

January 7, 2005

Mr. Bryan Williams, Q.C.  
Chair  
Fraser River Sockeye Review Panel  
1000-840 Howe Street,  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6Z 2M1

Dear Mr. Williams:

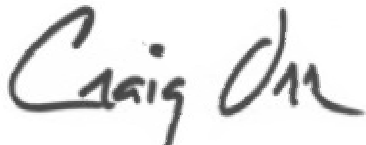
At the December 21 meeting of the sockeye review panel, the harvest committee representatives of the Marine Conservation Caucus recommended to you that the panel examine the lessons learned by the past panels of this nature, in particular, the panels which reviewed the disappearance of sockeye in 1994 and 2002. While certain circumstances may have been different in the case of the “missing” sockeye in 2004, we should none-the-less examine the findings of previous reviews to learn what worked, what didn’t, what was learned, what recommendations were made, and which recommendations were accepted, rejected, and/or implemented.

The MCC believes such an examination will help guide us in examining not only the specifics of 2004, but also the more general and recurring themes that seem to warrant all-too-frequent reviews of not only our management of fish and fisheries, but Canada’s commitment to serving the public interest.

To assist the process, the MCC is attaching a previous briefing note prepared by Terry Glavin—a conservation sector representative on the last sockeye review—re-iterating the recommendations made by the previous Fisheries Minister. Further, the MCC is disappointed that many of these promises made by the previous minister have not been implemented, and thus urges you to ensure such an examination and learning experience be made part of the 2005 ‘workplan’.

We would be happy to provide advice on how such an examination should be conducted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Orr". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Craig Orr  
MCC Integrated Harvest Planning Committee member

## **Recommendation 1: Wild Salmon Policy**

It is recommended that the Department conduct consultations on a wild salmon policy and associated guidelines, with First Nations, harvesters and other interest groups including conservation organizations, and the policy should be finalized by December 31, 2003. This policy will define conservation objectives for naturally spawning salmon, and will include identification of conservation units and reference points, and will address habitat protection, enhancement and aquaculture.

## **Recommendation 2: Advisory Processes**

It is recommended that new advisory processes be developed for the provision of advice on policy issues and harvest planning to facilitate improved and more transparent consultation:

Policy Advisory Process - A new formal, structured policy advisory process is proposed. Specifically, a policy steering committee should be established that represents the full range of interests in fisheries resources, including First Nations, commercial and recreational fishing sectors, conservation organisations\* (there was no consensus among committee members over whether environmental groups and streamkeeper / habitat stewardship groups should be separately identified), community groups, and the provincial government. This committee would provide a venue for broadly based dialogue with the Department on major policy matters, such as a wild salmon policy, risk management, and socio-economic objectives. The policy steering committee will also consider the range of further interests to be invited to participate in this committee.

Assignment to Policy Advisory Process – Given that conservation concerns associated with some mixed stock fisheries are likely to result in shifts in harvesting opportunities to more terminal areas, it is recommended that the policy steering committee, once established, be asked to provide advice to clarify the policy on access and allocation. Consultation will occur in the fall of 2003 to discuss issues, and provide information to support a policy decision before the 2004 salmon fishery.

Harvest Planning - A more streamlined and representative cross-sectoral advisory process is proposed for harvest planning and post-season review. Specifically, two new salmon harvest planning committees, one each for the north and the south. A three-phased process would be established to provide co-ordinated advice to the Department on the development of IFMPs.

- 1) Advice on conservation objectives and science-based risk management would be provided by representatives from First Nations, the recreational and commercial sectors, and conservation organisations (there was no consensus among committee

members over whether environmental groups and streamkeeper / habitat stewardship groups should be separately identified).

- 2) Harvesters (representatives from First Nations and the recreational and commercial fishing sectors) would develop proposals on the conduct of fisheries consistent with phase 1, for inclusion in draft IFMPs.
- 3) First Nations, the recreational and commercial sectors, and conservation organisations (there was no consensus among committee members over whether environmental groups and streamkeeper / habitat stewardship groups should be separately identified) would provide advice on draft IFMPs focussing on ensuring consistency between conservation objectives and proposed fisheries, as well as any cross-sector integration issues requiring resolution.

NB Fraser Panel - The Fraser River Panel will continue to serve as a focal point in the in-season management of Fraser River sockeye and pink.

### **Recommendation 3:** Fraser River First Nations Watershed Process

It is recommended that the Fraser River First Nations Watershed process be further supported by ensuring technical support is provided for continued improvements in the efficiency of annual management planning and consultation processes. Also, support should be provided to coastal First Nations who choose to form an aggregate body to represent First Nation communities.

