



ABORIGINAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

ANNUAL REPORT 2005 - 2006

#699509

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NOTE:

The information contained in this report is believed to be accurate but is not warranted. Any errors or omissions are unintentional.

General Overview of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy

The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) is a program that provides for the effective management of the Aboriginal fishery in a manner consistent with the *Sparrow* decision. This landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision found, among other things, that where an Aboriginal group establishes an Aboriginal right to fish for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes, this right, after conservation, has priority over any other user of the resource.

In accordance with negotiated, time-limited agreements, Aboriginal groups participate in the management of the fisheries and are provided with both allocations of fish and economic development opportunities. The Program applies where Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) manages the fishery, and where land claims settlements are not in place.

AFS Agreements

AFS Agreements are without prejudice to either party's position on Aboriginal rights. Agreements negotiated under the AFS contain an allocation to be harvested by the Aboriginal group, which is fished under a communal fishing licence. This allocation is determined after consultations with the group regarding their needs for FSC purposes. Agreements detail the conditions to be included in the communal fishing licence, such as quantities, time, gear and data collection. Agreements may also contain other arrangements for the co-management of the Aboriginal fishery by the group and DFO, such as stock assessment, fish enhancement and habitat management projects. Commercial fishing and other economic development opportunities may also be negotiated as part of an AFS Agreement.

Fishing Plans

Fishing Plans, one component/schedule of an AFS Agreement, detail the numerical harvest levels which have been negotiated and established for FSC purposes.

These plans establish the Fishing Authority and the plan to monitor fisheries harvests by members of the community who have been designated on behalf of the community. The allocation sets the species and the quantities, times and gear to be used.

Communal Licences

The Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licence Regulations provide for the issuance of communal licences to Aboriginal groups. These licences include conditions for quantity of catch by species, gear, time and area of harvest, and disposition of fish. The conditions for designating fishers and the reporting requirements are also set out in the communal licence. Typically, communal licence conditions flow from the fishing plan within the AFS Agreement. However, where DFO cannot reach an agreement with a First Nation, a communal licence is issued. As per s.6(f) of the Policy for the Management of Aboriginal Fishing, the conditions will be minimal and will contain allocations based on the last offer made by DFO before termination of negotiations.

The communal licences are a way of providing the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to fish for FSC purposes consistent with the priority afforded them, while integrating the management of Aboriginal fisheries with all other fisheries.

