

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS BUILDING

Recreational Fishing Guides

Meeting # 1

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Skidegate United Church, 6 – 9 pm

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Minutes of Meeting

Welcome everyone. What you have in front of you are documents called “Community Solutions Building” and “Taking Stock” which provide some background to the marine issues that have been identified by local Islanders. There is also a package with a number of maps and graphs for your information. I was recently at a QCI Sport Fish Advisory Board meeting with some of you – and many issues were raised, including the impact of catch and release policies. A meeting with people involved in the local recreational fishery seemed like a good idea to begin talking about issues like a code of conduct, possibility of zoning, and so on. The idea is to develop ground-up solutions to identified problems instead of responding to someone else’s ideas and policies.

In meetings over the past two years, the same issues keep coming up – the idea is that tonight we might be able to come up with some action items to address these issues. We need to come up with productive solutions for the industry, the fish, and to reduce conflict. Over the past decade catch and release fishing has increased, particularly with respect to fishing lodges. Concern about high salmon mortality has made this a polarized issue. Some people don’t want to see any catch and release. Is it possible to develop a code of conduct so that all activities can take place? What would you include in a code of conduct?

- Elsewhere there are catch and release programs. I’ve participated in studies – and there is some information, but not a whole bunch. There are all sorts of things to consider: what do you consider catch and release? What about salmon vs. rock cod? You don’t want to release rock cod because they won’t survive. An individual code of conduct also sort of exists, and if a fish is bleeding then it is contradictory to many individual code of conducts to release it. Then there are the times you are forced to catch and release – you can’t keep undersized fish. There even used to be “under-over” policies when you couldn’t keep oversize fish. That’s no longer in place though.
- How would you define catch and release?
- There are really three types of catch and release: (1) when you catch an undersized fish (in which case you are required to release it), (2) when you are targeting a specific species and you catch something else, for example if you caught a pink salmon when fishing for spring (although this isn’t that common because gear types are usually different), and (3) when you are fishing beyond your limit and you have to let what you catch go. This last area may be where there are some opportunities for change.
- In the places I’ve worked – once you’ve caught your limit, you’re done. That includes bleeders and fish that have been played out.
- That’s great but isn’t the case everywhere unfortunately.

If you look at the graphs in the map package you can see data on the recreational fishery. This is based on north end and west side creel survey data.

- Creel data really needs to be better for the west side. The CHN is not always there to collect information and, even when they are, not everyone stops.

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- The numbers are extrapolated – they take the ground information and then extrapolate them based on data collected by aerial over-flights.
- The north end program is definitely tighter – some of the lodges have watchmen sitting at the docks. Then again, not all lodges participate and some tell their guests not to talk to the watchmen. There is virtually no information north of Rennell Sound and south of Buck Point, and the estimates are, as mentioned, based on who stops. At the moment there is no one stationed at the west side lodges such as Kano, Englefield and Tasu (West Coast Fishing Club).
- Perhaps mandatory catch reporting should be recommended. There are no requirements at this time. What about the idea of a log of what's caught and released for everyone – both lodges and individuals. What do you think?
- That's a good idea.
- Guests generally don't want that hassle, but it might work at the dock.
- Anything mandatory should be easily accessible. Mandatory things are usually a pain in the ass.
- Catch is already recorded by guides at the lodges. I'm not sure where that information goes though – and there is no release data.
- The information is supposed to be handed in to DFO.
- It does go out from the lodges I work for. I'm just not sure where it ends up.
- Two or three times per summer a fisheries boat comes to the lodge to get the data.

What about release data? Could you get release numbers from guided boats? If all the guides agreed, that would be useful information. Are all boats guided? Should they be?

- From a cost standpoint, lodges would say they can't afford to guide all the boats.
- Boats are 50% guided. If there was a simple form for the guests, you could get that information. It would be a simple thing to do.
- You know the catch numbers are accurate, but the release may not be. They could inflate them.
- So in the code of conduct both the issues of "catch" and "release" should be dealt with.
- A policy that doesn't allow for any catch and release will not be agreeable – especially for multiple day trips.
- Even though I try not to on my trips, I have to catch and release sometimes too.

