



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL FISHERIES RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018, 1:30 PM

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)
Josie Osborne, Mayor, District of Tofino
Penny Cote, Director, Electoral Area "D" (Sproat Lake)
Jack McLeman, Councillor, City of Port Alberni
Tawney Lem, West Coast Aquatic Management
Allison Witter, Province of BC
Dr. Eric Angel, Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries
Mark LaBrie, West Coast Aquatic Management

REGRETS: Andrea Goruk, DFO

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm

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

Chair St. Jacques welcomed new members to the Committee and provided a short overview of Committee.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY: Director Cote

SECONDED: Director McLeman

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

a. **Regional Fisheries Resource Committee Meeting – May 30, 2017.**

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the minutes of the Fisheries Resource Committee meeting held on May 30, 2017 be received.

CARRIED

4. CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION/INFORMATION

- a. **April 11, 2018 News Release from Ucluelet Salmon Fishermen calling for the Federal Government to release \$17 Million in emergency relief and May 1, 2018 ACRD letter sent to DFO Minister urging immediate attention to the plight of Area G Fishers.**

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT this correspondence be received.

CARRIED

5. REQUESTS FOR DECISIONS

- a. **Request for Decision regarding review of Fisheries Resource Committee Terms of Reference.**

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the Fisheries Resource Committee recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors adopt the Terms of Reference for 2018 with the following change: Item number 7.3 "The Committee will provide a status report to the Regional District Board of Directors annually" be removed from the Terms of Reference.

CARRIED

6. REPORTS

- a. **Department of Fisheries & Oceans – Salmon and Halibut Allocations and Openings Update, Hake Update, Area G Trollers Update - A. Goruk**

A. Goruk was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report to the Committee. Highlights included:

- **Salmon Update – Somass Sockeye – pre-season forecast for Somass Sockeye is approx. 500,00 (below the long-term average of approx. 750,000)**
- **Potential differential return to Great Central Lake (much weaker) versus Sproat Lake is expected to be an issue this year that may**

affect harvest opportunities. Detailed plans under development by Area 23 roundtable to address these concerns. Actual fishery opportunities will be based on the in-season assessment of abundance information.

- AABM Chinook – WCVI – AABM TAC – 88,300, FN FSC 8,447, Recreational 50,000, Commercial 29,853
- WCVI Chinook – Hatchery – Overall returns in 2018 similar to levels in 2017, Conuma Hatchery/Conuma River preliminary forecast is approx. 40,000 Chinook, Robertson Creek Hatchery/Stamp river forecast approx.. 80,000 Chinook, In season re-forecasts based on distant and terminal fishing indices
- Wild WCVI Chinook remain a stock of concern
- WCVI Coho – Outlook is low to near target
- WCVI Chum – 2018 levels similar to 2017. In areas other than Nitinat, Chum populations have been relatively depressed recent years.
- Halibut Update – This year, Canadian and American International Pacific Halibut Commission Commissioners (IPHC) failed to reach agreement for only the second time in the history of the IPHC. Regulations state in the event of non-agreement, catch limits default to the previous year. Based on IPHC stock assessments Canada will take a voluntary reduction for 2018, Recreational TAC 927,990, Commercial TAC 5,295,995.
- Hake Update – 2018 Total Canadian Offshore Pacific Hake quota 156,067 metric tonnes. Shore side – 121,910 MT, Joint Venture – 4.157 MT, Reserve – 30,000 MT.

There was a discussion regarding Carp and the American Bullfrog in Sproat Lake.

b. Provincial Fisheries Update – A. Witter (Verbal)

A. Witter advised she is new to her role in the Province. For the first six months she has been working in out-reach and doing a needs assessment on ways the Province can help – e.g., business development, innovation, marketing/branding. Involved in Grow BC, Feed BC, Buy BC, working on clean technology in fisheries and aquaculture etc. The BC Seafood Expo happens in Comox this year on June 11th and 12th. A. Witter is still in process of getting to know people and would be happy to hear of any groups or individual she should contact. Allison works closely with Provincial people in the policy division.

