

**Twelfth Annual  
Skeena Angler Advisory Team Meeting  
Skeena Valley Golf and Country Club  
March 18, 2018**

**In attendance**

**Committee Members**

Jason Harris - Terrace Rod and Gun Club  
Sam Cooper - Regional Tackle Vendor Community, Smithers  
Larry Proteau - BC Federation of Drift Fishers (BCFDF)  
Jim Culp - BC Federation of Fly Fishers (BC FFF)  
Troy Peters - Steelhead Society of BC (SSBC) Northern Branch  
Rob Vodola - Non-affiliated independent angler – Kitimat  
Gene Allen - Upper Skeena Angling Guides Association (USAGA)  
Randy Dozzi - North Coast Steelhead Alliance (NCSA)  
Frank Guillon - Bulkley Valley Rod and Gun Club, Smithers  
Dustin Kovacvich - Skeena Angling Guides Association (SAGA)

**Provincial Government Employees – Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO)/Ministry of Environment (MOE)/BC Parks and Conservation Officer Service Division**

Joe De Gisi - Stock Assessment Biologist (Chair)  
Paddy Hirshfield - Acting Regional Manager Resource Management Division  
Troy Larden - Fish and Wildlife Section Head  
Kris Maier - Fisheries Management Biologist  
Kenji Miyazaki - Fisheries Management Biologist (Minutes)  
Danica Crystal - First Nations Liaison FLNRORD  
Tracey Walbauer – BC Conservation Officers Service (COS)  
Ricardo Correia - DFO Fisheries Officer

**Stakeholders/Observers**

Scott McGinlay - Terrace area angler  
Gill McKean - Terrace guide  
Brian Niska - SAGA  
Rick Baerg - SSBC  
Stan Doll - Terrace guide  
Brian Shack - Terrace fisherman  
Nathan Meakes - SSBC  
Terry Lam - Terrace angler  
Mandi McDougall - Terrace lodge owner, angler, First Nation member  
Andrew Rushton – Terrace guide

Ryan Whitmore - Gitksan Watershed Authority  
Allison Oliver - Native fish Society, Resident Angler  
Jodi Smith - Local angler, Smithers

### **Regrets/not present**

Rob Brown - North Coast Steelhead Alliance (NCSA alternate)\*  
Walter Faetz - Skeena Angling Guides Association\*  
Mike Langegger - BC Wildlife Federation\*  
Jim Grilz - Prince Rupert Rod and Gun Club\*  
Dallas Matson - Tweedsmuir Rod and Gun Club\*  
Brian Patrick - Regional Tackle Vendor Community  
Malte Juergensen - Non-affiliated independent angler – Lower Skeena/Nass  
Philip Maher - Terrace Rod and Gun Club (TRGC)  
Dean Peard – Ministry of Environment (MoE)  
Mark Beere - FLNRORD

\* SFAC committee member

09:30 hrs to 10:00 hrs – Coffee, sign-in, name tags, seating

### **10:00 hours - Introductions/committee and Housekeeping**

NB: 9 committee members present of the total membership of 13, thus, item 5 (50% of the committee must be in attendance) from *Meetings/Procedures* section of the Skeena Fisheries Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) Version 1.5 (May 2016) is met

**Joe De Gisi (JD)** – 09:50 hrs - Meeting commenced; welcome and introductions made; Mark Beere (MB) is attending a steelhead manager's meeting in Washington State, but will remain the chair of the committee please send reg issues to MB. JD describes the contents of the supplied material. Error in the supplied documents, 6<sup>th</sup> item regarding the amendment of angling from boat regulation is stated as a federal reg, but is in fact is provincial reg and can be varied by the province not the federal gov't. Pg 11 is a new page that describes United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the roll of UNDRIP in consultation with governments. Section-head decisions from 2017

**Larry Proteau (LP)** – Did not receive the Section Head decision document from 2017

**JD** - There are 17 proposals in 2018, when only 12 proposals are allowed based on the terms of reference (TOR)

**Jim Culp (JC)** - Would like to know what provincial government ministry the fisheries staff works for?

**JD** - Responded with Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MFLNRORD) – (Editor's comment: Dean Peard is with MoE)

**JD** - Explains the current gov't structure and changes to the Resource Management (RM) structure in the Skeena region

**JD** - Calls for any changes to the proposed 2018 agenda

**Dustin Kovacvich (DK)** - Would like a discussion around the potential Chinook (CH) angling closure of the Skeena and Nass watersheds and FLNRO response to DFO's requests

**JC** - Would like to also discuss a potential committee name change. The current name causes some confusion due to the fact that other angling advisory boards in region have a similar name

**JC** - Question regarding voting around the table at the committee level - JC notes that other committees don't vote and they're advisory only

**JD** - Responds with the fact that this discussion has been brought up in the past

**JD** - Response to DK's CH ask; JD is not aware of a request from DFO to mirror potential river closures - the committee is provincial committee and doesn't delve into federal regs/fisheries management

**Troy Larden (TL)** - Responses to JD comments, TL feels they were appropriate and correct

**JC** - Agrees with DK and disagrees with JD and TL comments - JC wants to discuss and feels that this committee should deal with this potential issue

**TL** - The regulation proposal is not part of the committee TOR

**JD** - Committee is here to deal with the proposals that have been delivered and are on the agenda - CH discussion is not primary business for the day.

