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Public Meeting – Draft Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP)

July 5, 2010

Tsiigehtchic Gymnasium, Tsiigehtchic, NT

Attendance:

IFMP Writing Team: Kris Maier (Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board)

IFMP Steering Committee: Not available

IFMP Support: Not available

Public:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Anna May McLeod	Gwichya RRC Coordinator
John Norbert	Gwichya RRC President
Peter Ross	Gwichya RRC
Sonny Blake	Gwichya RRC
Phillip Blake	DGO President
Jason McLeod	RRC Youth Rep
Billie Veryl Clark	Public

Minutes: Kris Maier

1. Call to Order

Kris Maier (GRRB Fisheries Biologist) called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM. The opening prayer was given by John Norbert. Introductions were made from those around the table. Kris provided opening remarks.

2. Questions and Concerns

A lengthy discussion took place prior to the presentations concerning the lack of representation on behalf of the IFMP Writing team and Steering Committee. It was made clear that if this in fact was an important document, all the major players (DFO, FJMC, PCA) should be at the table. It was suggested that when it became known they were not able to attend, the meeting should have been rescheduled until a later date. Kris explained to the group that the meeting had already been postponed once, and delaying it any further into July would delay the signing of the IFMP which could keep it from being considered in the 2-month COSEWIC assessment, an



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important part of the COSEWIC assessment process. It was also mentioned that there should be different options available to the public for providing comments, such as phoning their comments in to the radio station.

3. Rat River Working Group (RRWG) Recommendations – Kris Maier (GRRB)

Due to the nature of the meeting and the lack of public representation, Kris asked the members present if it would be acceptable to go over the Recommendations set forth by the RRWG in March 2010, as the RRC members present had not yet been presented with this material.

Briefly, Kris went through the major discussion points from the RRWG meeting held in March 2010 and outlined the formal RRWG recommendations. Kris asked that the RRC comment on these recommendations as soon as possible and within 30 days. There was some discussion about predation, habitat issues and climate change.

The general consensus of the Gwichya RRC members that were present was that the fishery should be closed to allow the char population to rebuild.

Kris took note of this concern and made it clear that this was why the IFMP is so important to DV char management. The IFMP should allow management of DV char to continue the way it has been, by implementing voluntary closures through the Rat River or West Side Working Groups if that is what the communities decide is best.

4. IFMP presentation – Kris Maier (GRRB)

Kris provided a presentation that began with a background on Dolly Varden fisheries management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) and Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), past research and monitoring, Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), Species at Risk Act (SARA), and how TK, an IFMP, and community input can help us deal with these processes. Kris then followed up this introductory presentation by summarizing all the supporting sections included in the IFMP. This section focussed on identifying what an IFMP is used for, why there is a need for a Dolly Varden IFMP and explanations of the many challenges which face Dolly Varden management as well as an overview of how Dolly Varden management has been adapted over time to adjust to the changing needs of both the fish populations and the people who enjoy the fishery.

5. Section 7 presentation – Kris Maier (GRRB)

Kris provided a presentation on section 7 of the management plan which is in essence the “meat” of the plan. He presented the suggested color-coded management zones. It was noted that the suggested color-coding is different than what was included in the original plan circulated in May. We recommend the following changes because they allow us to prioritize stocks that are data deficient. The following color zones are suggested.



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Undetermined	Healthy
	Cautious
	Critical

The following is a table that summarizes the recommended stock status zones and their associated management objectives.

Stock Status Zone	Stocks	Rationale	Management Objectives
Undetermined (Grey)	Firth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize stock assessments to determine population status and trend Less than 5% removal rate Promote rebuilding of the stock through education and specific management measures Voluntary harvest management Only general legislative requirements and sport fishing limits apply
	Babbage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current data 	
	Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current data 	
	Malcolm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current data 	
	Vittrekwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small population; more data required 	
Healthy (Green)	None		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% removal rate Voluntary harvest management Only general legislative requirements and sport fishing limits apply
Cautious (Yellow)	Rat River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low fish population numbers during last stock assessment Population may be increasing currently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 5% removal rate Promote rebuilding of the stock through education and specific management measures Voluntary harvest management Only general legislative requirements and sport fishing limits apply Prioritize stock assessments to determine population status and trend
Critical (Red)	Big Fish River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic declines in fish stocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No targeted harvest Harvest closure in regulations Promote rebuilding of the stock through education and specific management measures Prioritize stock assessments to determine population status and trends



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Discussion

There was a long discussion about respecting the resource and only taking what you need from the land. Many examples were given about how management measures for other species were effective in the past and even though there may have been hard times sometimes, in the end they were glad for the restrictions because they helped the populations to stay healthy in the long run. Examples given were of past regulations for moose which included one bull only per family and limits of only 10 marten per household. It was reiterated again that the fishery should be closed if the populations are in decline.

Q1. What about sport fishing?

A1. In the GSA and ISR, the sport fishing limits are 0, so no one can keep DV char. However, Dolly Varden are not targeted as a sport fish in the GSA and ISR due to difficult access and poor angling conditions. In the Yukon, the limits are 5 char per day with a total of 10 char possession. This is something we are trying to talk to the Yukon Government about. Both working groups have expressed a desire to lower the sport fishing quotas in the Yukon. However, the only significant amount of sports fishing that occurs for DV char is in Ivvavik Park and on Herschel Island. At the WSWG meeting, there was a concern about sports fishing in Ivvavik Park. Parks closely monitors sports fishing in the park.

Q2. Are the stocks declining?

A2. It's difficult to say for sure. We don't have any current data on any of the rivers except for the Rat River. In the Rat, the char population seems to be coming back, but that may be false, as the increase in numbers seen over the last 3 years may be due entirely to one year class of fish that spawned in 2009. Because of higher death rates after spawning, many of these fish will not be in the population in 2010. The 2010 Rat River population estimate will give a better understanding of how the population is doing as a whole. But for the other rivers, we don't know for sure. It's up to COSEWIC to determine if the populations are at risk. Based on the data we have right now, that is a difficult question to answer.

Q3. What about funding?

A3. Should DV char become listed under SARA, this opens the door to more research and management funding to help restore and manage the species.

Q4. Are there other fish species in the NWT that have been listed under SARA?

A4. Not 100% sure, but I think there is a species of cisco that is listed as threatened. Nothing as significant as Dolly Varden char that has required an IFMP.

6. Next steps – Kris Maier (GRRB)

Kris explained that we have discussion papers that summarize the plan and are written in more plain language than the full IFMP that was distributed back in May. Copies were given to each person present. Kris also explained there is an action table that summarizes the objectives table and highlights each group's responsibilities. Copies of this document were also handed out to each person. We are working under a tight



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deadline if we want to have this plan approved before COSEWIC makes its recommendations to the Minister on the status of northern form Dolly Varden. Ideally, the Dolly Varden IFMP should be completed in time for COSEWIC to use in their 2-month assessment report which will be available in September. We request comments back to us within 30 days or after the next RRC/ HTC monthly meeting.

7. Door prize draws – Kris Maier (GRRB)

First prize: Combo survival / first aid kit (value: ~\$80)

Winner: Billie Clark

Second prize: Axe (value: ~\$40)

Winner: Jason McLeod

Third prize: Knife (value: ~\$20)

Winner: Phillip Blake

8. Closing remarks & prayer

Closing remarks were given by Kris Maier. Closing prayer given by John Norbert. Thanks were given to those that showed up and to the groups that have worked on the IFMP.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

