

Phase II Consultation Report (October – November 2008)

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

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ALAN DOLAN & ASSOCIATES
Public Relations • Community Engagement • Facilitation

March 5, 2009

Appendix P Stakeholder email updates

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy: Working Groups Update 1

May 5, 2008

Hi everyone,

Here is an update on the first Angling Management Plan Working Group meeting.

On the weekend of April 19-20, the three Angling Management Plan Working Groups held their first meeting in Terrace. The meeting focused on a number of things:

- Roles and responsibilities - Members of the Working Groups were chosen in part for their intimate knowledge of the waters in question, and they must ensure that all interests in the community are represented
- Scope - Angling Management Plans address angling-use issues on priority waters
- Task - The job of the Working Groups is to develop management approaches that balance resident angler priority with the guiding industry and the local economy

Members heard presentations on the Quality Waters Strategy and Angling Management Plan framework, AMPs that have been developed on the Dean and Horsefly Rivers, and angler-use data that the ministry has collected and analyzed.

I presented a summary of stakeholder and public consultation that was conducted between January and March 2008. The Consultation Report is a key information piece for the Working Groups. They will use this document to gain a perspective on community interests in relation to the development of Angling Management Plans. The Consultation Report is now available on the Skeena Quality Waters website

at: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/engagement.html>

I invite you to go to the website and look at the Consultation Report. If you feel there are some interests or points-of-view not represented in the report, the Working Groups have set aside a block of time at their second meetings (May 10-11) so members of the public can come and give a very brief presentation (3-5 minutes). If you feel that you have some additional information for the Working Groups, which is not captured in the Consultation Report:

- send me an email
- tell me which Working Group you want to address
- tell me very briefly what you want to say.

These opportunities will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Here's the specifics on location, date and time:

EAST WORKING GROUP

Sandman Inn - Meeting Room

Smithers, BC

Saturday May 10 4:00 pm

CENTRAL WORKING GROUP
Riverboat Restaurant
Hazelton, BC
Saturday May 10 4:00 pm

WEST WORKING GROUP
Coast Inn of the West - Copper Room
Terrace, BC
Saturday May 10 4:00 pm

The members of the Working Groups, who applied to and were selected by the Skeena Regional Quality Waters Management Committee (Regional Committee), are:

EAST WORKING GROUP (Waters: Babine, Bulkley, Morice)
Tom Espersen, resident angler
Tony Harris, resident angler
Gord Wolfe, resident angler
Micheal Hurwitz, resident angler
Tom Jones, resident angler (alternate)
Bob Hull, guide
Brian Schneider, guide
Richard Pow, guide
Keith Douglas, guide (alternate)
Jeff Lough, MOE
Facilitator: Dorli Duffy, Alan Dolan & Associates

CENTRAL WORKING GROUP [Waters: Kispiox, Kitseguecla, Kitwanga, Skeena IV (upstream from Kitwanga Bridge), Suskwa]
David Larson, resident angler
Doug Eftoda, resident angler
Don Intermela, resident angler
Jason Wiley, resident angler
Vacancy, resident angler (alternate)
Bob Clay, guide
Gene Allen, guide
Tom Lee, guide
Vacancy, guide (alternate)
Dean Peard, MOE
Facilitator: Alan Dolan, Alan Dolan & Associates

WEST WORKING GROUP [Waters: Kalum, Lakelse, Skeena IV (downstream from Kitwanga Bridge), Zymoetz I, Zymoetz II]
Jason Ouellet, resident angler

Chris Culp, resident angler
Jim Culp, resident angler
Rob Brown, resident angler
Michael Johnston, resident angler (alternate)
Dan Daigle, guide
Dustin Kovacvish, guide
Andrew Rushton, guide
Randy Dozzi, guide (alternate)
Dana Atagi, MOE
Facilitator: Sandra Bicego, Alan Dolan & Associates

If you would like to apply for a vacant Working Group position, please download and complete the Application Backgrounder (Go to: http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/planning/working_groups.html) and submit your application by email or fax to the Ministry of Environment by May 8, 2008.

The Working Groups will meet together again for their third meeting on June 7-8, 2008. The draft Angling Management Plans will be prepared and will be available for comments at public and stakeholder meetings in the fall of 2008. Visit the website for more information: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/>

Alan

Alan Dolan BSc, MSc
Facilitator, Skeena Quality Waters Strategy
Alan Dolan & Associates
250-478-8056
adolan@islandnet.com

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy: Working Groups Update 2

June 20, 2008

Hi everyone,

Here is an update on the completion of the Angling Management Plan Working Group meetings.

The three Angling Management Plan Working Groups first met in Terrace on April 20-21.

On the weekend of May 10-11, the Working Groups held separate meetings in Terrace, Hazelton and Smithers. The meetings focused on a number of things:

- Assembling and discussing background information

Phase II Consultation Report Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Appendices P – U

- Drawing on the personal knowledge and experience of Working Group members
- Developing management alternatives

The groups met together for a final meeting on the weekend of June 7-8 in Smithers. This meeting focused exclusively on evaluating management alternatives and developing recommended management alternatives for each of the waters. These management alternatives are the critical part of the draft Management Plan that will be released for public review in the fall.

Tom Ethier, Director of Fish and Wildlife for the Ministry of Environment, spent a day with Working Group members, getting a good sense of the hard work and commitment that was involved. Ethier addressed the groups briefly, reflecting on his time with them and thanking them for their volunteer efforts.

I will be preparing the draft Angling Management Plan and it will be available for comments at public and stakeholder meetings and on the website in the fall of 2008. Visit the website for more information: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/>

The tireless dedication of the members of the Working Groups has been incredible. The members put in many hours of their personal time including meeting informally between the three formal meetings.

The members of the Working Groups, are:

EAST WORKING GROUP (Waters: Babine, Bulkley, Morice)

Tom Espersen, resident angler
 Tony Harris, resident angler
 Gord Wolfe, resident angler
 Michael Hurwitz, resident angler
 Tom Jones, resident angler (alternate)
 Bob Hull, guide
 Brian Schneider, guide
 Richard Pow, guide
 Keith Douglas, guide (alternate)
 Jeff Lough, MOE
 Facilitator: Dorli Duffy, Alan Dolan & Associates

CENTRAL WORKING GROUP [Waters: Kispiox, Kitseguecla, Kitwanga, Skeena IV (upstream from Kitwanga Bridge), Suskwa]

David Larson, resident angler
 Doug Eftoda, resident angler
 Don Intermela, resident angler
 Jason Wiley, resident angler
 Ian Trombley, resident angler (alternate)
 Bob Clay, guide
 Gene Allen, guide
 Tom Lee, guide

Dean Peard, MOE
Facilitator: Alan Dolan, Alan Dolan & Associates

WEST WORKING GROUP [Waters: Kitsumkalum, Lakelse, Skeena IV (downstream from Kitwanga Bridge), Zymoetz I, Zymoetz II]
Jason Ouellet, resident angler
Chris Culp, resident angler
Jim Culp, resident angler
Rob Brown, resident angler
Michael Johnston, resident angler (alternate)
Dan Daigle, guide
Dustin Kovacvich, guide
Andrew Rushton, guide
Randy Dozzi, guide (alternate)
Dana Atagi, MOE
Facilitator: Sandra Bicego, Alan Dolan & Associates

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Have a great summer and see you in the fall!

Alan

Draft Angling Management Plan Now Available Online

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Fall Update #1

October 17, 2008

Hello everyone,

The draft Angling Management Plan, which is part of the Skeena Quality Waters Strategy, is now available at: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/>.

It is important to note that this is a DRAFT plan and it is crucial that everyone has the information they need to better understand it. Members of the stakeholder-based Working Groups, who helped develop the draft plan in partnership with the Ministry of the Environment, want to hear from all interested parties in the fall consultation process.

I will be meeting with local community members from now until November 30 to seek their input on the draft Angling Management Plan. The draft plan addresses angler-use issues during the steelhead sport fishery.

In this Phase II consultation process, we want to know what people like and don't like about the draft Angling Management Plan. We want to

know how the plan should be changed to better address the issues that people in the community have raised.

There will be a series of sector-based stakeholder meetings held in the communities of Houston, Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat and Prince Rupert. It is important that people have an opportunity to meet in smaller groups of like-minded people so they feel comfortable asking questions and making comments. The following sector groups are proposed:

- Resident anglers (with no economic interests related to steelhead)
- Non-guiding local economy (accommodation and meal providers, bait and tackle stores, etc.)
- Licensed guides
- Elected officials
- Business, economic development and tourism organizations
- Non-residents

The meetings will be held depending on local demand. If you would like to be involved in one of these meetings, please contact me at the address below.

The public open houses will be as follows:

Public Open House 5:00 - 9:00 pm		
Prince Rupert	Lester Centre of the Arts	Thursday Nov 13, 2008
Kitimat	Venue to be announced	Friday Nov 14, 2008
Smithers	Hudson Bay Lodge	Monday Nov 17, 2008
Hazelton	Skeena Lions Hall	Tuesday Nov 18, 2008
Houston	Seniors' Centre	Wednesday Nov 19, 2008
Public Open House 12:00 - 4 pm		
Terrace	Best Western	Saturday Nov 15, 2008

You will have a variety of different ways to find out more about the draft plan and let us know what you think. These include:

- Sectoral stakeholder meetings
- Public Open Houses (advertised extensively in local papers and promoted through other media channels)
- Online Response Form (coming soon on the website; also available at the public meetings)
- Website (wapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/)
- Email and telephone

Please note that the deadline for all comments on the draft Angling Management Plan, including completing the online Response Form, is November 30, 2008.

Non-guided, non-resident steelhead anglers are key drivers in the local economy, staying at local bed and breakfasts, lodges and campgrounds, eating at area restaurants and buying supplies at bait and tackle stores. The draft Angling Management Plan strives to create a balance between resident angling opportunities and other economic activities connected to the steelhead sport fishery.

The volunteer Working Groups and the Ministry of Environment clearly want to ensure the draft Angling Management Plan address local
Phase II Consultation Report Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Appendices P – U

economic concerns, First Nation values, resident angling issues, and other community interests. The Working Groups will carefully review the recommended management options based on the feedback obtained through the fall consultation process. Options will be revised where appropriate and then forwarded as recommendations to the Director of Fish and Wildlife. These recommendations will be carefully reviewed by the director to ensure they balance all the different community interests.

I look forward to seeing you in the community to discuss the draft Angling Management Plan further with you.

Alan Dolan

BACKGROUND

For years, people have told the Ministry of Environment that waters in the Skeena River system have persistent steelhead angler-use issues -- crowding, disproportionate numbers of non-resident anglers or guided anglers, lack of opportunities for resident anglers, illegal guiding, and poor angler etiquette - leading to a degraded quality of angling experience. Spring 2008 consultations confirmed these concerns about angler use on a number of waters in the Skeena River watershed.

In response to these concerns, the ministry implemented the Quality Waters Strategy on the Skeena River and its major tributaries. The Quality Water Strategy is a process to develop a draft Angling Management Plan on priority waters of the Skeena River watershed.

In the spring, I heard from hundreds of people at stakeholder and public meetings, via email and telephone calls and through the results of a Response Form that was distributed on the website and at public meetings. Community members raised several key issues that the draft Angling Management Plan needed to address:

- Overcrowding on certain waters at certain times
- Large numbers of non-guided, non-resident anglers contributing to overcrowding
- Importance of non-guided, non-resident anglers to the local economy
- Need for more resident opportunities to fish for steelhead

The Phase I Consultation Report provided the necessary input from all community interests for members of three stakeholder-based Working Groups to help develop the draft Angling Management Plan.

The information collected during the Phase II consultation process will be assessed by the Working Groups in early 2009 in order to help finalize the draft Angling Management Plan and forward it to the Director of Fish and Wildlife at the Ministry of Environment as recommendations for his consideration.

Quality Waters Strategy: Response Form II now available

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Fall Update #2

October 24, 2008

Further to my previous email, the Response Form is now available at:

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/feedback/>

It is a long questionnaire, but remember that you only need to answer questions for the rivers you are interested in.

There is a poster you can download and help us notify your communities about upcoming Public Open Houses at:

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/engagement.html>

I have heard from a number of you indicating your interest in attending sector-based stakeholder meetings in the communities of Houston, Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat and Prince Rupert. Those meeting will be an opportunity to meet in smaller groups of like-minded people who feel comfortable asking questions and making comments. The following sector groups are proposed:

- Resident anglers (with no economic interests related to steelhead)
- Non-guiding local economy (accommodation and meal providers, bait and tackle stores, etc.)
- Licensed guides
- Elected officials
- Business, economic development and tourism organizations
- Non-residents

I will be letting people know the dates and times of those meetings shortly. If you would like to be involved in one of the meetings, please contact me at the address below.

Please note: some of the newspaper advertisements that appeared in area papers this week had no venue for the Kitimat Public Open House and an incorrect venue for the Terrace Public Open House. So just to be clear, here is the correct schedule of Public Open Houses:

Public Open House 5:00 - 9:00 pm

Prince Rupert, Lester Centre of the Arts, Thursday Nov 13, 2008
Kitimat, Greek Orthodox Hall, Friday Nov 14, 2008
Smithers, Hudson Bay Lodge, Monday Nov 17, 2008
Hazelton, Skeena Lions Hall, Tuesday Nov 18, 2008
Houston, Seniors' Centre, Wednesday Nov 19, 2008

Public Open House 12:00 - 4 pm

Terrace, Best Western, Saturday Nov 15, 2008

Please visit the website for updated information. I look forward to seeing all of you during the consultation process

Alan

Draft Angling Management Plan Consultation Schedule

Skeena Quality Waters Fall Update #3

November 6, 2008

Just a reminder of the upcoming Public Open Houses:

Prince Rupert - Thursday Nov 13, 5-9 pm
Lester Centre of the Arts

Kitimat - Friday Nov 14, 5-9 pm
Greek Orthodox Hall

Terrace - Saturday Nov 15, 12-4 pm
Best Western

Smithers - Monday Nov 17, 5-9 pm
Hudson Bay Lodge

Hazelton - Tuesday Nov 18, 5-9 pm
Skeena Lions Hall

Houston - Wednesday Nov 19, 5-9 pm
Seniors' Centre

The Public Open House format will feature displays at different stations and "resource people" to answer questions and engage with members of the public. We will have a sit-down area where people can watch a slide show. There are a number of other different ways that people can get information and provide input on the draft plan, including the website, email, telephone, online Response Form, and stakeholder meetings.