**Larry Walker (LW)** - Disagrees with the JD assumption - he would like to see the committee discuss the CH issue and voice their opinions

**Paddy Hirshfield (PH)** - Proposes a discussion on the potential CH closure at the end of the day, for people who would like to discuss further

**DK** - He understands that the province is not developing the CH regulation, he just wants clarification on the potential timelines, etc. - when do stakeholders have a chance to consult on a watershed basis?

**JD** - We will deal with the potential regulation changes when FLNRORD is requested to mirror the reg by DFO

**JD** - No actions items from 2017? No comments received from the committee members

**JD** - Name change item, agree with JC assertion - JC suggested Skeena Angler Advisory Team (SAAT) and JD agree with the name change as well, **action to the committee**, no comments from the members

**All members of the committee are in favor of changing the name to SAAT**

**JD** - Forgot to thank the observers for attending the meeting

**DK** - Is Jason Harris (JH) a rep for the BCWF?

**JH** - No, Terrace Rod and Gun club

### **10:30 - Section head Recommendations for 2017 Regulation Proposals**

**JD** - People can ask questions regarding anything; JD asks TL to go over his reg decisions for 2017

**TL** – There were 6 -7 proposals developed by Fish and Wildlife (F&W) staff in the past year - TL will go over each proposal and his subsequent rationale for his decision

1. Chinook proposal (ocean quota)– Not supported by committee

**LW** - Was there sharing of this proposal with DFO?

**JD** - Yes, the reg was developed through discussions at the 2017 meeting and sent to John Webb DFO

**DK** - This particular issue has been stalled for years

**Gene Allen (GA)** - The stalling of regs by DFO is typical

**DK** - Coast wide regulation changes are too difficult/complex to just vary through DFO - The change would have to go to parliament

**JD** – This is a Federal issue, not to be discussed at this committee

2. Class Waters License Fee Increase

**TL** - Fees are provincially established, not regionally; fee changes would be considered a blunt tool to restrict use and crowding on rivers, hence fee changes are outside of the scope of this committee

**LP** - Why are we discussing this proposal again in 2018?

**GA** - Why is it allowed then?

**JD** - GA submitted the 2018 proposal on time

**Gill McKean (GM)** - Does the money from classified waters license go to Freshwater Fisheries Society of British Columbia (FFSBC)?

**TL** - Yes and no, a portion of the license fees go to Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) and basic license \$ go to FFSBC (Editor's note: a portion of the basic license fees does go to the HCTF)

**JH** - Change takes change, where do we start the conversation on this issue - how can we move forward on fee changes?

**Frank Guillon (FG)** - If this issue is not the committee mandate, where does a proposal of this nature go then?

**JD** - In the past this has been a discussion on a provincial level and it was deemed that an increase in classified waters (CW) fee was the wrong tool to deal with crowding on CW

**DK** - FFSBC met with Skeena Angling Guide Association (SAGA), FFSBC is predicting budget shortfalls in the future and the increase in CW fees could potential assist in reducing the shortfalls

### 3. Steelhead Catch and Release Quota

**TL** - This is being worked on at the prov level, but not sure where it stands, that being said the province has the ability to enact such a reg

### 4. Increase in COS Enforcement

**TL** - This proposal is outside of FLNRO staff; COS are part of Ministry of Environment (MOE) and not MFLNRORD, MFLNRORD has no control over COS work or budgets

**LW** - Just for the committee's information, RCMP are implementing auxiliary officers once again; has the COS or the province been thinking of using the same model?

**TL** - The province has enacted multiple programs across the Skeena that utilizes First Nations and others to work as guardians on the land base - most of the guardian programs in region revolve round wildlife, but fisheries guardians have been used in the past

**GA** - Best CO in the region was a poacher in the Kispiox Valley

**Troy Peters (TP)** - There's no avenue to get money to hire guardians

**TL** - FFSBC put money towards COS time in 2017

**LW** - There's an agreement in Kitimat with RCMP to patrol in the tidal and non-tidal areas. RCMP members check anglers for licenses and boating certification, etc.

