



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES
COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMMUNIQUE

December 2022



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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);"

All of us are aware that the decline of Pacific salmon has been decades in the making - decades of overharvest, poor management, and environmental pressures, have each steepened a rapid decline for Pacific salmon populations. The past few years brought even more serious and concerning trends, such last year's forest fires, followed by atmospheric rivers and floods. On the heels of the Big Bar slide, and precipitous low returns – we are looking at a shift of all interests from *harvest management thinking and structures* towards shared notions of **protection, restoration, and rebuilding**.

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

In early 2022, the FNFC partnered with the Pacific Salmon Foundation to host a Pacific Salmon Action Dialogue series. We had a series of dialogues with many subject matter experts from all sectors, Indigenous, commercial, recreational, and non-government organizations, with observations by federal, provincial governments that determined some key goals that were held by all concerned parties:

- Extinction of any salmon species is not an option and protection is the first step.
- If we are going to change the course for Pacific salmon, it will take ALL OF US.
- All levels of government need to work together on a cohesive Salmon Strategy, rather than designing separate strategies and programs.

We have since advised the federal and provincial governments that we do not need separate strategic plans, such as the PSSI or the *Provincial Salmon Strategy*. We have heard from the First Nations and other citizens 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.

We will need to work hard in coming months to build structures to connect the technical and political organizations to more effectively plan Indigenous participation in salmon protection and restoration initiatives through various legislation, policy and program initiatives.

By extension, salmon require water and habitat for survival. The FNFC has made significant progress in creating a provincial 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!

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Jordan Point

Executive Director

First Nations Fisheries Council of BC



Successful 2022 Fall Assembly

Held in a hybrid format on October 12 and 13 at the Musqueam Cultural Pavilion, the FNFC annual Fall Assembly provided a long-awaited opportunity to reconnect with everyone in person after two years of online meetings. The first half of Day 1 was dedicated to closed Tier 1 conversations which sparked fruitful discussions. A small social gathering after Day 1 of the event brought the Fall Assembly attendees together in a casual atmosphere, providing the opportunity to network and strengthen relationships.

The Fall Assembly carried a spirit of working together to protect and restore salmon. One of the key themes throughout the event was trilateral coordination, exploring ways to come together and design one *Salmon restoration strategy*.

We were honored to be joined by many amazing speakers who provided their insights into key topics. In the afternoon of Day 1, DFO Regional Director General Rebecca Reid presented the DFO Pacific Region Update on Regional Plans, Priorities, and Collaborative Opportunities followed by a Q&A. Day 2 of the event was focused on updates from the Province of BC. Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly opened the day with an overview of the Government of BC updates.

The 2022 Fall Assembly was a successful event thanks to all who participated either in person or remotely.

We are very grateful for your support.

If you would like to revisit the 2022 Fall Assembly, follow this link and access the event recordings: <https://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca/events/2022-fall-assembly/>



FNFC Seeking Nominations for First Nation Delegates to our Executive Council

The First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) is seeking nominations for First Nation Delegates to our Executive Council. The current term for Delegates ends December 31, 2022, and new or re-appointed Delegates will begin a new three-year term in January 2023.

As the FNFC emerged and evolved, First Nations determined that the interim Council structure should be expanded to more appropriately reflect the diversity in geography, expertise, and perspectives of BC First Nations. In early 2009, a new Council structure, consisting of 14 regional delegates, and the current Council mandate were ratified at the FNFC Fisheries Assembly in Nanaimo and endorsed by the BCAFN, UBCIC and FNS through resolution. The fourteen geographic regions are:

1. Northern Transboundary
2. Upper Skeena
3. North Coast
4. Haida Gwaii
5. Central Coast
6. North Coast Van. Island & Mainland Inlets
7. West Coast Vancouver Island
8. South Coast Van. Island & Mainland Inlets
9. Lower Mainland
10. Fraser Valley
11. Mid Fraser (1)
12. Mid Fraser (2)
13. Upper Fraser
14. Transboundary Columbia

The FNFC continues to affirm that Title and Rights are the strongest at the community level. The FNFC advocates for strong connections and reciprocal information sharing between the local, regional, BC-wide, national and international scales, and recognizes the need for communities and regions to work collaboratively on issues of common concern. For First Nations to influence legislative, policy or management changes, we must strive to have a unified voice and consistent messaging in our dealings with government.

