



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES
COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

COMMUNIQUE

September 2022



2022 FALL ASSEMBLY

October 12 & 13

Musqueam Cultural Pavilion & Liveatream

Registration Now Open

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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:yém nə Siyeʔe?

"Greetings: Are you all well, my esteemed friends (relations);"

As we move into the heart of the 2022 Salmon harvest season, returning migration is underway all along the Pacific Coast with varying degrees of strength and obstacles. The Skeena and West Coast returns appear to be providing solid opportunities for the Nations to replenish their communal needs.

With last year's fires, followed by atmospheric rivers and floods leading to a large snowpack and cool wet spring in 2022, the Fraser stocks face some daunting challenges in returning to spawning areas. Flow levels at the Fraser Canyon were around 8700 cubic meters per second and forced early migrating stocks, like early Stuart, to hold in deep pools in the canyon as they were unable to get past the wall of water. Given that this is on the heels of other major events such as Atmospheric rivers, floods, fires and the Big Bar slide, and precipitous low returns – we are compelled to begin looking at a shift from all interests from **harvest management thinking** and structures – towards shared notions of **protection, restoration, and rebuilding**.

Ultimately, scenarios such as this natural event, coupled with the broader issues of climate change, changing ocean conditions and other impacts, indicate to us that we, humans, are just now starting to accept that this is not an inexhaustible resource. The recent observed declines of wild Pacific salmon that have prompted strategic overtures by all levels of government to act, indicates the need for significant collaboration.

Accordingly, we have advised the federal and provincial governments that we have heard from BC First Nations that they do not need separate strategic plans, such as the PSSI or the provincial Salmon Strategy. We have heard from the Nations that it is better to design **one salmon restoration strategy** that we can all work on together. We have written to both ministers seeking a commitment to sign a formal accord committing all three levels of government to work collaboratively on a salmon restoration strategy, which would be consistent with their commitments to UNDRIP and DRIPA.

The FNFC has also 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 need to include ALL of us (First Nations Government/Leadership, both levels of government, and all other interest groups).**

By extension, salmon require water and habitat for survival. The FNFC has made significant progress in creating a provincial-level Water Table in collaboration with the Province of BC. A First Nation Caucus will aim to bring together best practices and expertise in different regions of the province and identify how BC First Nations can be situated in a meaningful role in meeting the DRIPA and UNDRIP intentions and meet reconciliation objectives.

Further detail can be reviewed by the sector reports in the following pages.

Thanks, and take care!

hay čx^w q̄ə,



Jordan Point

Executive Director

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC



Registration open for 2022 Fall Assembly: Naut'sa mawt: we are all connected - one heart, one mind

The FNFC will be hosting the annual Fall Assembly this year in Musqueam Territory on October 12th & 13th.

After two years of hosting the event online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are opting for the hybrid format, allowing the attendees to join us either in person or remotely. This year's Fall Assembly is going to take place at the Musqueam Cultural Pavilion located at 4000 Musqueam Avenue in Vancouver.

The in-person participation will enable participants to discuss current issues in fisheries in a Tier 1 dedicated space. The in-person attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions on a range of topics presented by a variety of speakers. It has been a while since all of us had a chance to meet in person and discuss issues that impact us. While some parts of the Fall Assembly will not be livestreamed, remote participants will be able to hear the Tier 2 presentations and discussion broadcasted online.

To learn more about the event agenda and registration, visit: <https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/event/2022-fall-assembly/>

Let's keep each other safe:

In light of the COVID-19 precautions, we would like to adhere to appropriate social distancing rules for the in-person participation. Please wash your hands regularly and avoid close contact with other attendees.

We recommend having a partial or full vaccination status if you do decide to join in person to limit the risk of infection.

We look forward to welcoming you at the 2022 Fall Assembly!





CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT The Indigenous Awareness Training

As we gear up for in person meetings this fall, FNFC has taken the initiative to provide staff with Indigenous Awareness Training to get all staff up to speed on the complex environment that we work in.

A special thank you to **Jenna Duncan** (First Nations Fisheries Legacy Fund Manager) and **Kimbaya Carriere** (Habitat and Environmental Protection Project Coordinator) for identifying the need for this training, developing the materials over the last several months, and presenting to FNFC staff. We would also like to thank and recognize the FNFC Council for guiding and supporting this work.

