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Uu-a-thluk
TAKING CARE OF

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Summer 2015

Nuu-chah-nulth Nations Sign Herring Declaration

Nuu-chah-nulth signed a joint declaration with Haida, Heiltsuk and Kitasoo/Xai'Xais First Nations in early July to safeguard herring (ƛusmit) in their territories. The statement of solidarity is based upon a common interest in protection, restoration, and the long-term sustainability of ocean resources and ecosystems where these Nations live.

The declaration comes after another season of poor herring returns. The Nations stated that the existing DFO approach to commercial roe herring fisheries does not encourage long-term recovery and sustainability of the resource. Additionally, costly legal battles and confrontations between DFO and some First Nations such as Nuu-chah-nulth, Haida and Heiltsuk First Nations have made the need for a united front on this issue a top priority.

"DFO is authorizing commercial herring fisheries in the absence of scientific consensus and contrary to the local knowledge of First Nations and local communities. First Nations affirm that DFO's continued mismanagement of herring is unacceptable," said Debra Foxcroft, OBC, President, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council.

Despite Nuu-chah-nulth Nations working with DFO Science staff and managers to resolve the Nations' concerns with the herring fishery over the summer and fall of 2014, the Fisheries Minister still decided to ignore Nuu-chah-nulth concerns, announcing that commercial herring fisheries would go ahead in Nuu-chah-nulth territories in 2015. After DFO made this announcement, five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations went to federal court to stop Vancouver Island's west coast commercial roe herring fisheries in 2015, but were unsuccessful.

Not to be deterred, Nuu-chah-nulth Nations' warned the commercial fishing industry not to fish the west coast of Vancouver Island this year due to low stocks, however some fishing companies and licence holders ignored the advice and chose to fish the area anyway. The boats that came to fish WCVI herring soon recognized they should have heeded Nuu-chah-nulth advice.

"Seine fishers came into our territories to look for herring for their roe fishery, yet left empty handed, because just as we said, there was not enough herring for a commercial fishery. The gillnet fleet didn't even bother to try," Foxcroft said.

The declaration was presented for signing by attending Nations at the Assembly of First Nation's Annual General Assembly in Montreal last July. The principles and objectives include stock recovery and habitat

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Scant herring roe collected during Herring Assessment Training (Barkley Sound, March 2015).

"Herring are vitally important to our coastal comunnities and have been for thousands of years."

—Debra Foxcroft, OBC,

President Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Toquaht Fisheries staff, David Johnson, shows a thin layer of herring roe that was from assessment training in March 2015.

Summer Interns

Jared Dick and Coleton Gomez-Leishman each successfully completed a summer internship with Uu-a-thluk. Jared's family background is Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nations through mother Tracey Watts (Hupacasath) and father Jason Dick (Tseshaht). He is continuing the final year of his post-secondary education at the University of Victoria. Enrolled in a Bachelor of Science program, Jared is working towards a major in biology with a marine studies concentration.

Prior to joining Uu-a-thluk, Cole had completed a foundation year at Camosun College in the Criminal Justice program. He has plans to take some Criminology courses and upgrade his math credits at North Island College. A member of Tseshaht First Nation, Cole grew up in Hupacasath and Tseshaht communities with ties to Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation.

While working with Uu-a-thluk, Cole certified for Swiftwater Rescue and Jared trained for Small Vessel Operator Proficiency (SVOP), a marine safety requirement, also obtaining recertification in Swiftwater Rescue. "By the time I graduate I'll already have many of the practical qualifications I need for a career in fisheries," said Jared.

A favourite moment of the internship for Jared was when he and Cole presented at the People's Assembly in Uchucklesaht about Henderson Lake Sockeye and its relationship to Barkley Sound. They also spoke to the group about the Henderson River fence they helped install to count returning Henderson sockeye. "Public speaking is an important skill to have for fisheries managers," said Jared. "And it was rewarding to share what we were working on and to hear feedback from the community."

A prime objective of Cole's summer internship was to help him increase his understanding of enforcement and compliance with respect to Nuu-chah-nulth resource management principals and how they could be integrated in fisheries occurring in Nuu-chah-nulth territories. Cole expanded his on-the-job skills in this area by shadowing Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Guardians, Fisheries Managers and DFO Fisheries Officers. "One day we drove around the waters near Tofino and talked to sports fishers, looked at their licences and also met with T'aaq-wiihak fishers," he said. "It was an eye opener as I learned that there was more to the job than patrolling and checking up on fishermen." Through these experiences Cole has developed an interest in the enforcement aspect of fisheries,

Uu-a-thluk summer intern Coleton Leishman-Gomez GPS mapping for T'aaq-wiihak fishery on gooseneck barnacle beds outside Tofino.

and is looking into the Resource Management Officer Technology Diploma Program at VIU. "After that I could then obtain a Bachelor's in Natural Resource Protection because they teach you about sciences and it has an enforcement aspect to it," Cole said.

"As in previous years, what I learned in school was being mirrored in my hands-on experience at Uu-a-thluk."
–Jared Dick, Uu-a-thluk summer intern.

Heading into his fifth year at the University of Victoria, Jared is also looking at ways to shape his interests in fisheries into a satisfying career. "As in previous years, what I learned in school was being mirrored in my hands-on experience at Uu-a-thluk," said Jared. He gave the example of applying his classroom learning to actual statistical models used in fisheries. This year Jared looks forward to taking Advanced Aquatic Ecology and Oceanography, courses he hopes will bring him even closer to his career path and understanding of Fisheries Management. "I encourage other young people to apply to the internship offered by Uu-a-thluk," said Jared. "You don't have to know exactly what you want to do, but it will expose you to the range of career paths available in marine-based careers."