**DK** - Based on the SAGA and FFSBC meeting, the COS would like to be on the river more

**Tracey Walbauer (TB)** - FFSBC money in 2017 put the officers on the river for 2 extra days

### 5. Removal of Fish from the Water

**JD** - Request from TP about information on the fish removal from water proposal - the proposal was sent to Victoria for a decision, the proposal remains there

**TL** - The proposal was fully supported by staff in region and sent to Victoria with a strong rationale from other jurisdictions (Washington State and Alaska), however, Victoria thought it

was an education issue, not regulatory - Allison Oliver will be doing some work on this issue through the Native Fish Society

**Allison Oliver (AO)** - She will be taking on the reg and pushing it forward onto the F&W director - AO will be looking for support letters from regional angler/conservation groups for support of the reg change

**JD** - Could AO please describe her background and affiliation?

**AO** - I'm a consultant and working currently for the Native Fish Society

**FG** - If this an education issue, we need to have the industry involved

**LW** - This is a good idea, most people are stupid and this needs to be law - Gov't needs implement this

**JD** - We need to move on

**TL** - Thanks to AO

**JD** - Moving onto the 2018 proposals

### **11:00 hrs - 2018 Regulation Proposal Discussion**

#### **1. Increase Classified Waters Fees – Upper Skeena Angling Guide's Association**

**JD** - How do we deal with repeat proposals? Waste of time, if they have not been supported in the past, on the other hand, things change, so the proposal can be brought forward when times change etc. - there may be a need to change the TOR to deal with repeat proposals, Section Head would be the one making the decision, there's the Provincial Angler Advisory Team (PAAT) to put higher gov't proposals forward, in scope for the committee, but not supported can be brought forward but placed at the back of the line

**JC** - He needs to think about it

**DK** - Agrees with JD assumption

**LP** - There are lots of repeat proposals on the table

**JD** - There's one repeat this year

**LP** - There's a reason why the BCWF walked away from the committee

**DK** - So are license fees are out of the scope of the committee?

**JD** - Yes

**DK** - Is there an alternative process to take the reg forward?

**JD** - Yes, the PAAT. I'll send out the contact information to the committee. **Action Item**

**JH** - If CH are mentioned in the proposals are they out of scope?

**TL** - Yes

**JD** - GA please describe your proposal

**GA** - The proposal should be part of the committee

**LW** - Agrees that the proposal is out of scope and a DFO issue, request a change in future

**JD** - Not a federal issue it's a provincial issue. Province sets licence fees not the federal gov't.

**DK** - SAGA is in favor increase CW fees, incremental fees over time

**JC** - BCFFF supports fee increase, BCFFF has been trying to help

**GM** - Discussion with FFSBC and that angler effort is decreasing across the province, the older anglers get, the less money they pay for license products; hence less money is coming to FFSBC - the older demographic of anglers makes up the majority of anglers, yet they pay least amount to fish

**GA** - Most effort on the Kispiox is from Non-Resident Aliens

**JD** - Based on license sales information the majority of the license fees are not from steelhead tags

**Brian Niska (BN)** - License sales are down, not necessarily angler participation

**AO** - Where does the license money go?

**TL** - 100% basic license fees go to FFSBC (Editor's note - please see correction, above), a proportion of the money from CW tags and species tags goes to HCTF - no money from license sales goes into provincial surplus

**GA** - \$400K made in Skeena on classified waters, yet the region only gets a portion of that money

**DK** - Proposes a change to GA proposal - gov't increase fees on classified rivers with anadromous fish species, not inland CW fisheries

**GA** - We need to think about the fish, \$ for enforcement and habitat projects

**DK** - Are we voting?

**JD** - GA are you okay with the change? Increase CW fees to \$100 on anadromous rivers across the province for non-res aliens and non-res?

**GA** - Yes

**JD** - Show of hands - 6 yes / 2 no /3 abstain

## 2. Angling Closure of BT Spawning Tribs - Author Kris Maier (KM)

**JH** - Clarification, is it for redd monitoring program or for the angling period?

**KM** - I will describe the proposal and the reg will become clear

**LP** - JH is the issue the closure on the Gitnadoix?

**FG** - Do people fish these rivers?

**JH** – Yes, Gitnadoix

**DK** - Does anyone oppose the regulation change?

**JH** - Would the confluence of the Gitnadoix and Mager be closed?

**KM** – No, you can angle downstream of the confluence on Gitnadoix proper

**KM** – Essentially, bull trout are vulnerable in the fall period, prior to spawning from angling, but we are open to modifying the aspects of the closure accommodate current angler use

