



# Fraser River FSC Access Consultation and Considerations - Status Update

**Forum on Conservation and Harvest  
Planning – January 2016**

Typo fixed – Jan. 28, 2016



## Overview

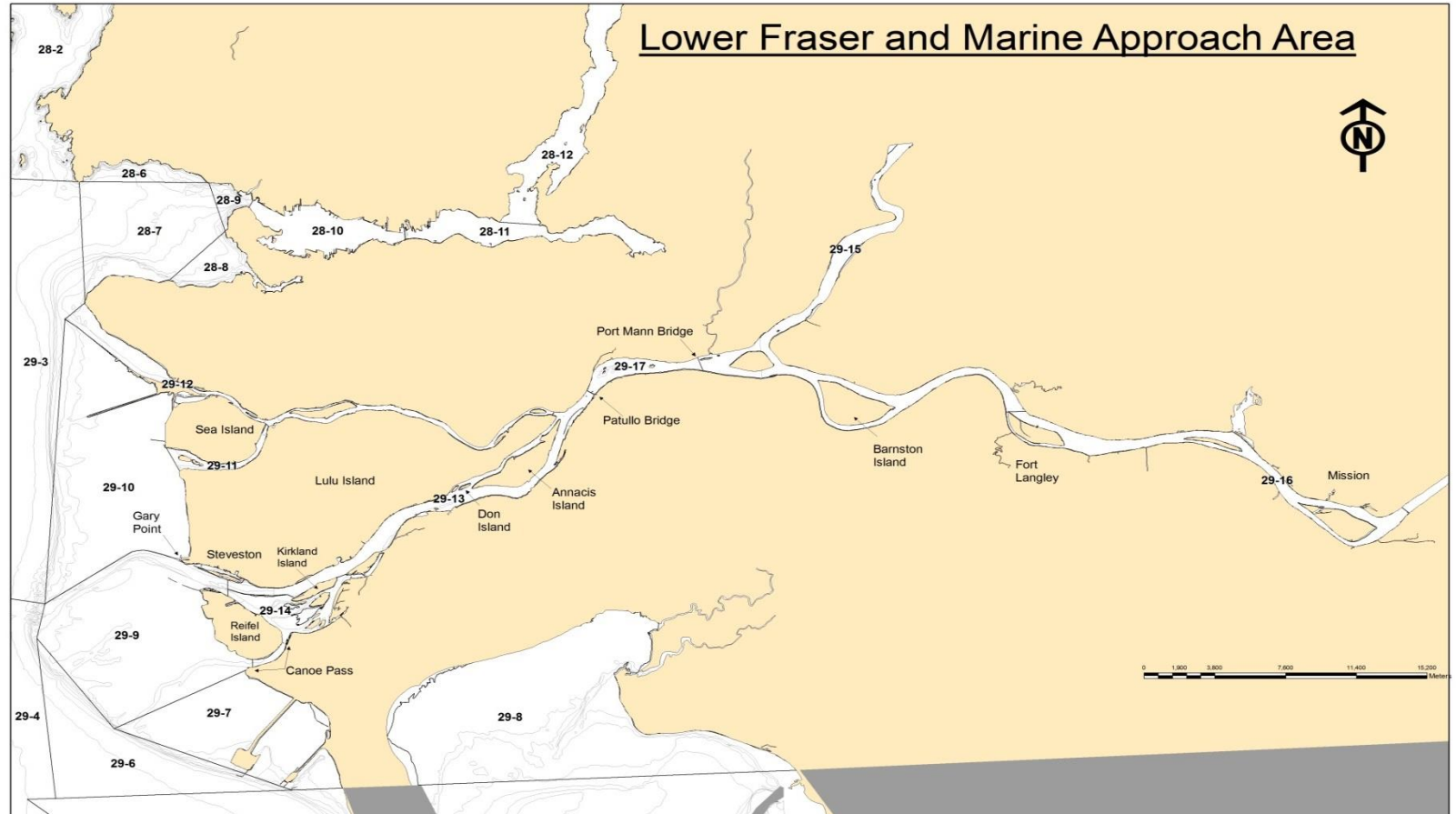
- Part 1 – Area 29 issues and approaches
  - Background
  - Status
  - 2016 Consultation and Planning Approach
- Part 2 - Fraser Sockeye FSC Access Issues



# Part 1 - Area 29 Issues and Approaches



# Area 29 Map





## Part 1 – Access Requests

- DFO has been engaged in consultations with First Nations on issues related to FSC access at the mouth of the river for some time
- We recognize the inherent complexity of First Nations' fishing interests and stock management considerations in the Lower Fraser.
- Letters sent to Fraser and approach-area First Nations in 2014 asked for specific feedback on how a number of FSC access changes requests might impact their ability to access FSC allocations.

