

Day 1 | Tier 2 | Welcome

Marcel welcomed DFO participants, noting the extended Tier 1 discussion time was very helpful and that the discussion covered topics discussed at Monday's JTWG.

Forum Action Tracker

Matt Parslow, DFO

This presentation gave a brief overview of the new Forum Action Tracker, summarizing action items from previous forums and DFO's responses, including responses to be provided at this meeting, or ongoing/pending work (See Excel doc with agenda package for details)

Discussion

- Marcel suggested the jet boat concerns are outside the Forum's scope.
 - We all need to be aware of the issue. It's happening in many territories, but agree that it should be handled locally.
 - As FSMC's capacity grows, it could assist others in solving such issues.

Presentation, continued:

- Getting agendas and meeting materials out in advance — progress re earlier submission and setting up FSMC sharing site (but web glitches). Important that invitees respond to RSVP to access materials/Zoom links. Suggestion to plan agendas earlier to support timely development of presentations (although data timing is always an issue pre-season).
- Update re efforts to secure funding for harvest sharing discussions:
 - This morning Tier 1 discussed establishing a subcommittee to start planning how to roll this out.
- Action Item tracker will be available on FSMC website along with other Forum materials.

Discussion

- We are starting to see other migration pinch-points besides Big Bar, such as Hells Gate and Black Canyon, and FNs are asking DFO to restore structures that support salmon migration during extreme high water in a context of climate change. We need this done sooner, not later. Costs need to be weighed against the costs to our livelihood and our children's future.
 - Report provided (see agenda package). The existing infrastructure is functioning at the levels intended in the original design, but more discussion needed.
 - The area around Hells Gate and below were the real problem and a solution will take years, so we need to consider interim mitigation such as truck and transport.
 - There are a series of pinch points, e.g. Lady Franklyn, and DFO boats were looking at them last year.
 - [Link to Dave Patterson video on this:](#) (Thanks Darren!).
- Need DNA analysis to confirm origin of steelhead encountered in our fisheries to determine if they are stocks of concern, and if current window closures are justified.

Interior Fraser River Coho

Madeline Thompson, DFO

Highlights of DFO presentation (See PPT for details):

- Presentation is for information.
- Recap of IFR coho status
- Recent/current escapement relative to PST (Pacific Salmon Treaty) reference points.
 - While recent escapements have been positive, productivity has not returned to historic levels.
 - Given reduced ER since late 1990s, factors other than fishing mortality are preventing recovery.
- Low Status designation will continue for 2023:
 - Survival goal wasn't met for 2022, so it will need to be met for 3 years (e.g. 2023-2025) before DFO would consider moving it up to Moderate status.

Discussion

- How can 10% ER be allocated to US and Canadian fisheries when our FSC needs are not being met? We are the rights holders, so who has authority to allocate that?
 - The 10% ER cap for Canada (and 10% in US) was set in the PST. Canada has actually been managing to 3-5% ER, i.e. below what the treaty permits, given the conservation concerns.
 - First Nations leaders are meeting in Ottawa to discuss implementing UNDRIP. We don't yet have a say in agreements like PST and the federal government has not represented our interests, despite their fiduciary obligations. We are being asked to work out sharing arrangements for when returns are too low to meet FSC needs but is DFO asking the sports sector to do the same?
- What percentage of IFR coho are being Coded Wire Tagged (CWT). We requested a fishery on marked coho last year and were told we could take them from the assessment fishery, but that does not permit our traditional fishing practices. How is the 3-5% ER shared? First Nations are supposed to be getting the first share after conservation. We are starving in our area and haven't fished coho in my lifetime, with no compensation or accommodation for the infringement on our rights. We had 10,000 coho return locally last year, which was a nice amount, but there is no trigger to permit us to fish. When does the PST expire? We need to start planning if we want to change these treaties, as it requires full discussion amongst us.
 - DFO: We could discuss moving up from the current 3-5% ER cap to permit more FSC fisheries. The 3-5% is mainly to cover incidental/bycatch in other fisheries, plus some limited FSC in terminal areas where we have confidence in the returns to specific systems and in what a precautionary fishery would look like. There is scope to look at that while we remain in the Low Status regime. FNs are engaged in the salmon treaty work. Treaty chapters expire in 10-year intervals (coho in 2028) so we will start thinking about areas for negotiation in 2025/26.

- Most of the coho produced in BCI are for stock assessment/CWT program, so they are not mass marked or mass produced for fisheries.
- First Nations from the US, Alaska and BC are meeting shortly to start planning a collective approach to future salmon treaties, with the goal of shaping a new treaty with a focus on indigenous fisheries that looks a lot different from the past.
- We encountered a lot of coho in our fishery last year that we were not allowed to retain.
- SEP (Salmonid Enhancement Program) is talking about reducing hatchery coho production while at the same time introducing new MSFs, which does not seem to make sense.
 - DFO: For IFR coho, most returning fish are wild, not hatchery fish.