National Perspective

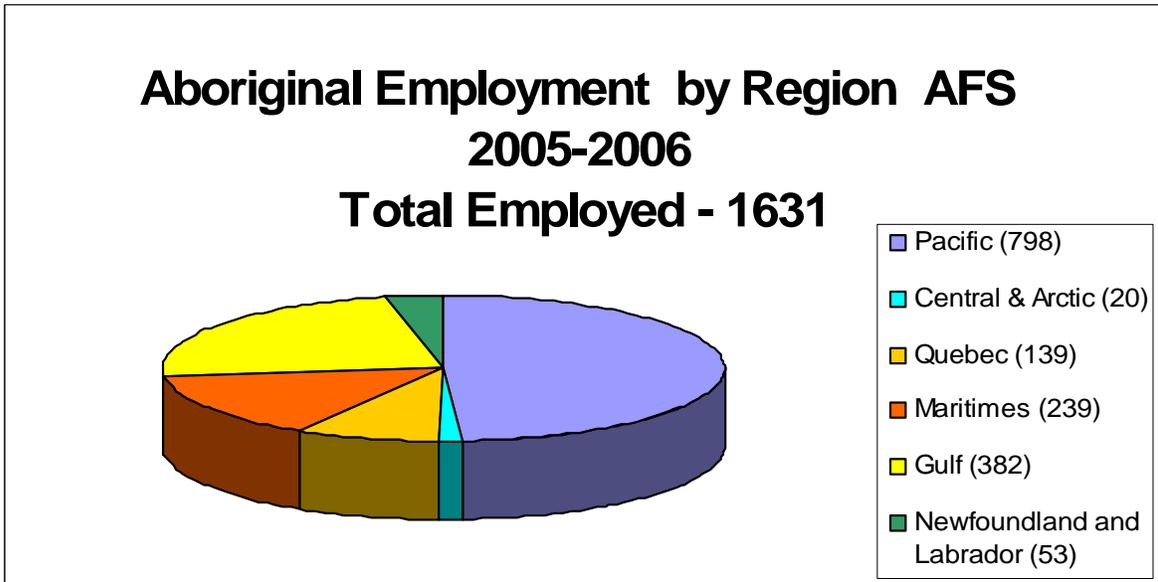
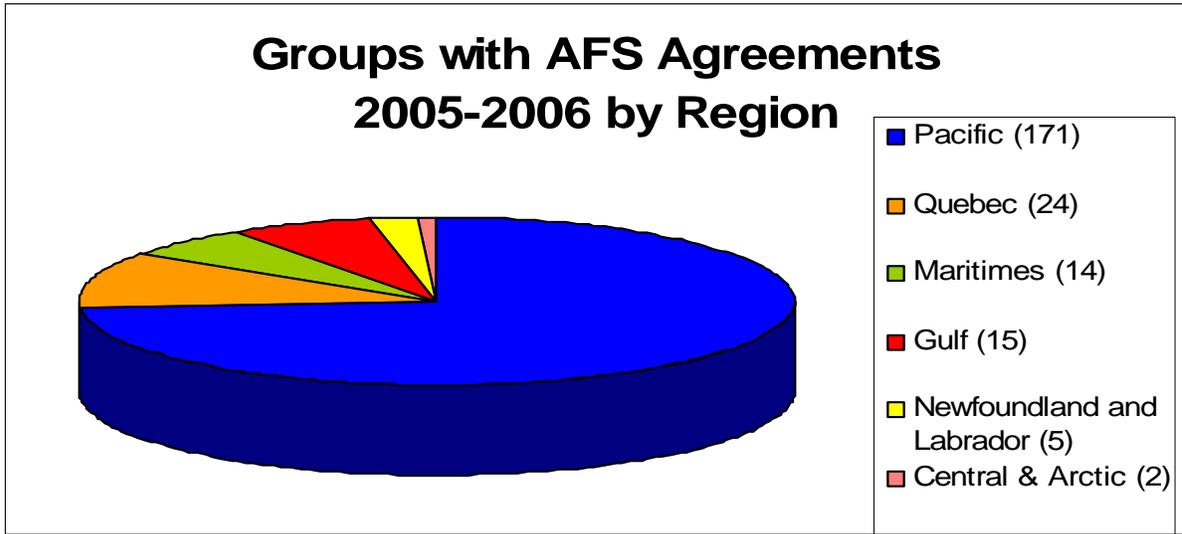
The AFS was funded at \$35,121,400 in 2005-2006. This included a mandated amount of \$23,721,400 for co-management expenditures, including \$721,400 in O&M, and \$9,300,000 for the Allocation Transfer Policy (ATP), including \$200,000 in O&M. \$2,100,000 was transferred to the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) Program at the beginning of the fiscal year to cover the portion of AFS activities now addressed in some AAROM Agreements. An additional \$120,320 was transferred to AAROM later in the year to repay that program for a halibut quota purchased under AAROM but issued under the AFS. \$1,014,000 in AAROM funds were spent under the AFS for ATP purchases in Pacific region. One million of this will be returned to AAROM in 2006-2007. \$320,000 from the Co-Management mandate was transferred to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) for implementation of the Nisga'a Treaty. \$150,000 was transferred to the *Marshall* Program to cover a debt owed to the Crown by Eel Ground First Nation. Their AFS Agreement was reduced by this amount. At the end of the fiscal year \$18,928 in AAROM funding was made available to Central and Arctic region with the understanding that this amount will be paid back in 2006-2007 to the AAROM Program. All of this resulted in a final budget of \$33,464,008. There was some movement between Co-Management and ATP funding throughout the year resulting in final expenditures of \$22,146,078 in Co-Management and \$10,392,500 in ATP. \$900,286 was spent in O&M and \$25,144 was unspent at year end.