I would like to thank all of you who met with me in stakeholder meetings over the past two weeks. Your input is very important to this process.

Following the Public Open Houses, I will be holding additional stakeholder meetings for people WHO HAVE NOT ALREADY ATTENDED STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS.

The schedule for those meetings is as follows:

Smithers - Thursday November 20
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community

7:00 pm - Anglers

Hazelton - Friday November 21

10:30 am - Guides

2:00 pm - Business community

7:00 pm - Anglers

Terrace - Saturday November 22

10:30 am - Guides

2:00 pm - Business community

7:00 pm - Anglers

Please confirm your attendance by email with me.

Stakeholders and public from Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Houston will have the opportunity to attend the Public Open Houses in their communities or come to the stakeholder meetings listed above. If you would like to explore other options, please contact me.

I urge all of you to fill out the online Response Form at <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/feedback/>

The deadline for input to this consultation process is November 30, 2008.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alan

Update on Consultation Process

Skeena Quality Waters Fall Update #4

November 13, 2008

I now have the venues for the second round of stakeholder meetings. Please see below.

The Public Open Houses start tonight in Prince Rupert.

Prince Rupert - Thursday Nov 13, 5-9 pm

Lester Centre of the Arts

Kitimat - Friday Nov 14, 5-9 pm

Greek Orthodox Hall

Terrace - Saturday Nov 15, 12-4 pm
Best Western

Smithers - Monday Nov 17, 5-9 pm
Hudson Bay Lodge

Hazelton - Tuesday Nov 18, 5-9 pm
Skeena Lions Hall

Houston - Wednesday Nov 19, 5-9 pm
Seniors' Centre

Here's the venues for the additional stakeholder meetings for people WHO WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE FIRST ROUND OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS.

Smithers - Thursday November 20
Hudson's Bay Lodge - Executive Room
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Hazelton - Friday November 21
Mountainview United Church, 2510 Highway 62
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Terrace - Saturday November 22
Best Western
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Please confirm your attendance by email with me.

Stakeholders and public from Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Houston will have the opportunity to attend the Public Open Houses in their communities or come to the stakeholder meetings listed above. If you would like to explore other options, please contact me.

This consultation process is very focused. We want to know:

Phase II Consultation Report Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Appendices P – U

- What do you like about the draft plan?
- What don't you like?
- How should the draft plan be changed to better address the issues that people in the community have raised?

I urge all of you to fill out the online Response Form at <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/feedback/>

The deadline for input to this consultation process is November 30, 2008.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alan

Quality Waters Consultation Process closes November 30, 2008

November 18, 2008

Skeena Quality Waters Update #5

Thanks to all of you who have been able to come out to the Public Open Houses.

Just a reminder of the last two Public Open Houses:

Hazelton - Tuesday Nov 18, 5-9 pm
Skeena Lions Hall

Houston - Wednesday Nov 19, 5-9 pm
Seniors' Centre

And also a reminder of additional stakeholder meetings primarily for people WHO WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE FIRST ROUND OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS:

Smithers - Thursday November 20
Hudson's Bay Lodge - Executive Room
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Hazelton - Friday November 21
Mountainview United Church, 2510 Highway 62
10:30 am - Guides

2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Terrace - Saturday November 22
Best Western
10:30 am - Guides
2:00 pm - Business community
7:00 pm - Anglers

Please confirm your attendance by email with me.

Stakeholders and public from Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Houston have the opportunity to attend the Public Open Houses in their communities or come to the stakeholder meetings listed above. If you would like to explore other options, please contact me.

I urge all of you to fill out the online Response Form at <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/feedback/>

Remember, the deadline for input to this consultation process is November 30, 2008.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Alan

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Update #6

December 17, 2008

To: All stakeholders

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the consultation process since the release of the draft Angling Management Plan on October 17, 2008. Your ideas on what you like about the draft plan, what you don't like, and most importantly the solutions you have offered are greatly appreciated and fundamental to the success of this process.

Significant concerns were raised about the draft Angling Management Plan and the provincial Quality Waters Strategy process. The Ministry of Environment and the Regional Committee that oversees the Quality Waters Strategy in Skeena Region are committed to the development of a draft Angling Management Plan that carefully considers all interests. Further work will be necessary to develop solutions and achieve balance amongst all stakeholders.

During the Phase II Consultation, which ended on November 30, 2008, there were 28 stakeholder meetings with 224 people attending and six Public Open Houses with 145 in attendance in the communities of Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Terrace, Hazelton, Smithers and Houston. More than 350 emails with comments have been received and 445 Response Forms were completed either online or at the Public Open Houses.

The information documented during stakeholder meetings and Public Open Houses, the email comments, and results of the Response Forms will be summarized in a Phase II Consultation Report. This report will provide critical information for the Working Groups to consider when revising the draft Angling Management Plan. An email notification will be sent when this report is available.

The Ministry of Environment and the Regional Committee are reviewing all relevant information and will provide an update on the process and next steps when the Phase II Consultation Report is released in late January 2009.

Alan

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Update #7

January 30, 2009

Dear stakeholders,

Further to my email in December 2008, due to the overwhelmingly large number of responses to the fall consultation process for the Skeena Quality Waters Strategy, the completion and release of the Phase II Consultation Report has been delayed until mid-February.

You will receive an email notification when the report is available on the Skeena Quality Waters Strategy website.

Thanks to all of you for the incredible amount of volunteer time and energy that you have devoted to this process.

Alan

Appendix Q Newspaper advertising

Placement:

Newspaper	Insertion Date
Prince Rupert Daily News	Wed Oct 22
	Wed Oct 29
	Wed Nov 05
Houston Today	Wed Oct 22
	Wed Oct 29
	Wed Nov 05
Kitimat Northern Sentinel	Wed Oct 22
	Wed Oct 29
	Wed Nov 05
Smithers Interior News	Wed Oct 22
	Wed Oct 29
	Wed Nov 05
Terrace Standard	Wed Oct 22
	Wed Oct 29
	Wed Nov 05
Bulkley Browser (full page)	Fri Oct 24
	Fri Oct 31
	Fri Nov 7

A copy of the display advertisement is on the next page.

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

**Do you fish for steelhead
in the Skeena River watershed?**

**Do you own a business
that serves steelhead anglers?**

**Come and learn about the draft Angling Management Plans
for rivers in your community and tell us what you think.**

Public Open House 5:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Prince Rupert	Lester Centre of the Arts	Thursday Nov. 13, 2008
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Kitimat	Greek Orthodox Hall	Friday Nov. 14, 2008
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Smithers	Hudson Bay Lodge	Monday Nov. 17, 2008
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Hazelton	Skeena Lions Hall	Tuesday Nov. 18, 2008
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Houston	Seniors' Centre	Wednesday Nov. 19, 2008
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Public Open House 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Terrace	Best Western	Saturday Nov. 15, 2008
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**Visit the website, download the draft Angling Management Plan and
fill out a response form online. Find out about stakeholder meetings
in your community. Contact Alan Dolan, Facilitator, Skeena Quality
Waters Strategy 250 478-8056 adolan@islandnet.com or visit
<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws>**



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Appendix R Synopsis of Draft Angling Management Plan (handout for Public Open Houses)

SYNOPSIS

Draft Angling Management Plan Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

THE ISSUE

Steelhead angler-use issues — crowding, disproportionate numbers of non-resident anglers or guided anglers, lack of opportunities for resident anglers, illegal guiding, and poor angler etiquette — lead to a degraded quality of angling experience on certain waters of the Skeena River watershed.

PHASE I CONSULTATION

Public and stakeholders consulted in Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat, Hazelton, Smithers and Houston in early 2008 said there are a number of key issues:

- Overcrowding on certain waters at certain times
- Large numbers of non-guided, non-resident anglers contributing to overcrowding
- Guided anglers playing a role in crowding at certain times
- Importance of non-guided, non-resident anglers to the local economy
- Need for more resident opportunities to fish for steelhead

DRAFT PLAN

Stakeholder-based Working Groups met from April to June 2008 and helped develop a draft Angling Management Plan to address some of these issues. They used suggested solutions from the consultation process and a regulatory tool box provided by the Quality Waters Strategy. The draft plan needs to balance all the community interests including resident angling opportunities, the local guiding industry and the local economy, which derives much of its revenues from non-guided, non-resident anglers.



PHASE II CONSULTATION

With the public release of the draft Angling Management Plan, a second consultation process is now underway that is asking public and stakeholders three things:

- What do you like about the plan?
- What don't you like about the plan?
- How should the plan be changed to better address the issues that people in the community have raised?

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS

There are a number of different ways that you can tell us what you think:

- Public Open Houses
- Sector-based Stakeholder meetings
- Online Response Form (<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/skel/qws/feedback/>)
- Contact the facilitator
Alan Dolan
adolan@islandnet.com
250-478-8056
The deadline for comments is November 30, 2008.

NEXT STEPS

The Working Groups will carefully review the recommended management options based on the feedback obtained through the fall consultation process. The draft plan will be revised where appropriate and then forwarded as recommendations to the Director of Fish and Wildlife, Ministry of Environment. The director will carefully review these recommendations to ensure they balance all the different community interests — resident angling, the guiding industry, and the local tourism economy.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT

ALTERNATIVES

When angler-use issues are a big problem, the Angling Management Plan relies on one main regulatory measure — the combination of a limited-day licence with a lottery system.

Working Groups considered a range of management options, but most of those options did not address the issue

of trying to evenly distribute angling effort over the entire Classified Waters period, so that there were not extreme peaks of angler use that cause crowding and poor quality angling.

The limited-day licence and lottery system is applied to the non-guided, non-resident sector of the sport fishery because stakeholders and the public indicated that the number of non-guided, non-residents fishing in some waters has increased considerably in the past few years and in many cases, that sector is a major component of the crowding problem. One of the over-arching principles of the Quality Waters Strategy states that if a fishery is oversubscribed, resident anglers have a higher priority than non-resident anglers on Classified Waters.

Some of the recommended management alternatives call for an immediate implementation of the limited-day licence and lottery — Kispiox, Zymoetz II and two zones of Skeena IV above the Kitwanga Bridge. Others call for a “trigger,” which means that angler densities would need to consistently meet a pre-determined level or target, in order to trigger a limited-day licence and lottery system to come into effect. These include the Bulkley, Morice, Kitsequecla, Kitwanga, Suskwa and Lakelse Rivers.



The following section summarizes the key issues for the priority waters covered by the draft plan and lists the Recommended Management Alternatives for each water. Those seeking more information are strongly advised to read the Executive Summary or the entire draft Angling Management Plan.

CENTRAL WORKING GROUP **Kitsequecla and Kitwanga Rivers**

While crowding is only an occasional issue on these rivers, the need to give residents priority was recognized. Changes to regulations on nearby waters may bring more pressure on these two rivers in the future. There are no guided rod-days allocated on these rivers.

- Start with resident-only angling on Saturdays
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during the Classified Water period exceeds a target of 342 angler-days two years out of three on the Kitwanga
 - Implement an eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during the Classified Water period exceeds a target of 228 angler-

days two years out of three on the Kitsequecla

- Implement an eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system

Suskwa River

The Suskwa River was considered separately from the Kitsequecla and Kitwanga because it has a larger proportion of non-resident anglers. The Suskwa was deemed a river where resident opportunities should be increased. Changes to regulations on nearby waters may bring more pressure on this river in the future. There are no guided rod-days allocated on this river.

- Start with resident-only angling on Saturdays
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during the Classified Water period exceeds a target of 399 angler-days two years out of three on the Suskwa:
 - Implement an eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system

Skeena IV (upstream from the Kitwanga Bridge)

This part of the Skeena River has some localized areas of crowding but large sections of river that are quite under utilized by anglers. There are a large number of unused guided rod-days on this stretch of the Skeena.

- Eight-day licence lottery for non-guided, non-resident anglers with 180, eight-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period (July 1 – October 31) in two zones:
 1. Mouth of Shegunia (Salmon) River to Four-Mile Bridge
 2. Triangular markers below mouth of Bulkley River to Kitwanga Bridge
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp September 1 – October 31
- Rest of Skeena IV outside two zones is status quo

Kispiox River

There are a large number of non-residents coming to the Kispiox River and contributing to crowding especially during late-September and early-October in the section from Resthaven to the confluence of the Kispiox with the Skeena River. The most important factor in weighing the different options was trying to manage non-resident anglers without seriously impacting local businesses that depend on those anglers. The only way to reduce those "peaks" of non-guided, non-resident activity that lead to crowding is to use an eight-day licence with a lottery system that "spreads" angler use evenly over the Classified Water period.

- Eight-day licence lottery for non-guided, non-resident anglers based on target of 795 angler-days in the Classified Water period, which is 99, eight-day licences spread evenly over the season (on entire river except status quo zone)
- Status quo zone in river corresponding to between 20.2 and 29.5 kilometres along Kispiox Valley Road
- Resident-only angling on Saturdays on entire river including status quo zone:
 - Hence no guided anglers on Saturdays during the Classified Water period

EAST WORKING GROUP

Babine River

There are crowding problems in the upper five kilometres of the Babine River, caused by both non-guided and guided anglers. There is also a sense that a reduction in the overall number of guided rod-days is required.

