

**RIVERS SMITH SALMON ECOSYSTEMS PLANNING SOCIETY**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**February 1, 2005**

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

**Pacific Salmon Boardroom**

**1682 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave**

**Vancouver**

Present:

Sandy MacLaurin	DFO: Community Advisor
Karl Wilson	DFO: Biologist
David Stevenson	RSSEPS Coordinator
Garry Taccogna	DFO: Community Stewardship Chief
Colleen Hemphill	G-N Treaty Negotiator
Sharon Chow	Sierra Club
David Welch	Chief Scientist, Pacific Ocean Shelf Tracking Project
Nigel Haggan	Nigel Haggan & Associates & UBC Fisheries Centre
Bruce Burrows	Wuikinuxv Nation
Miranda deVisser	Minutes

**Start meeting 0945**

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this meeting was to review the past year's works, the current financial status, and to confirm the project list for 2005.

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

The past year has been a very successful one for the Society. Last year, 10 projects were taken on, all funded by the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund. PSF accepted and approved the finalized recovery plan; however, they have yet to bind and publish it. The web page was revised, All minutes will be finalized and posted on the Society's web page, along with all of the final reports.

David's contract ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October; however, an interim contract was created for November and December, and he has since submitted the proposal for 2005. The position has already been approved by the management committee.

The current funding from the Pacific Salmon Foundation is \$120,000; other funding sources are trying to be located. Allocation of last year's surplus cannot be finalized until the board receives all of the final reports.

## **PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The financial statements remain unaudited; however, they have been reviewed by an accountant to confirm that no errors are present. The lowest form of financial review was chosen because it seemed to best suit the needs of the RSSEPS.

As of October 31, RSSEPS had \$65,000 in the bank, with \$52,318 expected to arrive from PSF once the final invoices have been submitted. The final total amounts to \$117,512.

The administration fund has already been budgeted at \$47,000, leaving \$73,000 available for this year's field projects.

All members were comfortable with the current financial statements.

The need for additional funding sources has been identified. Alan Kenny has offered to assist the group in locating Living Rivers funding. Sharon offered to look into the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund (HCTF). Some other potential sources identified are as follows: Bullet Foundation, Muir Foundation, Vancouver Foundation and Rudy North.

A priority for the group is to develop a comprehensive list of finalized projects to offer to potential funding sources. The establishment of a fund-raising committee was suggested in order to locate and secure these sources.

## **CONFIRMATION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR 2005**

Sharon, Bruce and Colleen agreed to sit on for the coming year. All parties agreed.

## **PRESENTATION OF 2004 REPORTS**

### ***RS3: Wannock Hydroacoustic Survey by LGL***

The Wannock hydroacoustic survey report submitted by LGL advises against proceeding with the acoustic work in the Wannock River. This is due to the complications associated with fish exhibiting milling behaviour in the system. The report also states that if the group is still serious about pursuing hydroacoustics, a complete bathymetric survey of the river should be done to determine if a more suitable site can be identified. The group decided to suspend all activity.

### ***RS5: Docee Fence Co-Management Capacity Project***

There is a growing need for the Gwa'sala Naxwada'xw people to seek to be involved in the management of the sockeye stocks within Smith Inlet. With the failure of the hydroacoustic program to enumerate stocks in rivers, the increased importance of this system was realized as an important indicator for the central coast, and the overall management decisions being made for the commercial fisheries. This project looked at developing the capacity of the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw to manage this project by using the appropriate formal and occupational training required to run the Docee Fence.

This past year saw extensive involvement of the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw people, and the need to continue with this momentum has been initiated.

This year, \$20,000 was contributed by Fisheries and Oceans, \$10,000 by PSF, and \$5,000 by the GN band. The final report states that with the continuing decline of DFO budgets, the need for a strong partnership has been identified to ensure the continued existence of the project.

The Band is adamant in maintaining a high level involvement in the future. The training received thus far has been invaluable as a movement is made towards the goal of full fence operation. From a community perspective, the project has helped the GN nation build momentum and focus more efforts in this area; both the historical and current importance of the sockeye stocks is becoming apparent to all generations as involvement with this project increases.

The Board agreed to support this project again, provided an estimate of the project timeline can be given. It was mentioned that the Band is not far from being able to assume full management of the Docee Fence.

***RS7: Long Lake Chinook Habitat Study***

The report for the Long Lake Chinook habitat study has yet to be received. Doug's report indicates that there may be value in a log debris removal project. The Board agreed that this project will not continue next year; also, a potential log debris removal project will be flagged for the upcoming year. Other sources of funding will be researched for this project.

***RS8: Enhancement Evaluation Program – Owikeno Basin***

The Enhancement Evaluation Program was essentially divided into two projects: the Genessee Creek Fence, and an otolith sampling program on the Inzhiana and Amback rivers.

Although some successes were associated with the Fence, more resources are needed and the utility of this project may not be appropriate at this time. The information gathered from the fence is not applicable across the entire basin.

The sampling program on the Inzhiana and Amback rivers was successful. The otoliths are currently at the lab waiting to be sampled.

