

Skeena Fish Advisory Committee (SFAC)  
March 20, 2011  
Terrace Valley Golf and Country Club

Chair- **Randy Dozzi (RD)**  
Minutes – **Mark Beere (MB)**  
Attendees - See Appendix A

1000 hrs - Commence

- Welcome, introductions, agenda
- **Ken Franzen (KF)** made a motion that Fisheries Branch staff demonstrate where his tax dollars are spent – **MB** agrees to provide an update
- **Denys Bell (DB)** asked what ministry staff represent and who has decision making authority – **Dana Atagi (DA)** described the new ministry (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations) structure
- **Mike Langedger (ML)** initiated a Terms of Reference (TOR) discussion expressing his concern that ministry decision making is not strictly science-based, making reference to the Kitsumkalum River 10 week bait ban – that it should be retracted - and that there is little focus on resident priority
- **KF**: The TOR must change or the committee will be defunct – the ministry's decision making criteria were not vetted by the committee
- **MB**: The ministry's decision making criteria describe the categories by which regulatory decisions are made by the decision maker – the SFAC provides a forum for the review and discussion of regional fisheries regulations and provides advice to the decision maker – the Regional Manager of the Recreational Fisheries and Wildlife Program
- **Larry Proteau (LP)** expressed concern that the Haida Gwaii were no longer included in the Skeena Region for the Fish and Wildlife and Parks programs stating that they were for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, with some support from **DB** and **ML** that they would like the Haida Gwaii to continue to be in the Skeena Region – ministry explanation that these decisions are made at much higher administrative levels than those government representatives present
- **Dustin Kovacvich (DK)** read excerpts from a ministry prepared summary and annotated bibliography regarding terminal gear types in the management of steelhead sport fisheries – **ML** responded that the data on this topic are variable and open to interpretation
- A discussion followed regarding committee membership in light of some vacant positions – **Bob Johnston (BJ)** volunteered for a vacant non-affiliated independent angler seat – a motion is tabled by **DK** accept **BJ** as a committee member – passed with no dissenters
- Discussion regarding the decision to fill a remaining non-affiliated independent angler seat – **Rob Brown (RB)** suggested that committee members represented the concerns of the non-affiliated members
- **Larry Walker (LW)** suggested that the committee consider a conservation organization representative to fill a non-affiliated angler position vacancy and **DK** suggested SkeenaWild
- **DB** motioned to have the Haida Gwaii non-affiliated angler seat removed from the committee and is seconded by **Gene Allen (GA)** – passed with 6 in favour, 5 opposed

1055 hrs – Penny Lloyd presentation – Regulations Transformation Project

- Public engagement
- Effort towards consistency
- A live website will be live late this spring

1105 hrs - 2009 Regional Manager Recommendations – Review – **MB** read aloud a summary of the proposals and the Regional Manager's recommendations, rationale for decisions

1115 hrs - break

1125 hrs – 2010 and 2011 Proposals – presentation of proposals by proponents followed by comments/questions from committee members

SFAC-2011-02 – **RB** – Catch and Release for bull trout, Dolly Varden char year round

- **RB withdrew proposal** noting he had seven to present and that there was overlap with the current proposal and SFAC-2011-10

SFAC-2011-01 – (**GA**) – Fly fishing only on the Kispiox River during the Classified Period – September 1 – October 31

- **GA** displayed the artificial worm hook-up found on the Kispiox, spoke of the non-resident, camp @ km 41 comprised of 12 American anglers that remained for 2 weeks; he also counted 62 anglers on one 'beat' in a single day, also noted low water was a concern, making fish more vulnerable
- **Ted Luscomb (TL)** proposed changing the regulations to no non-residents
- **ML** addressed the artificial worm hook-up as an education issue and re-iterated that resident's are not given priority access in BC
- **DB**: The Tweedsmuir R&G does not support gear changes if a conservation concern cannot be demonstrated

1140 hrs

- **Andrew Wilson (AW)**: a tool exists to close streams due to temperature or flow concerns
- **DK** in favour of the proposal – reduces efficiency of anglers – provides good opportunities for many anglers rather than exceptional opportunities for a few
- **RB**: conservation concern moot as there's no information to say there is or isn't – the Tye Test Fishery suggests that we've had a good steelhead year – one angler catching a lot leads to conflict – Newfoundland regulations: 4 fish total/day (harvested or released)

