

B.C. FEDERATION OF DRIFT FISHERS

Report to Main Board SFAB Feb 12th, 2022

SFAB Reorganization

The BCFDF has taken an active role province wide in reviewing options toward reorganization and has participated in the several meetings seeking input. Our directors, of which several are SFAC chairs, support the changes proposed as vital to ensuring we have cohesive province wide representation on the many issues impacting our fish stocks and angler opportunity.

We believe the creation of a provincial salmon/non tidal salmon/anadromous working group will allow more joint collaboration benefiting both Skeena and Fraser system issues particularly relating to non tidal salmon and steelhead issues. Other fisheries including those in interior B.C. and Vancouver Island will also benefit from this province wide approach and recommendations, including through the IFMP process.

We are also optimistic the new SFAB model will allow more meaningful collaboration with parallel provincial processes such as the Provincial Angler Advisory Team (PAAT) as well as facilitate active participation with First Nations in the developing “Round Tables” province wide.

Lower Fraser Collaborative Table

The BCFDF has been instrumental for several years in promoting cooperative dialogue with First Nations particularly on the Fraser River. This has helped create the past effective “Peacemakers” process and has morphed into the LFCT. This table represents 23 F/N’s, commercial interests, and the major recreational organizations including the SFAB and SFI.

As evidenced at a recent Working Group meeting, F/N’s are committed to seeing this process be successful in bringing all sectors together. The common theme from day one has been to conserve salmon and non salmon stocks for our respective future generations.

All can appreciate the significance of all sectors working together presenting joint solutions for implementation by our federal and provincial fisheries managers.

Reconciliation

The issue of Reconciliation and how it will impact all forms of recreation in B.C. is a top priority in the province. The BCFDF has participated in creation of the SFAB Reconciliation committee in the hope that the input from the Recreational fishing community will be given due consideration in the process, representative of B.C. anglers. We support the concept of Reconciliation with the proviso that all B.C. citizens have equal say on how the process unfolds.

We cannot accept predetermined decisions that negatively impact our opportunities and that of our future generations. Recognizing that all forms of recreation in B.C. will be impacted, the BCFDF supports other organizations such as the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) Reconciliation committee through our membership on the board.

It would be prudent for all the various committees province wide dealing with Reconciliation to have an opportunity to compare notes toward a comprehensive agreed position on how Reconciliation is to unfold.

Appreciating that the definition and goals of Reconciliation are elusive to all including FN's and government, we would expect that our elected officials will ensure accountability and transparency going forward.

NonTidal Salmon Issues

All sectors appreciate the endangered state of many salmon and steelhead species in both the Skeena and Fraser systems. Avoidance of non targeted species is critical which accentuates required selective fisheries within all fisheries and concentrating allowable fisheries more in tributaries thus avoiding threatened stocks and allowing these stocks to migrate the Fraser and other main streams with minimal interference.

Hosted by DFO and involving local F/N's and Recreational reps a series of meetings have developed plans for F/N harvesting with minimal impact on recreational fisheries on both the Vedder/Chilliwack and Chehalis rivers. This past summer and early fall demonstrated the 2 sectors can coexist with virtually zero conflict.

This sharing on the tributaries is the new future as we cannot continue to allow fisheries that impact stocks at point of extreme conservation concern. Truly selective fisheries by all sectors

must be mandatory and increased enforcement toward reducing rampant poaching on the Fraser must be a priority.

Outdoor Recreational Council

The BCFDF has obtained a seat on the ORC Board of directors which has enabled us to advance issues relating to the Public fishery. These issues include extinction of stocks including steelhead and access to fisheries such as providing funding to the recent legal actions toward securing public access to lakes on Douglas Lake Cattle Co. property. The ORC provided support to the concerns re sensitive fish habitat on the area of the Fraser River known as the gravel reach.

ORC has also submitted a letter to both the province & DFO supporting calls for an Emergency Provincial Steelhead Recovery Plan. This will be pursued further at the Provincial Angler Advisory Team meeting March 1st.

With in excess of 100,000 members we believe that ORC can play a significant role in both non tidal and tidal fisheries issues province wide. This impact will be influenced by groups such as the BCFDF and will provide balance & expertise to the important issues facing our fisheries.

Recognizing that Reconciliation is the priority issue for this decade the ORC has formed a Reconciliation Committee including the BCFDF and facilitated professionally. It is acknowledged that Reconciliation will potentially impact all forms of recreation in B.C. which dictates that respectful patient collaboration required with Indigenous peoples must be a priority. It is also acknowledged that collaboration with other groups such as the SFAB with similar Reconciliation objectives would be beneficial.

Rod Clapton, President

Motions submitted:

Motion #1

Whereas many steelhead stocks province wide are at point of extinction, requiring immediate actions to help reverse this trend

Whereas both DFO & the province have expressed willingness to work with collaboratively with the sectors and F/N's toward reviewing recovery options

Therefore, be it resolved that the SFAB support and take part in discussions toward a "Provincial Steelhead Recovery Plan"

Motion #2

Whereas the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) has identified four key pillars as follows:

#1 Conservation and Stewardship

#2 Enhanced Hatchery Production

#3 Harvest Transformation

#4 Integrated Management and collaboration

Whereas there is substantial data from US fisheries demonstrating significant increase in outgoing salmon and steelhead smolts and returning adults following predation reduction

Therefore, the SFAB is requesting that DFO review US predator management practices and policies to evaluate effectiveness in rebuilding B.C salmon and steelhead stocks