**GA** - Is forestry/development more of an issue, versus angling?

**KM** - Magar no, Morice forestry/development is an impact

**JD** - Anymore comments or concerns?

**JD**- Vote - 11 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain

### 3. Kitimat River Time and Place Closure, Bait Ban, and Hatchery Trout Quota Increase (KM)

**KM** - Explains regulation, proposal mainly focuses around CT, not so much for steelhead (STA).

**JC** - The proposal started through the SSBC a few years back. BCFFF supports the proposal. JC fishes the river in Sept and the CT are easy to catch. BCFFF supports the bait ban all year, CT are vulnerable, CO and be caught on gear, please make sure the regs are easy to understand for everyone

**KM** - Did not want to move forward with a year-round bait ban, due to a lack of information - we have funding in 2018/2019 to complete some more work in the system

**LW** - Pleads ignorance - could you please explain the difference between RB vs CT vs DV? Hatchery never produced RB?

**KM** - Explains the residualization issue, DV regulation, etc.

**LP** - Concerns with the bait proposal, only hatchery ST river in the north, further concerns with the closure upstream of the Highway 37 bridge mainstem/tribs. - more supportive of the tributary closures

**KM** – Do anglers utilize the proposed closure areas?

**LP** – Yes, doesn't like Highway 37 boundary proposal

**DK** - SAGA has discussed the proposal, SAGA is in favor of the residualization removal and the bait ban proposal - SAGA has issues with the closure in March; this will have an impact on STA fishery - close all the tributaries and leave the mainstem alone above the Highway 37 bridge, exclude the upstream of 37 closure, but include tributary closures upstream of Highway 37

**KM** - Based on Kitimat River guide reports, use in the early part of the year (Jan – March) is low, is the guide report information correct?

**DK** - Yes, Jan – Feb no effort - there's substantial use in March



**KM** - Guide reporting info shows little use in March

**Sam Cooper (SC)** - The info used to determine effort is guide information?

**KM** - Yes, the only information we have available is the guide reports and cutthroat(CT) telemetry results

**LW** - Observed 5 trucks on the river today, but agrees with the proposed reg changes

**JH** - Clarification on the CT fishery - where do the fish go after they spawn?

**KM** - There are three main biological forms of CT in the Kitimat: fluvial, anadromous and adfluvial

**JH** - Are you concerned with the concentration of anglers in the fishery?

**KM** - The concern is mainly regarding the overwintering congregations of CT prior to spawning - in April they will distribute throughout the watershed and are less vulnerable to angling - most CT on the Kitimat are caught during April

**DK** - Is it appropriate to be allowing angling on CT at all?

**KM** - Yes, based on the current info.

**GA** - Kispiox CT population has gone in the dumps - high mortality rates in bait fisheries

**KM** - Mortality rates are not based on instantaneous mortality, but longer monitoring, survival through the spawning period

**GM** - Has issues with the March closure - most anglers are looking for STA not CT, CT are by-catch - GM has 25 years' experience on the river, agrees with the fall bait closure, since CO can be caught with any form of gear or fly - agrees with tributary closure and bait ban, but not March closure

**BN** - Execution of the regulation needs work, needs more science based information to support the March closure and potential impacts to stakeholders

**KM** - Explains the movement patterns of the CT in the Kitimat River - there are coast wide concerns over anadromous CT populations - used the Steelhead Harvest Questionnaire to look at timing of fish capture in the STA fisheries, majority occurs after April 1

**GM** - So if angling effort during March appears to low what's the issue? If there are no anglers fishing then there would be limited encounters

**DK** - Still concerned with the timing of the March closure

**JD** - KM would like to modify your proposal?

**KM** - Yes, but not at this moment it may be modified at a later date

**JC** - Before a hatchery program, in 1974 (Editor's note: 1984) JC fished above the Highway 37 bridge and the majority of STA were dark - JC is more concerned with the bait issue

**LW** - Invites KM to attend a Kitimat fisheries meeting, Kitimat Fisheries Advisory Board at Kitimat Rod and Gun Club Thursday, March 22, 2018

**KM** - I will not be attending the meeting

**JD** - Let's Vote

**JD- Vote = 3 yes / 5 no / 3 abstain**

**KM** - Who supports what portions of the proposal? All committee members support residual retention - the lion's share of committee members would like to see a revamped proposal mainly revolving around the proposed closure time and the March 31 end date - no comment on the bait, but there was support in the discussion

**Action Item – Revise the proposal and re-submit to committee members.**

Lunch Break -12:05 hrs

Re-start – 13:00 hrs

**JD** - Post lunch house keeping, describing time management, take sometime away from KM presentation, 10 mins per reg proposal, and possible discussion on CH in the last hour

**4. Skeena Watershed Streams Bait Ban – Randy Dozzi (RD)/DK**

**JD** - Can we combine DK's SAGA and RD's proposals?

**RD** - Thinking of pulling proposal # 4 and putting proposal # 5 at the end of the list

**RD** - No bait = better fishing and less impacts on fish, RD killed too many fish with bait and feels it's not acceptable anymore

