

Navigating The ISDF (Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum) Inventory of Materials

The body of material inventoried here is best understood as capturing the history of a large complex continuing conversation about salmon and the people and sectors with rights, responsibilities, and interest in relation to it through what became known as the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum.

What follows is intended as an overview of the evolution of this “conversation” to help the reader navigate this rich body of material by setting out the context in which it took place, describing the process through which it was organized and captured, and referencing the key themes explored as the conversation evolved.

Extracts have been pulled from representative documents to enable those wishing to access this material a better sense of the nature of the information they might expect to find within the inventory.

Introduction

Big picture issues across sectors in a fully integrated fishery have been increasingly coming to the surface in many existing processes and bilateral initiatives. Would it be timely to explore the possibility of drawing those conversations together was a question many were starting to ask, not to affect or replace existing processes but to support and add value to them by addressing difficult discussions across sectors that needed to happen but were not happening in any focused way.

Glenn Sigurdson and Barry Stuart, who have worked in the middle of many complex situations relating to resources helping parties to build effective processes to deal with difficult and important issues were invited by Paul Sprout the then RDG, Pacific region, to explore this possibility in any manner they felt would be appropriate.

Those **explorations took place in the fall of 2006** in the form of broadly based individual discussions and two “visiting committees” where perspectives across sectors had an opportunity to engage about the desirability of an initiative along these lines, and what form it might take.

What became clear through this exploration was that here was a broad based support for building a space to talk through the most difficult challenges facing the fishery engaging a broad range of views across all sectors.

An **initial meeting was held on January 29, 2007**, at which time the participants reached agreement on this description of the process as something they could take back to their respective constituencies and share with others what was starting to take shape within the Forum.

ISDF – A Process Like no Other - Key Characteristics

The **fundamental characteristics of the Forum** that came to be identified with it were:

- a) *ISDF is about “doing something different in a different way”.*

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- b) A “space” for cross sector conversations and relationship building that has been grown by the participants (“ not mandated” by DFO or any other authority structure).
- c) Explore and incubate ideas (about approaches, tools, structures)/help facilitate/promote and support their implementation where there is broad based support.
- d) Inclusive and elastic to provide the opportunity for participation by anybody who wanted to participate.
- e) Based on a commitment of time and energy by participants who believe that this is an important tool in exercising leadership responsive to the reality that “ Change is Here”.

Process

The ISDF took place over the period January 29th, 2007 to its conclusion in a session on April 18th and 19th, 2011 - *Widening of the Circle III*, the third in a series of annual events that were designed to pull together a wider constituency of participants as a means to review, inform, and guide the ongoing work activities within the Forum.

The vision for the Widening of the Circle, developed by the participants, was a special event within the continuing series of events and activities that had been taking place within the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum (ISDF) over the preceding two years. It was to be highly interactive. Discussions would be informed by a broad and diverse range of perspectives across all sectors. It was not to be a “conference” –there would be no presenters, only participants in a dialogue, some of whom might be lead discussants to open the dialogue. The goal was to get people thinking both about what the participants within the Forum are trying to do, and how to go about getting there. It would be both a place and a point in time where the participants would “review where we will widen out the circle of involvement in the discussions of the Forum, hold ourselves accountable for what we have done and not done, breathe additional energy - insights and experience - into the conversations, and consider if and how we can go forward most effectively.”

Over the four years of the Forum, there were approximately 150 meetings held. These took several forms:

- a) Working Groups – through a continuing series of conference calls, often on a weekly or bi weekly basis with periodic in person meetings;
- b) Workshops – to focus on a specific topic area, and draw in other participants including special guests who could bring a specific contribution to the discussion;
- c) Full Forum- meetings that occurred on a regular basis, but typically 2-3 each year; and
- d) Widening of the Circle annually in 2008, 2010, and 2011.

Overall **leadership of this effort** (and related co-ordination and facilitation) was provided by the CSE Group, and specifically Glenn Sigurdson, Barry Stuart, and Jessica Bratty. In addition to the meetings, the facilitators were in regular contact with the participants through continuing telephone discussions, meetings, informing other organizations and groups as to the work of the ISDF, and presentations at events and conferences as requested.