- Creation of three zones:
 1. Resident and non-resident anglers from 80 metres below the adult salmon-counting fence to Nichyeskwa Creek; no guiding
 2. Resident anglers only between Nichyeskwa Creek and Nilkirkwa River; no guiding



3. Open to all licence classes downstream from Nilkirkwa River
- Ministry should review and rationalize guided rod-days on the Babine (used and unused) and seek to reduce the total allocation

Bulkley River

There are crowding problems on the Bulkley, especially non-resident campers at access points. There are also concentrations of guided anglers during the peak season. The most important factor in weighing the different options was trying to manage non-resident anglers without seriously impacting local businesses that depend on those anglers. The only way to reduce those "peaks" of non-guided, non-resident activity that lead to crowding was to use a limited-day licence (the Working Group did not reach agreement on whether it should be an eight-day licence or not) with a lottery system that "spreads" angler use evenly over the Classified Waters period. That lottery would be established in the future if the number of non-resident anglers exceeds a target. The Working Group felt there was a need to provide more resident angler opportunities on the Bulkley River.

- Zoning for resident-only weekends during the Classified Water period for the following three creeks where they meet the Bulkley River:
 1. Chicken Creek
 2. Toboggan Creek
 3. Telkwa River
- Telkwa River resident-only for the Classified Water period
- If the non-guided, non resident angler-day target is exceeded twice in three years, it would trigger a lottery with limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period:
 - **Option 1 (high use)** – Lottery would allocate 1,716 angler-days
 - **Option 2 (average use)** – Lottery would allocate 814 angler-days

Morice River

Crowding also occurs on the Morice River, particularly in the area around campgrounds at peak season. It was felt that the non-resident crowding may be a problem in the future but for the moment the status quo is adequate. It was felt that resident anglers need more opportunities on the Morice.

- If the non-guided, non resident angler-day target is exceeded twice in three years, it would trigger a lottery with limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period:
 - **Option 1 (high use)** – Lottery would allocate 617 angler-days
 - **Option 2 (average use)** – Lottery would allocate 449 angler-days
- Request Ministry of Environment to conduct an Angling Guide Management Review to look at the number of rod-days allocated to guides, used, and unused

WEST WORKING GROUP

Zymoetz I River

The upper part of the Zymoetz River has experienced crowding due to increases in the number of non-guided, non-resident anglers. There are some concerns around the number of guides working in the

area. Given the limited access of this area, the sensitivity of the habitat, and the difficulties with enforcement, the best option was to go to guided-only for non-resident anglers. Guiding restrictions were considered primarily to “flatten out” use over the Classified Waters period and prevent peaks in activity that result in crowding.

- Extend Classified Waters period to begin on August 1 and end on December 31
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp from August 1 – December 31
- All non-residents must be guided
- Limit three existing guides to use of one boat per guide per day
- Limit three existing guides to a maximum of three anglers per boat
- Three existing guides need to be allocated 10 additional rod-days each to accommodate increased demand because non-residents must be guided

Zymoetz II River

Crowding and over-use by all types of anglers has been a problem on Zymoetz II, the lower section of this river. Anglers who camp out for long periods of time cause problems. The only way to reduce “peaks” of non-guided, non-resident activity that lead to crowding is to use a limited-day licence (the group did not reach agreement on how many licences would be available) with a lottery system that “spreads” angler use evenly over the Classified Water period.

- Extend Classified Water period from August 1 to May 31
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp required for longer classified period
- Include Clore River with Zymoetz II Classified Water
- Resident-only angling on weekends (no guiding)
- Maximum of three anglers per guide or assistant guide per day
- Distribute guiding effort throughout the season

- Increase the current allocation to the five guides by 30 rod-days per guide to accommodate the extension of the Classified Water period
- Limited-day licence lottery for non-guided, non-resident anglers with a target of 267 angler-days spread evenly over the Classified Water period

Kitsumkalum River

Increased angler use and guided effort have produced crowding on the Kitsumkalum in September and October and also in April and May. There is lots of resident angler interest in this river but opportunities for residents have been declining.

- All non-residents must be guided
- Limit each licensed guide to one boat in the upper river and one boat in the lower river on any one day
- Maximum four guided anglers per boat
- No guiding on Sundays for entire river
- No guiding from Glacier Creek to Kitsumkalum Lake on Saturdays
- Reduction in maximum number of guides allowed in upper and lower river to 11 (regulation presently allows 13)
- Resident anglers only on Sundays

Lakelse River

The Lakelse River has no allocation of guided rod-days. There is a large fall salmon sport fishery that exacerbates any crowding due to steelhead anglers. There has been an increase in non-resident use on this river in recent years.

- Class I Classified Water all year (change from Class II all year)



Ministry of Environment
wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/

- Steelhead Stamp required from September 1 – May 31 (extension from present December 1 – May 31)
- Resident-only fishery March 1 – May 31 for entire river (for steelhead and trout fishery)
- Non-residents can access fishery from June 1 – February 28
- If non-guided, non-resident anglers exceed a target of 100 angler-days, two years out of three:
 - Implement a limited-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system

Skeena IV (downstream from Kitwanga Bridge)

This part of the Skeena River has some pockets of crowding, notably at the mouth of the Kitwanga River and in Kitselas Canyon. Although restrictions on non-guided, non-resident anglers are not required right now, provision needs to be made for the future.

- Class I Classified Water all year (change from Class II between July 31 and October 31)
- Existing Skeena IV guides can guide in either reach (downstream and upstream of the Kitwanga Bridge) of the new Skeena IV Classified Waters
- Four new guide opportunities of 20 rod-days each would be made available (total 80 new rod-days)
- Existing Skeena IV guides from the Terrace area (four guides who presently hold a total of 85 rod-days) would each be issued 30 additional rod-days
- If non-guided, non-resident angler effort exceeds a target of 1,000 angler-days two years out of three
 - Implement a limited-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system

Appendix S Display panels for Public Open Houses

(originals were colour, 24" x 36")

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

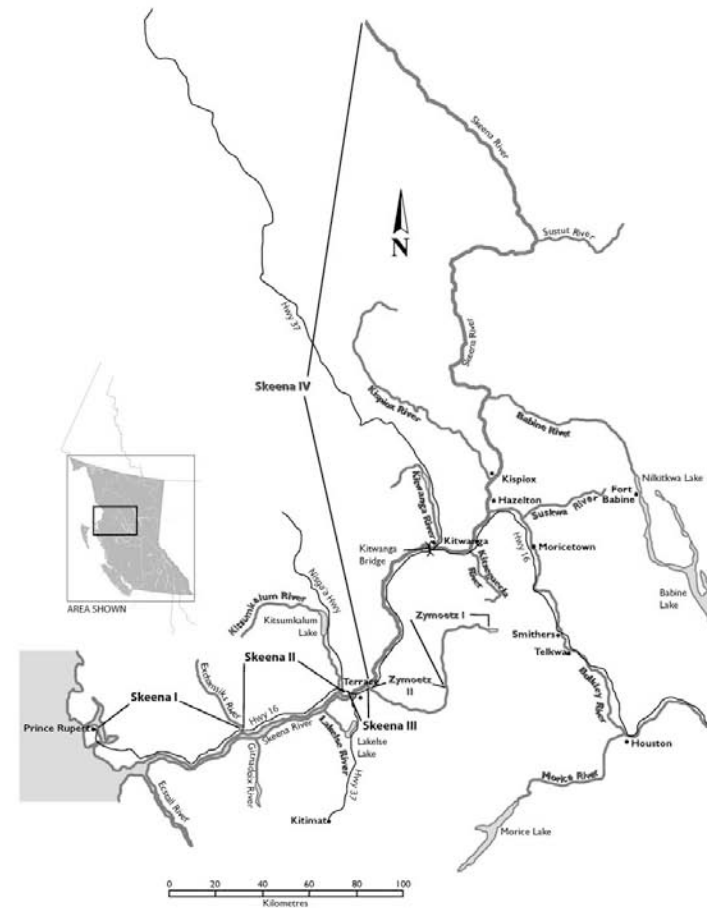


Welcome! Public Open House

- Learn about the **draft** Angling Management Plan
- Tell us what you like; what you don't like
- Tell us how you think it could be changed and why
- Complete the online Response Form
- Deadline for comments: November 30, 2008

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Skeena River Watershed **Priority Waters (Red) for Steelhead Angling Management Planning**



Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Process Timeline

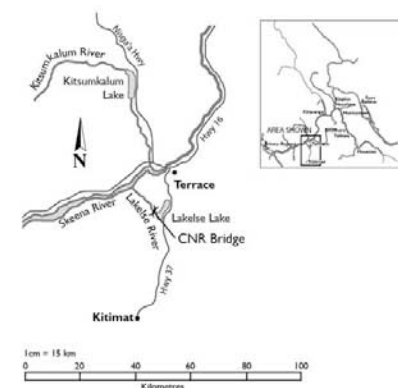
May 2005	Provincial Quality Waters Strategy established
2006	Regional Committee for Quality Waters Strategy formed
2007	Regional Committee recommends priority waters for Angling Management Planning
Dec 2007	Facilitator hired to guide process
Jan – March 2008	Phase I public and stakeholder consultation
March 31 2008	Phase I Consultation Report published
April 2008	Regional Committee establishes Working Groups to develop draft Angling Management Plan
April – June 2008	Working Groups (3) meet to develop draft Angling Management Plan
July – Sept 2008	Facilitator writes draft plan
Oct 17 2008	Draft Angling Management Plan released to public
Oct 17 – Nov 30 2008	Phase II public and stakeholder consultation process
Jan 2009	Phase II Consultation Report published
Early 2009	Working Groups meet to review public and stakeholder input and revise draft plan
Early 2009	Draft Angling Management Plan forwarded to Director of Fish and Wildlife at Ministry of Environment
2009	Director of Fish and Wildlife considers recommendations in revised draft

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Kitsumkalum River

Recommended Management Alternatives

- All non-residents must be guided
- Limit each licensed guide to one boat in the upper river and one boat in the lower river on any one day
- Maximum four guided anglers per boat
- No guiding on Sundays for entire river
- No guiding from Glacier Creek to Kitsumkalum Lake on Saturdays
- Reduction in maximum number of guides allowed in upper and lower river to 11 (regulation presently allows 13)
- Resident anglers only on Sundays



Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Kitsequecla and Kitwanga Rivers Recommended Management Alternatives

- Start with resident-only angling on Saturdays
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during Classified Water period exceeds target of 342 angler-days two years out of three on Kitwanga:
 - Implement eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during Classified Water period exceeds target of 228 angler-days two years out of three on Kitsequecla:
 - Implement eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system



Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Suskwa River Recommended Management Alternatives

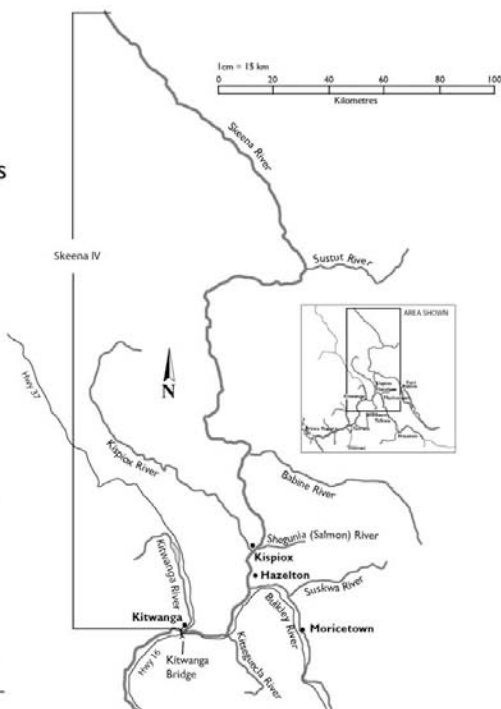
- Start with resident-only angling on Saturdays
- If non-guided, non-resident angling pressure during Classified Water period exceeds target of 399 angler-days two years out of three on Suskwa:
 - Implement eight-day licence spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system



Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Skeena IV (upstream from the Kitwanga Bridge) Recommended Management Alternatives

- Eight-day licence lottery immediately for non-guided, non-resident anglers with 180 eight-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period (July 1 – October 31) in two zones:
 1. Mouth of Salmon River to Four-Mile Bridge
 2. Triangular markers below mouth of Bulkley River to Kitwanga Bridge
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp September 1 – October 31
- Rest of Skeena IV outside two zones is status quo

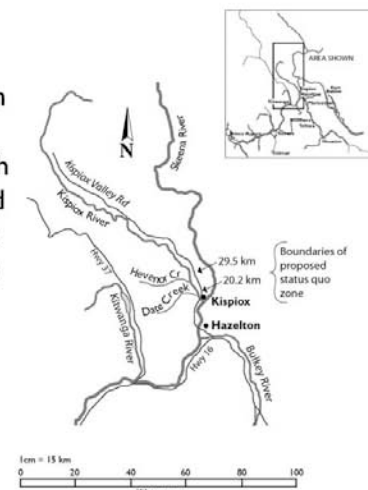


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http://www.gov.bc.ca/ste/qws/

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Kispiox River Recommended Management Alternatives

- Eight-day licence lottery immediately for non-guided, non-resident anglers based on target of 795 angler-days in Classified Water period, which is 99 eight-day licences spread evenly over season (on entire river except status quo zone)
- Status quo zone in river corresponding to between 20.2 and 29.5 kilometres along Kispiox Valley Road
- Resident-only angling on Saturdays on entire river including status quo zone:
 - Hence no guided anglers on Saturdays during the Classified Water period