**DK** - SAGA position abstained on this issue

**DK** - Kalum and Skeena bait bans, not happy with back bouncing at the mouth of the Kalum

**FG** - Any of the committee members present that don't agree with the bait ban?

**LP** - There's a Kalum bait ban in place already....sort of - no reason for bait ban, I'm not sleeping on the float, not supporting

**JC** - Repeat discussion, much larger issues in region, need to tackle other issues that really count, BCFFF supports the proposed bait bans

**DK** - SFAC bait ban dates April 1-Sept 1, BCFDF is open to discussion to a ban bait use from Hell's gate to power lines on the Skeena mainstem (Remo) - SAGA proposed a number of dates, but the closure was approved from April 1- Sept 1, province needs to mirror

**TL** - No, the province doesn't need to mirror DFO proposals

**JC** - This is stupid

**TL** - Easy Jim

**LW** - Does this mean for artificial bait?

**DK** - Yes, Jensen eggs etc.

**JH** - There are other systems in region that allow bait use, is that correct? Is the issue really about bait?

**TL** - It depends on the specific management objectives you're trying to reach and is the management objective the correct tool to meeting that objective

**DK** - Objectives are clearly defined. Bait use studies cited in the proposal show that there is harm to fish

**JH** - My concern is that we need to know if the information supplied is correct when citing studies

**DK** - I can supply you with the reports

**JH** - I've read them. The studies don't accurately represent the Skeena fishery

**DK** - I didn't come to debate the studies

**JC** - I love to fish with all techniques - we all know that using bait catches more fish - Kalum brings back memories to JC of catching overwintering steelhead with bait - let's get this reg done!

**Scott McGinlay (SG)** - We're here to represent the fish, not our own personal agendas - I've seen people with fly rods catch a 40 lbs CH on the Kalum, fighting the fish for 45 mins, they probably killed that fish - in the same amount of time I observed people using bait catch 3 or 4 in the same amount of time - you can't tell me that bait use is the issue

**DK** - I still guide the bait fishery on the Kalum - personal observations, that bait is far more productive - not trying to exclude people from the fishery

**Brian Shack (BS)** - I'm a bank angler, I use bait and catch very few fish - love fishing, food fisher - I do not support a bait ban

**JD** - **Vote Skeena watershed bait ban 3 yes/ 4 no / 4 abstain**

**JD** - **Vote Kalum Bait Ban - 5 yes / 2 no/ 4 abstain**

**DK** - Trout and steelhead present, Kalum First Nation dislike the back trolling in Skeena/Kalum confluence, kill less fish RB, ST, DV, CH without bait, Skeena closure area is 3km in length, not looking at a permanent closure, mainly a boat fishery

**JD** - Any comments?

**JD** - Skeena River bait ban - Hell's Gate to Skeena 2 Boundary (Powerlines at Remo) April 1- Sept 1 - **7 yes / 1 no / 3 abstain**

#### 6. Skeena Watershed Streams Jan-Feb No Fishing (RD)

**RD** - Once again reduce harm to pre-spawn steelhead on the tribs, high effort on these spring holding fish, opportunity to leave the fish alone in the really cold conditions - stop the senseless dragging of fish up on snow covered banks, like the picture that was circulated this season

**Rob Vodola (RV)** – I support changing the reg to start in December

**DK** - SAGA supportive of the idea, but not blanket closure, not a main Skeena channel closure, DK's point of view not SAGA - close the Copper and Lakelse, beating up on STA in Copper is not appropriate, fish are tired by that point in the season

**GA** - November is hammer time for angling on the Kispiox, would like to see a closure Dec 1 instead of Dec 31

**JD** - RD would you like to modify your proposal to extend the closure times?

**JC**-In favor and opposed, why close the river if you can catch the fish in March again, what's the point?

**Nathan Meeks (NM)** - The picture discussed was a November fish, the reg should be focused on the tributaries - not the mainstem Skeena

**DK** - Appreciate the proposal and should be developed and implemented on a system to system basis

**LW** - I support the motion, start small and move forward one system that a time

**JH** - In the past, we have put these types of proposals forward and should reduce the proposal to single water bodies and not a blanket closure

**TL** - Fisheries management isn't easy, there's a number of issues that are out of our hands from a fisheries management standpoint, such as climate change, which is becoming a larger issue

**DK** - Propose a Dec 1 closure where the summer steelhead winter closure exists, current winter closure starts Jan 1 upstream of Cedarville on the Skeena and Kitsault Bridge on the Nass

**TP** - Keeping the fish wet would reduce all the issues

**KM** – It's illegal to molest or harm fish and the reg currently exists, there's a bunch of debate around the appropriateness of winter steelhead fisheries