219 AFS Agreements and Amendments were signed with 231 Aboriginal groups in British Columbia (BC), Quebec, Central and Arctic and Atlantic Canada. Some of these First Nations are funded under an Agreement with an Umbrella Group such as a Tribal Council, Watershed Authority or Native Council.

These AFS Agreements have resulted in the creation of 1,631.25 seasonal jobs in areas such as processing, monitoring and enhancement activities.

199 of those employed through the AFS are Aboriginal guardians, trained by DFO and employed by the Aboriginal group. The remaining 1,432.25 jobs were created nationally in the fisheries management field (habitat restoration, stock assessment, fisheries enhancement, etc.), and in the areas of consultation and economic development.

Groups with AFS Agreements



Expenditures by Region 2005-2006

Region	Co-Mgmt G&C	Co-Mgmt O&M	ATP	Total Expenditures
<i>PACIFIC</i>	\$15,035,000	\$380,000	\$6,592,000	\$22,007,000
<i>CENTRAL & ARCTIC</i>	\$148,928	\$350,400	\$0	\$499,328
<i>QUEBEC</i>	\$774,000	\$123,166	\$2,476,000	\$3,373,166
<i>MARITIMES</i>	\$2,271,500	\$0	\$150,000	\$2,421,500
<i>GULF</i>	\$2,995,650	\$0	\$200,000	\$3,195,650
<i>NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR</i>	\$921,000	\$0	\$974,500	\$1,895,500
<i>HEADQUARTERS AFS</i>	\$0	\$46,720	\$0	\$46,720
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$22,146,078	\$900,286	\$10,392,500	\$33,438,864
TOTAL BUDGET	\$33,464,008		Unspent	\$25,144

Employment Under the AFS – 2005-2006

REGION	GUARDIANS	OTHERS	TOTAL
PACIFIC	46 ¹	752.25	798.25
CENTRAL & ARCTIC	0	20	20
QUEBEC	23	116	139
MARITIMES	36	203	239
GULF	57	325	382
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	37	16	53
TOTAL	199	1432.25	1631.25

¹ Estimate based on previous years. Specific information not collected for 2005-06.

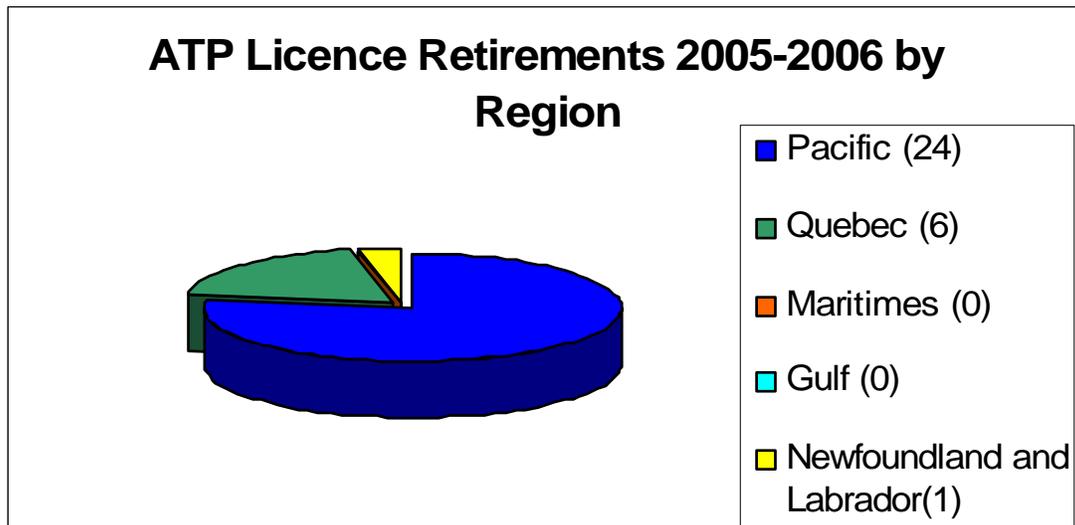
Allocation Transfer Program (ATP)

Background

In 1994 the AFS was amended to include the ATP. The ATP supports Aboriginal groups in achieving self-sufficiency through participation in commercial fisheries. The ATP facilitates the voluntary retirement of commercial licences and the issuance of new licences to eligible Aboriginal organizations in a manner that does not add to the existing effort on the resource. As a result of changes in 1998, funding may also be provided to purchase equipment, such as vessels and/or gear necessary for Aboriginal groups to fish these licences. Eligibility is restricted to Aboriginal organizations that have fisheries agreements with DFO under the AFS. It is a means to stimulate Aboriginal economic development opportunities and develop fisheries expertise in Aboriginal communities.

