



Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council

Conseil pour la conservation des ressources halieutiques du pacifique

21 March 2005

Minister Geoff Regan, PC, MP  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
200 Kent Street, Ottawa Ontario  
K1A 0E6

**Via courier**

Dear Minister Regan:

**Re: 2005 Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council: Work plan**

On behalf of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council it is my pleasure to provide you with a copy of our Council's work plan for 2005.

This plan concentrates on assisting the Pacific Region with the implementation of the Wild Salmon Policy and also initiates a climate change outreach program to improve public understanding of the challenges facing fisheries managers as a result of climate change.

Sincerely yours,

Hon. John A. Fraser  
Chairman  
Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council

Encl.

cc: Council Members  
Larry Murray, DM, DFO  
Paul Sprout, A/RDG, DFO

# PFRCC Budget and Workplan for 2005-2006

## Introduction to the Budget and Workplan

The terms of reference of the PFRCC require that Council submit a workplan and budget each year. The full Council met at the end of February to prioritize its workplan topics for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

In preparing this workplan the Council determined its goals and priorities for the coming year and determined the resources required to fulfill the work. In recognition of fiscal realities, Council ensured that the proposed workplan had budgetary decreases as compared to previous years.

## General Priorities

The general priorities of Council have remained unchanged since its inception. These are:

- To advise the federal and provincial ministers on critical issues concerning the status and conservation of anadromous salmonids and their habitats. Direct requests for advice are treated with the highest priority. The broad and inclusive membership of the Council also enables it to identify emerging and critical issues from many perspectives.
- To become directly engaged in emerging fish conservation issues and to assist the public in understanding those issues via processes such as public consultations, holding conferences or workshops and by production of understandable material in published form and on the Council website.
- To continually update comprehensive and accessible information on the status of stocks and habitat as well as advisory follow-up as appropriate.

## Priorities for 2005/2006

The release of a second draft of the *Wild Salmon Policy* is an important policy development for DFO and Pacific salmon. The Council recognizes that DFO will require assistance in implementing the policy over the next few years. Consequently the Council is proposing to provide support in a few key areas where its abilities correspond to critical implementation needs. These areas are:

1. The development of indices of habitat status as per the **Wild Salmon Policy**. Under the new WSP DFO has committed to systematic reporting on the status of salmon habitat in the Pacific Region. The Council also has the responsibility of advising ministers on the status of salmon habitat so the development of a framework for determining habitat status and reporting on it would benefit both the Council and DFO.

Council acknowledges the need to develop indices that are practicable and are based on information that is either readily available now or that could be routinely collected through community stewardship groups and First Nations. The Council is considering two approaches. The first would be to commission a report on the current state of the art followed by an advisory recommending a way to proceed. The second approach would be to convene a workshop of experts and produce proceedings that would include Council's recommendations as a summary paper.

2. Stock Assessment via Partnerships with Public and Private Groups as per the **Wild Salmon Policy**. With the revised WSP DFO is proposing new approaches to assessment and fisheries management that are based on partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders. The adoption of new organizational models will pose numerous challenges for DFO such as:
  - The development of practicable assessment frameworks that are consistent with the capabilities of partners yet provide the necessary information.

- The development of performance criteria and auditing procedures that will encourage the development of capacity in the partners.
- The development of guidelines and procedures establishing the respective roles of DFO and partners in the various processes involved with assessment and management.
- The development of training programs necessary for both partners and DFO to facilitate the transition to this new way of doing business.

The diverse backgrounds of the members of the PFRCC ideally positions the Council to make valuable contributions on how to make such a new approach work. At the present time the PFRCC considers the transition of stock assessment to be the highest priority. Council considers collaborations with core and area-based stock assessment staff to plan and hold bilateral meetings with stakeholders and First Nations as the best approach to collecting the necessary information necessary for writing an advisory on the topic.

3. Recommendations for the adoption of an “Ecosystem Approach” in the management of Pacific salmon fisheries as per the Wild Salmon Policy. Questions such as:

- “What is ecosystem-based management?”
- “What are ecosystems values?” and
- “How can such values be incorporated into the management of salmon fisheries?”

are very topical. Adoption of an ecosystem approach is one of the key strategies of the WSP. Further, in the current budget the government has renewed its emphasis on implementation of the Oceans Act, which requires that an ecosystem approach is used in the management of ocean resources (Oceans Act).

It is clear from the WSP that DFO requires assistance in defining what an ecosystem value is and advice on how to develop an ecosystem approach. The Council is well positioned to develop a broad perspective on ecosystem values because of its broad-based membership. Furthermore, the Council is mandated to engage the public on such general policy issues and could provide advice to DFO on what ecosystem values are important to Canadians and how consideration of such values could be included in fisheries management decision making.