### **Recommendation 4:** Elements of the IFMP

It is recommended that the pre-season development of the IFMP be the focal point for consultation and debate. IFMPs should clearly define the priority of conservation, and should also include a number of other key items such as:

- A description of domestic and international commitments;
- Decision rules that will guide in-season management. This would include a science-based risk management framework, with decision tables that illustrate probable effects of a wide range of management options. They would cover a broad range of foreseeable circumstances and would guide the appropriate fisheries management responses to changing circumstances (such as in-season estimates of pre-spawning mortality of Late run sockeye); and
- A description of socio-economic objectives.

### **Recommendation 5: IFMP Issues for 2003**

Pending completion of a wild salmon policy and completion of long-term escapement goals for Fraser River sockeye, it is recommended that consultations be held with First Nations and stakeholders (including conservation organizations) on escapement targets to guide resource management for the 2003 fishery. As well, there will be consultations on the management objectives for Cultus Lake and Sakinaw Lake sockeye in 2003, relating to both fishing and habitat protection.

### **Recommendation 6: Food, Social, and Ceremonial Obligations**

All harvesting plans will continue to be designed to ensure that, after conservation objectives have been addressed, priority access for FSC purposes is provided over other uses.

### **Recommendation 7: Regulation of the Recreational Fishery**

It is recommended that consultations be initiated with the Sports Fishing Advisory Board to address concerns regarding the regulation of the recreational fishery, its linkage to the First Nations and commercial fisheries, and possible impediments to the provision of stable and predictable opportunities for the recreational harvest of sockeye.

### **Recommendation 8: Enforcement**

It is recommended that the Department consult with First Nations and stakeholders on enforcement issues:

- There will be pre-season meetings involving Conservation and Protection staff from Area offices to address anticipated monitoring enforcement issues, coordinated strategies, and priorities;
- There will be post-season meetings to review the outcome of these strategies, and progress related to partnership arrangements and protocols;
- Partnership arrangements and protocols with First Nations and stakeholders should be developed or improved, wherever possible. These would formalise the shared roles and responsibilities, and could include improved monitoring and catch reporting, co-management issues, or on-ground interactions between the parties.

As well, external members of the Steering Committee advocate more funding to support enforcement activities related to the conduct of Fraser River sockeye fisheries.

### **Recommendation 9: Monitoring and Assessment Studies**

It is recommended that monitoring and assessment studies be continued to improve understanding of the effects of high spawner density (e.g. Adams River 2002) and the migration behaviour and in-river mortality among Late run sockeye.

As well, external members of the Steering Committee advocate undertaking stock assessment studies on all Fraser River sockeye stocks.

### **Recommendation 10: In-Season Estimates and Data**

It is recommended that the Department work with the Pacific Salmon Commission staff, First Nations and stakeholders to develop improved in-season estimates of run size and timing. A number of avenues will be explored to develop these improvements:

- improvements to existing test fisheries;
- development of new test fisheries;
- environmental monitoring programs;
- use of stock assessment fisheries (conducted on a limited small fleet basis);
- traditional knowledge and on-water information will be evaluated as a means of augmenting these information sources.

As well, the Department should work with all harvesting groups to improve the accuracy and timeliness of catch reporting, including adoption of a catch monitoring system to provide information on landings; Fisheries and Oceans should consider a 3-5 year program focussed on optimising resources in in-season estimates to achieve conservation objectives.

### **Recommendation 11: Facilitating Stock Assessment Fishery**

It is recommended that the trigger for a pilot sales fishery be clarified so that the occurrence of stock assessment fisheries (conducted on a limited small fleet basis) that are specifically for the determination of stock abundance and the identification of a Canadian TAC, whether in approach areas or within the Fraser River, would not automatically trigger a pilot sales fishery. Such an assessment fishery would need to be approved by the Fraser Panel, as part of the Pacific Salmon Commission process.

### **Recommendation 12: Improved Communication with Recreational Fishery**

Prior to the commencement of the 2003 management season, it is recommended that Pacific Region staff consult with the Sports Fishing Advisory Board, to identify and

implement practical, affordable options that will improve the timeliness and effectiveness of in-season communication and consultation with the recreational fishing community.

**Recommendation 13: Innovative Fisheries**

It is recommended that the Department work with all sectors to adopt innovative means to conduct sustainable fisheries that are consistent with conservation objectives. Where appropriate, conservation organisations should be involved to assist in advising this work.

**Recommendation 14: In-Season Decision Making**

It is recommended that the Regional Director of Fisheries Management be assigned the authority and accountability for in-season decisions involving circumstances that are not addressed in the IFMP, including coordination between area offices, and dispute resolution.