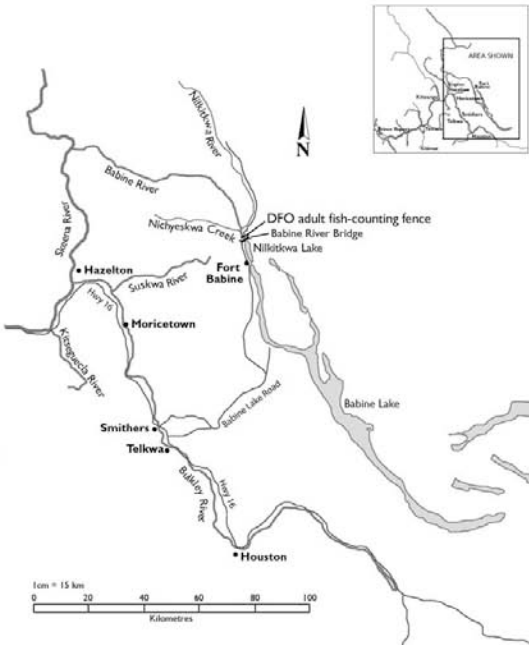
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Environment
http://www.gov.bc.ca/ste/qws/

Babine River
Recommended Management Alternatives

- Creation of three zones:

1. Resident and non-resident anglers from 80 metres below the adult fish-counting fence to Nichyeskwa Creek; no guiding
2. Resident anglers only between Nichyeskwa Creek and Nilkitkwa River; no guiding
3. Open to all licence classes downstream from Nilkitkwa River

- Ministry should review and rationalize guided rod-days on Babine (used and unused) and seek to reduce total allocation



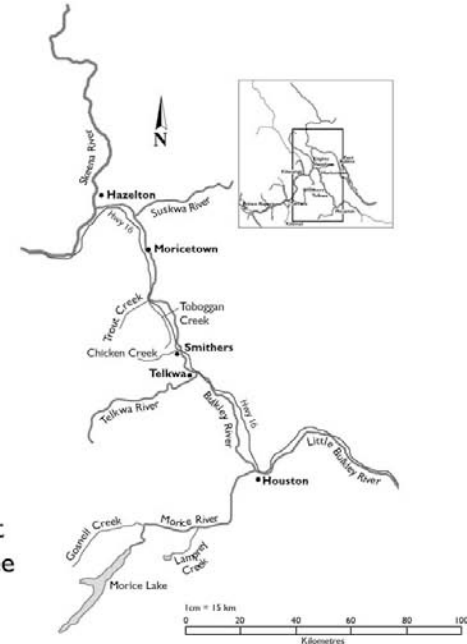
Bulkley River
Recommended Management Alternatives

- Zoning for resident-only weekends during Classified Water period for the following three creeks where they meet the Bulkley River:

1. Chicken Creek
2. Toboggan Creek
3. Telkwa River

- Telkwa River resident-only for Classified Water period
- If non-guided, non resident angler-day target is exceeded twice in three years, it would trigger a lottery with limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period:

- Option 1 (high use)** – Lottery would allocate 1,716 angler-days
- Option 2 (average use)** – The lottery would allocate 814 angler-days



Morice River

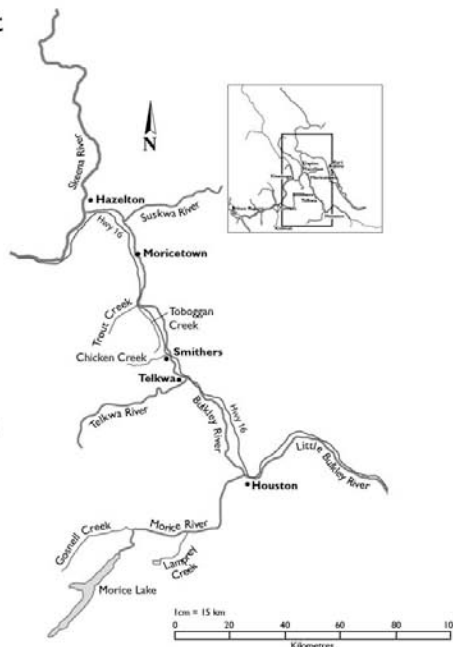
Recommended Management Alternatives

- If non-guided, non resident angler-day target is exceeded twice in three years, it would trigger a lottery with limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period:

Option 1 (high use) –
Lottery would allocate 617 angler-days

Option 2 (average use) –
Lottery would allocate 449 angler-days

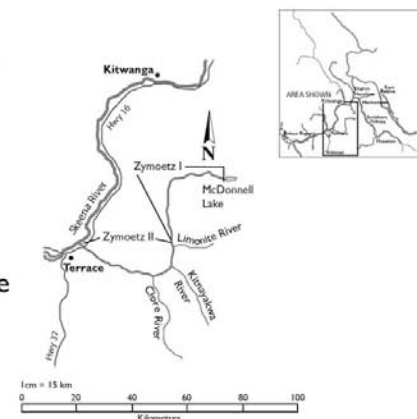
- Request Ministry of Environment to conduct Angling Guide Management Review to look at number of rod-days allocated, used, and unused



Zymoetz I

Recommended Management Alternatives

- Extend Classified Water period to begin on August 1 and end on December 31
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp from August 1 – December 31
- Limit three existing guides to use of one boat per guide per day
- Limit three existing guides to a maximum of three anglers per boat
- All non-residents must be guided
- Three existing guides have been allocated 10 additional rod-days each to accommodate increased demand because non-residents must be guided

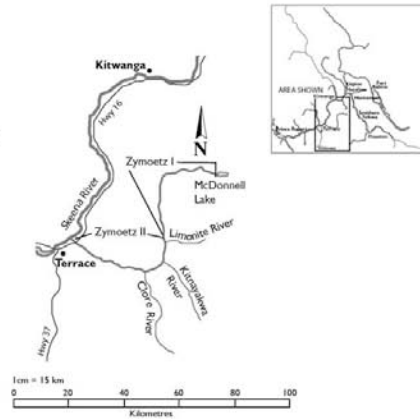


Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Zymoetz II

Recommended Management Alternatives

- Extend Classified Water period from August 1 to May 31
- Mandatory Steelhead Stamp August 1 to May 31
- Include Clore River with Zymoetz II
- Weekends resident-only (no guiding)
- Maximum of three anglers per guide or assistant guide per day
- Distribute guiding effort throughout the season
- Increase allocation to five current guides by 30 rod-days per guide
- Limited-day licence lottery immediately for non-guided, non-resident anglers with target of 267 angler-days spread evenly over Classified Water period

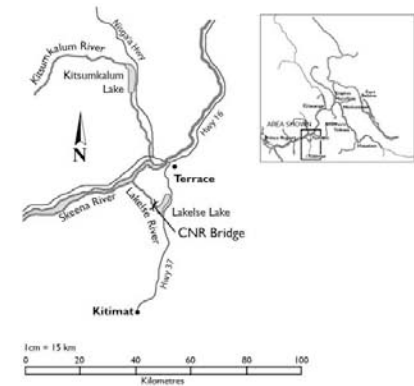


Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Lakelse River

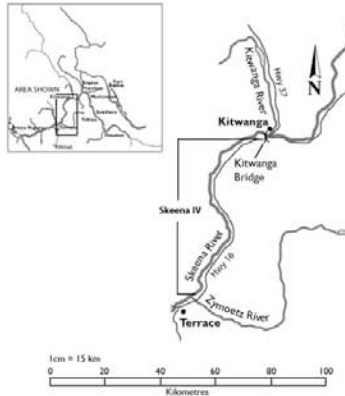
Recommended Management Alternatives

- Class I Classified Water all year (change from Class II all year)
- Steelhead Stamp required from September 1 – May 31 (extension from present December 1 – May 31)
- Resident-only fishery March 1 – May 31 for entire river (for steelhead and trout fishery)
- Non-residents can access fishery from June 1 – February 28
- If non-guided, non-resident anglers exceed target of 100 angler-days two years out of three:
 - Limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system



**Skeena IV (downstream from Kitwanga Bridge)
Recommended Management Alternatives**

- Class I Classified Water all year (change from Class II between July 31 and October 31)
- Existing Skeena IV guides can guide in either reach (downstream and upstream of the Kitwanga Bridge) of the new Skeena IV Classified Waters
- Four new guide opportunities of 20 rod-days each would be made available (total 80 new rod-days)
- Existing Skeena IV guides from the Terrace area (four guides who presently hold a total of 85 rod-days) would be issued 30 additional rod-days
- If total non-guided, non-resident angler effort exceeds target of a thousand angler-days two years out of three:
 - Limited-day licences spread evenly over the Classified Water period through a lottery system



How to Provide Comments

- Public Open Houses
- Stakeholder meetings
- Online Response Form
- Contact the facilitator
Alan Dolan
adolan@islandnet.com
250-478-8056
- Deadline for comments:
November 30, 2008

We value your input

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Angling Management Plan Working Groups

EAST WORKING GROUP

Tom Espersen	Smithers	Resident Angler
Tony Harris	Smithers	Resident Angler
Gord Wolfe	Smithers	Resident Angler
Michael Hurwitz	Smithers	Resident Angler
Tom Jones	Smithers	Resident Angler - Alternate
Bob Hull	Smithers	Guide
Brian Schneider	Smithers	Guide
Richard Pow	Smithers	Guide
Keith Douglas	Smithers	Guide - Alternate
Jeff Lough		MOE
Dorli Duffy		Facilitator

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Angling Management Plan Working Groups

WEST WORKING GROUP

Jason Ouellet	Terrace	Resident Angler
Chris Culp	Terrace	Resident Angler
Jim Culp	Terrace	Resident Angler
Rob Brown	Terrace	Resident Angler
Michael Johnston	Terrace	Resident Angler - Alternate
Dan Daigle	Terrace	Guide
Dustin Kovacovich	Terrace	Guide
Andrew Rushton	Terrace	Guide
Randy Dozzi	Terrace	Guide - Alternate
Dana Atagi		MOE
Sandra Bicego		Facilitator

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy

Angling Management Plan Working Groups

CENTRAL WORKING GROUP

David Larson	Hazelton	Resident Angler
Doug Eftoda	Hazelton	Resident Angler
Jason Wiley	Hazelton	Resident Angler
Don Intermela	Hazelton	Resident Angler
Ian Trombley	Hazelton	Resident Angler - Alternate
Bob Clay	Hazelton	Guide
Gene Allen	Hazelton	Guide
Tom Lee	Hazelton	Guide
Dean Peard		MOE
Alan Dolan		Facilitator

Appendix T Presentation at Public Open Houses (words only, no graphics)

Skeena Quality Waters Strategy Public Open Houses • Fall 2008

Outline

- Phase I Consultation - What we heard
 - Problems
 - Solutions
- Working Groups
 - The challenge
 - Understanding the problems
 - Finding solutions
- Draft plan - Tell us what you think

Jan - March 2008 Consultation:

What we heard - Problems

- Crowding on certain waters at certain times
- Non-residents contributing to crowding on some waters
- Importance of non-residents to local tourism economy

Jan - March 2008 Consultation:

What we heard - Problems

- Need for more resident angling opportunities
- Guides contributing to crowding on certain rivers at certain times

Jan - March 2008 Consultation:

What we heard - Solutions

- Regulations that balance
 - Angling opportunities
 - Guiding industry
 - Tourism economy

Jan - March 2008 Consultation:

What we heard - Solutions

- Need to know carrying capacity of rivers and allocate to different groups
- Control non-resident use through limited-day licences, lotteries or guided only

Jan - March 2008 Consultation:

What we heard - Solutions

- Reassess guiding and rod-day allocations
- Re-establish resident priority by creating new opportunities
 - Resident-only zones
 - Resident-only times

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

The challenge

- Understanding the problem
- Finding solutions
- Balancing interests

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

The challenge

- Working with available data
- Using local knowledge and experience
- Addressing what was heard in the community consultation process
- Following the principles of the Quality Waters Strategy

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Understanding the problem

- When crowding occurs
- Where crowding occurs
- Why crowding occurs

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Understanding the problem

- When crowding
 - Last two weeks of September
 - First two weeks of October

**April - June 2008 Working Groups:
Understanding the problem**

- Where crowding
 - Zymoetz I and II (Copper)
 - Kispiox (lower)
 - Bulkley and Morice

**April - June 2008 Working Groups:
Understanding the problem**

- Where crowding
- Skeena IV (mouth of Kitwanga, mouth of Bulkley)
- Kitsumkalum
- Lakelse

**April - June 2008 Working Groups:
Understanding the problem**

- Why crowding
 - Major peak in activity in middle of Classified Water season

**April - June 2008 Working Groups:
Finding solutions - Non-residents**

- Need to spread angling activity evenly over Classified Water period
- Limited-day licence alone won't stop crowding, because people will buy their licences at the busy time

**April - June 2008 Working Groups:
Finding solutions - Non-residents**

- Need a lottery to distribute licences evenly over the Classified Water period
- Lottery reduces the opportunity to guide illegally

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Non-residents

- Some lotteries immediate — Zymoetz II, Kispiox, two zones in Skeena IV
- Some lotteries based on a trigger if angling density reaches a certain target — Bulkley, Morice, Lakelse, Kitsequecla, Kitwanga, and Suskwa

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Non-residents

- Advantages of lottery
 - Fair
 - Maximizes number of anglers
 - Could accommodate some last-minute anglers

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Non-residents

- Disadvantages of lottery
 - Cost to ministry
 - Could impact local business, depending on target
 - Reduces flexibility for anglers

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Why regulate non-residents?

- Principle of Quality Waters Strategy - resident priority
- Community said non-residents part of crowding problem

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Increase resident opportunities

- Resident-only on part or all of the weekend
- Resident-only zones

April - June 2008 Working Groups:

Finding solutions - Guided anglers

- Spread guiding over Classified Water period

- Reduce number of guided anglers per guide or assistant guide
- Reduce number of guide boats at any one time

Draft Angling Management Plan

- It is a draft
- It is not perfect
- There are lots of different ideas out there
- It's time to take it back to the public and get feedback

Oct - Nov 2008 Draft Angling Management Plan - Tell us what you think

- What do you like?
- What don't you like?
- How should plan be changed to better address problems community has identified?