Note, this particular project will rely on Staff and Council but its initiation is dependent upon time and discussion of overall priorities with DFO.

4. Hot Habitat Issues – Gravel extraction revisited. Effectively resolving habitat conflicts between wild salmon and our other uses of aquatic and riparian habitats is crucial to the successful implementation of the WSP. One such issue is gravel extraction. This issue, like most habitat issues, involves all levels of government and a complex mix of fisheries, economic and social values. There is an ongoing need for public education so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to understand multiple perspectives on the problems. Decision makers need fair and balanced advice. Both requirements are central to the mandate of the Council.

Gravel is very valuable especially in the Lower Mainland. Gravel accumulates in river channels and raises the level of river beds, which diminishes the flood security of many municipalities. The responsibility for dyke maintenance and upgrades has been off-loaded to municipalities. Mining gravel from river beds is easy, very profitable and mitigates the need for dyke improvements. Gravel bars in the lower Fraser are the spawning locations of pink salmon, one of the largest stocks of Pacific salmon in the world.

Council recognizes that there are many similar habitat issues in the Pacific Region, all of which require public education and impartial advice for decision makers. Consequently, Council is considering dealing with hot habitat issues over several years. Along the way the Council will provide not only issue specific education and advice but also more general commentary and advice on the dilemmas faced by all stakeholders in managing aquatic resources and how such dilemmas might be discussed and resolved in an open, inclusive and accountable process.

5. Completion of current projects. Several projects are underway and will be completed in the coming fiscal year:
- **Hatchery salmon wild salmon interactions** – Council produced a report on hatchery salmon wild salmon interactions and undertook a public consultation. A report on what Council heard from the public has been completed and will be released soon. To complete this project Council is preparing an advisory that will focus on knowledge gaps and on future roles of hatcheries particularly as they pertain to the **Wild Salmon Policy**.
  - **Conduct of Fisheries** – Council has produced a report this year on commercial fisheries. Writing of the report on sport fisheries will soon be underway to be followed by a report on aboriginal fisheries. The reports will outline fisheries of the past, changes made through the years to reduce conservation concerns, outline where the fishery is going today and speculate on what the fishery of the future may look like. The intent of the reports is public education and they are to be written in an informal style that is readily understandable by the interested public including students.
  - **State of Steelhead** – This project uses information summarized from the provincial data bases to report on the status of steelhead stocks. Data collation and summarization has been completed this year. A summary of the data and a status advisory will be produced in 2005/06.
  - **Report on agricultural impacts on wild salmon in the lower Fraser River valley** – This report has been completed and has been internally and externally reviewed and subsequently revised. After a final edit the revised report will be released early in the new fiscal year.
  - **PFRCC Website** – A significant redesign of the PFRCC website will be launched early in the new fiscal year. The new site has been designed to make it user friendly and to enhance the ability of the Council to engage and educate the public on issues related to wild salmon.

### **Resources Required:**

- Council's resources required to carry out its 2004-2005 workplan will be \$750k; down from the \$850k of past years.
- This budget recognizes the increased efficiency of the running of the office with the elimination of secretarial support for the chair. At the same time it includes increased costs for the chair, recognizing that with Hon. John Fraser is stepping down (Mr. Fraser waived most applicable remuneration) and accordingly the assumption of more costs for a replacement chair.

## Budget and Workplan Summary for Fiscal Year 2005-2006

| Item                                                      | Expense                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Members/chair per diems                                   | \$165,000                       |
| Secretariat salaries/conversion costs-potential contracts | \$140,000                       |
| Ongoing Scientific advice-secondment or contract          | \$ 90,000                       |
| Consultations and travel                                  | \$ 60,000                       |
| Policy & Media contracts                                  | \$ 35,000                       |
| Printing/publication/translation                          | \$ 20,000                       |
| Space, computer support                                   | \$ 80,000                       |
| Office expenses                                           | \$ 25,000                       |
| Development of Indices of Habitat Status re WSP           | \$ 30,000                       |
| Development of Stock Assessment Partnerships re WSP       | \$ 30,000                       |
| Ecosystem approaches re WSP                               | (Staff/Council if time permits) |
| Hot habitat issues-gravel extraction                      | \$ 20,000                       |
| Conduct of Fisheries project-recreational & First Nations | \$ 50,000                       |
| State of steelhead-reporting                              | (Staff/Council)                 |
| Advisory on Hatcheries – Wild Salmon Interactions         | (Staff/Council)                 |
| Fraser Valley Agricultural Impacts project                | \$ (printing only)              |
| Web project and web hosting                               | \$ 10,000                       |
| <b>Total</b>                                              | <b>\$750,000</b>                |