National ATP Budget

As noted above, the ATP was funded at \$10,392,500 in 2005-2006. 31 licences were retired and the Department purchased or contributed towards 21 vessels. In addition various quotas, equipment and gear were retired nationally.



Pacific Region

The core budget for 2005-2006 in Pacific Region was \$21,055,000, which included \$15,025,000 for Co-Management, and \$5,900,000 for the ATP. This includes \$130,000 in Co-Management O&M and \$200,000 in ATP O&M. A Co-Management top-up of \$50,000 in O&M and \$10,000 in G&C was provided from Headquarters contingency funding. Additional ATP funds in the amount of \$1,014,000 from AAROM access funds and \$2,320 from Headquarters contingency funding were also provided. \$120,320 was returned to AAROM to reimburse for quota purchased under AAROM in 2004-2005 but issued under the ATP. This resulted in a revised total Regional budget of \$22,011,000.

During 2005-2006, a total of \$6,592,000 was spent to retire licences, vessels and gear under ATP in this Region. An additional \$200,000 in O&M was paid to a licence broker, and \$4,000 in ATP funds was not spent by year end. \$15,035,000 was spent on Co-Management Agreements and \$180,000 in O&M was spent on contracts with First Nations. All licences except one crab licence purchased late in the year have been issued to First Nations.

Number of Agreements

The following Agreements were negotiated in 2005-2006:

- 20 Comprehensive Fisheries Agreements
- 74 Amendments to Comprehensive Fisheries Agreements
- 40 Project Funding Agreements
- 20 Amendments to Project Funding Agreements
- 2 Fisheries Agreements
- 1 Framework Agreements
- 1 Sub-Agreement

158 Total

Employment

In 2005-2006 approximately 46 Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians were employed seasonally. Another 752.25 people were employed seasonally in other projects funded through the agreements. Please note that this information is based on final reports received for 2005-2006, or on preliminary projected estimates provided by the group at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Commercial Access

24 commercial licences were retired in 2005-2006 under the ATP in Pacific region, as well as some quota, vessels and gear. 23 licences have been allocated to First Nations and the remaining licence will be allocated under future AFS Agreements.

The following licences, quotas and vessels were acquired under the ATP in 2005-2006

Item	Value
salmon gillnet (MVL 11.28m)	\$85,000
spawn on kelp	\$600,000
15,000 lbs halibut quota	\$427,500
salmon gillnet (MVL 11,43m)	\$85,000
roe herring gillnet	\$150,000
roe herring gillnet	\$150,000
roe herring seine	\$400,000
7,500 lbs halibut quota	\$217,500
salmon gillnet (MVL 10.26m)	\$84,000
salmon gillnet (MVL 12.50m)	\$82,000
salmon gillnet (MVL 10.64m)	\$85,000
salmon gillnet (MVL 11.13m)	\$85,000
salmon gillnet (MVL 11.05m)	\$85,000
salmon troll (MVL 13.02m)	\$200,000
prawn (MVL 13.02m)	\$650,000
crab (MVL 12.19m)	\$650,000
halibut (MVL 19.99m)	\$99,000
red sea urchin (MVL 8.28m)	\$125,000
red sea urchin (MVL 10.29m)	\$125,000
salmon seine (MVL 18.91m)	\$420,000
salmon gillnet (MVL 10.97m)	\$76,500
salmon gillnet (MVL 10.97m)	\$76,500
halibut licence and 13,568 lbs quota	\$451,170
4,000 lbs halibut quota	\$120,000

9,500 lbs halibut quota	\$285,000
5,000 lbs halibut quota	\$150,000
crab (MVL 11.76m)	\$579,000
crab traps	\$48,830
Total	\$6,592,000

Key Projects

Northern Abalone Research and Rehabilitation: Kitasoo Abalone Stewardship Project

The northern abalone is a marine mollusk that inhabits exposed and semi-exposed areas of the BC coastline. It is a grazing herbivore, subsisting on diatoms and large kelp species and plays a significant role in healthy marine ecosystems.