The FNFC is seeking to confirm 14 regional Executive Council Delegates. The deadline for submitting nominations is **Thursday, December 15, 2022**.

For more information, questions, or to submit completed applications please contact

info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca



CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

Developing Staff's Skillset in HR and Proposal Writing

HR Training Workshop

The FNFC staff took part in a 2-day Human Resources workshop on September 28 and October 5. Jodi Rai, the FNFC HR consultant from heyHUMANTIS, introduced the fundamentals of HR to FNFC employees. The staff learned to distinguish between the elements of emotional intelligence, techniques to better work in a diverse environment, to understand the steps to resolving conflict, and analyze connections between organizational, team, and individual goals and objectives.

Proposal Writing Workshop

On October 19 and 26, Taryn Danford from Danford Consulting, led a proposal writing workshop to help FNFC employees understand different strategies of composing grant applications. The staff learned how to research and find relevant grant opportunities and connect them to FNFC strategic objectives, identify core components of a grand application and understand what makes proposals successful.

More training activities are scheduled to take place in the next fiscal year.





POLICY AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT UNIT FEATURE SERIES

Aquaculture is More Than Salmon Farming

“Hatchery in a Box”: An insight into a salmon restoration initiative by the Okanagan Nations Alliance (ONA)

Since time immemorial, First Nations people have gathered food from the sea and shore, the rivers and lakes — and they have also made changes to increase food productivity. From coastal peoples building the ancient clam gardens lining the coast to interior peoples sending wedding gifts of salmon eggs to populate new streams, aquaculture takes many forms and is integrated into the land and waters, and the cycles of the ecosystem.

First Nations broadly have expressed interest to FNFC in aquaculture and how different forms of aquaculture can provide opportunities for First Nations communities to strengthen food security and/or increase economic wellbeing. Aquaculture is more than salmon farming: many First Nations in BC have realized the potential of aquaculture and are engaged in a number of aquaculture operations including shellfish, seaweed and marine and freshwater fish. This article will be the first in a series aimed at highlighting the diversity of aquaculture activities that First Nations are successfully engaged in across BC.

The Sylix Okanagan Nation's efforts to reintroduce and restore the Okanagan sockeye and chinook salmon populations to the creeks and rivers throughout the Okanagan is a well-known success story in BC aquaculture. Its aim is to expand community access to fish for both food security and cultural purposes. ONA succeeded in restoring the sockeye salmon back to their native range in the Okanagan and estimates are that over 300,000 fish may be available annually for harvest by First Nation communities as a result.

The Sylix Okanagan Nation's *kl cpalk stin* Hatchery is a critical part of the ONA's long-term program to restore the historical range of Sockeye in the upper Okanagan watershed, Okanagan Lake and Skaha Lake systems, and in a region of the Columbia River Basin. With a capacity for over 8 million eggs, this 25,000 square foot facility allows for maximum egg-to-fry survival whilst posing minimal risk to the surrounding fish populations. Fry are released in early summer each year into the nearby Shingle Creek or surrounding streams.

In 2017, ONA developed the “Hatchery in a box” system to create a mobile, smaller scale version of their hatchery. This system provides First Nations communities with a cost-effective solution to enhance wild stocks of salmon within their Traditional Territories. This innovative modular hatchery system allows for small-scale on-site production of fry to support community-based aquaculture programs in remote areas. Support for training, site election, production planning and licensing is also available to support communities who acquire the system. To date the ONA has installed 12 units across the province.



These, and other initiatives, form part of ONA's continued restoration efforts which encompass a holistic approach to restoration that include the land, water and the wildlife that inhabits both. Estimates indicate that over 30,000 spawners per year and upwards of 300,000 for fisheries harvest could return to the Okanagan Basin through these efforts. The ONA describes the hatchery's success as a testament to the determination of the Syilx people to realize their goal of restoring the ntytyix (Salmon) to their original habitat and rightful place in their territory.