Interior Fraser Steelhead Update

Jenn Davis, Province of BC

Key points in BC presentation included (See PPT for details):

- Overview of ministry reorganization, key Provincial staff whose work relates to salmon.
- Management is more challenging when fish are not plentiful, so the focus of reorganization is to put more emphasis on solutions that are long overdue.
- Provincial recognition of First Nations as rights holders and potential partners in collaboration, not stakeholders.
- Her team has been working with FNFC on how to organize and work with First Nations.

Discussion

- If the Chilliwack River is so full of steelhead that they can have a derby, why aren't they coming back to the interior? These are super fish who can swim up a waterfall. Canada and BC need to get their act together. We're also hearing conflicting messages on the role of hatcheries. If a hatchery can bring them back on the Chilko, put one there. My fishery has been cut by 90% and it's going to get cut further this year.
 - BC: We focus on wild fish because they have the best ability to reproduce and adapt to climate change. We do have some hatcheries, but when there are so few fish, we want to focus on rebuilding the wild stocks — unless we give up on them, and we're not ready to give up. There were missed opportunities in the past, and we have had good advice from First nNations. The goal is about how to ensure that nations all along the migratory route have access to fish.
- Until recently, BC's position was that habitat was not a problem for Early Stuarts, but we want to have enough habitat to accommodate a recovered population.

Presentation, continued:

- Overview of 4 population status categories that will drive different Provincial management approaches.
 - When we have a species in trauma, we need a different approach. BC is putting hydrologic systems at the centre now.

- This is not the answer, just an update, as there are a bunch of things we need to put in place to get started. An updated BC Action Plan is coming out this fall.
- Focus is on minimizing harm (e.g. forestry impacts), and starting restoration.
- New watershed healing approach includes addressing indigenous rights plus restoring a healthy watershed so it won't get blown out again in extreme conditions.
- PSSI and DFO have been great partners; FN can provide valuable direction on where to focus.
- Keep It: If we want to keep it, we need to embed the management needs in other things.
- Enjoy It: Human benefits are not just about harvesting.
- Habitat: It's about healing the river. The piece that's often forgotten is interim protection measures. If we can identify important spawning areas, we can try to get those protected. It's about changing the balance: we don't need a court case to do what needs to be done. We have the commitment now, though how well it's been done is still open.
- First Nations did work on IFR steelhead recovery that included mining the former Provincial process for useful info. We need the nations to tell us how best to deal with it. DFO has been a very good collaborator but there's a lot that BC can also do on our own.

Discussion

- I want to focus on what's needed in my territory. We need studies to see if the steelhead that we encounter in our approach area fisheries are ours or the Fraser steelhead. If we need to stop fishing to protect IFR steelhead, then so does everyone else. Pinnipeds are one of the biggest problems and we are the answer. We can harvest them, but we need a plant to process them and funding to get that in place.
 - BC: We're hearing the question of how to improve our discussions with Approach nations. In the past, people were running away from the issues. But we hope that starting this fall, we can start discussing what's within the art of the possible.
 - We have Guardian programs that can help.
- Q/A: Jenn Davis can help Fns navigate/connect to the right BC government people.
- How will the Province work with us to fix issues on the Coldwater? We're also looking at forestry and mining/water use.

ACTION: Jenn to follow up directly with Lee Spahan.

- We did a helpful education campaign about a decade ago for ATV weekend warriors, so education can help in some situations. Suggestion that other biologists review BC's steelhead management approach, as the current approach has not worked. Appreciate the points raised, I really feel that I was heard.
 - BC: Strategic messaging about steelhead management will come from Jenn's office going forward. BC is trying to fix the disconnect between individual professional opinions and BC's official positions. The approach is to bring together western and indigenous science through an anadromous committee (BC interest in a joint committee with FNs).

- It was hard to see hundreds of people fishing IFR steelhead; claiming to be stewards while lobbying to lower conservation thresholds. Logging companies should be required to build bridges instead of using culverts that impede fish passage.
- Thank you for being here. It gives me a higher level of comfort. Appreciate talking to the managers instead of dealing with economists and industrialists.
- Work done to help identify fisheries sensitive watersheds in Upper Fraser provided a useful tool to protect these areas, but we seem to be the only ones using it. Want to see stronger BC enforcement re use of this tool. In some areas, limits for clearcuts have been reached and yet they're still proposing additional clearcuts.

ACTION: Jenn to follow up with Darren re the Fisheries Sensitive Watershed tool, ensuring it's used and whether to strengthen it.

DFO PSSI Update

Mike Hawkshaw, Andrea Goruk, Brandon Wood, DFO

DFO presentation highlights included (See PPT for details):

- Areas of early action under each of PSSI's four pillars.
- Harvest transformation: intent is to develop new management approaches for periods of low productivity — i.e. emphasis on more precautionary approaches.

