NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FISHERIES INSTITUTE
Indigenous Program Review
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Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Workshop – Moncton NB Nov 7, 2017

What We Heard

Tell Us about your AAROM

At the beginning of the session, participants were invited to introduce themselves along with their Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management groups. Each participant also listed one major issue for their program. The major issue listed by all groups was inadequate funding. Since the program was initiated, core funding has not changed to meet the increasing demands placed upon the participant organizations.

"We started in 2004. A lot has changed in Nova Scotia in terms of nation to nation. We started looking at traditional species now we do governance and consultation. We have the same amount of staff to deal with increased workload. Our staff is spread really thin."

The issues with funding has affected organizations in the following areas:

- Increased demands on Organizations to deal with varied and expanding aspects of fisheries and habitat management ie: oceans research, staff job security, delays in receiving funding, increased costs due to remoteness of communities, lack of increase in core funding over the years.

"Times have changed. We are called to deal with marine protected areas, occupational health and safety international bodies, many other things. DFO is stretched as well. We are also chasing after emerging species. There are so many other areas that are vital. Free trade is coming up and we are not at the NAFTA table and other free trade agreements. We need support for emerging issues. Oceans, climate change."

- One participant mentioned how there was a call out for project proposals for aboriginal groups to partake of but in the end no aboriginal group was chosen for the project. They felt the money only made it to the big consultancy firms rather than Aboriginal organizations

"Cash flow is a big issue. 4-6 month delays with our core funding. Staff members don't have security. We are always looking for projects to keep staff employed. Staff is pulled toward other deliverables that may not meet community needs."

"Our resource high in cost (Kuujjuaq) have to ship, fly in. technicians in 14 communities only work full time during summer. Half time during winter. But DFO asks us to keep working because we have species in specie at risk." (Beluga)

- Another issue mentioned by participants is the onerous amount of accountability measures demanded of them. In the words of one participant, *"In terms of accountability now we need P.H.D.s to do accountability."* Participants also brought up overlapping AAROM groups and how they align and consult. Many groups are brought in for consultative purposes but they are not a political body. Meanwhile tribal councils have a mandate to consult but don't have a technical mandate.
- One participant implored government and other First Nations to never forget rulings such as Sparrow, Marshall and others.
- Atlantic Policy Congress stated they have 2-3 regular staff in their Administrative AAROM program. 2 biologists and 1 technician. Staff is kept small and they rely on networks throughout the region. They mentioned how lots of AAROMs are doing work of other government agencies. Transport Canada will say they can tap in to AAROMs and APC tells them the AAROMs are already oversubscribed and they should invest some money for the work they want done.

Exercise one: defining services

The groups in attendance listed an extremely wide range of services they see as fulfilling an important part of their mandate. These range from extensive field activities to management priorities. Groups also engage in capacity building exercises and youth training. These activities are listed below:

- **Field activities:** Stock assessments swim through, Smolt wheel, water quality, temperature monitoring, Community aquatic monitoring program, CABIN, traditional knowledge, habitat protection, GIS database, stewardship, habitat remediation riparian zone remediation around salmon rivers.. straight bass stock assessment, stocking salmon fry in river looking at survival rates. Impacts of hatchery reared stocking stranding, entanglements, PEI fish kills by pesticide, mud analysis, assessments on shoreline erosion, decontamination, plankton turtles, purchase of safety vessel, culvert assessment, electro-fishing, beach cleanup
- **Resource management activities:** watershed management collaboration, collaborative aquatic management, Biologist on national technical groups on salmon, consultation and management, species at risk, Invasive species, oceans marine research and protection, emergency response ie: oil spill, section 11 agreement to protect species around reserve areas. Water extraction, water quality, ocean marine protection MPA's whale issues, GMO salmon, fish friends, interaction with other AAROMs, review literature about species, attend peer reviewed committee meetings, look at IFMP data collection, compile fishery harvesting info like dollar value, types of species,

employment generated, ocean debris like plastics, wharves, harbours, working with NOAA, occupational health and safety mining follow up, consultations, navigation act, International collaboration, converging data collection regimes with the U.S. State of Maine, communication protocols around spills, community reporting, SAR terrestrial, organize forum for AAROM directors, provide funding support for annual AAROM science symposium, information distribution, host FN fisheries conference which brings fisheries managers and AAROM directors, look at ITK frameworks throughout Canada, participate in AFN fisheries committee, attend meetings throughout region.

- **Youth Education:** education in schools and outreach, natural resource camp for youth, participate in oceans day, wetlands day, talk with elders, school science day activities, outreach youth camp, attend cultural events to talk about our groups, seal hunting.
- **Capacity Building:** acquired training vessel, trained people for tuna fishing, organizing program for scuba diving, also teaching people to be deckhands or captains.

What you would like to do.

