

Angling Guide and Resident Angler Working Group Radisson Hotel, Richmond, B.C.

Tuesday, Wednesday March 7th & 8th, 2006

Meeting Notes

In Attendance: Al Martin (Chair), Miles Stratholt, Dave Narver, Tom Protheroe, Chris Bos, Art Lingren, Dick McMaster, Barry Rogers, Noel Gyger, Craig Murray

Introductions and updates from participants

The resident angler and angling guide representatives each provided a summary of the issues they thought were relevant to the ensuing discussion. These included:

- Skeena angling guides were upset at the recent rod day fee increases. They felt that there was inadequate consultation and lead time, and that they were not seeing any benefits in their region from the fees they were already paying. They felt that their needed to be better communication of the Quality Waters Strategy (QWS) to stakeholders and the public in general.
- Kootenay angling guides felt that their needed to be a significant increase in the communication between government and sector representatives with regard to issues of concern for angling guides and resident anglers. They also felt there needs to be better communication of the QWS.
- There should be more effort made to integrate the QWS process consistently across the province.
- Resident Angler representative raised the issue of insufficient funding available to support the QWS process. As well, there are insufficient manpower resources in some of the regions to effectively deliver on the QWS mandate. If the QWS is going to be successful their must be progress in the Skeena Region 6 this year. The Regional Committee in Skeena has determined that it would be impossible to do an AMP on one river as it will transfer effort. All of the Skeena Summer Run Steelhead rivers must be done together.
- Government needs to focus more resources on the provincial recreational fishery. Other agencies in government should be involved in helping to market the QWS along with the angling opportunities in the province.
- A consistent message was that the group wanted to see a formal sign off of the QWS.

Al Martin, Director of Fish and Wildlife (F&W), provided a summary of government activities:

- The minister had already signed off on the strategy, but that due to a recent change in ministers this was not adequately communicated. There will be correspondence from the Minister to the stakeholders out shortly.

- Identified the Freshwater Fishing Society as the organization that has the mandate to market recreational fishing in the province, and that they will be integrated into the process.
- Changes in organization of the ministry have resulted in changes in the fisheries program. This has been identified and is being addressed through the drafting of an up-to-date fisheries strategic plan and the amalgamation of fisheries responsibilities into the Ministry of Environment.
- The provincial QWS committee now has significant influence on decisions around funding allocation. The Director identified the necessity for the committee to determine how to maximize results given the budgetary limitations.

1. Allocation of Guided Rod Days on CW (CW)

- An update was given on the process underway to allocate long term rod day quotas on the classified east Kootenay streams. The process will mirror that utilized last year to allocate days on an annual permit basis and will utilise the working policy in the *Quality Waters Strategy Resource Document*. It is expected that the results will be very similar to those achieved last year. Members of the committee indicated that they would like to see 20% of rod days on newly CW made available through auction on an annual basis.
- The committee voiced concern that it need to be made clear to the guides who receive days that the number is variable over the length of the term, and can be adjusted (up or down) subject to a dutifully developed and accepted Angling Management Plan (AMP). The quota is also subject to diligent use provisions and any quota that reverts to the crown through these provisions will be subject to review prior to re-allocation. There was also some discussion as to the possibility of some form of “rod day insurance” for guides.
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch to ensure that the above is communicated clearly to recipients of east Kootenay CW rod day quotas and reflected in the policy
 - **Action Point** – the committee to review the working policy and recommend modifications based on information garnered through the east Kootenay experience
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch to review the legal status of existing and newly allocated rod days with regard to requirement for compensation to angling guides who may have their quotas reduced
- There were also concerns about the existing requirement for guides to prove possession of liability insurance
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch to review regulatory requirements and consult with existing angling guides on implementing this requirement.

2. Electronic Licensing

- The Director of F&W indicated that this is a priority of the branch and that funding has been allocated to explore the viability of different models of application. The model will be required to be available at the point of sale and must be simple and approachable. Business cases will be explored in other jurisdictions.

- With regard to the QWS, electronic licensing would provide a powerful tool to track and regulate angler use on specific CW. There is a projected 16 month time line identified for this project.

3. Review of QWS process

- Implementation of the QWS process in 05/06 varied by region. There were a number of issues which came to light as the process was put into practice and feedback was received from both ministry staff and stakeholders. The committee felt that the process needs to be better communicated to stakeholders, and the QWS resource document should be reviewed and modified with this in mind.
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch and committee to work with ministry communications staff to incorporate a revised document in a communication plan for QWS.

4. Guide as the License

- The committee reviewed the proposal submitted by the F&W branch and felt it was a workable pilot for CW. There was some discussion around how it would be applied in the field, as well as the economic implications.
 - **Action Point** – the angling guide representatives will take the proposal for further review and will provide the committee with their recommendations.

