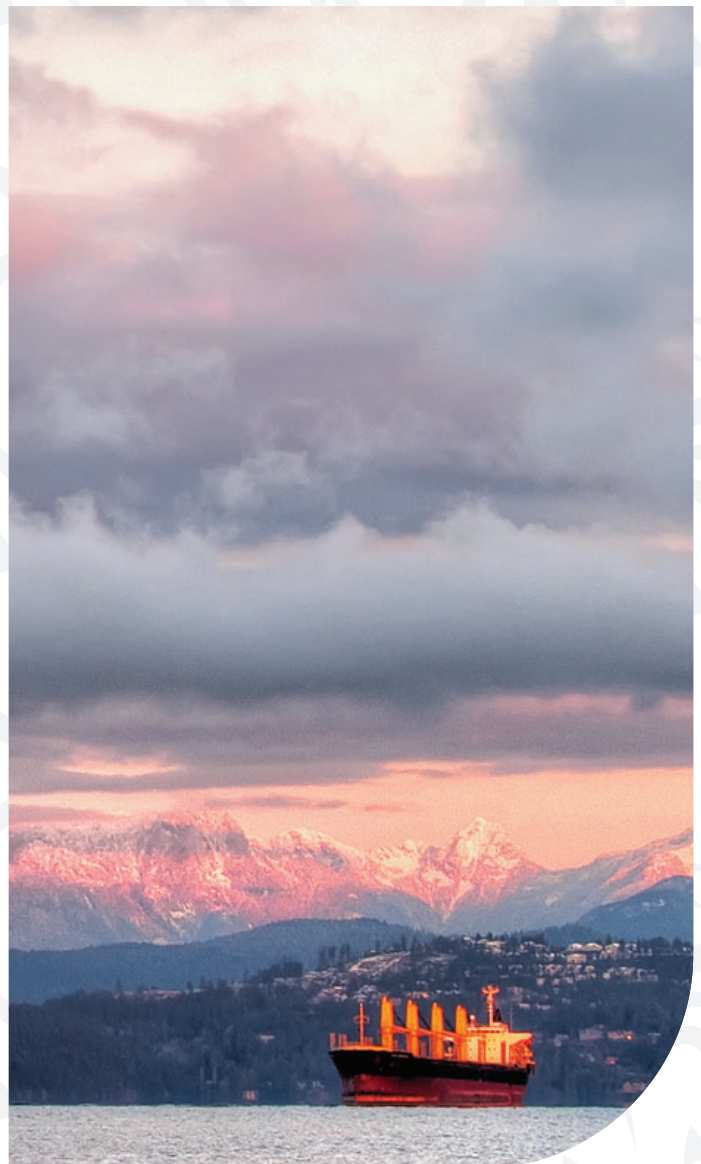
Letter of Understanding on Marine Spatial Planning

Southern BC MSP is co-developing an MSP framework with guidance from FNFC's Marine Research and Science Coordinating Committee (MRSCC). DFO, the Province of BC and FNFC have co-developed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) which is currently under final legal review. This LOU outlines the collaborative working relationship between the parties. FNFC is also scoping Tier 1 capacity-building opportunities for First Nations to enhance marine planning in their communities.

Building a Coastal Marine Strategy with First Nations

The Province of BC is working to build a Coastal Marine Strategy with First Nations

in BC, and FNFC will be hosting engagement dialogue sessions for First Nations Leadership to meet with Minister Nathan Cullen in early February. These engagement sessions will ultimately guide the development of a vision for the strategy. FNFC will be drafting a 'What We Heard' document after these leadership sessions, as well as partnering on developing sessions for First Nations technical staff in the coming months.



FNFC and the Province of BC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Key Initiatives and Processes through the MOU

In the Fall of 2019, the FNFC and the Province of BC signed an MOU which supports the collaboration between FNFC and BC to advance shared interests and priorities regarding development of policy, management, and initiatives related to fisheries and the aquatic environment in the province.