Notes were maintained on a continuous basis for all activities. These notes were summary in nature, intended to capture the flow of the discussion, and the key points that emerged, without attribution of comments to any participant. The Notes allowed the participants to continue to maintain continuity across conversations whether conference calls, workshops, meetings, or major sessions, and enabled the participants to continue to widen and deepen their discussions as opposed to retracing the same ground with each new event. The history of the conversation was continuously brought to life by the participants. For example:

“These are notes, prepared by Glenn Sigurdson as the facilitator, not records of outcomes. The goal is to create a continuing conversation, and to capture the essential points made by the participants without attribution, and with no suggestion that they necessarily enjoy the support, or the same level of support by everyone on the calls. What they do capture is a growing conversation that combines many perspectives across sectors and a history to use in later discussions that will have a more outcome orientated quality.”

The **quality of these discussions** was vibrant, open, and candid – and the evolving relationship between the participants made it possible to sharpen and intensify these discussions. All of the participants in these conversations were recognized leaders within their respective sectors who brought individually and collectively some of the best thinking possible to bear on seemingly intractable challenges.

The materials that have been compiled here ensure that the richness of these conversations is archived so that it remains accessible to others, and to inform the conversations that will need to continue with new people and places over time.

Discussion Themes

Below are the key themes of discussion with **some explanatory comments to illustrate the nature of the discussions drawn from ISDF documents included below in italics.**

Three initial themes were identified by the participants as key starting points for the work of the Forum: Monitoring and Compliance, Access, and Integrated River and Resource Management.

1. **Monitoring and Compliance:** this became a cornerstone of the work of the Forum, and ultimately led to the development of a distinct body which came to be known as the **Monitoring and Compliance Panel**. The rationale for this focus was succinctly stated in the synthesis from the Widening of the Circle II:

*As basic as it may sound we “**get past fighting over numbers**”. It is not that we don’t have lots of numbers, undoubtedly many solid numbers. The problem is that **we don’t believe each other’s numbers. They’re not full and complete enough. There isn’t a consistent story. The public doesn’t believe them. They don’t know whether we’ve got our act together.** And if everybody thinks everybody else’s numbers are wrong, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that “somebody’s stealing from me.” As long as you think that and you don’t have solid numbers, you cannot ever start building relationships and trust with any integrity. And ultimately it is better and timelier information that it will take to support better decisions, which create more economically sound fisheries while protecting the environment, communities and fish. That is the reason why the Monitoring and Compliance Panel was*

formed in 2009 – to begin to tell each other’s stories with confidence and credibility and move forward together on addressing the real problems.

2. **Access:** the initial framing around access was in terms of creating greater confidence and stability across sectors and moved from there into recognition that the dimensions and sensitivities around this discussion were many and complex.
- *Change is here- fisheries are contracting; fisheries are reshaping; social values are being reformed. This is happening in different ways in different places. It is not a question of if, but how we respond to these realities. And new realities have implications for “access”.*
 - *“Access” is a word that is elastic and means different things to different people. It is about ‘accessing’ what people value and different people value different things. It is about considering ways of increasing values in innovative and creative ways, and in doing so, indirectly reducing competitive tensions. It is about in-season decisions made in the heat of the fishery, and tensions that arise as a result of those decisions. The word also carries within it many interests and values that are not readily translatable, if at all, into money– cultural, social, historical, ecological, environmental, recreational, life style, and the broad public interest in the health of the resource. Each sector has its own ‘currency’ around values, and this further challenges discussions across sectors. And framing the debate within the constraints of conservation exacerbates those tensions.*

This led to an iterative refocusing of the conversation that evolved into different pathways that are present within this inventory of materials including: In Season decision making; Chinook as a Learning Vector; Values and Benefits.

