



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL FISHERIES RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 30, 2017, 10:00 AM

Regional District Board Room, 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Dianne St. Jacques, Chairperson, Mayor, District of Ucluelet
Tony Bennett, Director, Electoral Area "C" (Long Beach)
Penny Cote, Director, Electoral Area "D" (Sproat Lake)
Jack McLeman, Director, Councillor, City of Port Alberni
Sheena Falconer, West Coast Aquatic Management
Andrea Goruk, DFO, South Coast Division
Don Hall, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
Barron Carswell, Ministry of Agriculture

REGRETS: Josie Osborne, Mayor, District of Tofino

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Gunn, Contractor
Tracy Bond, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

The Chair recognized the meeting is being held in the Tseshaht First Nation and the Hupacasath First Nation Traditional Territories.

Introductions took place around the table.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

a. **Regional Fisheries Resource Committee Meeting – September 14, 2016.**

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the minutes of the Regional Fisheries Resource Committee held on September 14, 2016 be received.

CARRIED

4. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

5. CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION/INFORMATION

- a. **MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS**
Nuu-chah-nulth Fishing Rights/Ahousaht et al v. Canada
- b. **DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS**
On-Vessel Processing of Hake by Domestic Harvesters
- c. **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**
Fisheries Habitat Restoration

There was a discussion regarding the Department of Fisheries comprehensive review and the restructuring. It is unclear which programs will be affected and to what extent. The focus will be shifting and resource restoration and habitat may be off the list. A. Goruk advised there are significant changes. The focus is to be on legislative and regulatory priorities. A. Goruk will forward any information she is able to share with the Committee.

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT correspondence a-c be received.

CARRIED

6. REPORTS

- a. **Department of Fisheries & Oceans Update – A. Goruk (Verbal)**
 - Herring – there were no commercial fisheries on the WCVI this year, only FSC and Treaty fisheries were open.
 - Herring assessment consisted of seine test charter, First Nation's charters in Area 23, 24 and 25, dive survey (vessel based and shore based) and eleven spawn flights.
 - Dive survey results are not available yet but main Barkley spawn appeared smaller than last year, Clayoquot Sound spawn observed was similar to last year; more spawn in the Esperanza side of Area 25 this year but less (none) in the Nootka side.
 - Chinook – The forecast terminal return of adult Stamp/RCH Chinook to Barkley Sound and Alberni Inlet in 2017 is approximately 79,000 (range

58,000 to 100,000). This is about an average return and similar to last year. With this return, directed Chinook fisheries are expected in the terminal Alberni Inlet area for all sectors.

- Barkley Coho – the 2017 outlook is low to near target. Information to forecast Coho returns is limited.
- Chum – the forecast return to Barkley is below average and below lower fishery reference points. 2017 forecast is 38,000 (range 17,000 – 74,000). Lower fishery reference point is 48,000.

b. Update on Low Expectations for Returning Sockeye – A. Goruk (Verbal)

- Pre-season forecast for Somass Sockeye is 172,000 (critical zone)
- Key factors in the sharp decline of expected abundance relative to recent return years are: i) very low observed smolt production and ii) relatively low marine survival rate for the 2014 and 2015 key sea-entry years associated with this year's adult return.
- The management outlook for Henderson Sockeye is in the "very low zone" for harvest management, corresponding to an expected return of less than 15,000. Similar to Somass Sockeye, key factors in the low expected abundance for 2017 are the decline in the marine survival rate associated with recent sea-entry years and relatively low smolt production in 2015.
- At this run size, there is no available commercial, economic opportunity or recreational harvest.
- The Area 23 Roundtable has recommended a closure to Sockeye fishing for all sectors consistent with the Area 23 local management plan. First Nations have volunteered to not fish for FSC or domestic harvest at this run size.
- Potential opportunities may be possible if the run size is up-graded.
- The test fishery commences June 12/17 and the first in-season re-forecast is June 29/17.

c. Update on Provincial Ministry of Agriculture – B. Carswell (Verbal)

The Province is working closely with DFO concerning habitat. It looks like this will be a good season for Hake. The department has one new staff member. His name is Mike Turner. Also on board within the next month or two will be a new "Denis Chalmers".

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Fisheries Resource Committee recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors forward a letter to

the new Minister responsible for Fisheries in the Province of BC outlining the importance of fisheries to ourselves, Coastal BC and the Province.

CARRIED

d. Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Update – D. Hall (Verbal)

D. Hall indicated that the low Sockeye returns are happening coast wide. Chinook – the Sport and First Nation fisheries have seen the lowest total allowable catch in recent years. Area G and the five First Nations commercial Chinook fisheries underway in May but catch numbers were low.

Several chapters of the Pacific Salmon Treaty are being re-negotiated. Currently the parties working hard to complete all chapters except the Sockeye and Pink chapter that is on a different schedule. West Coast of Vancouver Island will not see much impact for revised Chum and Coho chapters. The conservation of Chinook is very important to Canada. Both parties have exchanged papers. Negotiators will be meeting again this summer and negotiations are scheduled to conclude near the end of September.

Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and fishers report poor Herring harvest opportunities this year.

There is a new marine conservation “Area of Interest (AOI)” being proposed for well off shore of the west coast of Vancouver Island. Major areas of interest for a marine protected area covers 141 square kilometers and would be the largest ever-proposed marine protected area on BC’s coast. This is part of the Canadian commitment to increase protection of coastal offshore areas. A. Goruk provided a presentation from other DFO staff with more information about the proposed AOI.

Update on Justification Trial – this has been a very slow seven year process. The arguments are now before the judge and there is no indication on when there will be a decision. Negotiations have taken a bit of a different turn. They are being led by Indigenous & Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to lead to a reconciliation agreement. The first meeting with INAC and DFO took place May 25-26, 2017. So far, there is no apparent change in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans position. Sessions will continue through the fall. The objective is to have a memorandum complete and to the Cabinet by fall with a reconciliation agreement on aboriginal rights. The Five Nations are committing to this new process.

D. Hall advised he is retiring in the fall and this is probably his last meeting with the Fisheries Committee. He thanked the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Fisheries Resource Committee for including Nuu-chah-nulth involvement for the fifteen years that he had represented the NTC.

e. West Coast Aquatic Update – S. Falconer (Verbal)

S. Falconer advised that the high level of in-kind is proving challenging in upcoming projects. The Barclay Sound Working Group would like to see full support for projects as finding fifty per cent in-kind is proving to be extremely difficult to find in small communities. The Somass Basin Habitat Restoration project is moving forward, the Chinook Net Pen project is on-going, and there is currently work being done on water quality testing. The initial water quality results showed problems for aquatic life in some sites but further testing will occur. Twenty-three sites are being looked at including: McCoy Creek, Roger Creek, Ship Creek, Dry Creek, and the Inlet. The information will be reviewed closely to ensure it is correct. The report should be complete within the next few months.

Working with Ducks Unlimited regarding land acquisition critical for habitat. The Net Pen project first year survival rate showed on a small increase but the catch ability was up seventy-five per cent. The information coming out of this project will take a few years to get a good picture. Currently working on the Fish flow project application to go in the fall.

f. Alberni Valley Update – P. Cote, J. McLeman (verbal)

P. Cote provided an update on “Bob’s Rock” and the flooding that took place in Sproat Lake, Beaver Creek and Tseshaht. There were millions of dollars in damage. There is a push to remove the large rock, and to ask Catalyst to fold down gates at time high fall participation. Emergency BC will be providing a grant program and applications will be available this fall. The group is planning to apply for funding to remove the rock. This should be looked at first as it may effect flow in other areas downstream. It may be better to look at the watershed as a whole. S. Falconer advised she would work on a grant application for a hydrology study that would include the entire area.

Koi continue to be a problem on Sproat Lake, as do the Bullfrogs. The Bullfrogs are migrating around the lake. Send a letter to Laura Brown, Regional Director, DFO and Dr. Matthias Herborg, Aquatic Species at Risk Coordinator, Province of BC regarding the Koi issue and the issue of the Bullfrogs eating the Sockeye smolts.

g. West Coast Update – D. St. Jacques (verbal)

D. St. Jacques provided an update on the Hake fishery. The Hake quota is good - 138,000 metric tons plus 17,000 metric tons carried over, Joint Venture is 15,000 metric tons. Last year saw a large quota but the catch was only 103,000 metric tons. The problem being not enough boats in the water. There is real concern regarding the shifting around of allocations. Ships are considered

shore-side but they are not. There is a constant battle on who gets what. The East Coast Shrimp fishery sees specific allocation on ship and shore-side. This is the preferred model. All parties then know what they are working with and know how to invest.

The Sports fishery has begun.

MOVED: Director Cote

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT reports a-g be received for information.

CARRIED

7. LATE BUSINESS

a. Pacific Salmon Treaty Negotiations

MOVED: Director McLeman

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Fisheries Resource Committee recommend the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors forward a letter to the Canadian Commissioners negotiating the Pacific Salmon Treaty with the U.S. advising that the Regional District does not wish to see any further Chinook reduction on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

CARRIED

b. Marine Spill Response

MOVED: Director McLeman

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Fisheries Resource Committee recommend the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors forward a letter to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard copied to the Western Canada Marine Response Corporation requesting that Marine Spill Response funding not be based on the approval of the Kinder Morgan project proposal.

CARRIED

c. Bullfrogs and Koi in Sproat Lake

MOVED: Director Cote

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Fisheries Resource Committee recommend the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors forward a letter to the Provincial and Federal Governments advising of the Regional District's environmental concerns with respect to invasive species in Sproat Lake and asking if there has been any environmental impact studies done with regards to Bullfrogs and Koi in the Sproat Lake Watershed given how important Sproat Lake is to Sockeye rearing.

CARRIED

8. ADJOURN

MOVED: Director Cote

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 11:58 am.

CARRIED

Certified Correct:

Dianne St. Jacques,
Chairperson