Discussion

- Does selective harvesting mean getting rid of gillnets? We can fish selectively by changing net mesh size. We've been fishing with gillnets for thousands of years.
 - DFO: In times and places when we want to avoid certain stocks, yes, we don't want to see gillnets in the water. But after conservation, where there is a place for FSC fishing with preferred methods, there would continue to be opportunities. FSC gillnets would have clear priority relative to commercial gillnets.
- Recreational fisheries fish in different ways, and those fisheries impact our access, some more than others, so how will monitoring be improved? Government is compensating commercial licence holders for lack of access, but we've lost 90% of our fishing with no compensation or accommodation. If we're all focussing harvest efforts on the Chinook 41s as the last remaining stock, how do we prevent that from crashing? No First Nations have agreed to MM/MSFs, yet DFO is pushing it. How much PSSI funding is going towards this? Case law is not being adhered to. We have nothing left to fish, yet PSSI funding is going to support all these other things.
 - PSSI will fund work on things like mandatory guide reporting and improvements to creel surveys. DFO has cut back rec and troll fisheries to reduce their impacts on the Summer 41s so that more are accessible for FSC. Staff will entire about PSSI funding allocated for MM/MSF.
- Eliminating commercial gillnets removes an important option to help younger indigenous fishers get into the industry. Where do we fit into these pillars? How do we access these funds? We want to restore fish populations so that we can restore our fisheries. DFO has

an agreement with the FSCMA, so why aren't these management decisions being made via FSMB instead of in different rooms without us?

- DFO: The commercial industry needs to become more viable, given the experience of recent years. That's the main driver for commercial harvest transformation.

Presentation, continued:

- SAP (Salmon Allocation Policy) review: The SAP drives much of what's in the IFMP and it was written in 1999, which was a different world. The 5 Nations fishery court decision triggered the Minister's commitment to update the SAP, with interim management changes (e.g. chinook allocation for the 5 Nations sale fishery is now allocated before the rec fishery). DFO has committed to work with nations on a new policy, with Phase 2 starting this spring.
- Indigenous harvest transformation: DFO wants to engage and consult with communities to co-develop proposals:
 - Key activities: transitioning to selective harvesting methods for FSC — e.g. to permit access using other methods when conservation concerns preclude gillnets (e.g. IFR coho window closure).
 - Investigating innovative or terminal fishing approaches.
 - Improving catch monitoring and reporting.
 - Improving management approaches: operational management approaches,
 - Pacific salmon indigenous communal commercial alternation program.
- Commercial harvest transformation: closures, licence retirement, derelict vessel program.
 - Modernizing management frameworks: focus on controlling fleet fishing power and better information on catch/bycatch to permit relaxation of fishing restrictions.
- Recreational harvest transformation:
 - Modernized, flexible management approaches, improved information and accountability (e.g. C&P follow up after creel survey reports).
- Overview of additional salmon-related work.
- Upcoming PSSI engagement opportunities, Let's Talk Pacific Salmon platform.

Discussion

- DFO closed our gillnet fishery despite having no steelhead encounters, but the rec fishery remains open, so how many encounters do they have? We need support to get into other fisheries — access to many key fisheries is locked up by big industry.
- What is the purpose of mass marking?
 - DFO: In areas with a lot of returning hatchery fish, mass marking allows selective removal of those fish. MSFs allow rec fisheries without impacting wild fish.
- There has been significant investigation of ITQ (individual transferable quotas) or share-based commercial fisheries. It may support fishery management but doesn't help with distribution of access and raises questions about assumed "ownership" of the fish. It benefits interception fisheries, but doesn't help with CWT stock assessment programs.

- DFO: DFO doesn't have a road map for what ITQs will look like, so we envision a process to build in the principles that people want to see, e.g. owner-operator and community-owned licences. So we acknowledge the risks but there are ways to address them. Re MSF impact on CWTs, there are methods to correct for that bias.

ACTION: Mike H to share a PPT on how to correct CWT bias from MSFs.

- There are different ways to mitigate conservation concerns in gillnet fisheries, such as mesh sizes and improved handling techniques (i.e. releasing fish in ways that reduce post-release mortality, which applies to all gear, not just gillnets).
- In our FSC fisheries, we count/verify every fish landed, with the help of 75 monitors. But anglers are allowed to self-report their catch via a phone line.

ACTION: DFO to address questions about criteria for derelict vessel program & how the licence alternation program will work, given discrepancy between gillnet and halibut or prawn licences.

- DFO: DFO plans more discussion with nations on the licence alternation questions.
- Re the PSSI work on recreational monitoring, FSMB has also identified many of these issues in their work plan, so how does that align with the PSSI approach? It feels like DFO is going backwards towards the outdated consultation model with much of the PSSI work.

Adjourned: 4:50 pm

Day 2 | Tier 2

Following introductions, Marcel reviewed key themes of the Day 1, Tier 1/Tier 2 discussions:

- Key topics covered in Tier 1, including the need for new approaches to weak stock management that emphasize priority and flexibility for FSC access where possible while ensuring protections and supporting rebuilding.
- Tier 2 topics included a review of the new Forum Action Tracker, update on IFR coho conservation framework, BC steelhead update and PSSI update.
- On the overall tenor of Day 1 conversations, Marcel reminded participants of the importance of respectful language and dialogue — being hard on the issues, not the individuals.

