

RIVERS SMITH SALMON ECOSYSTEMS PLANNING SOCIETY
TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

May 2, 2005

9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Airport Inn
Port Hardy**

Present:

Sandy MacLaurin	DFO: Community Advisor
Karl Wilson	DFO: Biologist
David Stevenson	RSSEPS Coordinator
Doug McCorquodale	Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nations: Biologist
Bruce Burrows	Wuikinuxv Nation: Fisheries Manager
Jen Fagan	DFO: Stock Assessment Biologist
Miranda deVisser	Pacificus Consulting: Minutes

Start meeting 0935

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss the final reports from 2004 and discuss the project planning for 2005.

Brief Updates

David has met with Ian Robertson of Interfor to determine if they have any funds available for contribution. Although Interfor is interested in cooperating with the Society, the majority of their FIA money is allocated towards road deactivation, and they will not be able to contribute this year. David will meet with Ken Hall of Western Forest Products next week to see if he has interest in involvement.

Karl has looked at the channel in Machmell Flats, and it appears that the channel is not functioning as planned. There is currently very little water in it, and silt has become an issue. A solution to siltation problem could be minimized by continuous monitoring, regulation, and maintenance of the channel. The WFP would like the water license to go to the Wuikinuxv but they are reluctant to assume the responsibility for it without a budget for monitoring and maintenance.

REVIEW OF 2004 REPORTS:

RS3: Wannock River Hydro Acoustic Project

The Society is satisfied with the recommendations in this report. Although it was decided that this project will not go ahead this year, technological advances suggest that it may become feasible in the future.

RS4: Early Marine Ecology for Juvenile Sockeye Salmon in Rivers and Smith Inlet

The Society agreed to fund this project, provided the following recommendations are met: an Owikeno band member will be trained in labeling and data collection for the

project, a masters thesis will be published on the project highlighting comparisons with previous data and recommendations for the future, and the project will be peer reviewed. It was agreed that the peer review process would be important in determining whether the project is valuable or not. The importance of the context of the review was discussed, for example, how the data is going to be used, whether this project is a reasonable way to gain information, and if this information will be applicable to other projects. Due to funding constraints, it is likely that the Society will be able to provide Rick with PSEF funding for only 1 – 2 more years. It was agreed that Rick should be notified of this possibility.

RS5: Docee Fence Co-Management Capacity Study

Within the next month, DFO (Jen Fagan) & GN (Doug) will meet to develop a long-term schedule and targets for this program to address the issue of capacity building.. In addition, they will discuss what needs to occur for the GN band to take a more active role in planning and conducting the program. The Pacific Salmon Foundation would like to know how this project relates to the Recovery Plan. Doug stated that some kind of schedule and targets will be built into this year's proposal.

Jen Fagan, currently acting for Julian Sturhan, provided the group with a stock assessment update. Matt Mortimer has recently committed to the sockeye biologist position and will fill the position until September.

The possibility of the Society becoming an AAROM partner was discussed. Doug has previously communicated this idea to a DFO resource manager, and after some consideration, the idea was negatively received. A meeting is scheduled for May 24th regarding AAROM, which Doug will be attending.

Action item # 1: Doug will provide the Society with an update on the AAROM meeting.

RS7: Long Lake Chinook Habitat Study

Doug made several recommendations regarding potential projects within Long Lake, aimed at the chinook population: a juvenile emigration study, as well as a study on lakeshore spawning, could provide valuable insight to the system.

Recent slides have caused large amounts of debris to accumulate in the lake. The GN band is attempting to commence a salvage project and direct the revenue towards fisheries rehabilitation, but because the entire lakeshore is within a protected area, accessing the wood may be difficult. The Province has stated that if they receive support from Fisheries and Oceans, they would ensure the protected status of the lakeshore while still allowing access to the wood.

RS9: Geneese Creek Fence

It was confirmed that the fence will not be run this year. Although there are not enough funds to run the fence, it is thought that the site has potential, and an engineering team will still evaluate the site and determine the most suitable fence type and location.

RS10: Productive Capacity Review of Owikeno and Long Lake Basins

Due to contradicting and inapplicable models, it was difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding productive capacities. The sockeye capacities will be a reasonable data set;

however, no models were found that can be applied to other populations (i.e. Long Lake coho). Jen mentioned that DFO would like an opportunity to comment on the paper – department biologists will be meeting to put together some comments and pass this onto the authors/group.

The potential of creating a workshop to review targets at the North Pacific International Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (NPICAFS) this fall was discussed. It was stated that the Owikeno case fits into the NPICAFS symposium reasonably well, and that it would be a good opportunity to obtain advice and insight into what is driving stock variation. Mark Johannes, the program chair, is the contact for organizing an NPIC workshop and can be reached through www.fishclimate.ca.

RS11: Creel Survey

Last year, a good number of the total marked tags from the Wannock River were recovered.

This year, DFO has a significantly reduced budget for this survey. Bruce stated that if a band member is hired to assist, the Owikeno band would top up the wage. If no changes are made to the DFO budget this year, the survey will most likely be run for approximately two weeks of this summer, compared to four weeks last summer.

RS12: Wannock River Deadpitch

The Rivers-Hakai Sportfishing Association has agreed to contribute funding for this project so that the program will be at the same level of effort as last year.