Stay tuned in our next feature where we will highlight other forms of First Nations aquaculture.

For more information, please reach out to Mike Gray at mike@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

DFO Finalized Salmon Allocation Policy Terms of Reference

Salmon Allocation Policy Review Anticipated to Proceed to Phase 3

In September 2022, DFO announced that the Minister has finalized the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the *Salmon Allocation Policy* (SAP) review in BC. The TOR have been in development since DFO announced their intentions to update the policy after the 2018 BC Supreme Court Ahousaht decision. The TOR describe the various phases and processes that will support the SAP review moving forward. Finalizing the Terms of Reference marks an important step towards the review process and updating the *Allocation Policy for Pacific Salmon* (1999). According to the TOR, DFO expects updates to the SAP will be completed by October 2024. Funding from DFO may also be available to support First Nations capacity and participation during the review process.

To support First Nations input into the TOR development, FNFC has convened a *Salmon Allocation Policy Working Group* that has been instrumental in providing feedback and recommendations to the development of the TOR. We anticipate that this Working Group will continue to serve as a Tier 1 (First Nations only) convening space, where First Nations participants can share and provide regional perspectives into the SAP review and updates throughout the review process. We also anticipate to continue supporting First Nations participation during the review process, and assist First Nations in BC to bring forward shared, united voices in the review and updates. FNFC is coordinating a nomination process with First Nations in BC to help identify potential participants to the Committees and Working Groups. Deadline to submit nominations is **Wednesday, January 11th, 2023**.

In January 2023, FNFC anticipates that DFO will move into Phase 3 of the review process. In addition to convening the SAP Working Group, FNFC is also planning to host regional workshops to discuss the SAP and engage with First Nations broadly regarding potential changes and updates. Once details are confirmed, meeting information and invites will be shared through the FNFC website and e-mail distributions. Please stay connected and we look forward to meeting with you in 2023.



For more information about the Salmon Allocation Policy review and/or the Terms of Reference, please reach out to Janson Wong at janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

PSC First Nations Caucus: Regional Workshops in 2023

The FNFC is continuing to work with the PSC First Nations Caucus in preparation for upcoming Pacific Salmon Commission meetings in January and February. The 26+ members of the PSC First Nations Caucus participate in the annual meetings, alongside other Canadian delegates, to meet with Tribal and US counterparts to review and discuss salmon fisheries internationally. Commissioners, Panel, Technical Committees will meet through these two weeks to evaluate Canadian and US fisheries that occurred and determine whether they consistently met their goals under the *Pacific Salmon Treaty*.

Through the FNFC—PSC First Nations Caucus partnership, we will continue to identify different ways to support First Nations to engage in the PSC process, and how the First Nations Caucus can effectively advance the collective interests of First Nations in BC. Last year's successful virtual workshops provided an opportunity for the First Nations Caucus to do the following:

- clarify their role and responsibilities within the PSC process and with Canada;
- introduce the First Nations Caucus' Strategic Plan and objectives; and
- present the various chapters within the Pacific Salmon Treaty and broadly described some of the key topics that are discussed at PSC meetings.

Building from these workshops, we plan to host more regional workshops in early 2023 to engage with First Nations about the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and explore what topics may be considered within international salmon management priorities. We also plan to explore mechanism that can expand First Nations influence and advance priorities within the Pacific Salmon Treaty in preparation for the next iteration of the Treaty. Please be on the lookout for more information and invites to these regional workshops.

Updates will be provided as this initiative evolves.



For more information about the Pacific Salmon Commission, please reach out to Janson Wong at janson@fnfisheriescouncil.ca



PARTNERSHIPS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS UNIT

FEATURE SERIES

Coastal Marine Strategy for BC: A Foundation for the Future

The Coastal Marine Strategy is challenging the status-quo of policy development with First Nations. This strategy is directly influencing the way the coast is managed and creating a new framework for co-development that will impact policy development in the future. This holistic and adaptive approach will reflect First Nations' priorities for the coastal environment, while linking together past and present marine strategies and initiatives. As the first of its kind, the CMS has potential to shift the approach to coastal management by aligning with DRIPA and addressing government silos.