2023/24 Draft Salmon IFMP | Chinook Update

Mike Hawkshaw, DFO

Key points in DFO presentation included (See PPT for details):

- Recap of Fraser Chinook management objectives.
- 2022 Chinook measures: recreational and commercial measures to increase harvest available for FSC.
- 2022 escapements for Fraser Chinook MUs: all were significantly above brood year levels.
- 2023 forecasts: For all but the Summer 41s, returns better than brood year are expected, though many are still low/not out of the recent low productivity regime.

- 2023 management objectives: Target for Summer 41s in development; focus of potential new measures may be the Summer 52s and/or Harrison.
 - FSMB motion re potential new measures to reduce fishery mortality on Summer 52s.
 - DFO consulting on reducing ISBM mortalities in 2023 to meet PST commitments.
- 2023 management considerations:
 - Many Spring 52 and Summer 52 populations spawn above Big Bar and 2023 is the first year of returns affected by the 2019 slide.
 - Also many environmental considerations.
- 2023 management measures: continued precautionary approach for Spring 42s/52s, potential added restrictions to protect Summer 52s (significant measures already in place).
 - FSMB management advice on Fraser Chinook.
 - Management measures expected for 2023.
- Timelines for getting chinook fishery evaluation data: DFO will share additional new info available with the Forum agenda materials.
- Kobe plots: snapshot matrix comparing annual escapement and exploitation levels to highlight safe/unsafe combinations.
- Quinsam and Harrison: updated status relative to PST commitments.
- Mass marking/Mark Selective Fishery (MM/MSF): Update, next steps for the technical review process.
 - DFO is also running MSF pilots in Area 13, 15 and 16 off the main migratory routes for Fraser Chinook. No decisions yet on new MSF proposals for 2023.
- 2023 IFMP approval timeline.

Discussion

- Q/A: The start time for the NC Area F troll has been delayed in recent years to avoid stocks of concern and pass through more Summer 41s for FSC fisheries. Release mortality rates are factored in estimation of fishery impacts (commercial release mortality rates are higher).
- Q/A: Chinook pre-season forecast has been peer reviewed. DFO is required to produce it for the PST ISBM and AABM abundance indices, but it's not used for in-season management.
 - DFO should consider using a below-median forecast, given high uncertainty.
- Why present this to us if the minister is making the management decisions? Where is DFO with IFMP reform? DFO is not consulting with us on fisheries being approved in our territory — we have a judicial review on that now. UNDRIP requires management changes but DFO is using the same old approaches. Meetings like this are meaningless if the minister is making decisions without us. Opening sport fisheries ahead of us has to stop.
- Request that DFO include S_{MSY} values in presentation slides for comparison to actual escapement. **ACTION**
- Didn't see any new measures in the draft IFMP to reduce Harrison chinook impacts.

- DFO: There is no specific prescription but it will probably involve some restrictions to reduce those impacts.
- It's very important that we get the genetic stock ID for chinook bycatch in the groundfish trawl, and that DFO continue funding the enhanced monitoring program.
- Why isn't DFO taking the same approach for other MSFs?
 - DFO: Those are mainly designed to take advantage of the large volume of US hatchery fish passing through Canadian waters.
 - But mark-rates for these fisheries are highly variable, so there is high release mortality. And in some cases, many of the fish being caught are not US stocks.

ACTION: DFO to address questions about S_{MSY} for Fraser chinook, how that was calculated and also about details supporting the chinook forecast.

ACTION: For Nicola, does the escapement estimate includes hatchery fish?

- Propose the need for another formal technical consultation session on Chinook, between now and mid-June.

ACTION: Confirm PST escapement goal for Harrison.

- How will rec fishery impacts be reduced?
 - DFO: The ISBM fishery covers everything but the offshore troll, so reductions for Harrison chinook would mainly be in the rec fishery (mostly Northern/Southern Strait of Georgia).

ACTION: DFO to clarify whether 3,000 Chilliwack hatchery fish should be included in estimating 2022 escapement for the Summer 52s relative to S_{MSY} .

- DFO: Agree this needs discussion, e.g. at the proposed technical meeting.
- DFO: Chilliwack fish are not counted in escapement.
- JTC needs clarity on this, also at the follow up JTWG meeting.
- Question DFO's assertion that pilot MSFs are off the main migration routes for Fraser Chinook. We need further clarity on the technical basis for that. **ACTION**
 - DFO: There hasn't been a formal statistical study, but DFO can share the evaluation framework for MSF proposals. DFO Stock Assessment is also preparing a memo on the outcomes for these pilots that will be ready in late April for sharing.
- Support idea of a follow up workshop for the AAROMs outside JTC; we need support for that to happen.

ACTION: DFO to follow up re planning proposed additional JTWG chinook workshop.