The Committee discussed the need for the Province to make the Federal

Government more aware of provincial interests and the importance of the industry in rural BC. The Province must understand the Federal Policy and get the message to DFO that British Columbia is interested in the fisheries. A. Witter agreed there is role for the Province. The Committee would like to see fisheries and aquaculture elevated by the Province. A. Witter suggested getting together to discuss. The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance is working on this and further discussion will take place at their fall forum.

b. **Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Update – E. Angel (Verbal)**

E. Angel advised that the court decision in the Justification Trial has been released. There is still a lot to be negotiated and for the 2018 fisheries, progress is very slow. The negotiation process regarding recognition of rights for First Nations in BC is a disappointment. Very little is happening, it appears not to be a priority in Ottawa. Any suggestions from this committee in helping to bring this issue to the forefront would be appreciated. The Herring fisheries is closed for commercial this year. DFO and the First Nations are working together on this. Stocks are staying low. The natural mortality rate is upwards of 80 per cent and no one is sure why. There is much concern with Chinook wild stock. Looking at building up stocks. There is considerable discussion on the impact of marine mammals on herring and salmon. Large cut in the Halibut TAC. Significant cuts in the Chinook TAC and difficulty reaching agreement in Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiations with the US. This is going to make this fishery difficult to manage. The northern chapter not being able to reach agreement puts in question ratification of the treaty as a whole. At some point there is going to have to be a discussion regarding sports fishery. Big changes happening with the Federal Fisheries Act. The NTC put in our own submission but did not get to meet with committee. In regards to the Ocean Protection Plan, the NTC Working Group is coordinating interaction with transport mainly. Overwhelming kind of initiative. Trying to support First Nations and see what parts would be beneficial.

c. **West Coast Aquatic Update – T. Lem (Verbal)**

T. Lem advised there is a large discrepancy between Great Central Lake and the Sproat Lake runs. Great Central Lake is down to 29 per cent from an average of 56 per cent of the total Somass return. Fishing could be shut down after the three- week opening. Additional data currently being gathered.

T. Lem discussed the two different organizations under the umbrella of West Coast Aquatic, Management and Stewardship. Funding that supported by Management and Stewardship ended March 31, 2018. Sheena Falconer, Executive Director, Stewardship, is now working in a different capacity.

Round Tables: The first roundtable began in 2005. This was the Barkley Sound Roundtable. The success of table has led to several more roundtables on Vancouver Island. These roundtables include all people or bodies who are affected by aquatic resources. The roundtables are working very well. At the harvest tables, the focus is developing local fishing plans and maximizing value in a particular year. Groups talking about what is happening on the water, test fisheries, monitoring. Relationships between all parties have been improved. Seen increased compliance on the water. Sectors enforcing each other. Seeing unique arrangements where harvest tables are contributing to the stewardship table.

On the Stewardship side risk assessment are being conducted to find out the highest-ranking issues. This is being paired with habitat status assessments to develop restoration plans. This work helps the Roundtables direct limited resources to the right places. For the past few years the Barkley Sound working group has mainly focused on the Somass. This is now opening up and the entire Barkley Sound is being looked at, including forestry. The Barkley Group is working on strategic plan, including looking at different scenarios and options to handle the increasing number of warm water events. A strategic plan is also being developed at the Clayoquot Roundtable this year. Barkley and Clayoquot will be looking at a marine risk assessment this year. All Roundtables have expressed the need for involvement of the Province. West Coast Aquatic sees an opportunity for the Province to be involved at the stewardship level at least. Always pursuing funding for the roundtables including the Department of Fisheries and others. The Cowichan Valley Regional District is looking at a very small Parcel Tax for funding roundtables. Would the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District be interested in a Parcel Tax? A meeting has been scheduled with Joy Hillier of DFO with respect to the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) for June 4, 2018 in the Regional District Boardroom. The meeting will include an overview on what the MPA is about, what the process is, and what has been done to date. Regional District Directors are invited to attend. As presently conceived, these off shore areas have the potential to impact some fisheries.

d. **Alberni Valley Update – P. Cote, J. McLeman (Verbal)**

P. Cote advised there is a meeting in Sproat Lake scheduled on May 24th to discuss the Weir. A watershed meeting is planned with the city in June to discuss water quality.

J. McLeman advised he has been hearing much talk around the bullfrogs and carp in Sproat Lake.

e. **West Coast Update – D. St. Jacques, J. Osborne, T. Bennett (Verbal)**

D. St. Jacques advised that it looks good for Hake this year. Hake TAC is 156,000 metric tonnes, 30,000 to Fisherman for foreign factory ships. It is important that the foreign factory ships do not interfere with local Fisherman. The processing plant continues to have difficulty hiring enough employees. They are looking into providing employee housing. Starting wage is only \$14.00 per hour and that is being looked at.

The sports fishery just began and looks good.

J. Osborne attended an Agriculture Plan meeting May 15th. Aquaculture keeps coming up.

The District of Tofino has written to DFO and the Province in regards to the Front Street Dock. The long-term sustainability of the dock is in jeopardy. The dock is currently in need of capital upgrades to maintain its safety and continued operation and maintenance is much too expensive for a small town.

T. Bennett – No report.

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

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

CARRIED

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Fisheries Resource Committee to take place in the fall of 2018 at the call of the chair.

8. ADJOURN

MOVED: Director Bennett

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 3:39 pm

CARRIED

Certified Correct:

Dianne St. Jacques,
Chairperson