I think you could explain to guests during the orientation (done by guides) some of the issues around catch and release. Get that information out (eg. explain mortality rates) and some of the guests might listen and make choices based on that information. "Fifty percent guided" means that for every two boats there is one guide. For example, I will do the orientation for my two boats at the dock and then go with one of them. We remain in contact with each other. The following day, I'll switch boats.

- Some lodges have it set up that way, others have other programs. Every lodge does have some form of orientation though.
- I like that idea.
- We do a safety orientation and then have all the guests go through a checklist of the information we have covered and check it off and sign it.
- That is a liability issue and came about because of lawsuits. You have to cover that you actually told them everything – the lodges are just protecting themselves from an operational standpoint.
- It would be up to the individual guides to decide if they wanted to share information about catch and release.
- So all guides are expected to inform guests of the "rules of the road"?
- Maybe part of the rules of the road could be biological information and mortality rates.
- Guides can help guests to make informed decisions.
- We do need more detailed studies in order to provide solid information to people though.
- It is amazing what survives – some of those fish are really beat up.
- Are we just talking about salmon? Or other species too?

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- Salmon at the moment, but we do have to consider other species as well.
- Salmon are pretty tough – rockfish are totally different.
- How do you catch a fish and ensure it doesn't bleed?
- There should be a requirement for bleeders to be kept.
- If everyone is working by the same rules and information and it becomes standard practice, it would be easy to do.
- It is a matter of changing the mind set.
- Some lodges have catch and release programs where they give guests a price for not bringing in fish to the dock.

Proper fish handling is also very important. If a fish can't maintain equilibrium and doesn't manage to just swim away, then you should have to keep it.

- They are pretty tough – some of those beat up fish are 80 years old.
- It is a matter of teaching good release techniques – people can be told not to put a fish in a net and bring it into the boat if you are not going to keep it.
- It also depends on the gear. For example, if you are using 15 lb test, then you should have to keep the fish.
- Equipment is important. It would be nice to change it regularly but that can get really expensive.
- You could explain to guests "if this happens then this is what you should do..." and lay it all out for them.
- Guests should be told to keep the fish in the water when you are going to release it, rather than lifting it out of the water.
- You really shouldn't have to handle the fish at all.
- There is a photography program that shows guests how to handle fish – taking it out of the water, taking a quick picture, and then putting it back fast. The techniques could be shown relatively easily.
- Sometimes you have to take the fish out of the water to release it.
- But you don't need to bring them into the boat.
- You could put this information in a booklet that could be in the plane when they travel.
- Information could also go out with fishing licenses. We really shouldn't be promoting catch and release at all.

Perhaps if you've got fish in the boat, it's time to switch gear – maybe changing from bait to plugs and spoons?

- Bait is provided at some of the lodges. Otherwise guides have to supply their own gear.
- We get spoons but not flashers or hoochies. We tend not to use our own gear in the instructor program.

What else would you have in the information package?

- Information about why catch and release is not good. DFO promoted catch and release for a long time and it has now become a problem because it has created a mentality that catch and release is a good thing.
- You would want to include different information for different species.
- Yes, you could have sections in the booklet – each with a checklist.
- People are not really into listening – even in orientation – and they don't read a lot.
- You also need mortality data.
- Many people don't even know where salmon come from or why they're here.
- So you need to provide basic biological information.
- People have difficulty telling species apart.
- Fish identification should definitely be in the booklet.
- In the case of springs – sometimes colour variation is more telling because not all of them have spots.
- Do lodges have a specimen of each species?

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- That's a good suggestion for rockfish.
- You should also mention the fish predators out there.

Are there any gear studies?

- J.O. Thomas did a gear study that showed that flashers with hoochies on sport gear had a higher mortality than gillnetters on coho because of bleeding tongues.
- Any gear will wear the fish down more than bait. The flasher takes the fish down faster because they have to fight the weight of the flasher as well as the guy fishing.

What about rockfish?

