

## **"B.C. FEDERATION OF DRIFT FISHERS YEAR END REPORT"**

My sincere thanks to all of you for your support this past year. We hear from some of you on a regular basis and hope to hear more from all in the New Year. Your participation as Directors is absolutely vital to the fishing future. With virtual meetings the norm for the foreseeable future, your participation is simplified. At times the issues seem very complex, but please don't feel intimidated as the role of the more experienced directors is to assist new participants. Our younger directors are the future of the BCFDF long after us grizzled veterans are long forgotten. As we have always said, whether you can contribute a lot as directors or a little it's all much appreciated.

This past year has been challenging in many ways including of course the pandemic. As an outdoor activity fishing has been acknowledged as a safe healthy experience, very beneficial to our mental health and a great family experience in these difficult times. This acceptance certainly solidifies the social and economic importance of the Public Fishery as a valued Canadian heritage. Let's ensure this recognition continues.

It would be great if those responsible for managing and allocating stocks, both federally and provincially would also recognize the significance of supporting and enhancing the "Public Fishery" now and for future generations. The perceived lack of respect and support for our rights and opportunities is not with the dedicated staff who we know often share our concerns. Our issue continues to be with our elected officials who are derelict in their responsibilities to ensure that our fish stocks and other resources are preserved and allocated responsibly to "ALL" sectors.

We continue to respect the constitutional priorities allocated to First Nations, but cannot accept that their rights including demands for economic opportunities, trump our access to this common property resource. Until we have an elected govt. that recognizes that "ALL" Canadians should be treated equally we must continue to be extremely vigilant in ensuring the voice of the Public Fishery is heard and we are consulted in all issues impacting the fish and fishers. Where necessary we must draw lines in the sand where potential actions will mean dramatic loss of opportunity in our

fisheries and severely impact the fishing future of our children who are the future stewards.

Recognizing that our time and energies are limited, we will strive to keep our focus on the big issues and not get derailed into the weeds. We will work with those who see the big picture and recognize that unity within our sector is paramount to any success. Too many people have elitist agendas that create divisiveness and we will not waste crucial time debating them. The big picture issues and venues include the following:

### **FRASER RIVER COLLABORATIVE TABLE**

To date our efforts toward respectful consultation with First Nations, particularly on the Fraser, have been productive and with a very professional facilitator on retainer and established meeting dates for 2021 we are confident the FRCT will play a significant role in many issues such as selective fishing and discussions toward allocation. There appears to be genuine consensus toward creating a meaningful process which will benefit both our future generations. We have significant support of these tables both within the sectors and government and we are hoping the FRCT can be a template for use province wide.

### **SPORT FISH ADVISORY BOARD**

The BCFDF has been a supporter of the SFAB for many years and suggest our involvement at all levels province wide has increased the profile of non tidal salmon and steelhead which perhaps were somewhat ignored due to the tremendous number of issues impacting the tidal fisheries. We are very supportive of proposed changes to the SFAB process which could include the creation of a "Non Tidal Salmon/Steelhead" working group on which the BCFDF could play a significant role.

Despite being limited to an advisory role the SFAB over the past 50 years has played a very significant role in determining fisheries management and angler opportunities. The SFAB strongly encourages member organizations to be the advocates and demand transparency and accountability from our elected officials. The BCFDF accepts that role.

### **FRASER RIVER SPORT FISHING ALLIANCE**

The BCFDF played a significant role in establishing the FRSA as a credible alliance of organizations, businesses and individuals concerned about the alarming diminishing of fishing opportunities on the Fraser River. The purpose of the FRSA is to represent these concerns through consultation, political activism and legal challenges where necessary. The FRSA will supplement the advocacy roles of the individual member organizations and help to promote common messaging. Considering the developing complexities of fishery issues a united voice and potential legal war chest will be vital to ensure retention of fishing opportunities for future generations

## **OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL**

The BCFDF has a seat at the Directors table of the ORC. As an organization representing over 100,000 members. ORC plays an important role in representing those who recreate in B.C. Be it fish or fowl or hunter or hiker their concerns can be addressed through ORC. Fisheries issues have been reviewed including ORC direct involvement in angler access to Minnie & Stoney Lakes through legal intervener status. We are optimistic that our participation on the Board of Directors can assist promoting fisheries issues province wide.

The issue common to all the venues mentioned above is the Reconciliation/UNDRIP implications. All forms of recreation in B.C. will be impacted. Fishing opportunities especially will be affected which demands that we look at all options to ensure that decisions are reflective of full consultation with the Public Fishery. We must continue and expand our developing relationships with First Nations, be it on the Fraser, Skeena or elsewhere. More than ever it's imperative that all Public Fishery groups promote common messaging toward entrenching our rightful opportunities as Canadians.

All the best in 2021 and stay safe. We really need your support in the New Year toward continuing our mandate to "Protect Fish Stocks" and "Retention of Angler Opportunity"

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