



**Summary of Meeting:**

**20 January 2004  
10:30 AM to 3:30 PM  
Airport Inn, Port Hardy**

**Present :** Doug McCorquodale, Sandie McLaurin, Lewis Bubl , Jonathan Hepples, Rick Routledge, Michael Rough, Colleen Hemphill, Sharon Chow, Misty McDuffee, John Nelson,, Bob Bocking, David Stevenson

Review and confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was introduced by the Chair, David Stevenson and accepted.

**Agenda items and Discussion**

**1. Summary of last meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on December 9 in Vancouver had been circulated. There were no errors or omissions reported so the minutes were accepted as written.

**2. Coordinators Report**

David Stevenson gave a short report on his activities as coordinator. A bank account has been set up in Evergreen Credit Union in Port Hardy for the RSSEPS. The signers on the account will be any two of three namely: Colleen Hemphill, Bruce Burrows and David Stevenson. A contract for the coordinator's position has been agreed upon based on the proposal submitted to the Pacific Salmon Foundation by Norman Dale. Terms of Reference for the Management Team and the Technical team have yet to be developed. We are still waiting for a copy of the Society's constitution and by-laws from Norman. They need to be reviewed and if necessary revised. The web page needs to be updated. We are waiting for the contribution from the Pacific Salmon Foundation to get to the bank. Web page updates will happen early in February. It has been confirmed that there is \$52,000 for the Information & Coordinating Project and \$150,000 for the rest of the projects. There were some problems with the list of email addresses but this has now been resolved. There are travel claim forms available. Travel claims for this meeting will be dealt with early in February.

**3. Review of 2003 Projects**

Doug gave an overview of the 2003 projects. RS1 the coordinating project has been approved and will start in November 1/03. RS 2 the recovery plan will be reviewed in Vancouver on January 26 and 27. Doug will finish the edits after the meeting. The final report for RS 3, the hydro acoustic study on the Wannock River, done by George Cronkite has been received. The report by Rick Routledge on Juvenile Habitat Assessment has been received. There is \$5,000 due on the



contract which will go to OKNTC. Rick has an outstanding invoice which has not been received. RS 5, the Docee Fence Co-management project is still waiting a final report which is due at the end of January. PSF will complete the contribution agreement when they get the final report and an invoice. RS6, the Long Lake Juvenile Assessment project requires a final report. A contribution agreement has been signed between the RSSEPS and the DFO.

There was some discussion on the process for evaluating the final project reports. It was agreed that project leads should have their work reviewed by the Technical Team first. If they recommend approval then the reports will be distributed to the whole group. There was some discussion on the requirements for official DFO reports most notably copyright. It was agreed that the reports will be jointly owned by the RSSEPS and the Government and that the information would be in the public domain. This should be identified in the contribution agreements between the Society and the DFO. RSSEPS contributions to the reports must be recognized and acknowledged. Rick reported that one of his Masters students will be publishing a report of their work in a scientific journal. As long as the Society gets credit for its role in the project, this will be acceptable.

#### **4. Recovery Plan Discussion**

The latest draft of the Recovery Plan has been circulated and Doug has received some feedback. The DFO have been reviewing it and feel that it needs to be tightened up a bit. Gary has proposed a 2 day meeting of the Technical Team in Vancouver to review the Recovery Plan and to decide the projects for 2004. Editing of the Recovery Plan will be done using power point and revisions to the document can be done by the group. The major part of the revisions have been done to the plan, it only needs some fine tuning, references and formatting. Doug was concerned that there may be some issues over the reduction of the number of projects being considered. There was some discussion on Table 7.1.2 on Fisheries Management Goals. It remains incomplete. It was included at the request of Rich Chapple of the PSF. Bob Bocking pointed out that the Recovery Plan is a framework document and does not need to detail the projects as these will change over time. The major issues and strategies should be identified and this is acceptable to the PSF. The budget table still needs to be completed. The costs of projects will be provided at the Vancouver meeting. It was suggested that the Recovery Plan remain a framework document without the specifics of each project and that the details of projects be identified in an accompanying Work Plan for 2004.



## 5. Technical Team Composition and Terms of Reference

The term "Joint Technical Team" comes from the expansion of the previous DFO technical team to include other members of the RSSEPS. It was suggested that the following people comprise the Technical Team: Wayne Wall (Interfor), Rick Routledge (SFU), Bruce Burrows (Oweekeno), Doug McCorquodale (GNFN), Bob Bocking (PSF), Gary Taccogna (DFO), Jonathan Hepples (DFO), Sandi MacLaurin (DFO), and other DFO technicians as needed. John Nelson (UVic) said he could be available if needed. David Stevenson will act as chair of the meetings. It was suggested that we try and involve someone from the Province on the Technical Team. Al Martin, Director of Fish and Wildlife and Ian McGregor were mentioned as possible contacts.

It was suggested that the Forestry Investment Account may provide an opportunity for funding parts of the Recovery Plan. Doug mentioned the need for the active involvement of the Forest Companies in the implementation of the Recovery Plan. The FIA may be in its last year.

**Action:** David will get information on the CCLRMP and the Oweekeno Land Use Plan to determine if how they impact the Rivers/Smiths Recovery Plan. Sharon will provide a map of the area showing land use designations.

It would be useful to know the Terms of Reference for other Technical Teams for other Recovery Plans.

**Action:** Doug and Bob will forward any information that they have on ToR for other groups to David. David will continue to work on producing ToR for the group to consider.

The ToR were discussed namely issues of process, conflict of interest clauses, tendering process, peer review of reports. In terms of conflict of interest Lewis urged an open and transparent process where any perceived conflicts are identified quickly. The previous group who worked at salmon recovery was perceived as working out of self interest. The PSF has expressed a preference for tendering of projects where it is appropriate.