- Limits for rockfish should be reviewed. We need to work on existing limits – six is outrageous. Just a small change would reduce pressure and would probably make a difference on bottom fish as well.
- What about changing where you are fishing if you start catching rockfish?
- Sometimes it is hard to move if you are catching fish because guests like it.
- What target would you set? What limit?
- Well, I like rockfish.
- Some guests want to catch their limit of everything.
- At the beginning of the summer the rockfish limit was 8 and 16. In Englefield we lowered it voluntarily to 4 and 8 because management decided that no one needs 16 rockfish. It was later lowered to 5 but we had already lowered it for our guests. You have to remember that a limit is a maximum, not a minimum.
- Like the BC Steelhead Society motto: “limit your catch, don't catch your limit.” We also need to address the issue of catch and release in rockfish.
- There is information on large groundfish like lingcod and halibut in terms of the large fish being the breeders. They know, more or less, how long it takes for fish to get to that stage.
- The Pacific Halibut Commission has some of this information – they have a pretty good understanding of the age/size correlation for halibut.
- What about images?
- That's probably not that necessary. Most places have pictures on the wall already.
- Some rockfish release better than others – eg. black bass.
- It also depends on the depth you catch them at.

What about education around location?

- I think you could address this in a code of conduct. If you start catching loads of one species (eg. yelloweye), then it is time to move. I really emphasize the issue of breeders in halibut and lingcod. It's important to give good ranges. For example, lingcod under 20 lbs are good to keep, halibut over 80 lbs should be released.
- For the guy who wants his trophy fish – he can take a picture and throw it back.
- When you near your rockfish limit you can also move to other grounds. The orientation could explain the relationship between different grounds and fish species.
- The booklet could give examples.

You could also explain the reality of a 300 lb halibut.

- In bottom fish you could explain that toxins such as mercury and other heavy metals accumulate as fish get larger.
- There are also worms.
- We don't let any guests go bottom-fishing unguided.
- That's a central coast thing because you have to travel a long distance from the lodge to get to the grounds. It's different here.
- That wouldn't be feasible in Tasu or Englefield.

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- Here you can virtually salmon and halibut fish in the same place.
- They also have different possession limits down south (2 to 3 fish?)
- It depends where you are.

Can we identify areas for fish protection? Is zoning an option?

- DFO usually shuts the fishing down if there are problems.
- Not here – this is the frontier.
- At the moment DFO has a goal of 20% protection and the CHN have a long-term goal of 40-50%.
- If you look at the map you can see the green dots and the crosshatched areas, both of which have certain limitations. Some of these areas may make sense, others may not. In Tasu – are there important places in the sound that should be protected?
- There is no rockfish fishing in the sound – we go outside.
- These are DFO-identified areas. We could also consider depth limits.
- That's true. Most guides don't want to reel in more than 100 ft of down rigger.
- For example, we could identify areas that are okay for salmon but not for halibut because you might catch certain rockfish.
- You have to remember that guides are working for a tip and so you want your guests to catch what they are targeting.

Are there areas where there could be protection zones?

- Not without information on where and how rockfish breed.
- Rockfish are fairly localized but information is limited because you can't tag them from the surface (unlike halibut and lingcod). They do know that in protected areas rockfish density increases and they serve as source areas for seeding other nearby locations. That is the rationale for protection.
- An example might be at Skidegate Point – there the wall is open but the corner of Tana to the corner of Dawson could be closed. The hope would be that fish would disperse from one side of the channel to the other.
- Everyone would also have to agree that it would work because DFO wouldn't be able to do adequate enforcement – you would need buy in.
- You still need to know where they breed.
- Many species are thought to have small territories – their whole life cycle is spent there, and larvae disperse to seed other areas. They are thought to have fairly localized populations.
- You also need to remember that there are local people fishing – not just the industry. Any protected area would also impact them.
- I don't think we should have really large areas – I think small areas would be more effective. For example in the Park, don't close areas directly around Hotsprings where there is high use. Close an area outside of Windy Bay. It might be a better spot and has fewer people. Closing Ramsay to the start of the Park is a bad idea. A few smaller points that people knew about and respected would be far more effective. Nobody even knows where the Rockfish Conservation Areas are.
- The information is not readily available and it's hard to track down. You don't usually look for areas where you can't fish, you look for areas where you can.
- Maybe we need to identify small areas that might work for us.

It's true – large areas won't necessarily work. DFO is not doing research, and as an Island we should support doing our own research to increase information about local stocks. We need to be a part of the solution.

