

Lower Fraser Collaborative Table

Subject email: **First Nations, Commercial and Recreational Fishers join forces in the face of declining fish stocks**

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For immediate release June 15, 2021

Fraser Valley, B.C. – Commercial, recreational, and Indigenous fishers are making waves with an innovative collaboration that will bring all three sectors together to prevent further decline of salmon and non-salmon fish stocks in the Fraser River.

The new Lower Fraser Collaborative Table includes members from 23 First Nations, regional and provincial recreational fishing groups, and commercial representatives from the Area E Harvest Commercial.

Members ratified the official Terms of Reference today.

The Collaborative Table hopes to chart a new path to reconciliation for fishing groups on the lower Fraser River, with plans to promote collaboration and civil dialogue that builds trust amongst all parties and all who have an interest in sustaining lower Fraser River fish, fisheries and habitat. Conservation, sustainable access for harvesting, and improved information sharing will be top priorities.

Les Antone, Kwantlen First Nation Delegate affiliated with the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance and a founding member of the Collaborative Table, says that First Nation and Sector collaboration is critical to the rehabilitation of Fraser salmon and non-salmon species. "Our people all remember the good old days when there were abundant salmon, sturgeon and steelhead, but today they are in a major crisis. We have to work together to rebuild these stocks while there is still time – and good management means we all have to make sacrifices together."

"Considering the current situation with Fraser River salmon and non-salmon stocks – including Interior Fraser steelhead at extreme conservation concerns – it's imperative that all user-groups must work cooperatively to protect and rebuild stocks," says Rod Clapton, President of the BC Federation of Drift Fishers. "This Lower Fraser Collaborative Table is where all sectors can work respectfully together to ensure these priceless resources are preserved for future generations."

Darrel McEachern, a life-long commercial fisherman, says, "I am optimistic and enthused by the formation of the LFCT and honoured to represent the Fraser River Commercial Fishermen. There is a real need for increased communication and cooperation among the First Nations, Recreational Fishermen and the Commercial Fishermen in the Lower Fraser River. Our goal is to protect and enhance the Fraser River salmon runs and to maximize the benefit of the sustainable harvest of salmon for all users. "Round Tables" like this have proven successful in other BC Coastal Communities, and it will be successful for the Lower Fraser River as well. The issues confronting us today are beyond our governments' ability to successfully deal with alone, and the LFCT has a very important role to play in the future."

Lower Fraser Collaborative Table

Lower Fraser Collaborative Table (LFCT) Members

First Nations members: Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (23 First Nations)

Commercial members: Area E Harvest Committee

Recreational members: Sport Fishing Institute (SFI)

Sports Fish Advisory Board (SFAB)

B.C. Wildlife Federation (BCWF)

B.C. Federation of Drift Fishers (BCFDF)

Fraser Valley Angling Guides Association (FVAGA)

Fraser River Sport Fishing Alliance (FRSA)

Fraser Valley Salmon Society (FVSS)

About the LFFA

Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) is a not-for-profit organization that works with all 30 of the Lower Fraser First Nations communities, 23 of which are signatories to the LFFA's Governance Protocol and Society. The LFFA works collaboratively and holistically with Lower Fraser River First Nations to manage their fisheries and support future generations' cultural and spiritual traditions. The ultimate mandate of the LFFA is to promote and support the management of a robust and expanding fishery while integrating environmental and conservation values.

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