

# The Docee Fence Co-Management Study – Final Report



Prepared for: The Rivers and Smith Inlets Salmon Ecosystem Planning Society  
Box 1719 Beaufort Avenue  
Comox, B.C.  
V9M 1R8

Prepared by: The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation Fisheries Department  
P.O. Box 110  
Port Hardy, B.C.  
V0N 2P0

**Table of Contents**

Introduction.....2  
Program Activities .....2  
Financials .....3  
Summary and Reccomendations.....5

## INTRODUCTION

For several years, various agencies have undertaken fisheries management activities and environmental restoration works within the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation Traditional Territories. The large majority of these undertakings have proceeded without any involvement of Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw members, and the information from these projects has rarely flowed back to the Band.

Since becoming a member of the Rivers and Smith Inlets Salmon Ecosystem Planning Society (RSPG), the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation is now more aware of fisheries activities within the Smith Inlet area. This is particularly the case with sockeye, a species that continues to be vital to the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw livelihood and culture. With a growing fisheries department, the Band is continuously seeking to become involved in the management of the sockeye stocks within Smith Inlet. A unique opportunity to increase involvement and capacity exists at the Docee River, where a salmon enumeration fence has been in place for several years.

Through working cooperatively with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, also a member of the RSPG, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation initiated what will hopefully become a long-term program at the Docee River Counting Fence. Band technicians worked in conjunction with DFO technicians during the first year of this program. The objectives in the short-term for this program are to increase the capacity of Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw technicians by providing formal and occupational training at the Docee River Counting Fence. The long-term objectives are to develop trained technicians who will possess the skills necessary to conduct fisheries research within their Traditional Territory.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Through partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, two Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw crewmembers were involved in all aspects of the Docee River Fence Operations. These activities included the enumeration of both immigrating adults (through the counting fence) and emigrating juveniles (through the rotary screw trap). Additional activities included adult and juvenile salmonid identification, mark-recapture analysis, scale-otolith-meristics sampling, trap operation, and sub-sampling for species composition.

While involvement in the enhancement of sockeye taken from Smokehouse and Canoe Creeks was to have occurred, the program was not undertaken this past season due to an increase in escapement to the Long Lake watershed.

Since the two band technicians were going to be working at a federal facility (Docee Fence), various forms of safety training were required. These training programs included:

- Bear Awareness Training
- White Water Safety Training
- Firearms Safety Training (FAC)
- Level 1 First Aid (with Transportation Endorsement)
- Small Boat Handling Training

Both technicians completed all training programs successfully. In addition to the training requirements, it was also necessary for the selected individuals to undergo DFO security clearance procedures. Once clearance was attained, the crew was sent into the Docee camp and employment commenced at the fence site in late June, with the two G-N individuals rotating on a two week on, two week off schedule.

#### FINANCIALS

The initial budget projected to complete the Docee River Co-Management Study was \$20,000.00. The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw fisheries program was to contribute \$7,000 for additional flights, training, labour, accounting and administration. The band did contribute this sum of money by project's end. In addition to the anticipated contributions for this project, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans contributed a total of \$6,500 for six weeks of labour costs, and two flights. The unexpected contribution from DFO resulted in a surplus for the project, and the total cost to the RSPG was only \$14,500.00. While it was suggested that the extra funding be expended on a year-end training seminar for the two Band technicians, timing and logistics did not allow this to occur. The detailed breakdown of actual costs incurred for the project is listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Actual costs associated with the Docee River Co-Management Study**

Item	Quantity	Hours or Days	Rate or Unit Cost	Total
<b>Labour (Camp)</b>				
Regular Hours	1	18 days	\$129.75 / day	\$2,335.50
First Rest Hours	1	3 days	\$194.63 / day	\$ 583.89
Second Rest Hours	1	5 days	\$259.50 / day	\$1,297.50
			<u>SUBTOTAL</u>	<b>\$4,216.89</b>
<i>Labour (Training)</i>				
Regular Hours	2	11 days	\$129.75 / day	\$2,854.50
			<u>SUBTOTAL</u>	<b>\$2,854.50</b>
<b>Training Costs</b>				
Firearms	2		\$100.00	\$ 200.00
Whitewater	2		\$420.00	\$ 840.00
Bear Aware	2		\$45.00	\$ 90.00
First Aid	2		\$160.00	\$ 320.00
Safe Boating	2		\$195.00	\$ 390.00
			<u>SUBTOTAL</u>	<b>\$1,840.00</b>
<b>Equipment/Travel</b>				
Flights	10		\$141.70 / flight	\$1,417.00
Kms (to / from airport)	288		\$0.42 / km	\$ 120.96
Waders	2		\$180.00	\$ 360.00
Raingear	2		\$120.00	\$ 240.00
Footwear (boots)				\$ 75.65
			<u>SUBTOTAL</u>	<b>\$2,213.61</b>
Admin. / Coordination	1	9 days	\$375.00 / day	<b>\$3,375.00</b>
<b>Total Contract Cost*</b>				<b>\$14,500.00</b>

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation envisions a day when co-management of marine resources is a reality. This year, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation moved towards their co-management goal on projects such as the Docee Fence. With full-time involvement during the field season, invaluable skills and knowledge were attained by the Band members, who are now more comfortable and confident in field situations.

The Docee program is a natural project for co-management. In the long term, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation hopes to continue to develop individuals who possess the skills and capacity to operate the enumeration programs, and be involved in the management decisions that result from the data collected. The Docee enumeration programs are reasonably straight forward, and are currently staffed by students or junior biologists. The long-term goal is to become the lead organization for the enumeration of salmon stocks in this region, through cooperation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation is aware of the importance of the data collected at the Docee River for fisheries management. While the long term goal is to develop a fisheries program capable of running and administering the field operations at the Docee River, band members must continue to develop the skills which will allow for successful performance of program duties. The band is not currently looking to "take over" operations at the Docee River in the short term. The band is, however, looking to have meaningful involvement in all activities in the region on an on-going basis.

The band feels strongly that the program, which was initiated at the Docee Fence this year, must continue in future years to ensure the growth of Band capacity. While the program should be viewed as a success, the following suggestions should improve the program in future years:

- While the involvement of supervisors from both organizations (DFO and GN) was extensive during the interview and hiring process, there needs to be more involvement from Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw supervisors during the course of the project. The difficulties encountered with one employee this past year may have been avoided if there was better coordination throughout the field season between the two supervisors.

- There continues to be great interest in the Docee project from the leadership of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw. Efforts should be made in future years to ensure a more open environment at the camp, including scheduled visits from band leadership to inform the community of the valuable, cooperative works occurring at the Docee Fence.
- The employee reviews, progress reports, job descriptions and deliverables need to be developed more clearly prior to the project, and both organizations need to ensure that their respective supervisors follow up as a team to ensure the program does not experience any labour issues.