- Is there no information from fish tagging? If you want people to participate you need to see results. Why else should they bother?
- Yes, look at the salmon head recovery program – people send in their fish heads and never get any information back. That's why local control of research is so important.
- You used to get pin and information about where the fish was from.

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- When I was working at the fish plant for the mark recovery program commercial fisherman were keen to get results back – they wanted their pins and the information about the fish.
- That doesn't happen anymore.

How do we start to identify zones?

- I have no idea.
- You need to have everyone who fishes the Islands to be on the same page.
- There are rockfish habitat maps done by DFO. There was a presentation on rockfish about a year ago when DFO shared their science but not many people attended. Haida Fisheries Program and the CHN were supposed to meet with Gary Logan (the DFO rockfish consultation coordinator) in late November regarding Rockfish Conservation Areas. I'm not sure what recommendations came out of that meeting.
- As far as I know, the meeting was delayed.
- Well, it is important to talk to the Haida Fisheries Program and find out what their vision is.
- Yes, but that doesn't preclude this discussion.

These meetings should be a chance to bring a vision forward and any marine plan should reflect the thoughts and ideas expressed. The strength of a marine plan is that it is not tied to any one agency. Everyone needs to see themselves reflected and take ownership of the plan.

- I like the idea of being proactive – of identifying the spots that will work rather than saying “no we don't want it there.”

It's pretty easy – all you have to do is look at a rockfish habitat map and make sure rockfish survive when you establish a protected area. The problem is that there are big conflicts of interest – when you talk about putting in a protected area at Langara, everyone cries. So you talk about Naden, and everyone cries. Everyone has to play by the same rules in terms of rockfish protection – it means that no one fishes rockfish there. You also need to have clearly identified landmarks designating a protected area.

- Not just points of longitude and latitude on a map.
- I have very little knowledge about rockfish conservation – do they need to be protected? What is their biology? I am uneducated on this subject.
- They are almost gone in the south.
- And we want to avoid getting to that point in the north. We also need to establish a baseline – at the moment we have no information. The only way to protect rockfish is to set aside habitat and then monitor to see if it is working.
- One thing to consider is: are we fishing as many rockfish as we once were? Is that our only gauge of impact? I've heard stories about Skidegate Inlet, and I suspect there are fewer rockfish than there were in the past.
- That's true in Naden too.
- There is no lingcod fishery this year in the Strait of Georgia.
- There are a lot of rockfish at Seven Mile Point and then nothing for a while, which suggests a small local population. It would presumably take a long time for them to return if they were fished out.
- It would be difficult to put a protected area at Seven Mile because so many people are there. The spots have to make sense or people will break the rules.
- Rockfish Conservation Areas are beneficial if they work. You can fish the overflow on the edge and there is typically very good fishing on the border of a protected area after a few years.
- These rules need to apply to everyone, not just sports fishermen. For example, in Skedans Bay, the commercial fishery can clean the area out and it takes a few years before the populations rebound.
- Is there good information on repopulation?
- It depends on the size of the area and the proximity to other populations.

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What about the perception that the Islands don't get benefits from the lodges?