Presentations in August covered various important topics and resource materials are now available to staff to get more information. Staff feedback was very positive and both Jenna and Kimbaya were recognized for leading this training initiative.





Photo credit: Dave Levy

POLICY & FISH MANAGEMENT UNIT

Responding to DFO's Mass Marking and Mark-Selective Fishing Discussion Paper

This summer, DFO published a discussion paper outlining their desire to implement a mass-marking/mark-selective fishery (MM/MSF) strategy for Chinook salmon within the next year. As part of the planning process for the implementation of this new strategy, DFO has asked for feedback and comments from stakeholders on their proposal. DFO has hosted two meetings in the style of town halls to elicit feedback from communities. As well, DFO has asked for more specific feedback on some areas of their proposal.

FNFC has been working to draft a response to DFO's questions as well as to the proposed changes in management strategies related to MM/MSF. The goal of the response is to highlight specific and broad concerns that we have heard in numerous Tier 1 (First Nation – First Nation) and two meetings (First Nations – DFO), as well as to outline the potential consequences should DFO move forward with implementation without addressing these concerns. We are working to outline the potential shortcomings of DFO's current proposed plan and point out other areas where more work is needed.

FNFC hopes that this conversation and our upcoming response paper are an opportunity to help further demonstrate First Nations' ability to increase their leadership in the management of Pacific Salmon stocks.

Transitioning Open Net-Pen Salmon Farming in BC

In July 2022, Minister Joyce Murray released the proposed discussion framework to guide the next phase of the federally-mandated “responsible plan to transition” away from open net-pen salmon aquaculture in BC. This next phase will build on previous Open Net-Pen Transition Plan engagement undertaken in 2020 and 2021. The release included the vision for the Transition Plan and outlined the objectives that will help guide the process. DFO also has committed to providing resources for First Nations to participate in the planning process.

The proposed vision for the Transition Plan includes a call to adopt alternative production methods that minimize or eliminate interactions between farmed and wild salmon while considering social, cultural and economic objectives.

The outlined objectives to help shape the transition plan include:

- Creating a pathway for existing aquaculture operations to adopt alternative production methods that minimize or eliminate interactions between farmed and wild salmon;
- Improving transparency on how the federal government assesses and responds to new scientific information to build confidence and trust in how aquaculture is managed;
- Providing greater opportunities for collaborative planning and decision-making with First Nations partners;
- Advancing innovation and attracting investment to support the adoption of alternative production technologies in British Columbia.

DFO is seeking feedback on the feasibility of the proposed vision and approach, options for implementation, and opportunities for partnership. The input and feedback received from First Nations, industry, local governments, stakeholders, and British Columbians during the engagement sessions will guide the development and implementation of the Open-Net Pen Transition Plan, expected to be finalized in spring 2023.

FNFC will continue to support First Nations in bringing strong, coherent messaging to influence Open Net-Pen Transition Plan development through a First Nations Coalition Working Group. First Nations must be present and supported at decision-making tables so that consent-based decision making is a key part of the plan development. First Nations possess diverse interests and opinions of aquaculture and there must be an inclusive Open Net-Pen Transition Plan that balances the diverse opinions and interests First Nations in British Columbia First Nations. Feedback from previous FNFC-facilitated meetings with First Nations highlighted the importance of respecting First Nations right to self-determination, and showed that transition may be different for First Nations in different areas. Participants stressed that transition must protect and accommodate First Nations interests and investments, and emphasized the importance of indigenous engagement, particularly in areas where decisions will impact local communities.

FNFC is supporting First Nations engagement on the next phase of the Transition Plan development and will be facilitating four regional (Tier 1) workshops for First Nations in BC this fiscal year. These workshops will be held across BC to garner perspectives from as broad a range of First Nations as possible. FNFC is planning on hosting the meetings in the following regions: Vancouver Island, Mainland /Southwest, North Coast & North Interior.

For more information on Open Net-Pen Transition Plan regional workshops or other FNFC aquaculture initiatives, please contact Mike Gray, Manager, Policy and Fisheries Management.