Presently, Fisheries and Oceans has allocated sufficient funds for otolith reading; however, these funds are fiscally restrained. It was suggested that the board re-allocate the DFO funds to fund next year's PSEF projects, while using the surplus PSEF funds to pay for the otolith reading. All parties agreed to go ahead with the suggestion.

**PACIFIC OCEAN TRACKING PROJECT (POST):**

**David Welch**

The Rivers Inlet fish stocks have declined for reasons not understood by scientists. The questions to be answered are why such a decline occurred in Rivers, and how can this be prevented from happening to other stocks?

Previous literature implies that the crashes are not due to freshwater factors; however, the ease of work in freshwater systems creates a tendency for more work to be done in these systems.

The goals of POST are to create a permanent, continental-scale marine tracking system with the ability to measure the movement, distribution and survival of fish. For reasons scientists have yet to understand, all species of juvenile salmon are migrating along the shelf environment until at least early September. POST believes that fish-tagging studies will help us better understand the population dynamics and migration behaviour of certain species of fish, and hopes to extend the technology to coastal seas around the world.

Recent advancements in tag technology have allowed for individual fish identification for extended periods of time. Each tag contains a unique ID code and has a life span of 10 – 20 years for larger fish; the batteries have a predicted lifespan of greater than four months. Acoustic modems have been developed for remote data retrieval.

There are three components to POST. The first is to deploy listening nodes on the seabed to form complete acoustic curtains. Next, approximately 1,000 juvenile fish will be surgically implanted with individually identifiable acoustic tags. Finally, the ocean data will be received from the tags and analyzed.

In the 2004 field season, 120km of acoustic listening lines were installed in various locations along the west coast, in both freshwater and marine environments. Fourteen salmon stocks were tagged in eight river systems, with a mix of hatchery and wild fish for comparison. The array ran for 5 months and measured fish survival directly. The results demonstrated a 91% detection efficiency, and demonstrated substantial differences in marine survival between species and stocks of the same species. High survival rates were measured immediately out of freshwater, with rates lowering past the Strait of Georgia system.

POST is currently testing a prototype acoustic modem equipped tracking sensor. This sensor has a 5 – 7 year projected lifespan and would have the ability to provide year-round fish census data on migration pathways, timing of migrations, and survival. Eventually, there will be 1,800 seabed nodes on the Pacific coast. Fish tracking sensors will be installed on each node, along with temperature and salinity sensors on a subset. Sensor grids will provide varying maps of the seabed temperature, salinity, currents, and a three-dimensional structure of the water column.

### **SOCKEYE ECOSYSTEM FRAMEWORK:**

#### **Nigel Haggan**

The Sockeye Ecosystem Framework proposes to use food web modeling to link life history data from Rivers Inlet sockeye from lake and coastal ecosystems. This data could then be used to integrate and apply current information to the global picture. The Framework proposes to pull together traditional and local knowledge and time-series including history and archives, tree and sediment cores, and paleo-climate data. The field studies would include biological surveys, stock assessments, oceanographic information, and aquaculture impacts. With this data an extensive model could be created including all aspects of the ecosystem.

The Ecosystem Framework would provide a life history perspective on the Rivers Inlet sockeye salmon, and would link watershed, inlet, coastal and oceanic habitats. The effects and interactions of fishing, predation, logging, climate and ocean-regime changes would be taken into account. A common framework from which to evaluate individual projects for their contribution to stock rebuilding could be developed.

It was agreed that Nigel would revise his proposal and re-circulate it for comments.

### **DISCUSSION OF EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Board felt that at this time, an Expert Advisory Committee is not needed. It was suggested that DFO Fishery Management staff be included in the discussions of the TAC so that data and mutual concerns can be shared.

**Action: Gary will contact Gordon McEachen to discuss fishery management involvement in the TAC.**

### **2005 PROJECT PRIORITIES**

A financial summary sheet was presented to and reviewed with each member of the Board. By the end of March, the group plans to have confirmed the projects for 2005 as well as allocated dollar figures to each project.

It was decided that RSSEPS will support all on-going projects (Early Marine Productivity, Docee Fence and Enhancement Evaluation). The other 'one-shot' projects such as the Productive Capacity Study and the Genessee Fence will not continue to receive support. It was also decided that the group will try to locate outside funding sources to support the Early Marine Productivity study.

Karl agreed to speak with Bob Bocking regarding the logistics of a mark-recapture study as part of the Early Marine Productivity project. Sandie agreed to look into the marine sounding and test fishery logistics, as well as look for a copy of the old DFO mark-recapture document for Rivers Inlet.

### **2005 PROJECTS**

The group agreed on the following projects:

#### **Confirmed Projects**

Docee Fence:	10k
Enhancement Evaluation	10k
Early Marine:	50k (?)

#### **Potential Projects**

Test Fishery in Rivers Inlet  
Inlet Sounding in Rivers Inlet  
Mark/Recapture for the whole of the Owikeno system  
Critical Habitat Survey  
Expanding Juvenile Abundances Surveys  
Habitat Projects:

- Owikeno Log Removal
- Long Lake Log Removal

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.**