- The benefits are not what they should be in relation to the resource that leaves the Islands. There are some efforts – artwork, etc. – but they are fairly small.
- It is tough to tour the Island from Tasu Sound. People are there to fish – these are different people than those who go to Sandspit. Remote lodges are remote lodges.
- Is there a way to bundle a Tasu trip with a town day?
- It's a matter of logistics and travel. From the lodge standpoint it is very difficult. They see it as “this guy's here because we're here.” The lodges do get their grocery overflow locally, although the rest is flown up. There is artwork, and more could probably be sold, but they have trouble getting it.
- There is artwork available – I think the desire by the lodges to sell it is fairly low.
- It is also an inventory issue. It is a matter of how much money it costs in relation to how much they get in return. In the case of floating lodges, it is also a space issue. The demand is really not that great.
- Art sales is one issue in terms of benefits, but there are others – what about criteria for local employment or groceries?
- Part of the problem is that there were 12 people at the job fair. People have to take responsibility too.
- You also have to consider the infrastructure that is here because of the lodges – local marine businesses and plane flights.
- In terms of day trips, some lodges are better than others.
- The plane is usually in and out – the new/old guest changeover is pretty fast.
- The cost of getting from a remote lodge to here prevents it from happening. It is easier in Sandspit with the guests at the land-based lodge.
- It's a marketing issue – the lodges market to people who want to go fishing. People who want to stick around already do.
- My impression at the north end is that guests are bundled up – some of those guys have been to Langara seven times and never even visited Masset. It seems like the lodges don't want their guests to interact with locals.
- It really is entirely because of logistics – there is a practical business reason. The problem is that if people leave the airport, they end up missing their plane.
- We try to organize it so that whoever gets to the lodge first (i.e. comes directly from Sandspit) is the first to leave on the way out. Then all the guests have equal time in Sandspit to look around at the gift shop and other things.
- I dropped off our brochures at the Masset airport but they were quickly moved away.
- Were the brochures in the way of doing business? They would probably stay in one place if they were on a rack.
- I think it is an issue of lodge promotion. Some lodges do promote ecotourism, but it is different for remote lodges.
- Is there value in talking with lodges to identify options?
- The problem is that there is not much for people to do. There needs to be scheduled tours and things to do.
- And that's something the communities could work towards.
- Yes, it is a huge thing that is being missed. Here you have to find someone to do a tour, whereas elsewhere people are fighting over the chance to sell you a tour. The opportunities for visitors here are limited – probably due to lack of money to start businesses and other reasons.
- Some ventures are beginning in Masset. But I think the dialogue with the lodges has to come from locals.
- Local infrastructure is important to get lodges to build town time into trips.

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What else is local benefit? You have employment, groceries, airport, services... what else?

- What about bait? There is talk about a CHN bait license. We might be able to sell local bait.
- That will be very tough. It is a matter of processing and packaging bait properly. I know some guys that have failed trying.
- What about groceries?
- You need to consider how much stuff can physically be brought here in quantities that the lodges need. Look at the transportation issues. West Coast Fishing Club is building a warehouse and freezer in Masset because it can't get enough on the plane at the moment.

What about the issue of lodge expansion – is there local support for continuing the moratorium on new lodges?

- Yes there is.
- I think the locals support the moratorium on new lodges, but the question is: how do you define “lodges”? Remote lodges with a license might be obvious, but what about B&B's? Charters?
- There seems to be two issues here: one would be new businesses setting up in Sandspit (in which case there would be more competition but not new areas being opened up), and the other is new businesses in a remote new spot (which means new impacts in a new place).
- There are not a huge number of new spots left for floating lodges.
- Perhaps we could support more small lodges but not more floating lodges?
- It is obviously to my benefit to continue to support the moratorium.
- Is a guide okay, but a lodge isn't?
- I think if we are talking about expanding areas, then that should stop. I see that as different than expanding the number of people. If we don't prevent area expansion through protected areas, then maybe we could do it by preventing more lodges. There has been huge expansion in sport fishing from the west coast lodges – so much so that their areas are almost overlapping.
- There is also the issue of lodge growth – existing lodges can keep growing too.
- A lot of the big lodges are really expanding. Langara is now up to 110 beds. The Queen Charlotte Lodge and Sampson are also expanding.
- How are eco-ventures doing?
- I take quite a few people on eco-tours but it's still a low percentage of the total lodge guests.
- What do you do on the tours?
- I typically make suggestions and consider the capabilities and physique of the guests.

Is there support for a moratorium on area expansion? Or a moratorium on any type of development?

- Some would say we already tried to stop expansion in the 1990s and it didn't work.
- I think everyone agrees with the land lease moratorium – that more land-based lodges shouldn't be allowed.
- There is expansion of land-based lodge development in Masset though. Rick Bourne bought Alaska View B&B and is buying up other businesses.
- More people are coming into town.
- More people are coming in general.
- It is difficult to address this issue because it is a matter of free enterprise.
- I think you have to focus the moratorium on remote lodges.
- And floating lodges because they have virtually no regulations.
- As long as lodge beds are increasing, that's not a moratorium in my view.
- Can you cap the number of beds?
- Yes, that might be a window of opportunity.
- There are also the big boats that have recently showed up. The Jennifer Gale and the Flying O, for example. These boats take six people and everyone works on the boat while the skipper runs them up and down the west coast. This is a different type of expansion but it accesses areas that haven't been hit before. This is beginning and we need to determine if we want that kind of business here.