1147 hrs

- **ML** recalls his clubs proposal for helicopter bans and **RB**'s lack of support
- **Al Hummel (AH)**: question about FN's steelhead fishing – FN's have first access/legal right to fish after conservation – discusses the merits of helicopter bans

1155 hrs

- **Jim Culp (JC)** shares concerns regarding stressed fish and their need for sanctuary areas
- **Cliff Gardner (CG)** questioned the type/size of hooks used and commented on Intruder flies and bleeders
- **KF**'s frustration with the lack of voting – it is agreed that we are seeking consensus and that voting does not determine the ultimate outcome for proposals nor would a proposal be adopted solely on the basis of consensus if not biologically sound
- **No consensus – 6 for, 7 against**

1200 hrs - lunch

1257 hrs - SFAC-2011-03 – **RB** – Institute a regulation that makes it illegal to remove a fish from the water before releasing it

- **RB** notes that this regulation exists in the Washington State freshwater fishing regulations synopsis, discusses the impacts of air exposure after exercise
- **DB**: The Tweedsmuir Rod and Gun Club does not support this proposal – un-enforceable, where, say small fish are caught from a large boat, fish are foul-hooked, et cetera

1302 hrs

- **Eckard Mendel (EM)** discusses some fisheries where this regulation could be a problem
- General support from **BJ**, **ML** (but use common sense), **DK**, **KF** (but don't incarcerate kids), **JC**, **RB**, **Werner Dilg (WD)** (it's how it's done – a few seconds is OK), **GA** (education issue) and **AH** (wants to educate young R&G Club members)
- **Ministry to re-word and circulate among committee members**

1319 hrs - SFAC-2011-04 – **RB** – Catch and release for cutthroat, bull trout, Dolly Varden char and Rocky Mountain whitefish year round in the Lakelse Watershed

- **DK** does not support – wants kids to be able to take a fish in lake fisheries
- **DB**: Tweedsmuir R&G rejects if there's no new info re. a conservation issue
- **Jeff Lough (JL)**: it's important to determine if the fish are actually native to Lakelse Lake – telemetry studies required
- **GA** supports the proposal – there are few trout and char in the Kispiox now
- **BJ** concerned that prohibiting the retention of one species could put pressure on others, i.e. rainbow trout
- **ML**: already done our conservation with the boundary change at the lake outlet (moved upstream)
- **DK** proposed reducing lake quotas, for example, from 5 to 2
- **No consensus - 2 in favour, 6 against**

SFAC-2011-05 - **RB** – Catch and release for bull trout, Dolly Varden char and rainbow trout year round in the Kitimat watershed

- Withdrawn by proponent due to an on-going Kitimat River survey

1335 hrs - SFAC-2011-06 - **RB** – Bait ban January 1 to June 30 – Kitsumkalum River

- **RB withdrew proposal** noting he had seven to present and that there was overlap with the current proposal and SFAC-2011-11

SFAC-2011-011 - **DK** – Bait ban November 1 to July 1 – Kitsumkalum River

- **DK** notes that this proposal doesn't impact salmon fishers, there is a high mortality for steelhead kelts
- **LP**: Bait use - LGL study: 1.1% mortality; Richard Bailey study: 1.8%
- **ML**: no support for segregation by method, Kitimat hatchery staff see little mortality when bait fishing for steelhead brood stock – no conservation concern for Kitsumkalum steelhead: 'I've fished it all my life – trust me.'
- **DB**: Tweedsmuir R&G Club doesn't support the proposal
- **GA**: supports the proposal – stating that steelhead will suck roe
- **RB**: more fish caught even with equal mortality = more mortality
- **JC**: bait out-fishes everything else and there is concern for Cedar River chinook and Deep Creek steelhead

1355 hrs

- **ML**: segregation!
- **DK**: not segregation – just a bait ban, not other gear
- **No consensus - 6 in favour, 7 against**
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1400 hrs - SFAC-2011-07 - **RB** – No angling in that section of the Kitsumkalum River where it meets Deep Creek for a distance of 100 meters upstream of Deep Creek and 200 meters downstream on both sides of the river - April 1 to May 31

