



OCTOBER 2009

IFRAWG UPDATE—SEPTEMBER 2009

Board of Directors

- Thomas Alexis
- Paul Grinder
- Andrew Meshue
- Randy Billyboy
- James Paul
- Carl Frederick
- Irvin Gagnon
- Terri Boyd
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IFRAWG is an interim planning sub-committee jointly established by First Nations and DFO to plan and prepare for discussions that take place at "THE FORUM", a larger gathering of First Nations, technical advisors and DFO staff. This process was established in 2007 to deal with some fairly serious salmon conservation issues; specifically for First Nations and their food, social and ceremonial requirements. In 2008 and 2009 the process continued. IFRAWG and FORUM do not replace any existing consultation or First Nation fisheries processes.

The purpose of the form:

- To build trust amongst First Nations
- To build understanding about each others fisheries
- To agree upon a set of principles for managing FSC fisheries
- To agree upon a set terms of reference to guide the process
- To manage "in-season" fsc fisheries
- To work with DFO to implement the plan
- To seek resources to continue building the process

To date the forum has dealt primarily with the first two aspects, i.e. understanding and trust building. First Nations have assisted DFO with provisions for exchange of information related to pre-season planning, preparation by First Nations of their fishing plans, input to DFO's integrated harvest plans, and post season reviews; which has helped further normalize relationships between and amongst First Nations, and between DFO and First Nations. The progress to date can't be minimized but more work is needed.

IFRAWG and the FORUM are interim processes with no mandates. Presently larger First Nation driven Tier 1 initiatives are taking shape, e.g. FN's Fisheries Council, and Inter-

Tribal Treaty Organization (ITO). Even with these immersing organizations there are still many challenges to overcome. Middle and upper Fraser First Nations are making some headway organizing into aggregate groups which are effective to varying degrees; however, lower Fraser and approach areas still need time to sort out organizational issues within their geopolitical areas. The formation of the ITO, and the continued development of the FNFC have not made matters easier for the average fisher person on the ground; they want some certainty about, in-season management, or new co-management arrangements that take into account jurisdiction/Aboriginal rights; they want to implement a co-management regime but with all of these processes out there; which one will get the job done? In the end it is up to the regions to ensure their constituency are kept up to date.

Presuming then that the management areas and groups can agree on who belongs with who, i.e. which affiliations and alliances are best suited, the discussion will shift to issues specific to the process, i.e. mandated representation, management principles and in-season management approaches. However there are still going to be detractors suspicious of any kind of "management framework" which may be used by DFO to set FSC. The question is whether or not this forum process will minimize DFO's responsibility in terms of, Title and Rights.

While the forum process is primarily about the operational aspects of the fishery, i.e. per-season, and in-season management, it must grapple with other issues like: Interconnectedness to this and other processes, WSP implementation, improved integrated decision making, FRSSI implications, Fraser Annex renewal, and the role(s) of the ITO. As empathy and understanding

grows, groups have used the opportunity to build relations between First Nations on the island, while building the capacity to participate in the management process, nowhere was this more visible then with, Chinook and sockeye. There is a dialogue happening and it continues to grow, First Nations are talking about shifting pressure from one species to another, from sockeye to Chinook, and from salmon to halibut, or crabs or prawns whatever, reduction in FSC harvest pressure on one species inevitably will lead to other species and other fisheries where the First Nations interest also lie.

IFRAWG had a teleconference on September 29 to discuss the next steps for the forum process. DFO has found resources to support a series of forum meetings to continue building a "framework". IFRAWG participants have requested that the, Paul Kariya report on the forum process to date be reviewed first before too much time and energy are spent on planning future events. In order to achieve the objective IFRAWG participants will be meeting in person at DFO headquarters in Vancouver - October 7th. The primary purpose is to begin drafting options on a framework and reviewing the Paul Kariya recommendations while planning for a full forum workshop including approach marine and Fraser First Nations, set for October 15 & 16, at the Executive Inn, Richmond. The forum will bring together leaders and managers involved in the salmon fishery and in the different processes to share their vision of co-management; from the ITO and FNFC perspective, to the marine and lower Fraser and BC interior, and also finally from DFO as well. The workshop will be important so please plan on attending, there are many issues to deal with, particularly since we are just coming out of a serious conservation concerns for the 2009 sockeye situation.

Upcoming Events:

- **UFFCA General Meeting
October 22nd—Quesnel
Sandman**

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