Keep Up With Uu-a-thluk

To receive the latest news about Uu-a-thluk activities, meeting dates, and fisheries issues and projects, follow Uu-a-thluk on Twitter or Facebook.

Visit www.twitter.com/uuathluk to learn more or login to your Facebook account and search for "Uu-a-thluk: Taking Care Of".

Updates

Draft "Use of Fish" Policy

The draft "Use of Fish" policy provides direction on how fish can be used to help fund assessment, research and other management activities. DFO provided the policy one-and-a-half years ago to First Nations in BC for their review and comments. Through the FNFC, a number of Nations, including Nuu-chah-nulth, provided comments and recommendations to DFO in 2014 to improve the policy and make it relevant to First Nations in BC. Since then the Nations have experienced a frustrating lack of engagement on getting responses from DFO. There was a discussion with senior DFO staff at the June 2015, Council Of Ha'wiih Forum on Fisheries meeting in Tsaxana. The Nations made it very clear that the policy as it stands now is prejudicial toward First Nations and DFO needs to revise the draft policy to address the concerns and recommendations identified by the Nations. DFO said the policy was before the Minister to be signed and it is up to the Minister to accept or reject it. The Council of Ha'wiih strongly recommended DFO pull the policy and get it right before it goes to the Minister for approval. DFO said they would pass on their recommendation to more senior staff. DFO has indicated to the Nations that the draft "Use of Fish" policy was not approved by the Minister prior to the government calling the Federal election.

Strategic Plan Progress

Michele Colyn, Capacity Building Coordinator describes the following four goals of the Uu-a-thluk strategic plan: management, capacity building, access and organizational development. Here are some Uu-a-thluk activities that support the plan's goals: working with Good Forks to create the seafood brand Ha'oom and selling the products to high end restaurants in Vancouver, Toronto and New York; employing two Uu-a-thluk interns for summer 2015; conducting youth science camps in five communities; arranging for youth to witness the first day of the Justification trial on March 9; creating the Huupukwanum (artist Kelly Foxcroft-Poirier) to be unveiled at each Council of Ha'wiih Forum on Fisheries; cultural sharing workshop with DFO; organizing and attending career fairs; communications staff writing 26 articles on Nuu-chah-nulth fisheries related issues; and staff helping out with the management of fishing resources and with reporting.

Casiits (Stanely Sam) speaks about the importance of the Huupukwanum to the Ha'wiih. Kelly Foxcroft-Poirier (artist) stands beside the Huupukwanum she created for the Ha'wiih.

Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework

In January, the Council of Ha'wiih Forum on Fisheries supported a proposal from the Salmon Coordinating Committee (working with the FNFC) to update the Commercial Salmon Allocation Framework in BC. The proposal that First Nations put forward is similar to a proposal that the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board (CSAB) put forward. There are some differences but most involved in the discussions believe that the differences can be worked out. The Nations expressed concern that DFO will cherry pick elements that are beneficial to DFO. Commercial fishermen and First Nations working together on the CSAF is a positive development.

Food and Ceremonial Access

The Nations proposed to draft four principles on the relationship between the Nations and DFO. This was in response to the approach that DFO took during the Justification trial when information gathered at meetings directed solely for Food and Ceremonial fishing was used against Nations involved in economic fisheries. There was consensus that the working relationship with DFO had taken a step back and that some form of action was required by the Nations.

Uu-a-thluk is...

Council of Ha'wiih Forum on Fisheries

The Ha'wiih or their representatives of:

Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h', Nuchatlaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Mowachaht/Muchahtlaht, Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Yuutu?it?ath, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, Tseshaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht and Ditidaht.

Joint Technical Working Group

First Nations, Uu-a-thluk, and Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff working together to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities.

Staff

Biologists, managers, outreach, capacity development and fundraising staff conducting the day to day work under the direction of the Council of Ha'wiih and First Nations.

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Fisheries Updates

•Ditidaht Fisheries: Through education and conservation-based approaches, those involved in the food fishery are trying to ensure that the next generation has something to harvest. Part of their strategy involves going into the schools to teach youth about conservation. For the last eight years the fisheries staff have conducted crab and rockfish surveys. Many elders are sick because of their lack of access to seafood, and the community is working to increase access to ocean resources.

•T'aaq-wiihak Fisheries: The Justification trial reconvened after Labour Day. The trial was originally scheduled to last about 55 days. Lawyers for the Department of Justice now estimate that they will take about 100 trial days to present Canada's case. The Nations will present their case after Canada. It is anticipated that the Nations presentation will begin in mid to late November. There was reduced abundance of suuḥaa (chinook salmon) on the WCVI in 2015 compared to 2014, so DFO significantly reduced the T'aaq-wiihak Nations' allocation, but kept the recreational target harvest at 60,000 chinook, the same as previous years. DFO justified this allocation decision because DFO treats the Nations' fisheries as just another regular commercial fishery, providing only a small share of opportunity based on a set number of DFO commercial licences, and maintains DFO policies that give priority in allocation to the recreational sector for chinook and coho.

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restoration, integrating modern science and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and implementing area-based management at a scale appropriate to First Nations and herring. Two additional objectives are information sharing between First Nations and Canada (represented by DFO) and restructuring how herring is managed within their territories in future.

"Herring are vitally important to our coastal communities and have been for thousands of years," said Foxcroft. "This declaration sends a clear message to Canada that herring health and recovery is of the highest importance to BC First Nations."