3. **In Season Decision Making**

“Conversations evolved over the course of the Forum’s deliberations from the broader question of “access” to a more focused conversation around in-season decision-making, and the access implications that were inevitable. The purpose was to understand the process through which the decision was made, and not to move into the ‘decision making business, or second guess decisions made, nor to interfere with operational mandates of existing decision making bodies such as the IHPC. A special task group was formed to lead this effort... to improve clarity and confidence in the in-season decision-making process with respect to “all” fisheries by all user sectors ...in relation to all three cycles: pre-season planning, in season management, and post season reviews. (Understanding how to “talk in the winter” can turn into “different actions in the summer”). Developing a framework for the analysis – a typology that enabled identifying “gross similarities, and the gross differences” in different contexts - was the first step so that there was consistency across them. The underbelly of this discussion was “how the tough calls should be made” – which needed to recognize that “more fish, not just less fish” creates challenges – perhaps even greater because the weak stocks are still weak. How decisions taken are responded to on the water by the user groups goes to the core of what it will take to react and adapt to new realities.

4. Grounding Discussions and Learning from Chinook

“Chinook was identified early on in our conversations as a useful vehicle to ground discussions and drawing important insights to inform our broader discussions. ...with an initial focus in season management decisions to support broader discussions around, principles, rules and rationale, and transparency to improve decision making processes.. A framework/matrix was developed which guided the analysis of specific cases/examples which lead to the preparation of a report by Bert Lonson - WORKING TOWARD IMPROVEMENTS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES IN SALMON MANAGEMENT: A Report on the Findings of 3 Case Studies of Chinook Management in 2008.

DFO’s intention to develop a new Southern BC Chinook Management Framework (aka a ‘Chinook plan’) was recognized at the ISDF meeting in March 2010 as a new opportunity to “learn from Chinook”, and add value to this important initiative while doing so. Our focus on Chinook has taken us beyond examining what has been or is (e.g. Bert Lonson’s 2008 case study report), to how things might go forward. A special group including key departmental representatives with accountability for leading the development of the Chinook Plan was tasked to consider this, and bring forward ideas to the wider ISDF Group, and then to the Department, where responsibility for the Plan and its development rests. The task assigned was:

- *Suggest how best to obtain informed and experienced input on an integrated, multi-interest basis on the development of the Chinook Plan;*
- *Design a process that effectively and efficiently supports and supplements, not replaces, the Department’s bilateral relationships and specific obligations with First Nations, and the established consultation processes with all other sectors; and*
- *Specifically, identify what a first step needs to entail to set the stage for future success.*

5. Values and Benefits – The discussion around Access also evolved in a further direction which led to the development of a Discussion Paper which informed and shaped an important conversation at *Widening of the Circle II*. This included a presentation on the content of the Allocation Policy.

“Development of a Discussion Paper to guide the development and presentation of a program on “Values and Benefits/ Access/ Traceability/Markets/Certification”: at the WIDENING OF THE CIRCLE II addressing questions such as: How can we build a future that encourages all interests to look for ways to respect each other’s values in relation to the resource, and create greater opportunities individually and mutually to grow and access those values and benefits with greater certainty in ways that will create new opportunities within constitutional and policy parameters, and the reality of growing ecological uncertainties? How might traceability/ standards/ certification, and other tools, support those efforts?

6. **Integrated River and Resource Management** - while the importance of continuing this as a theme of the overall discussions was recognized, and surfaced over the course of the conversations in different ways (e.g. into conversations related to “Watershed Governance”), the topic was of such breadth and reached out beyond the participants at the table, energy migrated away from this topic after the first year or so, and the working group was dissolved.

*“Habitat represents a point of convergence for many diverse values and interests, and an opportunity for the different interests (and the organizations and institutions within them) to create **integrative structures to benefit both fish and people. How to engage every sector, and communicate within it effectively, in a way that they see the potential value in this is key....**The integration that is brought together around the habitat nexus also provides the **opportunity and the reason to build collaborative structures**, and growing cohesion that can rebound out in positive ways ... The critical importance of **achieving integration and cohesion between and among governmental players** is also brought into sharper focus around habitat – departments and ministries including environment, forest, highways, and agriculture. In other words, the scene includes many elements in addition to DFO, and is not sufficiently bridged by speaking only in terms of federal/provincial bridges but requires drilling down and across departmental boundaries.*

7. **Governance/ Governance Tools:**

“The goal is to create practical approaches and tools, informed by what it takes to achieve effective collaborations in order to support ongoing efforts of the Department and others to improve how we make decisions and resolve conflicts associated with salmon.”