A CMS that is driven by First Nations' priorities for the marine environment could benefit communities by:



Advancing shared decision making and co-management (e.g., shared compliance and support of community-level marine planning).



Improving support for First Nation-led stewardship programs.



Providing funding for restoration of key habitats.



Managing cumulative effects of decisions on marine species and habitats important to First Nations' culture and food security.



Improving opportunities for First Nations to participate in or create economic opportunities.

Through Leadership and Technical workshops with coastal First Nations, six outcomes were drafted to guide the CMS: (1) A healthy, productive coast; (2) Resilience to climate change; (3) Trusting, respectful relationships; (4) Holistic learning and knowledge sharing; (5) Community well-being; and (6) A sustainable, thriving ocean economy. These outcomes were incorporated into a CMS intentions paper, assembled by a team of interested First Nations communities and organizations and provincial staff. The intentions paper is currently available for public review.

As a facilitator for South coast First Nations engagement, FNFC recently held a workshop on key mechanisms for co-development. Leadership and staff who attended examined tangible examples to apply to the next stages of the CMS and best practises for future initiatives. Discussion topics included decision making, coordination among First Nations, coordination within BC, coordination with the federal government, accountability, capacity, and inclusiveness. The recommendations from this workshop will be shared with nations for validation before being shared with the BC Coastal Marine Stewardship Branch team for implementation.

Partnerships Bring Benefits to Marine Management South Coast of BC Marine Spatial Planning

Trilateral Agreement Milestone

Over the last two years, FNFC has supported engagement between Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Province of BC, and First Nations within the Southern BC MSP planning area. DFO's national Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) program is a collaborative approach to managing ocean spaces that balances the increased demand for human activities with the need to safeguard and sustain marine ecosystems and their cultural values. MSP assesses marine users, activities, economies, and ecosystems in a specified area to support rights holders and decision makers in the complex management processes of the Pacific.

Marine Spatial Planning is a long-term process which could support First Nations in advancing their own community marine plans and priorities, while working to create a forward-looking, inclusive, ecosystem-based management framework that balances marine use objectives and provides an equitable seat at the decision-making table. The objective for FNFC is to position First Nations to be able to identify their own planning areas for economic opportunity, conservation, or cultural use, and help enable them to create targets that will benefit their communities. The outcome has potential to lead towards strong governance structures, resilient to political change, supporting First Nations in their decisions around how marine spaces in their territories are managed.

A milestone in the trilateral relationship between DFO, BC and FNFC has been achieved with the signing of a letter of understanding (LOU), which outlines guiding collaborative principles and objectives for working together. This agreement will ensure the longevity of the relationships that have been built, and that priorities of First Nations continue to be included in establishment of MSP on the south coast.

For more information on the Coastal Marine Strategy for BC, please contact Courtney Halvorson at courtney@fnfisheriescouncil.ca

Trilateral Coordination for a Salmon Restoration Strategy

An update on initial discussions and next steps

Throughout multiple engagement processes, including the *Pacific Salmon Action Dialogue series*, a key message communicated from First Nations and other citizens is that a *single coordinated approach* to salmon conservation and stewardship is necessary between Canada, British Columbia, and First Nations.

By *working together*, First Nations and Crown governments have an opportunity to support the coordination of a cohesive salmon restoration strategy across multiple levels and jurisdictions. This will provide opportunities to prioritize and maximize collective work and further meaningful implementation of the *Declaration Act*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and the *Government of Canada's 10 Principles*.

Following the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC's (FNFC) letters calling on both ministers to commit to signing a formal **Trilateral Salmon Accord**, a preliminary discussion was hosted at FNFC's Annual Fall Assembly on October 12th, 2022. James Mack (Assistant Deputy Minister, Water Fisheries and Coastal Policy & Planning, BC Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship), Sarah Murdoch (Senior Director, Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Gord Sterritt (Executive Director, Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance), and Jordan Point (Executive Director, FNFC) convened to explore what trilateral coordination for salmon conservation and stewardship could look like. They discussed lessons learned from previous trilateral processes, such as the Big Bar landslide and the flood response, and responded to questions from the audience. All three parties expressed interest in continuing the trilateral conversation with the intent to work together under a formal agreement.