Kitasoo and other First Nations traditionally used abalone as a major food source and as a form of currency for trade with other Nations. The commercial abalone fishery, peaking in the mid 1970's, drastically reduced northern abalone populations to the point of collapse. Harvesters used scuba gear to systematically fish the coastline in search of abalone which fetched high prices within several markets around the world, particularly Japan. In the brief period from 1977 – 1983 the commercial fishery targeted areas 6 and 7 within the Kitasoo / Xaixais Traditional Territory, and by 1990 it was recognized that this, along with the rest of the BC coastline had been extremely overexploited.

As a result DFO closed all harvesting of abalone due to conservation concerns in 1990 and in 1999, abalone were listed as a "threatened species" by Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

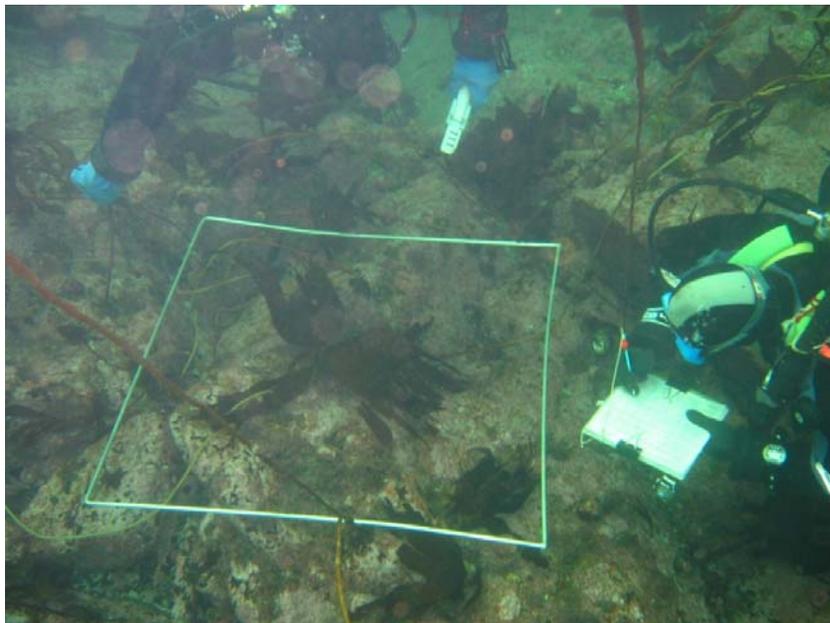
The Kitasoo Fisheries Program, a First Nations community-based co-management program out of Klemtu, with funding through the AFS Program, began abalone inventory surveys in 1993 and has covered large areas of the Kitasoo/ Xaixais Traditional Territory employing SCUBA survey techniques. While some areas had higher abundances, it was determined through repeat surveys that illegal harvesting and/ or population collapse was occurring in all areas.

In 2001, the Kitasoo Abalone Stewardship Program (KASP) was established with Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) as a partner. This has allowed the Kitasoo Fisheries Program to double its efforts in abalone enhancement and research efforts within the territory with support from HSP and DFO research staff. Long-term research includes efforts to rebuild local stocks through the use of artificial habitat made of cinder blocks and from identification and monitoring of critical habitat. This provides the opportunity to monitor juvenile recruitment success in a given area by carefully dismantling the condos every year to determine numbers of small juveniles which are otherwise inhabit inaccessible cryptic habitat. Efforts also include live tagging and recapture studies and intensive survey sites that provide critical data on abalone growth, mortality and population levels. KASP works closely with DFO science and other abalone stewardship groups such as Abalone Haida Gwaii and Metlakatla and Nisga'a Coastwatch programs.

It is hoped that, through these combined efforts, abalone populations will recover to self-sustaining levels, contributing to a healthy marine ecosystem while providing potential opportunities for food fish harvests by First Nations.



Northern Abalone in its natural habitat in the Central Coast of BC.