Oct - Nov 2008 Draft Angling Management Plan - Tell us what you think

- Public Open Houses
- Stakeholder meetings
- Online Response Form
- Contact facilitator
- Deadline for comments: November 30, 2008

For more information

Website:

wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws

Facilitator:

Alan Dolan

adolan@islandnet.com

250-478-8056

Appendix U Media coverage

Smithers Interior News

Angling report disastrous for tourism

By Quinn Bender - Smithers Interior News

Published: August 20, 2008 8:00 AM

Updated: August 20, 2008 11:48 AM

A leaked copy of a draft Angling Management Plan has small business owners convinced they're being pushed out of the \$100 million angling industry. The report is part of the Ministry of Environment's Skeena Quality Waters Strategy, an initiative to tackle claims of overcrowded rivers, and general deterioration of "angling experiences" in the Skeena watershed. But the recommendations put forth lean toward a lottery-based, limited-day licencing program for non-resident anglers, a proposal some insist will cut into the tourism industry by more than 50 per cent.

“What we feared would happen is happening. It’s unbelievable. People who come here from around the world are not going to come just to be put into a lottery. What a bunch of [BS],” said Gary Haywood, owner of Fort Telkwa. [If this goes through], I’m going to put up signs on the river that say angling guides and clients are not welcome here. They’re taking our business away, why wouldn’t I chase theirs away?”

The AMP working groups are composed exclusively of guides and resident anglers.

The plan has yet to go to the Ministry of Environment for approval, before being presented in public consultation this fall. A final AMP will then be brought back to the public in 2009 for implementation in the 2010 angling season. In its current draft form, it recommends immediate limited-day lotteries on the Kispiox, Bulkley and Zymoetz II rivers. On the other nine rivers in the region, limited-day licensing is recommended for future consideration, based on a number of indicators. On the Kitsumkalum and Zymoetz I rivers, non-residents could only angle in the company of guides.

Resident-only days or weekends are recommended for most of the rivers.

Attorney Don Giddings represents a group of business owners in the tourism sector demanding a voice in the process, before any decisions are made that might devastate the seasonal economy.

A 2005 IBM Business Consulting report estimated the Skeena wild salmon resource contributes \$110 million annually to the regional economy.

Giddings said at this time his clients only want meaningful participation, but future legal action has not been ruled out.

“If this goes forward as it has been, without real, proper public input then, yes, we would be challenging that.”

Jane Mathews, owner of the Two River’s Lodge in Telkwa, is one of Gidding’s clients. She would like to see the working groups consider shutting down the industry entirely for two years, and let the depleted salmon stocks recover — what she sees as the root issue.

“It’s been very biased up to this point. It seems they’re only trying to promote one-week angling. Well, if we’ve got to give up something on the rivers, let’s all give it up,” Mathews said. “But we can’t even get this view forward, because we have no power.”

Giddings said several of his clients’ suggestions were shot down directly by the facilitator of the program, Allan Dolan and Associates, prior to completion of the first report.

“[Dolan] advised them he would not be forwarding their letters to the committee. He felt they were redundant and unhelpful.

“What? It’s exactly the kind of input he should be looking for. I was quite perplexed by that.”

Both Dolan and the MOE did not return repeated phone calls to The Interior News.

Former guides make up bulk of recreational angler representation

By Quinn Bender - Smithers Interior News

Published: August 27, 2008 8:00 AM

Updated: August 27, 2008 11:05 AM

Former guides are representing the interests of recreational anglers in an increasingly heated debate over who can fish Northwest rivers.

The Interior News has learned that a full 71 per cent of the working group that will decide who can fish the Skeena watershed are current or former guides.

Don Giddings, a lawyer representing several small businesses and non-resident anglers, hired to help the tourism sector get their interests represented, said his clients have in the past raised this concern with the MOE, but were ignored.

"This was the single biggest concern with [my clients], the lack of real proper representation from specific anglers," he said.

The groups were established to draft an Angling Management Plan (AMP), a Ministry of Environment (MOE) document that tackles issues of overcrowded rivers by restricting and reallocating fishing days available to the different classes of angler.

The process, which will have a major impact on the \$110 million Northwest angling industry, has come under intense fire from both anglers and the tourism industry for favouring the interests of guided outfits.

MOE records obtained by The Interior News now lend credibility to that assertion.

The working groups were to be weighted in favour of the resident anglers over guides, four to three. But according to the Fish and Wildlife Branch, six of the 11 resident anglers in the groups were issued licences as guides or assistant guides in the last four years, which has raised serious conflict-of-interest questions by the tourism sector.

One of individuals listed as a resident angler in the Central Working Group is licensed as an assistant

angling guide for the current 2008-09 season.

The East group has one angler with an expired guide licence. In the West group, all four members listed as resident anglers are former guides or assistant guides.

Throughout several public consultations earlier this year, hosted by the Ministry of Environment, stakeholders, particularly the tourism sector, were assured their concerns would be heard and represented in the group discussions.

But Giddings said the concerns of the tourism sector have been shut out from Day 1.

“I always thought the process was somewhat flawed to begin with, but this is really only one of the factors.”

A leaked draft of the Angling Management Plan recommends a lottery-based, limited-day licensing program for non-resident anglers. Giddings said the plan would kill the tourism industry, which relies on seasonal tourists who typically visit the region for weeks at a time, while inflicting little impact on guided outfits whose clients already stay for visits not exceeding the proposed limit.

The AMP has yet to be approved by the Ministry of Environment, before being presented in public consultation this fall. A final AMP will then be brought back to the public in 2009 for implementation in the 2010 angling season.

The MOE did not return interview requests by The Interior News.

Fishing guides over their limit

Published: August 27, 2008 8:00 AM

Updated: August 27, 2008 11:13 AM

The average Bulkley Valley angler took it hook, line and sinker.

In the ongoing battle between the recreational angler and those making a buck off fishing, whether it be commercial or guiding operations, net one more for those pocketing the money.

In documents obtained by The Interior News, it was discovered that 71 per cent of those in the all-important discussions which will decide who can fish Northwest B.C. rivers and lakes are guides, or former guides.

This is analogous to the fox guarding the chicken coop.

Don Giddings, a lawyer representing several small businesses and non-resident anglers, hired to help the tourism sector get their interests represented, said his clients have in the past raised this concern with the MOE, but were ignored.

“This was the single biggest concern with [my clients], the lack of real proper representation from specific anglers,” he said.

The groups were established to draft an Angling Management Plan (AMP), a Ministry of Environment (MOE) document that tackles issues of overcrowded rivers by restricting and reallocating fishing days available to the different classes of angler.

The process, which will have major impacts on the \$110 million Northwest angling industry, has come under intense fire from both anglers and the tourism industry for favouring the interests of guided outfits.

MOE records now lend credibility to that assertion.

The working groups were each to be weighted in favour of the resident anglers over guides, four to three. But according to the Fish and Wildlife Branch, six of the 11 resident anglers in the groups were issued licences as guides or assistant guides in the last four years.

These simple numbers raise very serious conflict of interest questions.

A 2005 IBM Business Consulting report estimated the Skeena wild salmon resource contributes \$110 million annually to the regional economy.

With guides and former guides representing nearly every side, one can only wonder who will receive the most sympathetic decision.

In fishing parlance, when it comes to the working groups deciding who can fish the Skeena Watershed, one thing is clear, the guides are over their limit.

September 03, 2008

Smithers Interior News - Letters to the Editor

Anglers should take a test to stay put

Editor:

It was with great dismay that I read the article regarding the Angling Report, The Interior News, Aug. 20.

It seems incredibly short-sighted that the only input that has been considered is that of resident anglers and guides.

In order to have any meaningful change, fishing etiquette and conservation must be addressed. Having spent time considerable time fishing on the Bulkley River, I believe the greatest problem surrounding the perceived overcrowding and diminished angler experience is the dismal lack of manners and respect displayed by anglers on the river.

There is generally a sense of competition amongst anglers to get the best runs and catch the most fish. As long as this mentality endures nothing will change regarding the sense of overcrowding and a diminished angler experience.

Additionally, it seems ridiculous that the AMP is not addressing conservation. This is a resource conflict but as long as you are not taking impressive steps to preserve a resource that is so fragile and affected so greatly by our actions and activities then basically this process is about a group of grown-ups selfishly bickering over who has more right to benefit economically from this resource until it is exhausted.

I believe that education and enforcement are two factors that must be considered. To obtain a hunting license in this province you must take the core course.

A course for anglers, addressing both etiquette, regulations (which are almost impossible to decipher for the lower Skeena watershed), and conservation, could be easily set up online and be made mandatory for all anglers.

There ought to be a reporting process in place where if a particular boat or angler is reported then this serves as a strike against them, after so many strikes you are either required to retake the course or you lose the privilege of fishing.

Lorna Blix Evenden, Smithers

Agencies defend AMP selections

Tourism sector feels non-residents being pushed off rivers

By Quinn Bender
B.V. Region/Interior News

The committee spearheading a new Angling Management Plan (AMP) for the Skeena watershed is urging the public to make their thoughts known about a soon-to-be-released first draft. The appeal follows several calls to the Ministry of Environment by concerned anglers, fearing the consultation period has expired, and that the leaked draft is the final word.

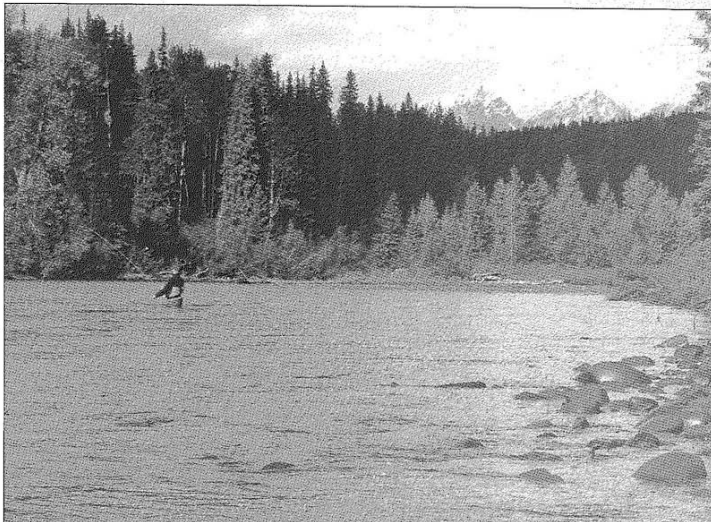
"There's this bit of perception that the AMP has gone to the ministry to make a [final] decision on it," said Tom Bell Regional Manager, Environmental Stewardship Division.

"[But] we're all looking for feedback on what these options will mean. Will they work. Where are the shortfalls — all that stuff. It might be necessary to have further discussions on some things. We don't know... but we're still eight to 12 months away before going to the Ministry [for final approval], depending on just what the public feedback is like."

The public release of the draft AMP is expected sometime this month. Sharon Robertson, chair of the Regional Quality Waters Strategy Committee, said the next round of public consultation this fall will prove more critical to the end result than the first round.

"All we've got right now is the working groups' interpretation and understanding of the first part of the consultation... [We need] to have the working groups digest this, and put some structure around this and then take it back to the communities and say, 'is this what we heard you say?'"

Robertson and MOE



Pierce Clegg/Special to The Interior News

Fisheries agencies are defending their handling of the Angling Management Plan process which will determine who will be able to fish northwest rivers.

officials, were responding to recent articles published in *The Interior News* that outlined some of the key recommendations of the leaked first-draft report, which the tourism sector said would be detrimental to their industry.

The thrust of the AMP is to give local anglers more exclusive access on their weekends to the fishing holes in their own back yard. But as a consequence for non-resident anglers, the tourism sector feels their clientele are being pushed off the rivers by a process that favours the wealthy, guided angler over the common, road-tripping fisherman. They cried foul when learning of the proposed limited-

day licences for their clientele, drafted by working groups whose angling representatives turned out to be, for the most part, former commercial guides.

The MOE and QWS committee said they deliberated long and hard on how the public might perceive this overloaded representation, but concluded their knowledge of the rivers outweighed their potential for bias.

"It was a really complicated discussion," Robertson said. "When we looked at the key criteria we really believed knowledge of the waters was critical. Whoever was on that committee really needed to know what was happening on the waters of their work-

ing group.

"I was confident the people chosen had those abilities, and that there was no unfair imbalance."

The MOE stressed the AMP was initiated by the public and driven by residents. The government's involvement is to provide only oversight and expertise in matters of biology and law.

"We said to [the working groups]: bring your experience and your approach from a resident angler or a guide's perspective, but you all have to be cognizant of the community's interests. The Ministry rep was always there to say they have to balance this off.

"This will be one of

the litmus tests as to what the recommendations are; that it shows balance and recognizes the interests of business and tourism," said Dana Atagi, Section Head for Fish & Wildlife.

The AMP has come under fire for addressing historical concerns of angler overcrowding, when the numbers today point to a significant decline. But Atagi said the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is counting a healthy return of steelhead at the mouth of the Skeena this year, which will ultimately attract more anglers and underline the importance of establishing a plan to control their numbers before they again overcrowd the rivers in years to come.

No impact on salmon

Editor:

I wanted to provide you with the following information on some key points on the Quality Water Strategy.

The focus of the Skeena Quality Waters Project is for the 13 priority steelhead fisheries within the Skeena's watershed. The 2006 report prepared by IBM Business Consulting Services entitled 'Valuation of the Wild Salmon Economy of the Skeena River Watershed,' provides an estimate of the value of all the fisheries (sport, First Nation, commercial and Alaskan) for all five species of salmon and steelhead. The \$110 million valuation is for the entire fishery. Based on the figures from the IBM study, the freshwater sports fishery (for both salmon and steelhead) is a small component of that (\$9.0M). The steelhead fishery would be again a smaller proportion of this \$9.0 million total. The Quality Waters Project is focused on steelhead fisheries and there would be no or only a small impact on the recreational salmon fishery.