**JD** – Let's vote on the regulation as written

**JD**- Vote - **2 yes / 6 no/ 3 abstain**

### 7. Kispiox Fly Only (GA)

**GA** - Kispiox First Nation (KFN) supports the reg change, KFN voluntarily stopped netting in the Kispiox, first C&R fishery in Skeena was the Kispiox, minimize the impacts on the fish, prevent impacts on holding fish, method control is a conservation tool, go to dry line fishery, restrict angler numbers, has support letter from KFN, local campground typically has 50 non-resident anglers spend 6 weeks on the Kispiox each season and support the restriction, 50:1 catch rate gear to fly, conservation based decision needs to assist the fish

**GA** - Gear fisherman went up from 40% to 70% on the river in 2017

**SC** - Question to the province, how will the change affect coho anglers?

**TL**- There's no exemption when it comes to fishing for a different species - if a fly only regulation is proposed by the province, DFO would be asked to mirror

**RV** - There are 50 non-residents staying for 6 weeks?

**DK** - Is there substantial coho fishery on the Kispiox?

**SC**-Yes

**GA** -Yes

**GA** – Bear Claw Lodge only caters to fly anglers

**BN** – As a fly casting instructor, shop owner and guide, the use of a fly-only regulation discriminates against people, need to develop a different level, such as a catch and release limit

**Andrew Rushton (AR)** - Fished for 30 years, runs a guide business, we need to adapt/evolve to changing times, we need to change methods to maintain quality fisheries

**LP** - Repeat proposal, is there an issue with the STA population?

**JD** - No idea

**LP** - Make the river Canadian resident only

**JH** - Concerned that the implementation of fly-only would transfer gear angler to other systems, like the Zymoetz River (Copper)

**JC** - There's more effort on the Zymoetz than ever, especially on the weekends, JC feels that there are less STA and you have to fish harder than ever to catch a fish - need to work together to figure this out

**BS** - We need to restrict all segments of the fishing industry

**JD** – Vote - **3 yes/ 5 no/ 3 abstain**

## 8. Skeena Booking System (GA)

**JD**- Describes the proposal

**GA** - Talking about guide day cap history, guides are restricted and have been since 1990, need to distribute effort

**JD** - Requesting PH to talk about Quality Waters (QW), in the past QW proposals were vetted through other sources

**JC** - BCFFF in favor; need to go back to the provincial process with 3 working groups, like in the past

**LP** - Does the booking system restrict BC residents?

**TL** - No - non-guided Non Resident Aliens and Non-Residents

**DK** - SAGA would like to see this included in all CW systems

**GA** – Upper Skeena Angling Guide Association (USAGA) would have proposed a Skeena wide booking system, but didn't want to step on toes further down river

**DK** - I abstained from the Kispiox proposal because the SAGA members do not guide there

**BS** - The proposal as written makes mention of restricting resident anglers? Is that the case?

**JD** - I think that's a typo, GA?

**GA** - Yes

**JH** - GA what are the irreversible consequences; how does a booking system work?

**GA** - History of the CW review process and carrying capacity; based on historical use

**DK** - JH, DK has the spreadsheets used to develop the anglers/km on each river in the previous QW review process

**PH** - Provincial examples of booking systems, other areas used the anglers/km; need to work together on the development of the booking system

**LW** - Item #3 means that the guided anglers get a free pass and are not restricted by the booking system

**DK** - As a guide I'm capped on the Zymoetz by the allocated angler days and anglers/day regulation; guides are already capped

**AO** - Rod day questions? How are rod days allocated? Could a guide hypothetically use all their rod days in the best part of the season, hence loading the rivers with assistant guides during the best couple weeks of the season

**TL** - Waters are classified 365 days a year, but restricted during certain periods of time (allocated days) - on the Zymoetz and Kalum rivers angling guides are restricted to the number of trip allowed per day and the number of clients per day

**TL** - I'll example the Kootenay Region example, there are highlighted the areas where the most effort was occurring the biologists developed a restrictive model based on the angling effort

**AR** - Angling guides base client effort on their historic business model; guides are unable to have an unlimited number of clients at one time; their business is primarily based on pre-booking

**AO** - Guide use should be a part of the model development

**JD** - GA, is it okay to modify the proposal to encompass the entire Skeena watershed?

**GA** - Yes

Vote - **9 yes / 0 no / 2 abstain**

### 9. Bulkley Tribs BC Resident Only (GA)

**GA** - These are small vulnerable tribs, no guiding allowed, open to Non-Resident Aliens during weekdays, there are new issues with a guide camp on the Suskwa, issues with illegal guiding on other systems