- **RB** and **DB** debate whether or not a conservation concern exists
- **GA**: closure to protect spawning steelhead
- **Larry Walker (LW)**: just another regulation
- **JC**: needs help from the Ministry – relates Stan Doll's experiences
- **ML, DK, RB** support data collection but **RB** wishes to by-pass the 'data death spiral' - the search for scientific proof that remains elusive until the population is extirpated
- **A decision is made to investigate this issue more fully**

SFAC-2011-08 – **RB** – Bait bans at the confluence of the Bulkley, Kitwanga and the Zymoetz rivers with the Skeena – July 15 to January 1

- **JC**: First Nation's conservation of steelhead excellent
- **GA**: as above on the Kispiox River, July – September
- **KF** opposed
- **DB**: no support from the Tweedsmuir R&G Club if a conservation concern does not exist
- **Cliff Gardner (CG)**: taking kids out of the fishery when you impose a bait ban
- **RB**: taught kids fly fishing – Grades 2 & 3 and up
- **JC**: related a similar experience from his 10 years as a tackle vendor
- **No consensus - 6 in favour, 7 against**

1450 hrs - SFAC-2011-09 – **RB/JC** – Skeena River bait ban

- **RB**: large Kalum River chinook require protection
- **DB**: offensive and abusive language in the proposal – why no edits from the ministry?
- **Mark Reagan (MR)**: this is a DFO (SFAB) proposal not a BC (SFAC) proposal and DFO has been told repeatedly to stay out of angler's tackle boxes
- **DK**: a bait ban has been proposed a number of times at Terrace SFAB meetings, passes at times, but is stopped at the NC SFAB and believes a Skeena-wide bait ban is heavy handed
- **MR**: no conservation concerns for chinook
- **RB**: beware of the 'data death spiral'
- **LW**: in discussions DFO chinook biologist, with Ivan Winther, neither Cedar nor Kitsumkalum chinook are a conservation concern – well over MSY
- **ML**: this is an education issue
- **JC**: this is a steelhead issue rather than a chinook issue
- **No consensus - 2 in favour, 7 against**

SFAC-2011-10 – **DK** – Trout and char catch and release only – Zymoetz River watershed

- **DK** has seen a marked decline in Zymoetz bull trout
- **TL**: depends on the time frame of implementation
- **DB**: the Tweedsmuir R&G gave this proposal a mixed review: don't have a problem with it but wasn't passed previously
- **RB**: need to do it now – be proactive – they're not there anymore
- **TL**: is this forever?

- **DK**: this may take 15-20 years – just don't fine bull trout in the Clore anymore
- **Jason Vines (JV)**: once closed, not likely to re-open
- **GA**: not so for Kitsumkalum chinook
- **JC**: steelhead fishery and by-catch and targeted fall fishery in the lower river and the Zymoetz is the most accessible
- **MK/LW**: support a total closure versus catch and release, for a reproductive cycle
- **No consensus - 8 in favour, 3 against**

1533 - SFAC-2011-12 - **DK** – Catch and release only for wild coastal cutthroat trout March 1 to May 31 in all Region 6 streams

- **DK**: not asking for a closure – just asking anglers to release them, concerned that we don't protect spawning trout and char
- **GA**: still seeing a drastic reduction in Kispiox cutthroat even with a January 1 – June 15 closure
- **JC**: Lower Mainland – one by one they have been failing
- **ML**: Kitimat cutthroat are no longer being enhanced, we're still killing fish in catch and release fisheries, logging and other habitat problems are a factor
- **RB**: combined impacts
- **No consensus - 4 in favour, 3 against**

1550 hrs –SFAC 2011–13- **DK** – Bull trout and Dolly Varden catch and release only August 15 to October 31 in all Regions 6 streams

- **KF** and **JC** exchanged ideas regarding how steelhead conservation concerns led us to steelhead non-retention
- **No consensus - 9 in favour, 3 against**

1606 hrs –SFAC 2011–14 - **DK** – Bull trout and Dolly Varden limit reduced to 1 per day between 30 cm and 50 cm in all Regions 6 streams, or at a minimum in the Nass, Skeena and Kitimat watersheds

- **Joe De Gisi (JD)** provided a review of the rationale and potential impacts of slot limits (such as the 30 cm to 50 cm proposed)
- **LW** questioned why we have such different approaches to char regulations in different regions
- **Andrew Wilson (AW)** explained that there is bull trout species management plan in progress provincially
- **DK** agreed to table this proposal until next year's meeting in light of the developing species management plan

1630 hrs Adjourned