What became clear over time as these conversations unfolded over time was that the umbrella that overarched all of these conversations was **governance** – the essence of which is how decisions are reached and differences resolved – and the focus turned to the tools, both conceptual and practical, needed to support improving governance processes. This body of work was broadly organized around the following outcomes:

- a. **Guidebook:** *a tool to assist managers and users and interests alike in improving decision-making processes associated with salmon, and their roles and responsibilities in these processes, and the core principles related to improved decision making and multi interest engagement. The Guidebook was to be flexible enough to a) enhance traditional processes; b) consider new emerging processes; and c) explore what it will take for the traditional and the emerging to be mutually supportive. I.e: How are we going to do business together? This resulted in the production of the April 2011 report “**A Practical Guide to Collaborative Fisheries Governance: a Guidebook for BC Salmon Fisheries**”.*
- b. **Framework:** *a tool that will provide a clear expression of the overall context – the “map” of how do all the 'pieces' fit together across scales, levels, law and policy, and in relation to specific authorities and rights. The goal is to provide the contextual clarity that will facilitate the effective use of the Guidebook. i.e: What business we’re*

doing, at what level, in what way, and by whom. Through this work it was recognized that a “framework” is an evolving context, and one that cannot be sufficiently captured in a static pictorial representation. This insight was ultimately captured in the May 2011 report “**Evolving a New Framework for Decision Making in Salmon Fisheries: Drivers and Directions. A Working Discussion Document**”.

- c. **Bilateral Obligations to First Nations in a Multi-lateral Context** - *an important foundation is respecting, fostering, and supporting bilateral obligations with respect to First Nations, while building multilateral collaboration in different ways and for different purposes at different scales.* This was recognized in the December 2008 paper “**Collaborative Fisheries Governance: A Draft Discussion Paper**”.

8. Capacity Building Programs

In January and February 2011, the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum (ISDF), in collaboration with the Monitoring and Compliance Panel (M&C Panel), the Fraser River Salmon Table (FRST) and the Joint Sport/First Nation Working Group, presented a four day capacity building program entitled “Making peace and decisions in the salmon fishery: building our capacity to work better together”. The goal of the program was to tackle some of the most challenging situations faced by all parties in the fishery in order to deepen our understanding of how we can work more effectively together in making decisions that affect salmon, and in doing so build a better future for salmon and each other. The objectives were to explore the concepts, guiding principles and specific approaches embodied by Participant Driven Collaborative (PDC) processes, in an interactive and fisheries specific context, to improve the relationships and processes that play out in-season and on the river bank, and within management settings more broadly. At its essence the program was about understanding that improvements to making decisions and resolving conflicts may come in different forms, whether through enhancing traditional processes, reaching out for new approaches, or exploring what it takes for the traditional and emerging to be mutually supportive. Key lessons included the need to “build processes for problems”, “one size does not fit all” and that the skills and tools essential for dealing with ‘making peace and decisions’ are essentially the same, adapted as appropriate to the situation... Exploring the nature and dynamics of interactions between individuals, and among multiple players with different goals and concerns across sectors, among governments and among diverse communities was done by building up from, not downloading upon, situations that were not real, but could have been.

Conclusion:

The theme of the third and final **Widening the Circle Symposium** in April 2011 was:

Building a culture of collaboration and the legacy of the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum.

Key areas of discussion included:

What will it take to build a culture of collaboration?

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- *What are the impediments and facilitators across and within fisheries governments, organizations and individuals?*
- *What is the legacy of the ISDF?*
- *What is it going to take to move forward?*

What have been the key lessons learned from the ISDF's work on:

- *Monitoring and Compliance*
- *Governance and decision making*
- *Capacity building*

The work that had been undertaken over the years was overviewed, and there was broad based support for the importance of continuing to find ways in the future to keep alive the spirit in which the ISDF had operated, including carrying forward the important conversations on critical challenges that it had made possible, and fostering the development of relationships across sectors.

The attached Inventory will assist in these future activities.