**DK** - SAGA support, but does not approve of river systems that have no guiding, but allows Non-Residents the opportunity for unlimited angling during week days

**JC**- BCFFF supports, should include Insect Creek?

**LW** - Doesn't believe that we should not be restricting other Canadians from the opportunity to fish

**TP** - This is a constitutional issue

**JC** - I think there are DFO issues with restricting Canadian residents from salmon fisheries

**DK** - I can live with only Non-Resident Aliens; small rivers where pseudo guiding is occurring; this is an issue of competition

**GA** - Albertans are the worst environmental disaster to hit BC in years - weekends are an issue, even during the restricted time

**AR** - There's a finite capacity on the small local rivers; commercialization of the area; non-residents are buying homes and hosting people to fish

**GA** - More illegal guides on the Kispiox than legal guides

**JD** - Let's wrap this up, so add Insect Creek?

**GA** - Yes

Vote – **9 yes/ 1 no / 1 abstain**

14:48 - Coffee

TL and TP have left the meeting, committee down to **10 voting members**, Rick Baerg (RB) will sit in for TP as the voting member for the SSBC

15:00 - Re-adjournment

#### 10. Zymoetz Fly Fishing Only (JC)

**JC** - Large flood impacts in 2017, need to a more conservative techniques to protect fish; After Oct 1 use a floating line and smaller hooks

**JD** - Just to clarify for the committee, the province doesn't have the ability to change line types and hook size, at the moment we are limited to restricting hook size to anything larger than 6mm, point to shank

**JC** - Went through this on the Morice River when there was a salmon closure; they developed a dry line regulation even though there was not a legal regulation

**GA** - Why can't we have a dry line regulation?

**JD** - KM will discuss in presentation

**JD** – **Vote 3 yes/ 5 no / 2 abstain**

## 11. Kalum No Fishing for STA (JC)

**JC** - Protecting holding fish; summer and winter fish protect spring holders; Deep Creek run typically holds a bunch of fish; having a closure at Deep Creek and need to have a stock assessment project on the Kalum

**JC** - Would like to modify the proposal to only encompass the Deep Creek area only, not Kalum proper

**DK** - Personally would like to see more fisheries work on the Kalum River, need more science before we go ahead with regulation changes

**AR** - Observing more pressure on the Kalum River

**DK** - Guide knowledge will be helpful in developing some sort of an enumeration/stock assessment project

**KM** - Some information does exist, but it's dated

**JC** - Do the committee members support the closure of Deep Creek?

**LP** - Opposed, seen this happened before with the trout and char closure

**RV** - Why are we concerned with the Kalum River only? The same issue is on the Kitimat and other winter rivers

**LP** - Thinks these are the first steps to closing all winter rivers, much like the trout and char reg.

**DK** - SAGA doesn't support the proposal

**DK** - Personally, we need more science in order to make a decision like this

**BN** - There will always be encounters with spawning STA in the spring, educating anglers is key

**JD** - Vote – 1 yes / 7 no/ 2 abstain

## 12. Lakelse River Steelhead (JC)

**JC** - No fishing in the upper portion of the Lakelse River March 10- May 31; the regulation will protect spawning steelhead - JC well aware of the trout and char fishery at that time of year below the CN trestle, JC willing to support a trout and char fishery in that portion of river only with trout fishing tackle; d/s CN trestle close entire river to the confluence of the Skeena for steelhead fishing but allow trout and char fishing with trout tackle

**RV** - What's trout tackle?

**JC** - Single handed fly rod or something, the regulation is attempting to protect pre-spawn and spawning steelhead in the river

**JC** - I want to protect steelhead



**LP** - I don't like the lower river closure

**LP** - Can't support

**JH** - Typically fishes a 6-weight switch rod and double egg pattern, is that steelhead or trout tackle?

**AR** - This is a case of education more than regulation; don't fish for spawning steelhead

**JC** - Need to educate ourselves and others with these issues and make tough decisions

**JD** - New proposal March 1 – May 31, no fishing for STA u/s of CN Bridge

**JD** - JC are in favor of this modification to your proposal?

**JC** - Yes

**JD** - **Vote – 7 yes / 3 Abstain**

15:34 hrs - Proposal Review Completed

**JD** - Next agenda items; KM presentation; more proposals; discussion on potential chinook ideas; update on classified waters review process

15:36 hrs - PH QW Update

**PH** - Classified waters review process chat; three main points 1) review 2) present 3) future; tons of work that encompassed the entire region with CW; need to think through the information that we have available to us; going to be thinking through the process before starting up, will the process include an emphasis on social issues?

Issues we're thinking about: we will not going to be following the QWS document and weren't bound to it - majority of the work this year will be focusing on the planning

**JD** - The QW proposals that were put on the shelf in previous committee meeting with regards to QW will be dusted off and looked at again

**JD** - KM presentation on angling methods tool box

15:43 hrs - KM presentation on angling methods.