The three volunteer working groups (WGs) have worked diligently to develop Angling Management Plans (AMPs) for consideration by the public, stakeholders and the Ministry of Environment. No decisions will be made upon any recommendations proposed in the draft AMPs until they have undergone public review and comments this fall.

There will be ample opportunity for public review and comment on these drafts and this has been clearly stated in the links posted on

the QWS website. (<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/skke/qws/>). There is a stakeholder and public review process scheduled for the fall of 2008 across the region. final dates and locations will be advertised closer to the meetings. All feedback received will be carefully considered before any further plan is developed.

Working groups consist of 4 resident anglers, 3 angling guides and one ministry representative and this make up is established in the Quality Waters Strategy (http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/skke/qws/docs/QWSREsourceDocument_2005.pdf). In addition one alternate resident and one alternate angling guide representative was also selected for each working group. No definition is provided for either an angling guide or a resident angler.

The Regional Quality Waters Management Committee (RQWMC) discussed the definition at great length during the initial stages of the selection process for these AMP WGs.

The RQWMC considered the following key criteria: knowledge of the waters considered, ability to focus on river-specific planning, endorsement by angling peers, and agreement with the principles, goals and objectives, rules of engagement and timeliness.

In addition, the RQWMC agreed that an angling guide representative must have been either a licenced angling guide (AG) or assistant angling guide (AAG) during the previous licence year (2007/2008) and that a resident angler representative must have not held either an AG or an AAG licence in the

2007/2008 licence year.

Dana Atagi
Head of Fish and Wildlife
Section
Environmental Stewardship
Division

Angler plan bad for tourism

Editor:

I am writing to register my concerns for draft plans, which I understand will serve to further restrict my access to Steelhead angling in the Skeena Watershed. We are lead to believe local anglers and guides desire to reduce competition on productive waters. To that end, I understand consideration is being given to limiting non-resident anglers to 8 days on some waters and, perhaps prohibiting weekend angling by non-residents.

I respectfully submit your cabinet colleague, the Honourable Barry Penner, is jeopardizing your tourism program in the interests of relatively small numbers of local anglers and fishing guides. As the steward of the inland fisheries resources for the province of British Columbia, his mandate is to ensure the wise use of those resources.

Providing a reasonable portion of the harvestable surplus of fish to tourists (to foster tourism, for the dollars it generates) is a significant element of that mandate.

I have fished the Kispiox River for almost 20 years. My trips and those of other Albertans contribute significantly to the British Columbia economy. Our

license fees have increased markedly over the years. That is a cost I have paid, without much complaint, in return for reasonable access to some incredible fishing not available here at home.

We patronize your hotels, restaurants, and laundromats; buy gas at your service stations, fishing tackle and groceries from your retailers; spend money in your bars and liquor stores. When we return to Wild Rose Country we extol the virtues of Beautiful British Columbia.

Think about it. Can British Columbia afford to slight its non-resident anglers? Will the advantage that accrues to commercial guides compensate for the losses sustained by others in the tourist trade?

J.B. Struthers
Edmonton

Not another fish story

This is not a fish story. The increasingly heated debate over the Angling Management Plan (AMP) has little or nothing to do with fishing.

Groups were established to draft a Ministry of Environment (MOE) document (AMP) that tackles issues of

overcrowded rivers by restricting and reallocating fishing days available to the different classes of angler.

A leaked draft of the Angling Management Plan recommends a lottery-based, limited-day licensing



TIME OUT
TODD HAMILTON
PUBLISHER/EDITOR

program for non-resident anglers to be sold through guides only.

The conspiracy theorists shout this is a collusion story between government and fishing guides, who are friends with MOE workers.

Others will tell you it's a conservation story that the Skeena fishery is under too much pressure. The flip side of that group will tell you it's not too many anglers, it's simply there aren't as many fish. And then there will be those who will say, nope, there's more fish now than ever.

A faction will tell you this is a biology story, that the science simply isn't there to make any determination.

Government will tell you that this is a feel-good story, that our lawmakers are stepping in to provide a quality fishing experience for everybody.

The government detractors will tell you this is a process story and another case of Big Brother coming in and ramming nonsensical and damaging policies down the throat of the little guy.

The bureaucrats will say this is a story of objective consultation and policy construction in everyone's best interest.

The fact of the matter, the Angling Management Plan is all of these and none.

Although there are many tall tales being told, exaggerations that would make even the most creative angler blush, this is not a fish story.

It is a story of the almighty dollar.

It is an economic story.

Each of the other aspects are but chapters in an ongoing novel surrounding fishing in the Skeena and the Bulkley Valley.

And like all good stories, there is a plot.

If the leaked AMP were the final version, non-resident anglers would be limited to the number of days they could fish, and while the matter is still unclear, who they can fish with.

Which is why at a recent meeting of those understandably upset with the potential impact of the AMP, there were few anglers and mainly business people.

What's another name for a non-resident angler? Tourist.

What is a main staple of northwest B.C.'s economy? Yup, tourism, especially anglers and hunters.

And there was the magic word, economy. If the AMP, the way it stands, made everybody money and the fishing was great, there would be no dissent.

However, as the AMP stands, the Bulkley Valley stands to lose big dollars as tourists are, in effect, limited from coming to this Valley.

Maybe now, our Bulkley Valley tourism leaders will stop scratching their heads wondering what's all the kerfuffle over some fish.

It's not a fish story. It's our economy.

Todd Hamilton is the publisher and editor of The Interior News. To comment on Time Out, e-mail: editor@interior-news.com

Sombody has to take care of fish

Editor:

Last weekend I saw the prime example of why non-resident anglers should be required to have a licensed professional guide to be able to fish in B.C.

It is required for hunting so why not for angling too?

I was walking up to a favourite run to fish when I came upon five non-resident fishermen. They were knee-

ling down on the rocks about 20 feet from shore.

A few minutes later, I learned why they were so far from the river. One of the fishermen was holding a beautiful Steelhead. They were trying to set up for a picture when the Steelhead slipped out of the guy's hands and slammed onto the rocks. He then literally pounced on it like a cat on a mouse and pressed down on it so he could grab it again.

He then lifted it up for some pictures and he then packed the Steelhead to the river to take a couple more pictures of him holding it above the water before finally releasing it to the river.

The group then proceeded to fish one each other. The fish was out of the water for at least two or three minutes that I saw. I guess we can kiss that fish goodbye. But that's OK, because "we got lots, don't we, eh?"

I went to the top of the run and watched as these guys hooked six more Steelhead and again dragged those fish, using their rocks, out of the water and bounced each fish across 15 to 20 feet of rocks where they proceeded to mangle and take pictures of the fish before getting it back in the water.

These guys are either ignorant about how to handle fish or just don't care.

I am not saying that all non-resident anglers are this negligent; there are many very excellent and responsible non-resident anglers, just as there are some irresponsible resident anglers. But we have to start somewhere.

I am sure if there was a professional guide with this group, this situation would not have happened and the fish would live to fight another day.

Hearing mandatory guided non-residents would also help cut down on the illegal guiding that is going on now. Those of us who spend more on the river have all heard the stories. "I don't need a guide, I'm not a guide. I just bring my boat and take friends out. I have a lot of friends." Or, "I don't need a guide. I'm not a guide. I just have rooms and vehicles for friends to use. I have a lot of friends." Who is going to take better care of our resources?

Legal resident guides or illegal guides?

In our region we have only a few conservation officers, certainly not enough for such a large area. I think it is time for the government to come up with some money to help out with this problem. One way that was suggested is to

have anglers have to pay for fishing classified waters and return it to the region it was collected in to help pay for protection of the resource. This would start to correct these and other issues.

We have five major river systems in this area within one-and-a-half to two-hour drive. Anglers come from around the world to have the privilege to fish here, and this is pretty special to have at our back door.

This is a precious and non-replaceable resource and we have to take responsibility to take care of it now and for the future.

Once the Steelhead are gone, the non-residents will take their money elsewhere and we will be left standing on shore with our rods in our hands remembering the good old days.

Laure Babcock
Smithers

It is a fish story, dummy

Editor:

Re: Todd Hamilton's column, *Yet another fish story*, *The Interior News* Oct. 1.

To say this is an economic story is to miss the point.

I believe it is first and foremost a quality of life story for the resident anglers who like to lose a few years and then into the amazing Skeena River.

If you are an angler like I am, it's a bit tough to take when someone looks behind the inability to speak English and happens to be a tourist guest in the Province of B.C., yet displays a total lack of civilized decorum because he/she needs to catch a fish.

When tourists display aggressive behaviour toward B.C. residents and others fishing alongside them on an over-increasing scale it's time to make some basic changes.

Last summer I witnessed all kinds of inappropriate behaviour on the Skeena system — enough to take the joy out of fishing.

It's common knowledge in the angling community that a lot of anglers avoid certain spots simply because a group of tourists show up, very, very early and "hog" the spot for the bulk of the entire day.

Restricting free and unlimited access to a world class resource is the only appropriate way to manage this problem.

Failure to do so would diminish the quality of life for resident anglers and show a lack of respect to this truly world class fishing resource.

Charles Claus
Prince George

November 05, 2008

Skeena Quality Waters plan draws fire from anglers, business

By Shannon Hurst - Smithers Interior News

The Hazeltons business sector is warning they have the most to lose if the Skeena Quality Waters Management plan goes ahead without their involvement.

Alan Dolan facilitated a meeting with stakeholders in Hazelton on Saturday with more than 40 anglers and business people turning out to voice their concerns.

Dolan reviewed the draft plan from the working group and then tried to answer and address issues. Dolan tried to assure people that their voice would be heard but could not guarantee they would be included in the future.

Another major issue is the proposed eight-day lottery and how it will affect the \$52 million tourism industry in the Hazeltons.

Several people have conducted their own surveys with nonresident anglers and said that the majority of those questioned said they would not return to the area if the lottery was implemented. For Shannon McPhail, conservation was a major issue.

“It really bothers me that people see steelhead as dollar figures,” she said. “The most important thing is conservation and it’s not even being talked about.”

Kispiox business owner and operator, Joy Allen said she had two main concerns and they were the fact that people and neighbours were fighting about the draft plan and that the wrong information was getting out to the public.

“I have gotten literally hundreds of e-mails in the past two weeks and most of them don’t have the facts straight,” she said.

Allen also said that she feels strongly that something needs to be done to regulate the rivers. While she said she does not completely agree with some of the proposed plans, until something better comes out she will support the fact they are trying to regulate the Kispiox.

Working group member, David Larson, said he has not agreed with everything the group put together but his main concern was a lack of respect.

”Right now it’s hard to find a lot of respect between people,” he said. “If everyone involved would respect each other we might be able to get further.”

Former guide and B&B owner and operator Bob Clay said it was evident to him that this plan would help the guides financially.

“It is really evident to me that the guides stand to gain the most from this plan,” he said.

At the end of the meeting regional board member, George Deagel addressed the room and said as a member of the board he not only heard what people were saying but would take it into consideration.

Dolan addressed the issue of misinformed people by saying anyone is welcome to call him or e-mail him with questions or concerns.

He also said that anyone wishing to have a voice needs to contact him or write a letter before the end of the month so he can put together a draft to take back to the working group in January.

Doug Donaldson questions Alan Dolan during a Skeena Quality Waters Angling Management plan stakeholders meeting on Saturday.



November 04, 2008

Angling plan loved, hated

By Kat Lee - Terrace Standard

If you're a steelhead angler or have ties to the industry, some changes are coming your way.

Government officials were in town Oct. 30 and 31 to get the local feel of the draft angling management plan, also known as the Skeena Quality Waters Strategy. The plan has different regulations for local rivers and types of anglers in an effort to reduce angler overcrowding. Regional working groups consisted of four resident anglers, three licensed guides and a Ministry of Environment official, all of whom provided input and helped develop the management plan.

Three separate meetings for resident anglers, local businesses, and licensed guides took place in Terrace last Thursday and Friday to hear what the different groups thought of the draft plan. About a dozen people from each sector came out to get more clarification on the plan or voice their concerns.

Alan Dolan, facilitator of the strategy, has been speaking with stakeholders in Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Terrace, Hazelton, Smithers and Houston last week and this week to get public feedback.

"They all have fairly different points of view," Dolan said of the stakeholders, adding that he was asked by a number of people to split the consultations into different groups as some may not always feel free to speak in a large forum.

“I would say generally the response of the plan we’ve had from anglers is quite good,” he said.

While most resident anglers said they approved of parts of the plan and liked the proposals, there were still some issues they had problems with.

“The plans are by no means perfect,” Dolan said, adding he is asking people for solutions.

Businesses like stores, restaurants, tackle shops and accommodations have not been as pleased with the plan.

“The business community is concerned with any regulations that affect the non-residents,” Dolan said. “They (non-residents) make up people who put into the local economy.”

Kermodei Tourism’s executive director Luke Houlden agreed that there would be a profound impact on the local industry businesses with the current plan to regulate non-residents.

“The repercussion to the accommodation sector and downtown would be devastating,” he said. Houlden attended both the business and guiding meetings in Terrace and said it is an issue for both residents and guides; people come here to fish, and the guiding industry brings money into the community with visiting anglers using local services.

“The guiding community is of huge importance to tourism, and I believe there are some inequities for guides in the plan,” he said.

“We’re looking at the bread and butter of the tourism sector, and we’re looking at slowing it down,” he said, adding that he’s looking for more community involvement on the issue.

“The more the community gets involved, the more the community as a whole is happy with the outcome.”

Dolan said guides have been telling him there needs to be more opportunities both from the existing guides and the new guides.

While there was no meeting scheduled specifically for non-resident anglers, Dolan admitted that most of them were unhappy with having their fishing regulated.

