

RIVERS SMITH SALMON ECOSYSTEMS PLANNING SOCIETY
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 21, 2006
Conference Call
9:00 a.m. to 10:55

Present:

David Stevenson, Bob Bocking, Sandie MacLaurin, Dave Peacock, Bruce Burrows,
Julian Sturhahn, Peter Johnson, Karl Wilson, Doug McCorquodale

1. Wannock River hydro acoustic experiment.

Peter Johnson of LGL Limited gave a report on the experiment to use Didson Hydro Acoustic equipment to identify fish in the Wannock River. A good site with a gradual slope was found in front of the Eagle Nest B & B. A depth profile of the river bed was obtained. A report on the profile will be provided by Don Deagan. It was concluded that Didson hydro acoustic technology would be a viable option for more accurate enumeration. It would require two Didsons one on both sides of the river to acquire a good data set. The new long range Didsons now have a range of 80 meters. The experiment was able to count 25 to 30 fish in a short period of time. There was no examples of milling or fish going downstream.

When compared to other technologies the Didson does a good job of counting high abundance as well. You actually see the fish moving through the beam although there is some shadowing with large targets. Bob asked how the fish movements were recorded. There are 3 groups working on a software package. There is a group in Nanaimo who have developed a tracking program that catches 90% of the target. The data collection will be automatic but it will still require some quality control to interpret the data. The manual tracking is straightforward but labour intensive and costly. The cost of purchasing a Didson unit is \$75,900 US. Wireless internet connection can be used to send data from the collection site. A temporary shelter would have to be built to house the two lab tops and other electronics. The 2 Didson scanners would be discreet and not confuse the two recorders. The total estimated cost would be \$210K.

Peter and Bob agreed to work on the stage one concept paper for the Northern Boundary fund. The Wuikinuxv must accept a key role in the project. Wuikinuxv crew will be trained to run the sounders and collect the data. The sounders could be used for other projects as well such as enumerating chinook returns. There was some discussion on who would own the equipment. Insurance, security and maintenance are issues that would have to be dealt with. It was agreed that some sort of co-ownership between DFO and Wuikinuxv would be best with an MOU to spell out the use, care and maintenance of the equipment. .

2. Rivers Inlet Echo Sounding Project 2006

This year's project has gone quite well. The data is being processed right now. The quality of the data is good according to Don Deagan. It did discern when sockeye showed up but there were fewer numbers of sockeye than expected. It is recommended that the echo sounding program be repeated again next year. The data collected can be correlated with the historical data collected from the previous echo sounding program. This year's seine catches to determine species composition indicated a 90% sockeye catch. There were a small number of springs, dogs and humpies caught. This year's project was partly funded by Wuikinuxv TRM money. It is not certain that this would be available for next year's project. In addition, some admin costs need to be added to the project costs as there is no more funding from PSF. 15% was suggested as a reasonable rate. The DFO committed \$30K to the Echo Sounding Project for 2007

3. Smith Inlet Chinook Mark Recapture

Julian has been considering the use of radio tags for a mark recapture program for the Smith Inlet Chinook. They would need to be seined in the lower river, marked and then recaptured on the spawning grounds. There was some discussion on the best method of capturing and marking the chinook. It was suggested by Ivan that we use PIT tags and a PIT tag receiver on the Docee Fence. The object would be to capture the chinook below the fence, mark them and then see how many actually proceed through the fence. The idea would be to get an estimate of the total population. Doug assured us the GNN has the crew capacity to undertake the project. The project would attempt to get population estimates. The tagging of 40 to 50 fish would be sufficient. Recovery of the carcasses will depend on how high the water levels are. Julian commented that there is now an underwater camera in place at the Docee Fence so it will be useful to identify tagged fish. It was agreed that Doug and Julian would work together with Ivan to produce a concept paper for the Northern Boundary Fund.

4. Inziana Creek otolith reading

Sandie reported that the Salmon Enhancement Evaluation data is being reviewed by Brian Anderson. He is concerned about the lack of 4 year olds from the 2001 brood year in the 2005 Inziana sample. He suggested that we should try and get samples from the Inziana in 2006 to see if any of the 2001 brood year show up. The DFO have some funds in the budget for the collecting the samples but not for reading the otoliths. There may be as many as 3,000 samples required.

It was agreed that this proposed project would not likely be approved for funding by the Northern Boundary Fund and that we should seek funding from other sources.

5. RSSEPS November meeting

Bruce asked if we could hold the next meeting of RSSEPS on September 6th instead of the 7th as he has a previous commitment. There will be a meeting of RSSEPS on **Wednesday September 6** at the Air Port Inn in Port Hardy. The meeting will start at 9:30. and go to about 4:00. We will review our summer projects, assess escapement numbers, discuss the conservation units for the Wild Salmon Policy pilot project and begin planning for 2007 projects. A full agenda will be sent out early in September.