- Q/A: FNs will be involved in planned workshops to develop MSF next steps: the intent is more collaboration, less info dumps.
- Why are inside areas still open to non-retention instead of no fishing for salmon, given data showing very high releases and release mortalities?
 - DFO: There is a continuum of rec actions from no fishing to chinook non-retention, and the idea is to find an appropriate balance between protections and allowing

opportunity where possible. We believe management actions significantly reduced impacts on early-timed chinook stocks. Further measures may be needed in August.

- If Summer 41 returns are lower than brood, why permit rec non-retention, given the extra release mortalities? What are they fishing for? What are the impacts of the recent Nicola floods? it would be helpful to show the migration timing of different Fraser chinook MUs. Also release mortality rates and effect of factors like bait use that increases mortality.

ACTION

- Summer 52s include stocks that migrate to the Upper Fraser.
- If MSF evaluation results aren't ready until next April, that's an iFMP process mismatch that FSMB needs to review.
 - DFO: CWT results are earlier; we can see if DNA results can be available earlier.

ACTION

- How does MM/MSF fit with the precautionary approach, given impacts detected on the Summer 52s? If there is no enforcement and/or creel gaps, those pilots should be stopped immediately. We do not give our free, prior and informed consent for these fisheries. We want to know more about the proposed reference fishery. FSC fisheries need to report their catch data every week, so the rec sector needs to do the same. They're killing far more fish than we are while our FSC needs are not being met. Re the chinook non-retention fisheries starting April 1, is there creel and enforcement at that time? Is bait allowed? How many years before these pilots become regular fisheries? Court rulings have provided guidance for both sides on consensus requirements and the need to avoid sharp dealings in order to do meaningful consultation. DFO needs to address our concerns, even when there is not clear consensus in the room.
 - DFO: Any mortalities in MSFs will need to be counted as part of the rec fishery's allowed impacts, so they are not free. DFO will share the reference fisheries PPT on the Forum website. **ACTION** The intent is to provide independent data on stock encounters, stock ID, mark/unmarked rates — i.e .a representative sample of what is vulnerable to the fishery.
 - Why doesn't DFO do the reference fishery before permitting MSFs instead of after opening them?
 - DFO: All the impacts would have been captured in the FMI (Fishery Mortality Index) calculations.
 - DFO will follow up to respond on the other questions above. Recreational creel surveys are done and results are shared monthly.
 - Q/A: Creel surveys happens in months with higher effort, then they use statistical methods to infill for other months.
- Suggestion to have a catch monitoring workshop.
- DFO: The objective of the planned MSF operational framework is to stop having pilots, so we hope to get it in place in time for the 2024 IFMP.

- Where does DFO get authority to open rec fisheries in April before FSC needs are met, and without consulting us? It's killing off all our fish. And extreme weather is killing off our habitat. Will DFO ask the minister when we will be accommodated?
 - DFO: This discussion raises important issues around how UNDRIP is implemented. We are also working together through reconciliation agreements like the FSCMA to address these concerns, which are also being shared and raised within government. The chinook management actions that we've taken since 2019 have had an effect, with improved returns in 2022. But one year is not a recovery, so we need to continue precautionary management. We're in a challenging position in terms of accessing the earlier-timed stocks, but DFO has reduced rec/commercial impacts on the more plentiful stocks, like Summer 41s, so FSC has increased for some groups, but we need to continue work to rebuild stocks so that others can also access them.
 - DFO needs to relay a clear message to the federal government that funding needs to be provided to support UNDRIP implementation. But I'm not happy with DFO management; our stocks have collapsed and we have never been accommodated, while DFO continues to authorize other fisheries.
- I share the frustration. On the coast we are still struggling with DFO on follow up to implement court rulings. In addition to monitoring, I want to see more validation. Reconciliation is about establishing trust and requires putting words into action.

FSMB Update: 2023 Chinook management

Matt Parslow on behalf of FSMB

Key points of FSMB presentation (See PPT for details):

- Background and context for FSMB choosing to focus on Summer 52 Chinook management for 2023.
- February 2023 FSMB motion: reduced impacts on Summer 52s, ensuring priority for FSC.
- FSMB's JTC asked to develop and work on scenarios for what the results might look like.
- Table: Fishery impacts for base period, 2019-2021 average and percent reduction by fishery.
- JTC work shows severe restrictions needed to further reduce from 15% FMI towards 10%.
 - Other considerations, e.g. reduced access to other stocks for FSC in 2023.
- Next steps: Harvest groups working through potential scenarios for reductions, using DFO staff and modelling resources.
- FSMB will meet again April 19 to review feedback, including from this Forum.
- JTWG explored the scenarios/tools in more details on Monday.

Discussion

- Marine recreational impacts were higher than First Nations originally and are still higher. That should be the first place to cut and FSC harvest should be higher. Also what kind of management adjustment is used to account for anglers who don't report their catch? Until First Nations are there to validate their catch, I don't trust DFO's catch reporting.

