



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL FISHERIES RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MAY 13, 2015, 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)
Keith Wyton, Director, Electoral Area "A" (Bamfield)
Jack McLeman, Councillor, City of Port Alberni
Sheena Falconer, West Coast Aquatic Management
Dennis Chalmers, Province of BC
Peter Hall, Salmon & Herring Manager, DFO, South Coast Division,
Don Hall, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

REGRETS: Josie Osborne, Mayor, District of Tofino
Penny Cote, Director, Electoral Area "D" (Sproat Lake)

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY: Director J. McLeman

SECONDED: Director T. Bennett

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

a. Regional Fisheries Resource Committee Meeting – June 23, 2014.

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the minutes of the Regional Fisheries Resource Committee held on June 23, 2014 be adopted with the following amendment:

Page 3, Item b to read "through the implemented Pacific Salmon Treaty program".

CARRIED

4. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

5. CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION/INFORMATION

6. REPORTS

- a. P. Hall, DFO provided an update on Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Chum and Herring. This year the Chinook fishery's Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is significantly lower than last year which was 205,000. This was an over forecast. This year's pre-season TAC forecast is 127 thousand. Included are 60,000 for the recreational fishery and 6,700 for the Toquaht fishery but the TAC will be adjusted with in-season information. The food and ceremonial fishery is approximately 11,000 pieces. The terminal returns for West Coast Vancouver Island hatcheries is poor returns on 4 and 5 year old fish with better returns for 3 year olds. There is an Area 23 meeting scheduled for May 14, 2015 and they will be looking at lowering the TAC for the larger fish. S. Falconer advised that Robertson Creek Hatchery lost 200 adults in fall of 2014. 100,000 eggs were lost due to the new Chiller System somehow failing. This is being looked into. P. Hall advised that the Canadian Government is still involved with a dispute with the U.S. regarding the Chinook TAC.

Coho

This season's West Coast of Vancouver Island Coho return has mixed forecast signals suggesting opposite things. There is a warm water 'blob' off the coast. This phenomenon is unusual and may be an early stage el nino. The Coho returning who went to sea last year will have experienced this. It is not known yet how this will have affected them. The 'blob' is huge and about 2 or 3 degrees warmer than normal and can have a significant impact. DFO is monitoring. This year the Interior Fraser Coho is the focus on the south coast of BC. There will probably be more restrictive measures. This will impact the West Coast recreational fisheries in retention of Coho and type of gear although this has not yet been determined.

Sockeye

This season's Sockeye pre-season forecast for the Somass is quite good, approximately 700,000 to 1 million. This number will be updated in-season. The Henderson Sockeye forecast is moderate with 25,000 to 45,000 fish. Last year we were disappointed in the return to Henderson. There will be a discussion at

the Area 23 meeting on May 14th regarding Henderson Sockeye and the low snowfall this year. Alternate management strategies will be developed if needed this year. Sockeye are now being caught for food and ceremonial. DFO is optimistic that the First Nations Sockeye agreements will be signed off within the next few weeks.

Chum

There will be a forecast on Chum but this is not available as it has not been finalized. There have been poor returns over the last several year and it looks like the same will be true for this year. Any surplus will be allocated to First Nations food and ceremonial. There is some optimism around Nitinat Lake Chum but we will see what happens. Work is being done to develop a plan.

Herring

There was a 23,244 Herring allocation for West Coast Vancouver Island. There were 2,000 tons for the seine fishery and, 1,000 for Gillnet fishery. The Gillnet fishers were not interested in coming. Seven Seiners and 1 packer came over. They looked at Barkley Sound but the fish were not the quality that they were looking for. They were in Barkley Sound for less than 24 hours with no catch. There was a small First Nation fishery but very little harvest. The Department is looking at some of the science and management aspects of the fishery over the next 3 years. (Herring management framework renewal).

- b. D. Chalmers provided an update on the Provincial Seafood Secretariat. Four Ministries will be represented including the Ministries of Agriculture, Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Environment, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. The Terms of Reference is currently being developed. The objective is for the Province to speak with one voice. There will be a central body to address. It is hoped the Secretariat will be together and running sometime this year.

It was suggested that a Letter of Support for the Provincial Seafood Secretariat by the Fisheries Committee would be of assistance. This letter is to be addressed to Barron Carswell, Senior Manager, Intergovernmental Relations.

D. Chalmers advised that the Hake TAC for 2015 is 114,739 metric tons. This is a 2 per cent increase from last year. Out of the 111, 000 TAC last year only 44, 000 fish were landed. The Russian and Ukraine markets have been our largest and with the trade boycotts and political unrest that market has ended. China is now our only market and that is limited. Province representative have recently returned from the Brussels Seafood Show with no orders or interest. Last year there was no interest for joint venture. It is unclear if there is an interest for joint venture for 2015. The Treaty expires in approximately 3 years and if we can't get the fish out of the water it may affect the future Canadian allocation in these negotiations.