## 6. Process/criteria for selecting 2004 Projects

David pointed out that there is a need for clear criteria and objectives that are linked to the Recovery Plan to guide project selection. Doug stressed the need for an enumeration plan that was reliable, consistent and repeatable each year. We need a means of determining progress or success of the different projects. Doug wants some priority given to enumeration in determining next year projects. We need to identify the objectives of the enumeration plan in terms species, location, activities and outcomes.



Gary tabled a document titled "Watershed Management Plan for the Owikeno Lake Basin" produced by the Braden Ecological Resources for the DFO. This document puts forward four important objectives that need to be addressed:

- 1) accurate spawner enumerations are necessary
- 2) limits to salmonid productivity must be identified for freshwater, estuarine and early marine environments
- 3) impacts of logging, especially wood debris accumulations on beach spawning, rearing, and estuary habitats need to be quantified and if possible restored
- 4) effects of large scale environmental change such as global warming and glacial melt need to be understood.

Doug pointed out that similar objectives are identified in the Recovery Plan. One of our priorities has to be sockeye, that is why we are here.

It was pointed out that the Owikeno Lake Basin is considered a conservation unit according to the DFO Wild Salmon Policy. John Nelson gave a brief summary of some of his findings on the genetics of the Owikeno Lake sockeye. The Recovery plan needs to proceed on a total ecosystem basis, and at the same time focus on specific parts.

It was suggested by Sandie that one way of identifying projects was to consider the following questions:

- 1) Will the project contribute to the Recovery Plan?
- 2) Has the work been ongoing?
- 3) Does the project provide new information?
- 4) Is the project do-able within time and financial constraints?

The present target numbers used in the Recovery Plan are based on Al Wood's modeling and represent our best guess on marine survival.

Sharon expressed the need to focus on the proper enumeration of all species. Jonathan pointed out the need to define the Limit Reference Points (LRP) and the Target Reference Points (TRP), the point at which certain actions are triggered and the optimal escapement numbers. Target numbers are needed for each species and for each watershed. Bob added that we don't need definitive numbers but that estimated recovery targets would suffice for selected species like sockeye and coho. The question is what can we do with reasonable certainty and scrutiny from a peer review.

Other concerns were determining the productive capacity of Owikeno Lake and maintaining genetic diversity of stocks. Are there enough nutrients in the Lake to sustain the salmon fry? Objectives should include: return the ecosystem to full capacity, return levels of sockeye to historic levels, understand the reasons for the decline, and be able to measure the recovery. All the projects must fit within the proposed budget. Since there are more projects than funds there will need to be some effort to raise other funds.



There was some discussion over the causes of the 99 decline in sockeye stocks in both Smiths and Rivers Inlet. It was agreed that global warming probably played a role in the decline. If the problems are related to global warming then at least we can plan for it and take actions to protect the remaining stocks.

Doug suggested four possible priorities: co-ordination, enumeration, filling knowledge gaps, and enhancement treatments. These are included in the Recovery Plan. Decisions for project selection should be based on what will be best for the Recovery Plan, then costs should be determined and funding sought. That is, don't let funding requirement be the sole determinant of what projects are chosen. The Recovery Plan can be used to lever other funds. All sources of funding are on the table including the DFO's and the First Nations.

Rick wanted to add three projects to the list:: analysis of glacial retreats, ways to analyze with satellite imagery past productivity and hydrodynamic modeling in the Inlet. Paul Whitfield of Environment Canada has some information on glacial melting.

Jonathan suggested that a marking project in Inziana River should be considered. It would require a significant dead pitch count. 5% of the juvenile trawled fish were marked. In 1999 2,000 fish were marked, in 2000, 8,000 fish were marked, in 2001, 560 to 800,000 fished were marked, in 2002 200,000 were marked. 2004 was identified as the final year of the enhancement program in the DFO Sockeye Recovery Plan of 2000. Any enhancement post 2004 would be reviewed by DFO/RSPG and would consider the decision points put forward in the DFO document. None of the fish were marked in 1999 as there were small numbers (though the otolith banding would be different that wild fish due to incubation at Snootli). All fish have been thermally marked in 2000-2003. There are three different marks, one for Owikeno basin stocks, one for Wannock and one for Long Lake (Smokehouse & Canoe).

There was some discussion of the 21 proposals listed in Recovery Plan. There was a question on #2 the Traditional Ecological Knowledge study. Was it completed?

**Action:** David will contact Stephanie Henry to inquire.

There was a question on project #3 the Ecosystem modeling project. We await Nigel's proposal on this one.

There was some discussion of sport fishing creel project. Michael pointed out how important it was to implement a creel survey for non-lodge sports fisherman. Lewis pointed out that commercial fishers are monitored closely and that they pay the costs of this monitoring. It was agreed that closer monitoring of the non-lodge sports fishers was needed.

phone 250 890-0297 email [dagit@island.net](mailto:dagit@island.net) fax 250 890-0297



Misty McDuffee of the Raincoast Conservation Society explained their proposal to take core samples from the bottom of Owikeno Lake. They are prepared to work with Rick Routledge on this proposal. Rick explained how core sampling worked to provide a historical record of salmon abundance. Analysis of the core samples takes time and money.

Lewis reminded us how important it is for the Society to communicate our work to the general public and to other resource users such as the commercial fishers. It is one of the tasks of the coordinator to develop a communication strategy for the Society to keep everyone informed.

**7. Conclusion:**

The next meeting will be for the technical team to review the Recovery Plan. It will take place in Vancouver at the Pacific Salmon Foundation on January 26 and 27. The meeting will start at 9:30 am. The next meeting of the RSSEPS will be determined as needed.