- DFO: DFO has focussed on making the largest reductions in the lower priority fisheries, and the largest remaining shares should go to FSC, so we do need to do more to address that. Catch monitoring concerns will be addressed in more detail in the proposed workshop.
- We now have a net for FSC and want to try to catch chinook in the marine approach.
- The FMI figures reflect how fishery mortalities actually played out — not allocations.
- JTC's updated gaming tool broke this info out in more detail — e.g. marine impacts include NC. We've broken down impacts by area, separated out test fishery impacts, etc, to help identify where further reductions can be made.
- The FSMB process is a new way of doing business, as the FSCMA gives us authority to make joint management decisions while ensuring that FSC priority is respected. Both parties go out and collect information via their respective processes and bring it back to the board to collectively use to come up with a consensus decision. Once FSMB makes a decision, both parties have a responsibility to implement it. We are still developing the process to do that. The agreement also does not fetter the authority of either party. We expect the FSMB will provide a briefing note summarizing all the information that supports our decision, which we will also have to figure out, but it should provide greater transparency. We won't always get everything we want, but if we can make progress, this new way of doing business will be worth it.
 - FSMC and DFO are also currently working on strategic planning to help work through the FSCMA implementation challenges.
- We've gone full circle from arguing about openings to arguing about closures. We need to start thinking about new management tools that can help achieve the reductions without full closures, so things like gear restrictions. We are collaborating well on FSMB as a team, despite our past differences, and even if we can't always get everything we want.
- How will DFO justify allowing rec fisheries without FSC needs being met? We won't be in the water before August. How will DFO accommodate us?
 - DFO: The Summer 52s are a key constraining stock. We have reduced fishery impacts but not as much as we want. They come back and peak in the Fraser during June-August, so this overlaps with fisheries targeting Summer 41 chinook. FSMB is discussing what changes we can make to further reduce these impacts and ensure the majority are reserved for FSC. So Summer 52 management is a key factor that will shape 2023 fisheries.
- Does the FSMB agenda for April include a decision on proposed MSFs?
 - DFO: The JTC has discussed fishery impacts in MSFs as part of their work on Chinook 52s.
 - Why is approval of MSFs not a FSMB decision?
 - FSMC shared a letter with DFO at Forum 2, suggesting that approval of MSFs should fall under the FSMB mandate, but DFO has not yet officially responded.

2023 Escapement Planning

Colin Schwindt, DFO

Highlights of DFO presentations included (See PPT for details):

- A more detailed technical version of this presentation was discussed at JTWG Monday.
- Preliminary 2023 Fraser sockeye and pink forecasts both well below median, with high uncertainty.
- Sockeye run timing considerations.
- Draft sockeye escapement options.
 - Table of potential 2023 harvest opportunities at different run sizes.
 - Draft escapement options summary.
- Draft pink escapement option and planning considerations; FSC expected to be met at all run sizes.
- Proposed window closure options: Good discussion at JTWG around this.
- Key considerations and questions.
 - Factors that will affect 2023 in-season management.

Discussion

- Q/A: Explanation of how the LAER level affects the amount of permitted bycatch for stocks of concern in order to support fisheries targeting other more abundant species.
- There won't be much chance of pink commercial fisheries, but the Americans will want to fish. Difficult discussions are expected because they want to retain sockeye when they fish for pink, although they're using sockeye mesh nets.
 - DFO: Retention of bycatch, both in Canada and US, will likely be a major issue in fishery planning for the next few years.
- Q/A: The 2023 forecast for Early Stuart is almost entirely 5-year olds, due to 2019 Big Bar effects. Big Bar impacts are also expected to affect 2024 returns. The 2023 forecast also considers recent positive marine conditions.
- Who gets the 20% LAER? If DFO permits 60% TAM (total allowable mortality), how could 40% of the run result in 100% of the returns needed in future? Why isn't there a third option? Why even allow a LAER instead of just allowing the fish to rebuild?
 - DFO: LAER is not a target but a cap and we try to manage to a much lower level. DFO shared a table showing how those impacts have been distributed in recent years. It's been mostly for test fisheries and FSC in the past 3 years. There is also discussion about a process to explore how future LAER allocations are shared. We usually only share 3 options in high abundance years. In years of lower abundance, we never hit those higher TAM caps — it's only very rarely, when run sizes come in well above expectations.
- Stop using the term abundance when returns are anything but. Why haven't the Early Stuart numbers rebuilt? Why is the federal government not doing revenue sharing with First Nations? DFO is always managing us but the sport sector can do whatever they want.