In the Shrimp Trawl Fishery by-catch is a big problem. There have been major changes over the years in gear, and this has had huge impact on the fleet's ability to catch the 42 million pounds of shrimp available West Coast of Vancouver Island /Queen Charlotte Island. The By-catch limits are consistently lowered as the biggest by-catch is Eulachon, which is endangered. Now there is strong interest in shrimp from China, but there are only 42 boats catching. Oregon has introduced blue LED lights on the trawl and this has helped lower their by-catch by 90 per cent. In Canada we have a regulation that bans the attraction of fish by the use of lights. An application to set up an experimental fishery to test the use of lights on the west coast could be made and that information could be used to change the regulations but this will take 2 or 3 years.

- c. D. Hall discussed the Salmon Treaty Mitigation Settlement monies. There are still approximately 17 to 19 million dollars in the mitigation pot. This money was for Salmon treaty settlement for the loss of harvest for our fishers. Originally there was 29 and half million dollars to mitigate impact on fisherman. 11 or 12 million has been used to buy-back licences. There is a set amount the Government can offer for the buy-back and they cannot offer a higher money amount. This may be an appropriate time to raise the issue with the Minister of Fisheries with alternate suggestions. Originally Areas "F", "G" and "H" were included in the buy-back, Area "H" has now been dropped. The Salmon Treaty re-negotiations are coming up in 2018. Discussions regarding which chapters should be reviewed are just commencing. As DFO is in the early stages it is a good time to talk to them about community interests and involvement in position development. The Commercial Salmon Framework is a good opportunity for the West Coast of Vancouver Island commercial salmon fishers and First Nations to work together. So far two proposals have gone forward to the Minister.

D. Hall reported Herring. Where there was a spawn it was very light. First Nation Chiefs will be meeting in June. It appears they will be opposed once again in 2016 to any Herring Fishery on the West Coast. The DFO model is not trusted.

D. Hall updated the Committee on the continued Fisheries Justification Trial with 5 Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and DFO. The original decision was in 2009. Canada is now arguing that their infringement of the five First Nations rights is justified. Originally Canada estimated they would need 55 days to hear their witnesses but we are on day 35 of the trial and only six witnesses of more than 20 have been heard. The trial is definitely going to take longer than originally scheduled. There will be a recess in July and August. After Canada is finished it is the NTC's turn. The Trial will be moving to Ahousaht for a few days in the Fall and then back to Vancouver. D. Hall would like a letter of support from the Regional District for the economic benefit that this the fishery has had. It was suggested

that Mr. Hall come to an up-coming meeting of the Regional District Board of Directors meeting.

- d. J. McLeman discussed the need for the Fisheries Committee to be kept updated with regards to halibut specifically the recreational fishery. P. Hall suggested inviting the DFO Sport Fish Manager to a meeting to give an update.
- e. S. Falconer reported that there is new information from genetic testing that the Chinook in the Sproat River are wild. This will have implications for fisheries management in the future. The Barkley Salmon Working Group is just completing a Chinook Risk Assessment on the Somass, Nahmint, Sarita, and Toquart watershed systems. The Assessment includes Very High Risk factors, High Risk factors and Moderate Risk factors for each life history stage and each watershed. The group is conducting a review of the Risk Assessment factors which includes identifying data gaps, working with stakeholder groups and identifying action items for follow up.
- f. Terms of Reference – Fisheries Resource Committee

Due to time constraints the Committee will discuss the Terms of Reference at the next scheduled meeting.

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the Regional Fisheries Resource Committee receives Reports a-f.

CARRIED

7. NEW BUSINESS

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the Fisheries Committee recommend to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors that a letter be sent to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans regarding on-going concerns with the use of the Pacific Salmon Treaty mitigation funds:

- *Expressing concern at the license price being offered in light of the decline in uptake by industry in the buy back process;*
- *Asking for an update of expenditures and number of licenses tendered; and suggesting that a new approach be adopted in order to better support the Area G troll fleet in light of expected further catch allocation reductions in 2015.*

CARRIED

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Wyton

THAT the Fisheries Committee recommend to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors that a letter to be sent to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, regarding concern that community interests be represented when Canada develops positions to be taken during the 2018 Pacific Salmon Treaty re-negotiations.

CARRIED

MOVED: McLeman
SECONDED: Bennett

THAT the Fisheries Committee recommend to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors that a letter be sent to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans requesting that due to the continued economic and social importance of the Area G Troll Fleet to our communities, a mechanism be developed that continues to take into account their need for access to Coho when Fraser River fishing plans are being developed.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Fisheries Resource Committee is to be held on Monday, June 29, 2015 at 10:00 am at the Regional District Office.

It was requested that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans provide an update on the Halibut Sports Fishery at that time.

9. ADJOURN

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Certified Correct:

Dianne St. Jacques,
Chairperson