RS 8 - Sockeye Enhancement Evaluation

The key issues for the group to consider regarding this study are whether or not enhanced fish are making a contribution to population numbers, and what their actual survival rates are compared to their expected survival rates. As the data has been worked up, the survival rates to age 4 are as follows: Inziana 0.27, Amback 0.3, and Genesee 0.19. The biostandard for other areas in BC is 0.68. According to Sandy, it is predicted that, depending on the age 5 component, sockeye survival rates will not deviate much from this biostandard.

Although popular sentiment states that hatcheries are successful in contributing to stock enhancement, little conclusive evidence exists supporting this statement. It is thought that in this case, conservation enhancement is a contributor to fish stocks and can be used to avoid extirpation of local stocks..

One of the recommendations made in this report was to work towards better Area Under the Curve (AUC) estimates. It was stated that current estimates are an underestimation of actual numbers.

TEMPLATE REPORTS FOR 2005

The Society wishes to develop a report template to be used on all future project reports for the Pacific Salmon Foundation. The following summarizes the proposed template:

Title Page

- Same title as used on the PSF contract

Summary

- Brief statement highlighting the outcomes and results of the project

Introduction

- State the problem, provide background information, indicate the scope of the project, and the location
- Explain how the project relates to the recovery plan

Activities

- Outline the activities, location of activities, personnel involved, and work schedule
- Outline the methodology used

Outcomes

- Provide data, limitations of data, results, discussion of problems, and conclusions

Future Activities or Follow Up

Conclusion

- State what was learned and how the goals of the Recovery Plan were furthered

References

Appendices

The Society proposed that methodology, budget, and expenditures sections be added to the template. Font, heading styles, and general formatting consistency were also stressed. It was suggested that a shorter executive summary of the project could be submitted, while the complete report be posted on the website.

PILOT PROJECT FOR PSF

The PSF has decided to undergo a pilot project for evaluating recovery plans. The goal of this evaluation is to show that the recovery plans are still working towards the goals originally stated in their plan. Of the seven recovery plans, the Rivers-Smith plan was one of the two selected to test the evaluation framework on. David and Sandi will be attending a PSF meeting in May to present the current status of the Rivers-Smith recovery plan.

JUVENILE SURVEY

Questions were raised regarding the allocation of available funds to the Juvenile surveys of Long Lake and Owikeno Lake. Kim confirmed that two trips will be made to Long Lake to complete the trawls, and one trip will be made to Owikeno during January – February of 2006 to complete the acoustic survey. DFO will be conducting a 2 boat trawl in September 2005 (consistent with past years) and paying for this out of DFO budget. Due to the fish behaviours associated with glacial sedimentation in Owikeno Lake, acoustic surveys in this system can only be conducted from mid January to late February.

DFO has already budgeted \$14k for the Owikeno and Long Lake trawls. The contribution of \$10K from RSSEPS will cover the cost of additional acoustic trawls in Owikeno Lake.

Action item # 2: Kim will provide an updated status overview for both Owikeno and Long Lake for the period 2000 – 2004 by late summer or early fall.

Action item # 3: Kim will provide a project proposal by the end of May.

PROJECT PLANNING FOR 2005

The following outlines the projects and budgets for 2005:

1. Juvenile survey – Owikeno Lake	\$ 10,000
2. Sockeye Enhancement Evaluation	\$ 13,000
3. Early Marine Survival	\$ 40,000
4. Docee Fence	\$ 8,000
5. Critical Habitat Survey	\$ 10,000
6. Project Coordination	\$ 47,000
Total budget	\$128,000

Total budget available from PSF	\$120,000
Available from 2004 surplus	<u>\$ 10,000</u>
Total available for all projects	\$130,000

The sensitive habitat survey was discussed in terms of who the review should be sent to, and what the outcomes of the survey will be. Some names mentioned to send the review to included LGL, Triton, Pacificus, Mike Barry, Dave Burte, Blue Revolution, and the universities. The end project will essentially be a digitalized map including extensive stream and species information.

A budget, including all the funding sources, was requested.

Action item # 4: David will email Doug the financial planning documents for this year.

LAKE FERTILIZATION PROJECT FOR OWIKENO AND LONG LAKES

The logistics of lake fertilization projects were discussed. It was stated that lake fertilization projects are only beneficial if the system is food limited. If the number of fish in the lake is too small, food availability will not be an issue and fertilization will result in minimal improvement.

In Nimpkish Lake, a previous fertilization experiment began by stocking the lake with additional fish to create a food-limited system. After stocking, fertilizer was added and a burst of phytoplankton followed; however, an unfavourable species of phytoplankton was targeted and the fish did not benefit. After adjustments were made to the fertilizer, a favourable species of phytoplankton was targeted, and an increase in fish size was noted. Previous studies have not highlighted Owikeno or Long Lakes as ideal fertilization candidates; however, after some discussion, it was agreed that the project may be feasible in Long Lake.

Action item # 5: Jen will try to locate the applicable lake fertilization reports and send to David.

SUMMARY, PLANS FOR NEXT MEETING, ADJOURNMENT

It was decided that any writing received regarding publications will be posted on the web in the relevant section.

It was agreed that another meeting is not required at this time, provided a list of projects, allocations, and project leads is sent out to all members of the Society.

Action item # 6: David will email the Society an email confirming the 2005 projects.

Action item # 7: Jen will follow up with Kim Hyatt regarding recent cost estimates for DFO acoustic and trawl surveys (both DFO conducted and contractor conducted)

End meeting 1500