- DFO: In recent years, the ER on Early Stuarts has been extremely low, which suggests that fishing is not the cause of depressed returns. At the same time we've seen lots of environmental and climate change issues that may be linked.
- Q/A: LAER is part of our PST discussions with the US, and we've been using it to try to encourage the US to plan fisheries more conservatively.
 - When people talk about using LAER to enable other fisheries, we're looking at truly small numbers returning on these off years, e.g. for Lates, so we could be driving those populations into extinction.
 - DFO: That's why giving careful thought to the escapement options is important. It can give us important leverage with the US (e.g. choosing the more conservative options holds them to that LAER cap).
- Q/A: If no 5-year olds come back, we might need to explore additional measures to provide more protection — e.g. reducing test fisheries and FSC bycatch.
- Early Stuarts were bad 10 years ago, and it's now horrendous, so hearing about ways to fish them is distressing. We've been asking for years for details of how the forecast is calculated.
 - DFO: We can present that in a future JTWG meeting and bring in staff to explain forecast model selection.
 - It relates to earlier questions about how the proportion of 5-year olds was calculated.
- **ACTION:** Propose DFO report on Early Stuart questions at future JTWG meeting.
- The Early Summers brood year was 50% Nadina. I have concern about permitting fisheries that would mostly catch Nadina, when we haven't been able to fish them because we are trying to rebuild them. I want to see fishery management focus more on individual stocks, which are important to those who rely on them.
- We need to revisit what information DFO presents on Fraser sockeye and how. The details are slipping. The escapement plan approach was designed for when we had way more abundant fisheries, so we need a new approach. For this room, it's also important to share the breakdown by individual stocks. I'm on the technical committee but there is still reluctance to share data with me. The forecasts and uncertainties around them need to be explored as part of the consultation process. We can't provide feedback here without that. This is an opportunity to start doing this work jointly as a team. It's important to know your audience, and a mixed-stock fishery presentation is not appropriate for Upper Fraser nations. It's not acceptable to just keep rolling over past plans because there is no fishery expected, or to have the Fraser Panel decisions made by disinterested commercial fishers.
 - DFO: Welcome feedback on what this group wants to see from DFO. We will provide the more detailed presentations in future. We are starting to make progress, but welcome further discussion. We also need to work on how to meaningfully engage people in DFO's planning process.
 - There are ways to apply this information to the stocks in our area. The IFMP also includes such a breakdown.

- LAER sounds like it's just for commercial. I share the frustration over declining stocks and the lack of fisheries. We need to sit down and have a good discussion about our lack of opportunities and about what's happening elsewhere.
- We've had these tense discussions for 20 years and I don't see any effect of all this planning on Early Stuarts and my ability to feed my people.

Next steps:

- DFO: The government of Canada is currently finalizing an action plan to implement UNDRIP, with a strong focus on fisheries that will address management, funding, guardian programs and PSSI.

DFO participants left the meeting, which continued with Tier 1 participants only.

Day 3 | Tier 2

Marcel opened with a recap of Day 2, noting this had been the most productive of the 3 Forums so far. He added there appears to be a cultural shift underway towards one of curiosity and openness to learning, with a strong technical focus. The Forum process is still in transition and far from perfect but this is an important opportunity.

Key topics covered on Day 2 included DFO's Fraser Chinook management update, with many technical questions for follow-up and a proposed additional JTWG to address them. Tier 1 shared strong support for a fourth Forum linked to that.

Other topics included FSMB and Fraser sockeye/pink updates, and news from DFO about a pending Reconciliation/UNDRIP implementation Action Plan.

Tier 1 topics included next steps for an FSMC Forum letter, sockeye management questions, proposed fourth Forum and Monitoring Workshop and discussion of IRMA funding concerns, guardian programs.

DFO | What We heard

Matt Parslow, DFO

DFO presentation highlighted key messages heard by DFO. Additional details and questions from the Forum minutes will also be captured. Key points in this presentation (See PPT for details):

- Over-arching theme about when Canada will implement UNDRIP, the need for FNs to be involved in all aspects of planning, priority for FSC, questions around monitoring and the need to work on corrective actions.
 - Need to build trust to make progress on reconciliation; maybe start via tech process.
 - Accommodation for lost opportunity.
- Feedback about the Forum and JTWG process
 - Feedback re progress in improving Tier 1, JTWG; need to continue improving that.

- Importance of balancing relevant details with higher level info in presentations.
- Suggested guidance document for presenters.
- Forum renewal to consider JTWG feedback.
- IFR Coho: Key points, next steps and specific tech questions.
- BC presentation: Good to see BC attending; key message that DFO, BC and nations need to come together to support stock rebuilding.
 - Provincial tool: Fisheries Sensitive Watershed.
 - Need for BC and DFO to start working together on PSSI initiatives, with FNs as the common link bringing them together. Need to align our policies to support rebuilding from mountain tops to valleys.

Discussion

- Concern that PSSI is reverting back to DFO's old consultation model, not collaboration.

Presentation

- Interest in connecting BC's Coastal Marine and Watershed Renewal strategies (possibly a topic for the fourth Forum?).
- PSSI is a big pot of money and it came with a number of directions for spending on specific pieces like licence retirement, BCSRIF, better internal DFO organization, but other pots are also available.
 - Coastal FN concerns about commercial gillnet licences, steelhead closures.