“It was felt it was the fairest way to reduce non-resident angling use,” Dolan said of the proposed limited-day license and lottery system for non-guided, non-resident anglers.

“There is a priority to B.C. residents,” Dolan said. “British Columbians pay taxes in B.C. They’re co-owners of these resources.”

However, Dolan said the plan tries to find a way to maintain the quality fishing experiences for everybody that comes here.

“There is the concern that some of the rivers are being crowded some of the time,” Dolan said, giving the Copper River as an example, and much overcrowding in late September and early October. He said the plan is trying to solve that.

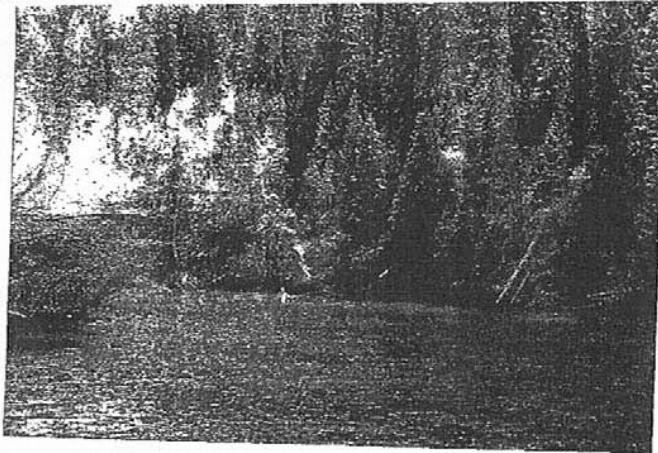
“There is an element here that you can’t please all of the people at all of the time, because there are competing interests,” he said, stressing the need to find balance between the stakeholders.

The director of fish and wildlife will review the report in 2009 and make the decisions about what goes in it. Nothing of the plan will be reflected on anglers until 2010-2011.

Currently it’s a consultation process, Dolan said, so the most important thing people can do right now is to give him feedback on the plan.

“The plan will change,” Dolan said. “We’ll use input to change the plan.”

A public open house of the plan will take place in Terrace Nov. 15 at the Best Western between noon and 4 p.m. The draft plan can be viewed at the Ministry of Environment’s website.



A series of stakeholder meetings over the Angling Management Plan that was commissioned to deal with overcrowding of rivers in Northwest B.C. began over the weekend. Babine Norlakes', and The Interior News contributor, Pierce Clegg, said now that late season angling is happening, rivers are wide open.

Limited day lotteries for Bulkley

By Jennifer McIntosh
Smithers/Interior News

Small business owners were looking for a chance to be heard at a stakeholder meeting about the Ministry of Environment's draft angling management plan.

The meeting was part of a series of public consultation meetings held on the weekend.

Sunday's meeting was for business owners, whose financial livelihood is tied to tourism.

A leaked copy of a draft Angling Management Plan in August had small business owners convinced they're being pushed out of the \$100 million angling industry.

The report is part of the Ministry of Environment's Skeena Quality Waters Strategy, an initiative to tackle claims of overcrowded rivers, and general deterioration of "angling experiences" in the Skeena watershed. But the recommendations put forth, less toward a lottery-based, limited-day

That was a reaction to a plan we are no longer using.

—Name Withheld

licensing program for non-resident anglers, a proposal some insist will cut into the tourism industry by more than 50 per cent.

"That was a reaction to a plan that we are no longer using," Alan Dolan, senior facilitator, Skeena Quality Waters Strategy said. "The wording around the recommendations was changed and the material was put into context, people are reacting to the first document."

Dolan said to Carolyn Haywood, that had the draft not been leaked, the plan wouldn't have been released until late September or early October.

"What we feared would happen is happening. It's unbelievable. People who come here from around the world are not going to

come just to be put into a lottery. What a bunch of [BS]," Gary Haywood, owner of Fort Telkwa said. Haywood added that he wanted to see concrete evidence of the overcrowding.

"The Ministry of Environment should be able to provide me with proof that there is overcrowding."

Dolan said the survey responses from guides and resident anglers showed him that it was a concern.

Councillor Jo Ann Groves asked Dolan why business owners were not represented.

Dana Atagi, Ministry of Environment representative said that the group simply wasn't given the resources to include the extra people.

"We knew from the

outset that was going to be the weak link," he said.

A final AMP will then be brought back to the public in 2009 for implementation in the 2010 angling season. In its current draft form, it recommends immediate limited-day lotteries on the Kispiox, Bulkley and Zymoetz II rivers.

On the other nine rivers in the region, limited-day licensing is recommended for future consideration, based on a number of indicators. On the Kitsumkulum and Zymoetz I rivers, non-residents could only angle in the company of guides.

Resident-only days or weekends are recommended for most of the rivers. Dolan said that while there were no business owners in the working groups, his report will show their concerns.

"Also the people on the groups were instructed to look at ways to benefit the community, they weren't necessarily going in as guides or anglers," he said.

◆ FISHERIES

Open house seeking input on draft angling management plan

By Shaun Thomas
The Northern View

Fishing enthusiasts on the North Coast will have an opportunity to provide their



File photo

Input is being sought on a draft angling management plan that would look to address overcrowding on some parts of the Skeena River.

feedback on a draft Steelhead angling management plan during an open house at The Lester Centre tomorrow night from five p.m. to nine p.m., and Skeena Quality Waters senior facilitator Alan Dolan says it is important that people have their say on the plan.

"This deals with Steelhead angling on 15 prominent rivers in the Skeena watershed. The draft plan has to do with managing the anglers, as opposed to managing the fish, in terms of overcrowding on the river," he explained.

"The Skeena is a world class fishery and people come from around the globe to fish the river...For a long time the Ministry of Environment has been told that there are problems with certain rivers at certain times of the year with too many people fishing and has been

asked to change the regulations to improve the overall fishing experience."

The open house will consist of displays, information packages and resource personnel talking about the draft management plan, and the information gathered during the evening will go back to the advisory council working on the plan with the goal being to submit final recommendations to the Minister for his approval.

"We have had smaller meeting with anglers and elected officials, but this is an opportunity for anyone interested in Steelhead to come in and give feedback on the plan," said Dolan, noting that the process has been in the works since last January.

Those unable to attend the meeting can fill out an online survey

to give their thoughts on the plan at <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/ske/qws/feedback>.



MyTown

Shannon Hurst

Time is running out for individuals to voice their concerns and recommendations regarding the Quality Waters Management draft plan.

The proposed plan has been the cause for much controversy and debate in the Hazeltons and surrounding areas for the past few months.

While many people are against the plan and most of its recommendations there are a few who see both sides of the issue.

Bob Clay who has a stake in both sides of the potential outcome said he has always tried to see everybody's perspective.

Clay makes and sells bamboo fly rods to people all around the world both guided and non-guided and said he would like to see a more balanced approach and agrees that a plan is needed.

"We can't just have status quo, as this would be unacceptable and I feel the answer lies in consultation of all the interests involved," he said. "I feel the business community was not well represented at the meetings." Clay added that he also has many friends in the guiding industry and feels they are an important part of the community as well.

After talking to many people, I am in complete agreement with Clay on this matter. The business community should have been involved in the initial process and there is definitely a need for some type of management plan to ensure the future of our fish.

During the stakeholders meetings, conservation was a major concern for all involved but the manner in which to do so remains in question and left out of the process.

Joy Allen also said while she has concerns about the draft plan, she recognizes the need for something to be done to guarantee a future for both business owners, guides and the fish.

With the deadline for suggestions on Nov. 30, the time to speak up or write your concerns is now.

Unfortunately, the public will continue to be left out of the process after the deadline passes with Allan Dolan taking recommendations back to the working groups to finalize a plan that no one outside the group will see.

This too bothers me greatly. According to Dolan the process is modeled after several in existence around the province already, but that does not mean it is a good one.

The draft plan needs to be questioned and major changes implemented but most importantly, the process to be questioned and changed.

There are always at least two sides to every story, issue and circumstance and in this case it is overwhelmingly obvious that there are several sides missing at the table.

*Interior
News
Nov 19, 2008*

What about the fish?

Editor:

An open letter to Mr. Alan Dolan and Mr. Tom Eithier,

In a Quality Waters Strategy website a message from Mr. Eithier states "Our job is to fully understand these issues and I believe the draft Angling Management Plan captures the diversity of interests in the Skeena with respect to the management of Quality Waters."

I'm writing this letter because I just don't see it.

I have just been attempting to fill in your online questionnaire. I'm upset that the scope of options is so limited, and it seems to me that limited entry is so extreme. Extreme for tourism, extreme for small businesses and extreme for a community that has been enriched by the amenity migrants from all over the world that choose to call this area home, even if it's only for part of the year. Tourism planners everywhere would drool at the loyal, repeat base of long term tourists we have during fishing season, with a minimal amount of government money going in to support it, I might add. Why in the world would we want these people to stay only eight days? Also why would we encourage that same tourist to have only an eight day window in which to fish and concentrate his/her fishing activity? Wouldn't it be ideal if that fisherman could take his/her time, stretch out their visit and fish in a leisurely fashion, taking days off to shop, or hike, or explore our beautiful area?

Interim News
Nov 19, 2008
A5

I have an idea, it's easy... and it doesn't have to apply to guided anglers. In waters that non-residents need to purchase a daily fishing permit, set a four consecutive day limit with a mandatory day off in between every four day stretch. This would give the fish a break, encourage longer, varied and more leisurely tourist stays and not have a negative effect on guides or business people. After a couple years, if this doesn't reduce crowding enough, make non-resident anglers take two days off in a row.

Just keeping the lottery idea on the table is seriously endangering the bread and butter of many Skeena watershed businesses. In this scary age of global economic uncertainty and uncertainty in mining and logging please be reasonable. I urge everyone to speak out and especially the two of you step up and immediately take the lottery system off the table.

I'm not sure it was so important to spend so much taxpayer money for what seems to be the main purpose, what about the fish?

Sandra Hinchliffe
Smithers

November 26, 2008

Skeena fishing future on the hook

Smithers Interior News

Bulkley Valley business leaders continue to sound the alarm over new fishing regulations they maintain will kill an already faltering angling tourism industry.

Following another round of open houses and stakeholder meetings in Smithers, Houston and the Hazeltons last week, only five days remain in the public comment period into the proposed Skeena River watershed Angling Management Plan (AMP).

Contained in the AMP, a limited eight-day licensing lottery for non-resident anglers is drawing the most heat. Angling tourism-based businesses say the lottery will force out-of-province and out-of-country anglers and their money away from northwestern B.C.

Smithers councillor-elect Mark Bandstra said with the downturn in the forestry industry and dwindling commodity markets, tourism is the last bastion of sustainable economic growth and the strongest single industry left.

“The business community has some concerns that with a lottery system, it would drive away those people who stay for long periods and become part of the community,” he said.

Facilitator, Alan Dolan said while the lottery system may be controversial it is the only answer to a perceived overcrowding of area rivers.

“[Lottery system] is where there is a lot of heat but not a lot of light,” he said. “I understand some people don’t like the lottery system, but you need to offer alternate solutions to deal with the problem of overcrowding.

“I guess if you don’t agree there is a problem [with overcrowding] that would be difficult.”

According to the plan, anyone from B.C. is considered a resident, while those from out of the country are considered non-resident aliens, which detractors say will not significantly reduce overcrowding, but simply force tourism dollars out of the community.

“I go to the docks and there is a [lineup] to get into the water,” Bandstra said. “But most of those cars have B.C. plates.”

Paddy Hirschfield, a biologist with MOE said it would be difficult to create legislation excluding non-local B.C. residents.

“There are some rivers that everyone needs to get lottery-style passes for,” he said. “But we thought that would be difficult at best.”

Although the AMP is meant to address historical concerns, detractors of the plan say current numbers dispute overcrowding and point to a significant decline in the number of anglers on area rivers.

But Dana Atagi, Section Head for Fish and Wildlife with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) said the Department of Fisheries and Oceans counted a healthy

return of steelhead at the mouth of the Skeena River this year, which will ultimately attract more anglers and underline the importance of establishing a plan to control the number of anglers before they again overcrowd the rivers in years to come.

“We have been at this for seven years to get this point, so it’s not like this has been a rash decision,” Atagi said.

“While there may have been a decline in angler days last year, there has been a steady increase since 1996.”

The MOE stressed the AMP was initiated by the public and driven by residents. The government’s involvement is to provide only oversight and expertise in matters of biology and law.

The underlying fundamental of the AMP is to provide what proponents say is a protection of quality angling experiences for all anglers.

“I don’t think we can discount self-interest in these complaints,” Don Giddings, a lawyer representing several small businesses and non-resident anglers, said.

“Does a quality experience mean that you don’t see anyone else on the river?”

December 8, 2008

The Hook – Tyee.ca

Proposed fishing restrictions spark outcry

By Amanda Follett

The provincial government’s attempt to conserve a healthy fishing habitat in northern B.C. is creating a flap from local businesses and foreign fish enthusiasts worthy of the feistiest steelhead.

The Angling Management Plan - Skeena Quality Waters Strategy has been on the table for discussion this fall, with the deadline for feedback ending earlier this week.

Within it, a proposed lottery system that would cap the number of non-resident anglers fishing the Skeena watershed is drawing serious criticism from the local business community and out-of-country anglers.

The draft plan was developed in the spring and early summer by local anglers, fishing guides and Ministry of Environment representatives. It was designed to respond to a recent influx of foreign anglers on northern B.C.’s world-class steelhead fishing rivers.

According to Ministry of Environment statistics, overall angler numbers varied on rivers throughout the Skeena watershed between 1983 and 2005, with the most notable increases taking place on the Kispiox and Zymoetz rivers.

On the Kispiox, the number of foreign anglers surpassed locals in the late 1980s and currently about twice as many non-Canadians fish the river as B.C. residents. Canadians from outside B.C. make up the smallest portion of anglers in the area.