Specifically,

- Allocation increases being sought by Squamish First Nation and Cowichan Nation Alliance Members
- Area change requests being sought by Squamish First Nation, Cowichan Nation Alliance Members and Snuneymuxw First Nation



## 2015 work related to Area 29

- Having made a decision on allocation increase requests in 2014, DFO's 2015 consultation approach focussed on:
  - FSC Area change requests for salmon affecting Area 29
  - Advancing consistency in FSC management approaches in this area
- Process included:
  - Bilateral meetings with requesting First Nations and First Nations with FSC fishing areas below Port Mann
  - Meetings with aggregate organizations (e.g. LFFA)
  - Status updates to Fraser Forum process
  - Distribution of information & requests for written input



## 2015 work related to Area 29

- Themes emerging from consultations included:
  - Concerns / questions about the access change process and how First Nations could better be engaged in application of overall approach
  - Importance of Tier 1 discussions and protocols for addressing fishing area issues
  - Limitations of fishing time and space in the Lower Fraser and complexity in coordination of various fisheries
  - Concerns about pace of decision-making
  - Important implications of DFO decisions to both requesting and other First Nations in the Fraser
  - Need clarity on access approach for all species, not just sockeye



## 2015 work related to Area 29

- Based on consultation input and DFO analysis, an interim approach to area change requests at the mouth of the Fraser River was announced, with the following characteristics:
  - Approach was for 2015 only, subject to review in future years
  - DFO would consider providing in-river access to requesting groups (up to Kirkland Island) for a portion of each group's Fraser sockeye allocation
  - Provision of access was subject to requesting groups submitting a fishing plan that addressed defined operational requirements
  - Importance of First Nations-to-First Nations dialogue emphasized
- Modifications made to some licensing arrangements in annual licenses that included FSC fishing areas near the Fraser mouth (Area 29-6, 29-7, 29-9 and 29-10).





## Outcomes of 2015 interim access approach

- All requesting First Nations submitted plans for in-river access, but poor returns and unexpected in-season downgrades in available TAC resulted in most requesting groups not being authorized to fish.
- Total Fraser sockeye catch resulting from in-river fishing by requesting FNs was less than 2000 pieces.



## 2016 consultation approach

- For 2016, DFO is continuing consultations in regard to the Cowichan Nation Alliance (CNA), Snuneymuxw First Nation and Squamish Nation area change requests.
- DFO will also be continuing consultations in support of a consistent FSC fisheries management approach for Area 29.



# 2016 Consultation Approach

- As in 2015, DFO will be consulting with First Nations on Area 29 issues.
- Theme areas where DFO may be seeking input:
  - Elements of an overall FSC fishing plan for the Lower Fraser
  - Impacts, if any, of the proposed FSC fishing area change requests on First Nations' ability to access your FSC allocations
  - Any additional information relevant to the FSC area change requests to assist DFO in our analysis of the requests
  - Input on the design of the post-season review / pre-season preliminary planning session (i.e. scope of discussion topics, invitees, timing, location, etc.)?



# Part 2 – Fraser salmon FSC access approach



## Issues

- Increasingly, many Fraser salmon stocks are returning at levels that do not support achievement of the total First Nations' FSC allocation.
- In a number of recent years, low returns have led to reduced FSC fisheries and a requirement to establish sharing arrangements amongst First Nations.
- In consideration of the priority of FSC fisheries, when available TAC is not sufficient to address FSC allocations, commercial and recreational fisheries targeting Fr. Sockeye are not initiated (i.e. available TAC is set aside for FSC fisheries).
- Weak overall outlook for Fraser sockeye in 2016 could mean that sharing arrangements will need to be invoked.



## Fraser Sockeye Sharing

- In the absence of specific consensus recommendations from First Nations, DFO has generally advanced the following general guideline when FSC reductions have been required:

***General guideline – FSC Fisheries are managed to distribute available TAC in a manner proportional to the cumulative FSC amount in three broad areas – South Coast, Lower Fraser and BCI.***

- A hypothetical example of how this would be applied if total available TAC were 50 % of total communal license target:

Area	Communal license target (pre-season) – from 2015 IFMP	Share of total allocation	TAC made available in-season
South Coast	276,800	27.4%	138,400
Lower Fraser	434,000	42.9%	217,000
BC Interior	300,000	29.7%	150,000
Total	1,010,800	100%	505,400



## Other considerations

- In addition to applying the general guideline, DFO also takes into account various other considerations when applying FSC sharing e.g.:
  - in-season stock strength
  - management measures required at the management unit and individual stock level (e.g. Cultus)
  - management tools and approaches in different FSC fisheries
  - community interests of all First Nations
- Application of restrictions is always difficult given the importance of Fraser sockeye to all First Nations



## Feedback on approach

- First Nations have put forward a range of questions and feedback on the application of these sharing arrangements relating to:
  - the sharing arrangements themselves
  - the in-season tools and processes available to give effect to sharing arrangements (i.e. licensing arrangements, catch monitoring, in-season communications' process, etc.)
- DFO would like to seek additional input on these issues; discussion on next steps in process is welcome.