Questions:

**GA** - If consensus is made at the committee level can the change be pushed up the line to make regulatory changes?

**KM** - Yes and no, essentially the squeaky wheel gets the grease (Editor's note: consensus does not = proposal acceptance/recommendation for forwarding to Fisheries Manager) - the proposals that focus more on provincial wide changes need to be discussed at higher levels - if stakeholders are passionate about a reg the stakeholder needs to champion the reg to make Victoria aware

**PH** – **Action Item** – KM to supply presentation to the committee and observers

**NM** - How does the “any other gear method” regulation work?

**KM** - The any other method clause needs to be delegated from the federal government to the province

**KM** - Federal regulations have catch and release quotas in the legislation, but need to be adopted by the province in question

**JH** - Other areas have a better description of what the activity of “fishing” means

16:00 hrs - Chinook closure discussions

**JD** – This discussion will focus on how the province will respond to a regulation change mirror order from DFO, if it occurs

**PH** – This is an elephant in the room and please we want to hear what's going on; in all reality it's unlikely that we will have time to consult with stakeholder because the decision will be last minute decision from DFO

**TL** - We may not even get a mirror request from DFO in this case, this is a possible scenario

**FG** - Is this a regional or Victoria decision?

**TL** - Victoria, but they will consult with region

**JC** - BCFFF wrote a letter to DFO minister Dominic LeBlanc and FLNRORD Minister Donaldson, asking who manages these fisheries; reply letter described that region will have a role in the decision; Gitksan looking for full salt and freshwater closure; how do stakeholder groups consult with FN?

**DK** – I have concerns and I understand there are issues with CH; however, a watershed wide closure is not feasible; there are inland trout fisheries and times on the Skeena when steelhead and other salmon species not with a conservation concern available for fishers

**JD** - Are you suggesting that the province be selective in the closure?

**DK** - Yes

**AG** - Read multiple emails pertaining to current CH management; not supportive of a full closure on the river, but thinks there should be an opportunity and protect the fish first; in his opinion non-retention is a viable option

**JD** – FYI....DFO will not ask the province what they should do with CH stocks; DFO will only ask the province to mirror their closure; province is not in the CH management game and we can only assist

**FG** - Closure maybe around July 25, they have caught CH jacks in Babine Lake during the sockeye fishery

**AR** - The in river aboriginal fishery took a bunch of fish last year; 2018 decision should be based on science, not politics

**JD** - Just to reiterate, province doesn't deal with CH science/management

**BN** - If province does get mirror request, will the decision be based on by-catch mortality or purely dealing with FSC fisheries?

**JH** - Fishing out of boats is in the provincial toolbox? JH fishes out of boat to avoid conflict with other people; boating is not all about back trolling

**TL** - Yes, that's in our basket, but we wouldn't go there to protect CH we have no management authority over them

**DK** - Agrees with the boating issues on the Skeena, last year there were conflicts between boaters and FN fishers on the river; STA are in the Skeena starting around July 13 onward, DK requests the river be open to STA angling after July 13th

**JC** - Was involved in the Skeena CH tagging project in 1990's; of the x # of fish tagged during the study only one died from potential tagging and handling; there are SFAB members in Rupert that are against catch and release fisheries; politics are driving this issue and FN's

**JD** - Do PH and TL have anymore insight into this question?

**PH** - Work is continuing and will continue to work on this issue moving forward

**JH** - When are CH done spawning in the Skeena?

**DK** - Just to state it again, is looking for the province not to mirror DFO total closure regulation when there are other species available in the river that are not of conservation concern

**KM** - Space and time is speculative at this time

**TL** - Business cards available for follow up with him

16:35 hrs - Final housekeeping and thanks to the committee members and observers, meeting adjourned

### **Action Items**

1. Name change proposed to the committee members by Jim Culp - Jim would like to see the committee changed to Skeena Angling Advisory Team (SAAT) from Skeena Fisheries Advisory Committee (SFAC). This name change would bring the committee in line with the other provincial angler advisory committees, such as PAAT and SCAAT and reduce the overlap with DFO run committees. The motion was brought forward by the committee chairman, Mr. Joe De Gisi. The motion was brought to a vote within the

committee members, 11 yes / 0 no, motion passed. The committee will now be known as the SAAT.

2. Chairman JD to distribute PAAT contact information to the committee members, in order to move forward on provincially managed regulation changes i.e. Classified Waters fee change.
3. Kris Maier to revise his Kitimat River proposals to reflect the comments from the committee around the March closure time period.
4. Kris Maier to distribute the regulation tool box presentation to the committee members and observers.