Alan Dolan, who facilitated discussions for the draft plan, said 61 per cent of local anglers surveyed responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that crowding was becoming a problem in the Skeena watershed.

“There has been concern for a long time that the quality of angling on the river is going downhill,” Dolan said. “The quality angling experience means a quality tourist experience from people who are coming from outside.”

With tributaries like the Kispiox, Bulkley, Babine and Morice rivers made world famous by their steelhead stocks, the Skeena watershed has long attracted international attention from the fishing community, with the likes of late-night talk show host David Letterman and outgoing American VP Dick Cheney rumoured to cast a line in its waters.

In an effort to protect stocks, the area has classified waters status, with only catch-and-release fishing with barbless hooks permitted. Steelhead returns have seen a gradual decrease in recent years, but appeared to rebound slightly in 2008.

The angling management plan is not about steelhead conservation, Dolan points out, but about conserving the angling experience for locals and visitors. Although “quality angling experience” is subjective, its definition amounts to preserving the wilderness experience and, of course, landing the big one.

While the lottery system is designed to cap the number of non-resident anglers coming to the area, local businesses have expressed concern with the inflexibility of the proposed changes, which would mean non-residents would have to apply to the lottery system—and choose the rivers they will fish—well in advance of their arrival.

Fishing bloggers, mostly south of the border, have been busy decrying the proposed changes in the wake of the draft plan’s release, many threatening not to visit the area if suggested measures are implemented.

With a declining forest industry and shaky economy, businesses such as restaurants, hotels and tackle shops in the North argue that discouraging the foreign fishing market might not be prudent, considering the province’s current economic climate.

Dolan said he received 445 replies to an online form and 350 e-mails, with most e-mails coming from non-residents. A report on the feedback will be available late January or early February, with working groups returning to the table between February and April and a revised plan forwarded to the Director of Fish and Wildlife for review next summer.

Dolan said the working group will have to address concerns of the local business community and added that any changes are likely to be implemented with the 2010 or 2011 fishing regulations.

“We walk a fine line between resident anglers and a guiding industry and a local economy that relies primarily on non-guided, non-resident anglers,” Dolan said.

“It’s a unique wilderness steelhead fishing experience. There are a lot of people now saying they won’t come again, but I don’t think this area will have trouble attracting people to come fish in these rivers.”

December 10, 2008

Fly Rod&Reel Online

Access Denied?

Non-resident anglers may be regulated off B.C. steelhead rivers.

By Seth Norman

A small and self-serving group with guidance from the BC Ministry of the Environment is trying to drive a wedge in the long, happy and mutually advantageous alliance between the good people of the Skeena Valley and the traveling anglers from around the world who have treasured this resource and taken its side when it has been threatened. Whether they succeed or fail, the BC Ministry of the Environment and the Quality Waters group has much to answer for in this frivolous disruption of people's lives.

—Thomas McGuane

Hundreds of Canadian businesses with thousands of employees will be crippled or bankrupt if the British Columbia Ministry of Environment (MoE) passes proposed regulations to limit or ban non-resident steelheaders on the Skeena River and its tributaries: Kispiox, Bulkey, Babine, Morice, Skawala; also the Zymoetz (Copper). Frightened stakeholders in the area estimate damage to the local economy at between \$35 and \$50 million per year, and losses to local property values in the hundreds of millions. They worry already about tax repercussions from lawsuits over alleged contraventions of section 1 and section 15(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, about international actions claiming violations of Chapter 11, NAFTA.

More bitter still, these Draconian changes have nothing to do with conservation or protecting threatened steelhead runs. Instead, the options presented in a 114 page draft of “Angling Management Plan: Skeena Quality Waters Strategy” (AMP) aim to offer priority access for resident (Skeena Valley) anglers—a total of 113 presumed anglers showed up at 25 meetings held by the MoE—and to insure that selected guides can provide paying customers “a Hi-End...quality angling experience,” on waters partly or completely devoid of non-guided anglers.

More specifically, among the scores of AMP recommendations scheduled for review in January 2009—rules one critic calls “The Ministry’s practice run for the BC Olympics”—are the following.

Non-Resident Alien anglers (NRAs) shall be:

- Banned from one or more resident-only waters;
- Banned altogether from fishing two “premier,” Class 2 rivers, unless fishing with select BC guides;
- Banned from fishing other premier rivers on Saturdays, or both week-end days;
- Required, unless fishing with select BC guides, to apply in advance for lottery tickets that would permit winners to purchase licenses for one eight day period, valid on (the only) river they may fish at this time, regardless of conditions;
- Banned from fishing property they own on premier rivers unless accompanied by a select BC guide, or in possession of a winning lottery ticket with the eight-day and other restrictions described above.

“They will bankrupt us,” declares a Skeena lodge owner, anonymous here for fear of retaliation. “That’s why they kept us off the ‘Working Committees’ that came up with these options using the MoE ‘toolbox.’ That’s why the committees kept everything secret, until somebody leaked the draft just before the end. Nobody will travel thousands of miles and spend thousands of dollars to put up with rules like these...We’ll go bankrupt and the Ministry knows it.”

As evidence of the MoEs agenda, locals point to the AMP process, as revealed in the document produced. While the draft repeatedly insists all stakeholders had a chance to “offer feedback” to a “transparent” process—and expends hundreds of words suggesting mostly non-resident anglers will object to new regs—it acknowledges that, with the exception of a dozen guides and outfitters selected by MoE, no representative of any steelhead -dependent business was allowed to join the three Working Committees that would propose all changes. (Nor was anyone from the First Nations—roughly 70 percent of the local population.) Instead, MoE-picked members were “expected to represent all interests, not just those immediately around the table, but those in the community who were not sitting at the table— primarily from the tourism, accommodation and hospitality businesses...(Members) were supposed to try and focus on issues and interests rather than personal agendas and points-of-view.” (Emphasis added.)

Supposedly, that happened. At least according to Minister of Environment Barry Penner, responding to a May, 2008 letter from a retired community development consultant. “Ministry staff have assured me that the outcome of the QWS [AMP process] has not been pre-determined and that they have taken every opportunity to ensure that all potentially affected individuals have been given the opportunity to participate in the AMP development process.” (*See footnote below.)

Others—thousands of others—remain unconvinced. One of these is R.S. Hooten, a retired BC Ministry of Environment fisheries biologist, who argues a related position in a document he sent to the MoE.

“The process by which draft AMPs have been generated is far from adequate or fair. MOE has committed to a strategy...that has no hope of representing the interests of the majority of those who know and love the magnificent Skeena country or those whose livelihoods depend all or in part on it.”

No hope....

Unless the more dire recommendations are rejected—before more damage is done.

But damage has been done—by cancelled bookings, angry words, injured relationships and months of fear—“this frivolous disruption of people’s lives.” For stakeholders, that begs questions:

Why? What was the MoE thinking? Given the potential destruction to Canadian businesses, the loss of jobs—and the MoE’s oft-repeated insistence that it will not implement regulations that will negatively impact one of BC’s weakest economies? Given the losses contemplated by Canadian and NRA property owners, and to both BC and Federal agencies from lawsuits these owners will file against them? Given that all stakeholders, save perhaps members of the MoE, believe commercial angling plays a major role in creating crowding by killing off early steelhead season steelhead runs—and that illegal guides, and threats posed by lumber and extraction-industry issues, are far more important to these fisheries and fishers who use them?

What is the point here?

Since the leak of the proposed AMP regulations, stakeholders from Skeena and around the world question are questioning the entire AMP process; and some, its motives.

“Incompetence,” insists a Skeena activist who has spent decades fighting for that river. “I know people on both sides. We’re talking administrative incompetence. Bureaucratic incompetence—the wrong facilitator...maybe the greed of a few people on a Working Committee—but not all of them, for sure. (The AMP) was all wrong from the beginning...bad data, limiting the committees to those MoE toolboxes...I took one look and stayed out of it.”

To incompetence, another Skeena stakeholder adds bias from a MoE section head “known to make a few anti-American remarks,” who “lies, lies, lies to our faces.” She alleges far more substantial conflicts of interest at committee level. (For one, MoE allegedly filled five of seven positions with a guide, his employees, a cousin, and an out of area friend, two of whom were literally “parachuted” into a meeting from which qualified local (and competing) guides were excluded...

A U.S. angler suggests the MoE remains angry at NRAs for their influence in conflicts involving Prince Rupert fisheries, among others.

All possibilities.

There is another: that the allies here—NRA steelheaders, and steelhead-dependent Canadian businesses—are not merely victims of a flawed MoE process, but the targets.

The same stakeholders facing devastation actively supported First Nation and Canadian conservationists in a (so far) successful fight against putting fish farms on the Skeena. They fought again, helping conservationists and First Nation protestors stop (so far) Royal Dutch Shell’s coal-bed methane exploration in that river’s Sacred Headwaters.

NRAs contributed—politically and through donations to these, especially to the campaign that stopped Shell in 2006—the year MoE re-opened the dormant AMP process.

The same allies questioned and may oppose construction of a \$4.5 billion segment of pipeline through the area, a project of the American giant Enbridge, Inc. In 2006, Enbridge temporarily abandoned this effort. On November 4, 2008, Enbridge set up two new Skeena-area offices.

FOOTNOTE: *Minister Penner reiterated this position in a phone interview for this article on November 21: “Every stakeholder had a chance to be heard, one way or the other.” But he also promised that, given “issues” around representation, he had already ordered his staff to “fix problems” in the AMP, and return with “a new (AMP) draft in 2009.” Shortly thereafter, he excused himself from our interview to address the BC legislature. In an interview several hours later, MoE Regional Manager Tom Bell asserted that the only “new” draft of which he was aware was a second originally scheduled for the AMP process. Bell acknowledged that “Draft II” will be constructed by the standing Working Committees, absent, again, any representatives from steelhead-dependent stakeholders. “We don’t even bother to contact the (Skeena area) MoE,” insists one of these. “They bury our questions. We’re going straight to Minister Penner, and the Minister of Tourism, and the Premier. We’re going to find out why this happened, what’s happening, and we’re going to demand that start over from the beginning. What other choice do we have?”

Author’s Note: The contact information for the Ministers of Tourism and Environment, also the Premier, may be found below. But please keep this in mind:

At every turn of this investigation, I found misleading declarations that it was mainly NRAs—by implication, angry, ugly Americans in particular—who object to the changes in regs that will devastate Canadian businesses. This message resonates in BC for some very good reasons—like softwood tariffs. But ugly is as ugly

does: Any who address these issues would be wise to acknowledge these rivers are not ours; to ask hard-edged questions politely; and to recognize that any response may be offered as evidence in Canadian courts of public opinion. .

Reader Comments:

Dec 10, 2008 02:46 am

Posted by Seth

Here's the first of what may be many updates and additions:

Mike Hendry created a Skeena petition on the internet, flew to Victoria, and hand-delivered over 800 names to Barry Penner, Minister of Environment. Mike strongly suggests interested parties also contact Minister of Tourism, Bill Bennet.

Mike's looking for other fishers who property in the Skeena area, and can be reached at hendry_mike@hotmail.com

Dec 12, 2008 04:07 pm

Posted by Michael Cummings

This is a sad commentary for all nonresident anglers who have enjoyed the surroundings of the Skeena River drainage for years and who have always unselfishly come to the rescue of all its rivers when threatened by this and a plethora of other ill-conceived wrong-headed brainstorm which, under the guise of conservation and protectionism, are nothing short of a ploy to tell Americans to shove it. Despite this mindset, I will continue to say what I think about protecting these hallowed sacred waters. Until there is pressure to remove gill nets from our rivers, which are falsely put out in the name of subsistence, anything else is only a farce and an openly blind avoidance of the truth.

- mrc

Dec 16, 2008 02:37 pm

Posted by Ed Exum

Ladies and Gentlemen, the reason for such an outrageous response from the non-resident, non-guided angler, is that the Draft Angling Management. Skeena Quality Waters Strategy, is so incredibly outrageous!

Throughout "the Draft", the core message is that over crowding is an issue on Quality Waters of the Skeena. Nothing could be further from the truth. (See p. 72, of the Draft, Bulkley River." 457 (30%) of unused guided rod days" were left over from 2007). Yet, the guides, who represent 77% of QW Strategy committees' members, scream "over crowding". They are asking for more guided rod days, when they don't even use, what has been allocated!

Under the proposed plan, the licensed guide, is the only party, who benefits from the changes. Everyone else, gets screwed!

Implementing, an 8 day limit, lottery, for non-guided non-resident steelheaders, would be a disaster! Our steelhead community would be so fed up, that we would leave, en masse, never to return. OUR MILLIONS, UPON MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, WOULD GO TO ANGLING DESTINATIONS, WHERE WE ARE APPRECIATED, AS WELL AS, OUR DOLLARS. (I have been coming to B.C., to steelhead fish, for 36 years.)

Scrap "the Draft". Start over completely. Make it fair for all stakeholders.

PS. Also, we would not be attending the 2010 Olympics, along with all our friends.

Dec 19, 2008 11:21 pm

Posted by J.G.

Special places need protection. The Skeena system and the surrounding wilderness is the only truly "wild steelhead experience" left in North America. As a British Columbia resident I will fight to the bitter end to have this area protected. I cannot come to your country and go big game hunting without a guide, or access many parks without the proper authority. What makes you think that you have any right to fish in my province? Let alone 100% unrestricted access? How would you as an American act if we Canadians thought we should play a role in managing your fisheries?

Crowding from guides is not the main issue here. It is the "do it yourself" NRA's that come and stay for extended periods that are causing the crowding. By limiting these NRA's to having to fish with a guide for a maximum of 8 days, everyone wins. The guides get paid, the NRA gets to fish, and I don't have to see you everyday for a month.

If you don't like this....maybe you should go back to bass fishing. But this is the face of the future here in steelhead paradise. Quite simply....this area is being loved to death.