E-mail: mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

PSC First Nations Caucus Summer Session and Regional Meetings

In July, FNFC helped to facilitate an online meeting of the First Nations Caucus (FNC) where the Caucus members contributed to engagement and communication strategies to elicit input on topics for the upcoming Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) negotiations in 2026. We saw interest from the FNC members in helping build First Nations capacity to take a leading role in the formation of negotiation points. We also saw interest in increasing conversations and cooperation between Canadian First Nations and US Tribes.

The FNFC plans to continue working with the FNC on engaging with First Nations and the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) throughout the leadup to treaty negotiations. FNFC also plans to continue to work with the FNC on strengthening collaborative processes which can support the development of coordinated efforts to increase First Nations management and negotiation capacity.

In the fall and winter, FNFC will facilitate regional meetings with First Nations to increase community engagement and hear about issues relating to the PST, furthering FNFC's understanding of the topics and areas of concern prior to negotiations beginning. We are excited to meet with our partners throughout BC. We hope to build and strengthen our partnerships as well as to form new ones.





Photo credit: Sabrina Cowley

PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

Pacific Salmon Action Dialogues - Next Steps

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC and Pacific Salmon Foundation have partnered to present the Pacific Salmon Action Dialogue Series (PSADs), with the goal to align and coordinate action for the conservation and recovery of wild Pacific Salmon. Four sessions have taken place so far, each one building off of previous discussions. Session 5 will be launched in the fall to provide a draft direction forward building off the work done during the sessions.

- **Session 1** (March 3, 2022) set the stage as our virtual launch event, where we examined the present salmon system.
- **Session 2** (April 27, 2022), also virtual, explored examples of multi-jurisdictional collaborative models, and what lessons BC can learn from them. The watershed approach of the Washington Model and its use of a forcing mechanism was of particular interest.
- **Sessions 3 and 4** (June 1 and 2, 2022) were a two-day event combining in-person and virtual participation. Session 3 focussed on BC examples of watershed and regional-scale models of collaboration through two panel presentations and discussions. The morning panel explored two coastal examples: Cowichan Watershed Board and West Coast Vancouver Island Roundtables. The afternoon panel explored two interior examples: Nicola Watershed Governance Partnership, and Okanagan Nation Alliance.

Upon reflection on these local examples of collaboration on examples from session 2, a list of key ingredients was created for BC to develop a collaborative framework for salmon. In Session 4, breakout groups discussed the following questions:

- *How should these ingredients be organized (e.g., in what order and in what amount)?*
- *What are the first steps for creating a collaborative framework (e.g., at each level and by whom)?*

In response to the second question, there was special excitement for the idea of a declaration for the fish, and the need for a vision statement. Discussions then moved to how non-governmental parties can come into this work while recognizing the special place of First Nations.

This discussion served as a reminder to participants that there are many “ingredients” that already exist, but need to be applied to the common vision and centrally coordinated.

The PSADs team will use these responses to take the Dialogues discussions and actions to the next level. The goal is to map out complex conversations so that future sessions facilitate appropriate conversations at the appropriate scales. This strategy will ultimately support the development of an action plan for coordinated collaboration for salmon.

Presentation recordings, summaries, and agendas from all four sessions are available here: <https://www.ohboy.ca/psads-archive>

DFO Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative Roundtable

On July 21, 2022, Minister Joyce Murray hosted a roundtable with selected ENGOs (environmental non-governmental organizations), First Nations fisheries and aquatic resource management organizations, and academic institutions. In total, 18 organizations attended the discussion, including the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC. FNFC was joined by other Indigenous organizations, such as LFFA, the UFFCA, and the Ha’oom Society. Minister Murray shared that a key pillar of the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) is collaboration and engagement, as partnerships will impact the effectiveness of the PSSI implementation. Reconciliation with First Nations is also a key objective of PSSI.

One of the messages that the FNFC brought to the discussion was the need for financial transparency of PSSI and BC SRIF. In 2021, the Government of Canada announced the \$647 million **Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative** intended to guide a strategic and coordinated long-term response over 5 years to restore Pacific salmon and salmon habitat, while contributing \$100 million to the renewal of the BC Salmon, Restoration, and Innovation Fund (BC SRIF). The FNFC stressed the need to bring resources to the table in light of the wild salmon recovery efforts. Additionally, FNFC questioned the utilization of the \$100 million committed to the renewal of BC SRIF as no specific, committed, nor ongoing resourcing external to DFO was identified to address the decline of Pacific salmon.