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There were loads of new boats at the dock from the States this summer. How do you know who's here and what's happening in our waters?

- Haida Fisheries should be involved.
- Maybe we should have a registry for guides.

I asked for the CHN position on the recreational fishery from 1994. Some of you might remember the Charlotte Princess. At the time it got a lot of media attention because it was the first effort to say "we're taking control of our traditional marine waters."

- They talk about registration and distinguish between major and minor operators. The document also splits the Islands into management areas – with caps for the number of operators. It's a pretty comprehensive document but most people seem to have forgotten about it.
- Who would enforce it?
- That's part of the problem.
- Maybe the question is "how do you not enforce limits given the reality of expansion?" Look at Masset alone and what is being bought up there. Anyone with a B&B is getting an offer. The dock in Masset will be full of American vessels soon.
- If you look at the stats in Area 1, we have doubled the number of guests in less than ten years. In 2W, guests have increased from 1400 to 4400 between 2000 and 2005. That means effort on the west coast has increased over four times in five years. This is a huge increase.

What do you enforce? Do you want control? What will the future economy here look like? The idea of zoning is not new on land but we are still in the wild west out on the ocean. People are frightened of drawing lines on the map but we may need to ensure that there are still places to go. We can't keep this expansion up forever, can we?

- We market a quality fishing experience – if we are not careful, we won't have that in the future.
- There is the local lifestyle to consider too.
- It's hard when you see the big draggers out there – it's tough when you think about their impacts.

What about zoning the recreational fishery and saying "this is your area"? What about a cap on the number of beds?

- As soon as you put any limits in place, the price goes up. Look at what happened to angling licenses on land.
- Try to affect remote lodges – those are the big guys. They are the only ones who can afford to keep expanding. Try not to impact small local businesses.
- There is also the issue of effluent.
- Look at Cartwright Sound – the CHN has stated that the area is off-limits to recreational and commercial guys. Is there value in having areas for day fishers? Could we consider different types of zoning?
- What about the guys at Masset House? What are they?
- I don't know, but maybe you want to designate places for people to operate in specific places.
- Remote lodges are often linked to land-based lodges. Maybe you could cap the number of beds?
- Capping is difficult because of the issue of free enterprise.
- Small guys will travel really far to get fish—they don't just fish right near Masset.

How do we define how much is enough? There seems to be concerns around expansion but we need numbers and targets. We need to define what is acceptable and what is not.

- Are you talking about angler days? They would have to be owner-operator and zoned into different types (major and minor operators).
- That sounds similar to Gwaii Haanas.

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- And that's a problem because I don't like that system. Many people don't like it.
- You need to look at what is legally possible in terms of any type of cap or restriction.
- But we shouldn't be put off by what is currently possible – we need to say “this is what we want to see.”
- There also need to be opportunities for young people to go into business but we should have rules too.
- There appear to be two options: (1) we can regulate the numbers that go fishing, or (2) we regulate the areas where they fish. I think we should focus on the areas.
- Controlling where people fish makes more sense.
- Who will enforce this?
- We have to – there has to be buy in.
- If most people follow the rules, then there is pressure on the guy who chooses not to – people will report those who don't respect rules that everyone else supports.
- Which areas would you propose?
- I think we should also consider timing – maybe you could fish certain areas in July and then switch to another area in August. That way there wouldn't be constant fishing in one area.
- It's important to focus on protecting habitat and limiting the areas that are open for fishing. This will ultimately limit expansion.
- It may get people to think about slowing expansion.
- Lodges have to understand the rationale for closing areas – selection of places can't be arbitrary.
- The rules would have to be for everyone. They shouldn't be perceived as being 'anti-lodge.'
- Look at the commercial fishery – it is a free-for-all at the north end. It's good to see them open up the south end to relieve some of the pressure in the north.
- The ribbon boundaries mean that the area for the commercial guys is smaller.

What about opportunities to reduce pressure between the recreational and commercial fishery?