To build on the momentum of this conversation, FNFC organized a series of trilateral meetings throughout late fall and early winter. Participants from DFO, BC, and First Nations communities/organizations will meet to discuss the opportunities and challenges a Trilateral Salmon Accord poses and will begin to establish a shared vision and scope. Past and present work that will help guide these discussions includes *DFO's Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative*, *BC's Wild Salmon Advisory Council's Recommendations*, and *FNFC's Safeguarding and Revitalizing Wild Salmon Concept Paper*.

FNFC will work towards the following key outcomes over the next few months:



Developing a proposed approach for a collaborative trilateral (DFO, BC, First Nations) process for Wild Pacific salmon conservation and stewardship.



Drafting a report outlining shared short-term and long-term priorities and indicators of success.



Establishing a communications plan outlining how feedback will be elicited across the province.



Creating process materials to help transition the conversation to an enduring process.

Updates will be provided as this initiative evolves.

Updated FNFC—Province of BC Memorandum of Understanding

The overlapping interests, jurisdiction, and authority to be considered when working in areas of fish, water, and aquatic ecosystem health in British Columbia give rise to a complicated environment for First Nations to navigate. To address this challenge, FNFC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province of BC in October 2019. Annual joint workplans guided the success of the shared work over the past three years, including:

- Establishment of a *DRIPA Task Group* which provided recommendations on the development and implementation of BC's proposed *Declaration Act "Action Plan"*;
- The creation of a provincial *Water Table for BC and First Nations* to begin co-developing *BC's Watershed Security Strategy*;
- Ongoing collaboration in the development of the *Coastal Marine Strategy between BC and First Nations*.

FNFC and BC are refreshing their MOU to reflect that the progress they jointly made in advancing shared priorities of First Nations in BC and the Province and to reflect the structure of the newly-established Ministry of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship. The refreshed MOU aims to highlight the enduring nature of FNFC and the Province of BC's relationship and broaden the scope of joint work. The signed refreshed MOU will be shared once available.



For more information on the Trilateral Coordination for a Salmon Restoration Strategy and FNFC-Province of BC MOU, please contact Astrid Niemann-Zajac at astrid@fnfisheriescouncil.ca



HABITAT & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT

First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table: The Work Continues

The First Nations Water Caucus and Water Table that began meeting in June 2022, has continued its work on advancing First Nations priorities and interests around fresh water and aquatic habitat. The Water Caucus is a Tier 1 (First Nations only) space that brings together delegates from around the province. The Water Table is a Tier 2 space that convenes the Caucus delegates and BC government representatives from multiple ministries to address legislation, regulation, land use planning, and policies regarding water and aquatic habitat.

Recently, the Caucus and Table met at their second in-person meeting in Kelowna, BC on September 19th and 20th; and again, virtually on October 26th and November 1st. These meetings have initiated a co-development process of the *Watershed Security Strategy (WSS)*, beginning by identifying the values and priorities of First Nations delegates.

In the development of the WSS, the Caucus delegates expressed a common need to honour and build upon established First Nations-led water strategies and initiatives such as:

- *BC First Nations Water Rights Strategy* (First Nations Leadership Council, 2013)
- *Statement of Requirements for Water Governance in British Columbia According to Crown Commitments to Reconciliation* (First Nations Water Governance Roundtable, 2018)
- *Discussion Paper: DRIPA and High Priority Water Sustainability Act Reforms* (First Nations Fisheries Council, 2020)
- *Watershed Security Strategy & Fund Discussion Paper Feedback* (Healthy Watersheds Initiative-Indigenous Leadership Advisory Circle, 2022)

Through an analysis of these previous works, the Caucus identified 4 recurring themes of importance for First Nations to be included in the WSS:



Governance



The alignment of law and policy with UNDRIP



Strengthened ecosystem protections - Including salmon habitat protection and restoration



Resourcing - Putting an emphasis on enduring resourcing

The Caucus, with support from the Caucus Secretariat, has begun incorporating these themes in the development of components of the WSS Intentions paper, and will continue to do so throughout the co-development process of this strategy.



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 at madison@fnfisheriescouncil.ca with your contact information.



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