

B.C. FEDERATION OF DRIFT FISHERS REPORT TO MAIN BOARD

Feb 5th, 2021

NORTHERN REPORT

Our Skeena directors have been busy with numerous issues & advisory groups as follows:

Skeena Region Fresh Water Angling Committee, including opposition to a year round regional bait ban as unwarranted & not backed with defensible science. The BCFDF supports regulations where stocks are at “extreme conservation concern” & the last regulation prior to river closure is a “single barbless artificial” designation. This would allow fly fishing & drift fishing with a float & wool for children & those physically challenged. We will not accept any specific requests for “Fly Only” or any regulation or closure which panders to any sector or specific gear type.

Our directors attended & chaired North & South Skeena SFAC meetings & also participated in the North Coast meeting whose motions are referred to the Main Board meeting.

The BCFDF Northern chapter was an active participant in the review of the controversial TOR for the Salmon Allocation Review. We strongly support the concerns of other organizations including the SFAB & we submitted a lengthy draft of our concerns.

SELECTIVE FISHING

The BCFDF supports selective fishing within all sectors which must be fully vetted between the sectors, particularly relating to allocation amounts. We have concerns that proposals submitted by F/N for both the Fraser & Skeena systems have not been discussed with the Public Fishery, thus we cannot support proposals without adequate consultation.

Considering the number of First Nations bands involved, these proposals have the potential for very significant impact on allotments for our sector. Considering the years of reductions in fishing opportunity in the Skeena & total closures on the Fraser we have grave concerns for any reductions in our remaining tributary fisheries.

We are hopeful that through the “Fraser River Collaborative Table” and meetings both within and outside of the SFAC process there can be meaningful discussion how these selective

fisheries can protect stocks of concern while providing for equitable treatment of both indigenous and non-indigenous fishers

SALMON ALLOCATION REVIEW

The BCFDF shares the serious concerns of the SFAB and other groups that view the proposed TOR for this review as a bilateral process with the Public Fishery involved purely to bear witness to predetermined outcomes. We submitted a lengthy response to the TOR document and suggest this must be a priority issue for the Public Fishery moving forward.

FRASER RIVER COLLABORATIVE TABLE

The past several months has seen significant progress in our patient efforts toward developing a venue representative of the concerns of all sectors. We have created a working group which has established an LOU, developed a framework for our TOR and established budgets going forward into 2022.

A full forum virtual meeting was held Jan 18th with further meetings established for Feb 16th & March 16th. Topics of mutual interest such as predation control, selective fishing, capacity building and education campaigns have been flagged for future forums.

Considering the importance of Fraser River salmon and steelhead stocks & the geographical & member organizational scope of this table, it could be held out as a template for further provincial initiatives. The F/N involvement alone includes 23 bands. Support from regional and provincial organizations including the SFAB and SFI demonstrates how important this initiative is.

OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL

The BCFDF is currently playing an active role within ORC, particularly flagging how crucial it is currently to review the potential impacts of Reconciliation/UNDRIP. With 100,000 members from 59 member groups it must be acknowledged that not just fisheries but all forms of recreation in B.C. will be affected.

We are optimistic that ORC will continue to be cognizant of tidal and non- tidal fisheries issues and become more vocal in defending the rights and opportunities of all B.C. residents.

Considering the very significant number of anglers within the membership and the tremendous social and economic impact of fishing, this is a valid request.

SFAB ACTIVITIES

Through the Skeena and Fraser SFAC's the BCFDF continues to be very active in promoting Public Fishery selective fishing proposals on the Fraser and opposing unwarranted restrictions such as Region 6 bait bans. We are currently lobbying for updated stock assessments on many tributaries to facilitate non-retention fisheries with tremendous social and economic value.

We support the proposed revision of the SFAB process and remain committed to the important work of the SFAB.

We propose the following motions:

“Whereas First Nations Selective Fishing proposals have been submitted for both Fraser and Skeena River mainstream and tributaries for approval and funding with virtually zero consultation with the Public Fishery regarding potential impact on our existing fisheries”.

“Therefore be it resolved that DFO immediately initiate actions to consult with the Public Fishery to review existing proposals regarding impact on stocks and how allocations for all sectors are to be determined”.

“Whereas documented scientific evidence has determined that pinipeds consume 40% of outgoing Chinook smolts and 63% of outgoing Fraser interior steelhead smolts”.

“Therefore be it resolved that engagement with the Public Fishery be initiated immediately to develop plans to reduce piniped populations, particularly those animals that predate in areas of concentrated smolt migration and have a direct negative impact on the Public Fishery”.

“Whereas Reconciliation/UNDRIP have been officially embraced by both Federal and provincial governments, resulting in very significant concerns regarding the potential impact on Public Fisheries”.

“Therefore be it resolved that both governments initiate immediate consultation with the Public Fishery to review potential impacts on the fisheries”.

Report submitted on behalf of the BCFDF Directors province wide.

Rod Clapton, President