- There is no point in denying recreational guys access to an area if everyone else is permitted to fish there. DFO policy now includes ribbon boundaries and regulations regarding gear types. They appear to be trying to separate effort – do you think it is working?
- Without ribbon boundaries they'd be ramming us.
- I know the commercial guys aren't too happy. In some ways if the commercial guys are capped at 100,000 pieces then maybe they should be allowed to fish wherever they want – if they get the fish easier then they'll be done sooner. It could be an effective alternative to zoning people out. It's just an idea but maybe we should open it up and let people work it out.
- Spreading the fleet out would definitely help. It would also help the fish.
- We're not going to change the number of fish the commercial fishery catches, but if they catch them faster, then all the better. Why limit places outside of areas that have specific conservation concerns? I'm not sure we need ribbon boundaries.

Maybe the sport fishing industry should be treated the same as the commercial industry. A quota could be issued based on lodge size. For example, 44 guests – multiply by four coho, four Chinook etc.

- Are you also thinking quota for the small guys?
- I think quota would work for the lodges, but not quota for everything.
- It's a good idea but it would require major quota go to the big lodges (for example, Langara might get something like 40,000 pieces) and if the rest of the guys don't have quota then the lodges will go ballistic.
- Maybe you could say that up to a certain size of business there would be no quota, but over a certain size you would need quota.
- Good idea.
- You might get a proliferation of lodges just under the cap for quota.
- Who would manage the quota? DFO? CHN?

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS BUILDING

- A local group should.
- It would be easy to come up with an equation for quota because the season isn't that long – it should be different than Gwaii Haanas. Existing operators could be grandfathered in.
- What about the floating lodges?
- Most are mid-sized. Look at Mirabel – it's a part of larger entity. It is an issue of defining the size of the operation.
- To toss out a number – say 15 to 20 beds. Anything under that wouldn't have enough business to make it pay off.
- I've heard the "magic number" is 12.
- That's probably true on the coast, but it's more on Haida Gwaii because it's expensive to get here.
- Would lodges that have an island's component to their business get a bonus? For example, could "bonus beds" be used as an incentive?
- Yes, that might give them an incentive to market the place as well as fishing. It makes sense to try and force their hand to market the Islands.
- We did this in the past – we offered a package that included a few days in the Park. We hooked up with Moresby Explorers and set the package. The attempt fared well – we were fairly successful.
- Do you still offer that?
- They do promote it – but it is an issue of scale and, related to the number of clients, it's not a lot. We do land tours too – we take people to Tlell.

You still have the issue of catch and release. You need to have guests make educated choices. The information is very important – maybe it could be incorporated into the code of conduct that we were talking about.

- Are you suggesting that everyone sign a code of conduct?
- I'm not sure that would achieve much.
- It would prove that they've read it.
- True.
- Education is very important. For example, a friend told us a story about guided lake trout fishing in Great Bear Lake. Originally it was all catch and kill, and suddenly a new set of guides came in and changed all the fishing to catch and release. Within three or four years they were virtually hanging a flag at half-mast when a fish was killed. They changed the philosophy completely. The influence of guides is huge – people who are out fishing are really in the hands of the guide.
- I've noticed that with repeat customers, people's views have changed over the years.
- There should be information sessions like the Gwaii Haanas orientation sessions.
- When they are rushing out fishing I actually have their attention – they focus because they don't get a boat until I am finished covering everything. They don't really pay attention at any other time.
- When I pick up guests in Sandspit, I have them sitting in the truck and can talk to them about the rules and so on. It's perfect.
- That's similar to my trips to Skidegate Point – it is a one hour trip out and that gives me the opportunity for discussion.

The Haida Fisheries Program does over-flights and a creel survey but not all lodges comply or are part of the program – any comments on how to address this issue?

- How many stop and talk?
- Not many. Locals usually do but lodge support is low.
- We need to sell it to the lodges.
- It's important to make it easy – like putting up their catch on the board.
- What about the dock in Sandspit? Haida Fisheries people are paid in the north end to sit at the dock. It is really important that lodges buy into data collection. Interestingly enough, reporting tends to go down when the CHN food fishery is in the area because lodges don't want to cooperate when they're around.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS BUILDING

- The information should go straight to the guests.
- Is there any pressure on the guides to tow the party line?
- I've never seen any coaching.