This collaborative process is supported by a Joint Steering Committee, that meets six times a year. The Steering Committee consists of FNFC Executive Management and BC Executive Directors from participating ministries. In September 2021, FNFC's President, Executive Council Member, Executive Director and Management met with Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) and Executive Directors from participating ministries. At this meeting, a Joint Executive Committee process was approved by both BC and FNFC. This will result in FNFC Executives and ADM's meeting twice annually to provide guidance and strategic direction to the steering committee.

FNFC is working on many initiatives across ministries and departments in FNFC and

exploring collaborative engagement structures with the Province of BC.

FNFC's Policy and Fish Management team is working on engaging with First Nations and eliciting feedback and direction for the Interior Fraser Steelhead recovery strategy.

FNFC's Habitat and Environmental Protection team is working with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to establish collaborative structures that will enable First Nations in BC and the Province to coordinate and develop guidance for the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.

FNFC's Partnerships and Intergovernmental relations team is working with BC ministries to develop initial engagement and processes for the development of a Coastal Marine Strategy. In addition to this, the team is working to develop recommendations to BC to ensure the alignment of three BC Strategies: Wild Salmon Strategy, Coastal Marine Strategy and the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. The team aims to ensure that First Nations interest and priorities are a foundational element guiding the development of these strategies.

For more information, please contact Astrid Niemann- Zajac, PIR Senior Manager.

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Photo credit: Kelsey Campbell

HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

Stronger together: the new BC Water Table

The Water Table will bring together participants from First Nations and the BC provincial government.

FNFC is supporting the establishment and implementation of a joint Water Table. This Water Table will be the first co-development process to address province-wide policy, strategic and legislative water issues of shared interest to First Nations and the BC provincial government.

In July 2021, the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy confirmed support for a new provincial Water Table. Starting in Fall 2021, the FNFC and the Province of BC supported a Joint Interim Working Group comprised of four First Nations participants and four BC provincial government representatives to develop a draft Terms of Reference for the Water Table. The first task of the Water Table will be to co-develop the BC Watershed Security Strategy and associated Fund.

The fundamental component of the Water Table is the First Nations Water Caucus. The FNFC is supporting the development of a First Nations Water Caucus. With the guidance from an interim First Nations Water Caucus, the FNFC will be launching a regional delegate process to establish the First Nations Water Caucus component of the Table in Spring 2022. The FNFC will provide a joint secretariat role for the Water Table and a coordinator role for the First Nations Water Caucus.

**For more information, contact Water for Fish Project Manager Susi Porter-Bopp.
Contact e-mail: susi@fnfisheriescouncil.ca**

FNFC creates the Liard Regional Water Roundtable

The first Indigenous-led collaborative group in its watershed.

The First Nations Liard Regional Water Roundtable is the first group in the region to provide a consistent and structured First Nations-only (Tier 1) space for collaboration on freshwater management and governance issues on a watershed level.

Many First Nations across BC have expressed interest in working collaboratively with neighbouring Nations on freshwater management and governance in their watershed. Some Nations have their own plan, but many cited limited capacities to undertake such activities in their traditional territories.

The FNFC's Water for Fish project enables First Nations to work together across their watershed to achieve better freshwater management and governance outcomes. FNFC plays a coordinating role by providing a structure to enable this connection, enhance capacity and to reduce fragmentation within a region. It helps neighbouring Nations convene, elicit technical information and distill the best available practices across the watershed.

The vision of the First Nations Liard Regional Water Roundtable is to take a holistic approach to restoring, conserving and protecting water in the Liard watershed through Indigenous-led joint stewardship initiatives.

During the last year, the group has done the following:

- Created a Liard watershed water quality and quantity monitoring map that highlights gaps in monitoring
- Established Terms of Reference for the roundtable
- Secured seed funding for the roundtable

The Liard Regional Roundtable started in the spring of 2021 as a pilot initiative. FNFC is hoping this experience provides a framework to establish similar initiatives in other areas.

**For more information, please contact Water for Fish Project Coordinator Kimbaya Carriere.
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