Discussion

- The commercial sector is complaining that PSSI violates their rights (especially those with ITQs) but their access is a privilege, so how does DFO respond to that?
 - DFO is very clear that the discussion with the commercial sector is not rights-based, but about what is needed to support transformation of the commercial fishery.
 - There are conversations happening around FN interests in commercial access, and the minister appears open to that.

Presentation

- Fraser chinook management: Chinook bycatch in GF trawl, recreational fishery management, specific technical questions.

Discussion

- It's very important that DFO continue funding for GF trawl enhanced monitoring because we need stock ID for the chinook bycatch

Presentation

- Monitoring: Need for clarity about who is validating the reference fishery.
 - FN desire to be involved in validation and evaluation of impacts.
 - Concerns about not consulting local FNs in fishery planning.

- Workshop: Suggestion that JTWG work with DFO to plan how this rolls out, potential series of technical meetings.
- Sockeye management: questions about current tools being too blunt, in season management and PST; questions about forecast methods, evaluating past management.

Discussion

- [Link: Warren report on Aboriginal Guardian programs](#) (*Thanks, Mike S!*)
- In past years, there were weekly open calls in season. These have not been very well attended in recent years, but that is one avenue that could be re-tooled.
 - Another is Watershed Talk. Proposed DFO/FSMC follow up to improve awareness.
 - More in season info on chinook or sockeye would be great.
- Support ongoing funding for enhanced monitoring of chinook bycatch in GF trawl.
- Watershed Talk was a very useful tool, but it requires dedicated funding and staffing to do it.
 - FSMC is working to beef up staffing but will need more funding/capacity to do the work needed.
- Funding is a big concern everywhere, not just with FSMC. Guaranteed annual increases are needed for all our agreements to ensure that we can keep staff. DFO has used PSSI funding to address their organizational needs but not ours. Funding our organizations to do the work necessary is part of reconciliation.
- DFO referenced a Reconciliation Action Plan yesterday — how will DFO engage FNs in planning to guide the necessary reforms?
 - Plan is draft — it's currently being consulted online (60 days).
- **ACTION:** Proposed that FSMB and Forum Planning Committee discuss a potential response.
 - Indigenous leadership (AFN) have asked for more time to discuss the action plan. The indication is that it will be a living document.
 - Need to communicate to DFO the Tier 1 discussion about funding needs. Propose inviting Terry to talk to the Forum. We also need to hear from the Province on how they plan to implement DRIPA.
 - Given questions around approval timeline/consultation on the Action Plan — is it designed to be a living document that can be amended and improved?

Kukstsemc! Salmon Warriors Tracy & Janice



Ken Malloway, Greg Witzky, Chief Lee Spahan and IMAWG reps presented gifts from Forum participants acknowledging the contributions of two legendary “Salmon Warrior” women, Tracy Wimbush and Janice Bille, who are retiring



from the Forum process.

Forum Renewal Update

Marc Labrie, WCA

West Coast Aquatic presentation highlights included (See PPT for details):

- Eventual scope of Forum reform will depend in part on broader FSCMA changes underway and how those evolve.
- Progress to date: The WCA consultants are observing the process and interviewing participants to gather information. Next steps are to summarize and share to ensure it resonates, then use that to inform a plan.
- Goals include improving Forum efficacy, ensuring it's working for participants, aligning Forum goals with the FSCMA, strengthening relationships, improving transparency and accountability.

- Project completion date: June 2022.
- Priorities for the work: scope — will need more participation/interviews to ensure it's well informed. Project is on track for budget, behind the initial timeline.
- Next steps: Need more interviews, sharing a What We Heard document, reviewing proposed changes, communicating and seeking feedback on proposed changes, delivering final recommendations.
 - WCA is doing individual outreach and will also share a group email with a meeting schedule for the remaining project interviews.
- Status of progress on project deliverables.
- Emerging themes:
 - Need for clearly defined objectives, address forum schedule issues.
 - Dedicated time to sharing/hearing from FNs on topics relevant to their territories.
 - Space to develop consensus approaches
 - Breakouts and topic-specific sessions that come together at the end of day.
 - A place to talk about what is important to First Nations.
 - Reconsidered roles for JTWG and its input to the Forum.
 - Added structure to Tier 1 sessions.
 - Revised Forum schedule.
 - Also what happens to Forum outputs, communication cycles: linking Forum to other processes; this will be shaped as well by FSMC's strategic planning.
 - Transformative change requires looking at more than just one part.
 - Communications plan; need for communications capacity.
 - Next steps: Push to complete interviews and What We Heard.

Discussion

- Importance of taking time to work on trust building exercises
- We're seeing evidence of an emerging culture of learning and openness to collaborative problem solving from both sides. Proposed dialogues to solve specific tasks can plant the seeds of change and trust building that will guide and support the broader transformative change required — i.e. it may start to take shape naturally from seizing and nurturing such opportunities instead of trying to plan it all up front.
- Q/A: Marc to send Jeff the list of DFO interviewees. **ACTION**

Tier 2 adjourned