If someone doesn't comply with the rules then you could post that information on the internet so that people know. You could give a stamp or logo to operators that follow the rules.

- You would only need a couple of lodges to buy in at the start.
- It could even just be the small charters – but if you could get lodges to buy in then that would be good too.
- For those that follow the rules you could also give them access to the Haida Gwaii website – a listing saying these are the companies we endorse.
- Charters and lodges would have to do mandatory reporting, including all catch and release data.
- They would also have to have education for their guests.
- And all parts of the code of conduct should be followed.

Anything else?

- There should be more research – especially on rockfish, lingcod and halibut.
- We need to look at stress indicators in fish. We need to know what happens to them physiologically after they have been caught and then 'released' – we need to know more than whether they are alive or dead. The real issue is if they are able to spawn.
- There was a seine boat study where they released seined and tagged springs. The fish made it back to the creeks but they didn't spawn successfully – many were found dead on the bank, not spawned.
- With coho there is a 27.8% mortality rate following catch and release. That number doesn't consider natural predators so it is probably higher in reality.

Should we set up a group to access funding? What about finnage money at the lodges? What other sources of funding are there?

- Maybe we should apply a "research tax."
- I wouldn't call it a tax.

Are there other studies in other places?

- Almost all studies are pen studies – virtually nothing has been done on Pacific salmon.
- Maybe we could set up a voluntary program where the charter boats and guides tag the fish that you release.
- They do that at the Haida Gwaii Tournament (which is all catch and release). They use spaghetti tags.
- There is some research out there and the first step is to review what has been done.

I have one last issue regarding the fish we catch. We catch two types of fish: (1) local fish, and (2) migratory fish travelling by. What can we do to prevent targeting small local stocks? Look at Tasu and the coho caught in the fall – these stocks won't survive long. The Driftwood was also in Cumshewa Inlet and then moved to Selwyn and was there for 2 to 2.5 weeks. That will have a huge impact.

- The commercial guys are another concern – 60% of QCI coho are caught by the commercial fleet in Hecate Strait.
- Later in the season we are fishing our fish and this is a problem.
- We need to prove that these are local fish though. We need proof.
- It is fairly obvious if they are caught late in the season.
- You will get resistance from the lodges for sure. Tasu promotes that you can fish after everyone else is gone – it is one of their selling points. Maybe a zone closure could be in place after a certain date.
- We just need to ensure there is a place for the fish to get through.
- If you don't do zone closures, the other option is to reduce the catch limit.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS BUILDING

We should have more meetings like this one. It was a good opener, and it is clear we need to have more discussion around the possibility of zoning – seasonally or other.

- What’s the next step?
- We are going to take what we have to flesh out something we could support. The idea is that we could then bring it to a larger audience.
- We do have good action items and we will circulate the notes. It is a matter of constant building on discussions. Eventually we will have to deal with the really controversial stuff such as expansion of the sport fishing industry.
- I think I gained a bit – but I’d like to see more people be involved.
- The action items out of this meeting may also generate more interest.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

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FLIPCHART NOTES

1. Guidelines for Salmon

- proper fish handling
- bleeding fish are kept
- fish not maintaining their equilibrium should be kept
- release techniques: less handling of fish, netting, deep hooks
- keeping fish in water when released
- shouldn’t have to handle the fish with barbless hooks
- photography – protocol – quick

Note: The rationale should be provided explaining why; booklet could be given out with licenses.

2. Code of Conduct

- define “catch and release”
- monitoring activities (mandatory catch reports)
- federal regulations (i.e. undersize)
- limit of groundfish (i.e. if catching lots of yelloweye, move to other location)

Note: Guides are expected to orient their clients with the rules of conduct on the water, including: why catch and release is not good for fish (data on mortality), a checklist, and context (salmon biology, fish ID, predators).

3. Rockfish and other Groundfish

- size limits: maximum
- education – biology, toxins, maturity (age), breeding (halibut and lingcod)

4. Benefits from lodges: Criteria

- employment
- groceries: volume
- flights (airport)
- services (daytrips, artwork)

Note: Issue of logistics for daytrips and need for locals to take initiative and communicate with lodges.