After detailing the many activities each group does in their respective areas, they were asked what activities they would like to do. Much like their existing activities, each group had an incredibly ambitious and diverse list. These included:

- Management plans for individual species based on science and traditional knowledge, support for more science in habitat protection, collaborative environmental planning initiative which focuses on sustainable resource development, species at risk, emergency response, capacity to strengthen traditional knowledge system (Don't believe you can combine TK and pure science, can complement), OMRP: traditional species of watershed, More work with other federal departments in areas such as vessel safety, marketing and trade, economic development, Occupational Health and Safety training, fish data collection, biologist for each community, promotion of STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) careers, guardians for each community, policy analysis, ecosystem wide approach ie: intersection of forestry and natural resource development, youth internships, elders advisory, climatologist on staff, GIS, aquaculture, communications, Invasive Species
- Establish a network in case of oil spill where fishermen can call a number to mark the spot if they see spills. A call centre for traditional fishermen to report problems
- Establish a mechanism to link AAROMs and their specific skill sets.
- Apply UNDRIP principles and TRC recommendations into science policy and regulations within DFO.
- Fish data collection: want to grow capacity, biologist for each community, environmental technologist for each community, youth interns, GIS technician, stem career promotion, basic promotion of STEM careers. Guardians for each community, species at risk, policy analysis, training vessel, operational and capital, environmental response, for all six communities, ecosystem wide approach. Specifically intersection of

forestry and natural resource development. Elders advisory function, climatologist, capacity development for communities to work cohesively together, work at international level with other Wabanaki tribes.

- To be able to do GIS would be helpful at our office.
- Need to get more help for aquaculture. Snow crab and lobster on downturn. No stability in fishing, communication, training, admin, development, invasive species.

Your relationship with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and others

- Each Organization liaises with a number of departments within Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as other federal ministries. These include: Salmon habitat, Species at Risk, Oceans, Aboriginal Fisheries, Aquaculture, C and P, Coast Guard, Environment Canada, Universities, the respective province the organization resides in, Coastal Restoration Fund, AFSAR, Transport Canada, INAC, Other Band Councils, United Nations Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations.

Is your information being used or reflected in decision making processes?

- Participants say their experience varies whether their information is being used in the decision making process.
  - *I have lots of minsters who come to my office to get information. We produce impeccable work, we deal with, parks, natural resources, fisheries and agriculture.*
  - *One example is the Beluga management plan. One subspecies that is in the Species at Risk act. We monitor harvesting levels of belugas in our region closely. Reports we give are directly used in beluga harvesting management plans.*
  - *We have a Mi'kmaq, Maliseet forum which we invite DFO to. In the sea cucumber fishery DFO had no research and relied on our information for their results. Met with DFO at meeting at Institute Maurice Lamontagne, identified need to document research priorities so they know our interest and priorities.*
  - *It is very much regional. We try to work with DFO in both regions. There are many instances where our discussions in IFMP, we are lucky to get one line in the IFMP. There is still resistance to acknowledge reality of aboriginal people. There is a timid relationship acknowledging Aboriginal people in fisheries. On Species at Risk, we have meetings, local level science is taken into account but receives only a fleeting line.*
  - *Our biologist did work with local fishers and monitored the fishery. There was a voluntary reduction in effort which demonstrated a marked improvement in the species. The best example is salmon collaboration. Smolt wheel, ocean tracking network, assist with swim-throughs and counts. We are contributing to the collection*

of information on salmon populations in the rivers. We have a tripartite process and have a salmon table where salmon management is discussed.

- *Here are a couple examples where DFO was not taking indigenous information into account. Last fall we did a data frame assessment through CSAF process for eel. Information that was being used and input into assessment did not include info we had collected. DFO blamed it on a capacity issue within the department. One biologist wasn't able to get the info we collected. It was disheartening. Sea cucumber is considered a secondary species so there is no full time biologist. Our members are interested but science is being led by industry. I mentioned work being done in Gaspe on sea cucumbers. DFO did not know this was happening. It is for this reason we have a project to identify Indigenous Traditional Knowledge protocols throughout region. We were approached by a department about the different protocols.*

Priority list and wishlist

- 1) Governmental autonomy in fisheries management, 2) Become self-financed, 3) Manage catches brx (company)
- 1) Equal participation in natural resource management, 2) Strengthen research and natural resource management while retaining Mi'kmaq worldviews. 3) Collaboration and participation.
- 1) Excellence, 2) Sustainable, 3) Meet requirements of communities.
- 1) Unending protein to fed world, 2) Decolonize common fisheries, 3) Managing fisheries in sustainable way
- 1) Real co-management, planning and implementation of programs. 2) Relevant and effective communication to communities. Make sure we meet needs. 3) Maintain strong team of skilled and competent people from year to year.
- 1) Successive initiatives based on completed workplan, 2) Sustainable funding, 3) Innovative projects to reinforce community stewardship and watershed management.
- 1) Meet community needs, 2) Being open to partnerships and collaboration, 3) Open and transparent communication.
- 1) Human resources, 2) Training, 3) Funding.

Consider capacity of your team - needs

- Marketing, great negotiators, Innu biologists, ocean management career track.
- GIS training, GIS technician to better documents traditional knowledge, biologists and technicians
- Administrative assistant, project management, project application writer, first nations youth moving into our organization.
- Mentorship/internship funding.

- Training, increase percent of fleet from communities. Actually use boats to do fishing, biologists, project managers, support positions, accounting, scuba diving, prawn fishery, aquaculture.
- Enforcement, guardians, traditional knowledge advisors, specialists in fish passage, GIS, hydrology climatology, environmental technical policy analysis, youth intern, environmental lawyer.
- Wildlife officer, fisheries officer,
- GIS technicians, resources to run system,