5. Determining and Managing Diligent Use of Rod Days

- The committee discussed the concept of diligent use and a number of points were brought forward:
 - Not a process designed to punish guides, but an incentive to guides to keep their rod days working
 - It was identified that there would probably be very limited implementation of this requirement as a guide would most likely sell or lease his days prior to losing them to the crown
 - **Action Point** – F&W branch to develop some internal questions around diligent use and forward these to all CW guides

6. Electronic Guide Reporting

- An update was provided on the status of electronic reporting for angling guides. A number of models have been explored whereby guides could submit their operating reports via an electronic form (adobe, excel). This would require the guide to purchase the applicable software. At this time there are no resources available to pursue a web-based tool, but this may become available in the future.

7. Secondary Guide License

- The committee discussed those commercial operators, principally hunting guides, who have clients that may engage in angling peripherally as part of their operations. It was suggested that hunting guides be given authorization, through their license, to guide for fish as part of a hunt within their territories during

hunting season. This would not include CW, and would not constitute history on any potentially CW.

- **Action Point** – the F&W branch to initiate process to have the above reflected in regulation

8. Change to AGOP requirements

- The committee was informed that as part of the centralization of services in the Permit Bureau in Victoria, there would be less emphasis placed on the submission of Angling Guide Operating Plans. Areas of concern with regard to guiding activities would be identified at the application level by region. This would negate the requirement for the submission of an AGOP, and use information would be collected through the reporting requirements of an angling guide license.

9. Discussion of angler demand management

- The committee discussed some of the options available for management of non-resident anglers including resident only times and places. The Bulkley Angling Use Plan was also discussed along with its recommendation that non-guided non-residents be banned from fishing on weekends. It was pointed out that a single water approach such as this would be ineffective as it would simply transfer effort onto adjacent waters, and that an effective approach would require the inclusion of a number of high use waters.

10. Quality Waters Funding and Regional Resources support

- Committee members from the Skeena region were concerned that as the area with the highest concentration of CW, the Skeena was in immediate need of some demand management actions by government to address the ongoing and increasing problems associated with angler use.

11. Freshwater Fishing Society Video Presentation

- The committee viewed a short video presentation highlighting angling opportunities from across the province. The group provided feedback to Dave Narver, FFSBC Board member, on the video content and that Dave was going to take those comments back to FFSBC.

Conference Call with Assistant Deputy Minister Nancy Wilkin

- The Skeena guides representative conveyed to the ADM that his membership were unhappy with the recent rod day fee increases, particularly as they do not think that they are getting any benefit in their region with regard to regulation of un-guided non-resident anglers. The ADM indicated that better communication between government and stakeholders was required. This sentiment was echoed by the Kootenay guide representative who also felt that better communication was important.
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch will work with the provincial committee, the Skeena regional committee and Skeena regional staff to initiate a

meaningful, effective project in the Skeena region for the 06/07 QWS funding year. There is \$100K in the QWS fund available to resource this initiative

- **Action Point** – The Director of F&W will meet with angling guides in the Skeena region to address concerns around rod day fees.

- The committee emphasized the need for the QWS to have a higher profile, and that a public sign off by the Minister would be appropriate, along with an adequately resourced communication plan that would involve not only the F&W branch but Tourism and Parks as well.
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch will initiate contact with the Ministry Communications branch in the development of a communication plan for the QWS

- The issue of the Skeena Region having the most classified Waters and the longest history of problems regarding angler use was raised. It was suggested that for the QWS to have success, it was imperative that positive progress regarding development of AMPS in the Skeena Region were required in 2006.
 - **Action Point** - This matter will be further discussed, including budget and resourcing, during the meeting with the ADM Nancy Wilkin

- There were concerns raised that the regional capacity to deliver the QWS on the ground is severely compromised due to lack of financial and staff resources, and that a significant portion (50%) of funds raised through CW license sales was currently allocated to the production of hatchery fish (there is no stocking of CW).
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch will produce a breakdown of all fees generated through CW (basic licenses, CW licenses, salmon and steelhead stamps, rod day fees) and where these funds are allocated (Ministry, FFS, HCTF, QWS).

- The committee felt that it would be important that they meet with the ADM to discuss a number of pressing issues, and the date of April 13th has been identified. The Committee requested that inquiries be made as to the availability of the Deputy Minister and Minister to attend as well.
 - **Action Point** – the F&W branch to develop a formal agenda for this meeting and forward to the committee for comment, and the Director of F&W will enquire into the availability of the Minister and the Deputy Minister.