FNFC also voiced that both levels of government need to work together with the First Nations to develop a tripartite collaboration to protect wild salmon. **We do not need three different strategies. Instead, we need to work together to restore the wild salmon in BC collaboratively.**

FNFC also introduced the concept of Salmon Parks as connected to the notion of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPCA's) to support *Salmon Parks* in critical areas to ensure the protection of Pacific salmon. Salmon Parks are an Indigenous-led conservation initiative to protect and restore expansive areas of habitat surrounding key salmon conservation areas.

Across participants attending the roundtable discussion, consistent messaging included two focal points:

- A shared and coordinated approach to ensure protection of wild salmon in BC needs to be formally established between First Nations, DFO, and the Province of BC.
- Redistribution of control, empowering watersheds and regions to coordinate and make decisions most appropriate for their salmon populations, is needed.

As a follow-up to the July 21st conversation, FNFC will continue to advance the idea of formalizing a tripartite salmon accord with the Province of BC and DFO, supporting increased leadership and shared decision-making involving First Nations in order to protect wild salmon in BC.



HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table

FNFC is excited to announce the establishment of the First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table to work in partnership with the Province of BC in developing water security and sustainability. Initial meetings took place in person on June 27 & 28 in Vancouver. Subsequent online meetings took place virtually early August and in person meetings for both the Caucus and Table are scheduled for mid-September.

The 15-member **First Nations Water Caucus** meetings bring together delegates from across BC to work together to advance First Nations priorities and interests around fresh water and aquatic resources. The Caucus works with Province of BC representatives at the Water Table to address legislation, regulation, land use planning, policies, programs and strategies that facilitate shared decision making and supports self-determination, and water governance. Province of BC representatives participate from across ministries including Ministry of Land Water and Resource Stewardship, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Ministry of Health.

Some highlights and activities from the first meetings include:

- Building relationships between the First Nation delegates and the BC government representatives.
- Developing an accepted Terms of Reference for both the First Nations Water Caucus and the Water Table.
- Identifying co-development process and how this will inform the co-development of that Watershed Security Strategy and associated action plans.
- Identifying processes for communication and updates to communities and opportunities for Water Caucus delegates to engage with First Nations across BC and elicit feedback on matters being addressed at the Water Table.

If you would like to receive regular updates regarding Water Caucus and Table progress, and learn about opportunities to engage, please send an email to Madison Rattai, Coordinator, Habitat and Environmental Protection

E-mail: madison@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

Water for Fish Program Wins Land Awards

The First Nations Fisheries Council of BC (FNFC) is happy to share that our Water for Fish (WFF) Program won the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) 2022 Land Award in the Fresh Water category.

The award recognizes WFF's work supporting First Nations across BC on freshwater governance, policy and building equitable processes to advance First Nations priorities and interests. On June 9, 2022, BC leaders in sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use and real estate were honoured and recognized for their work at the REFBC Lands Awards gala. The awards program celebrates big ideas and bold leadership in these fields across B.C. and was established in 2010.

FNFC delegates and staff members were pleased to attend the awards gala at the Anvil Centre in New Westminster where they enjoyed a meal together and learned about the great initiatives happening in BC.

The FNFC staff would like to acknowledge and honour all of those who have made this program possible and built it into what it is today.

This award was made possible foremost because of the amazing work of First Nations communities and their willingness to work together and collaborate to advance fresh water sustainability. The Water for Fish program will continue to support and seek guidance from First Nations in BC to advance priorities and focus resources where needed. The work and initiatives in the Water for Fish program aspire to ensure freshwater conditions in BC are healthy and sustainable and support FNFC's priority to protect, restore and rebuild wild Pacific salmon.

We would also like to thank current and previous staff members who have worked tirelessly to push along projects within the program. Thank you to Deana Machin, Nadia Joe, Sherry Bourdreau, Julia Ko, Susi Porter-Bopp, Geneviève Layton-Cartier Kimbaya Carrière and Jacquelyne Fitchell. Thank you to the Executive Director, Jordan Point, and the Council, who continue to support this work.

We are very grateful to REFBC, Vancouver Foundation, Sitka Foundation, MakeWay, LUSH, the Moore Foundation, Environment and Climate Change Canada and BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy for their present and past financial support.





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