Abalone dive survey in the Central Coast of BC to determine the sizes of the abalone and what is found in the quadrat (metal square).

Combining Resources for SAR Recovery

The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) has “housed” a fisheries program since the inception of the AFS Program in 1992. The Fisheries Program’s primary mandate has been protecting the fisheries-related interests of its eight member First Nations, which all occupy and utilize portions of the Nechako watershed. The Federal nature of the AFS Program has created a focus on activities related to salmon management, and the CSTC has developed significant fisheries management capacity over the last decade and a half.

More recently, the CSTC has worked to lever its fisheries program’s AFS funded core infrastructure to address other priority conservation issues. A primary focus has been on becoming proactively involved within a Species at Risk (SAR) Recovery Initiative related to the Nechako watershed’s unique white sturgeon stock.

The Nechako’s white sturgeon population has been negatively impacted by the effects of a dam built on the river in the 1950s, and the subsequent regulation of the river. There has not been a successful recruiting of juveniles into the population for approximately four decades, and the remaining population has dwindled to 300-400 older adult individuals. Population dynamic models indicate that the Nechako’s white sturgeon stock will become unrecoverable within at 15-20 year horizon.

Since the inception of the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative in 2000, the CSTC has been a regular and key participant. The CSTC’s goals behind becoming involved in this process included ensuring that:

- recovery planning took place with consideration for the CSTC’s unique interests;
- suitable recovery actions were implemented as quickly as possible;
- the CSTC received the capacity development and other benefits inherent in recovery processes, in particular, the understanding afforded by direct involvement; and
- recovery of the species had maximum potential for success.

Involvement in the initiative has meant building relationships with industry and government agency personnel that the CSTC would normally not interact with. One of the primary results has been the CSTC's involvement in a broad array of research and recovery related activities, including:

- annual inventory and assessment programs;
- habitat-related research; and
- pilot conservation-based hatchery establishment and operation.

The benefits to the CSTC have of course included a substantially broader array of work and capacity development opportunities for its fisheries program's staff, but also include a much better understanding of policies and planning processes related to SAR, and how they relate to their member community's fisheries interests. For the recovery initiative, the CSTC's involvement has resulted in an extremely cooperative approach and expedited path towards recovery activity implementation.

The fundamental aspects of the CSTC's successful experience in this SAR process can be summarized as:

- the CSTC's ability to develop and retain suitable technical capacity to work with and fluently interact with personnel from other agencies with respect to SAR issues; and
- local and regional (BC and Canada) agency personnel that possess a willingness to effectively engage and involve First Nations in technical endeavors such as recovery planning

Without the CSTC's core AFS-supported fisheries program, the process of recovering this species would be substantially compromised, by both a reduced amount of funding and resources available to conduct recovery planning and implement recovery actions, and likely more importantly, a lack of First Nation involvement in the process. The understanding facilitated by First Nations' direct involvement and ownership of the recovery process can't effectively be replaced by any amount of consultation.



Releasing marked and tagged juvenile white sturgeon.



School children release juvenile sturgeon into the Nechako River.

Central and Arctic Region

In 2005-2006 the Central and Arctic Region had an annual AFS budget of \$350,400, all in O&M. An additional \$148,928 in Co-Management G&C funding was provided from the Headquarters Reserve for Contribution Agreements with two Aboriginal groups.

Most of the AFS budget (\$280,000) was spent on Aboriginal fishery community projects and an additional \$26,000 was spent on consultations with First Nations including the funding of the Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee (GSLAC). In addition, \$148,928 was allotted to two Aboriginal organizations through Contribution Agreements to purchase various equipment for future AFS projects. The Akaitcho Territory Government spent \$60,000 of G&C funding on a boat package and two spare “kicker” motors, and a garage package to house the boat and project equipment in Dettah, NT. The Dehcho First Nation spent \$88,928 on a boat package and garage to house it in Trout Lake, Northwest Territories (NT), a garage to store the Ft. Providence boat in and a boat package for the community of Kakisa, NT.

Aboriginal Fishery Strategy Project Workplan – 2005 – 2006

Community Fishery Workers:	2005/06 NT
Métis First Nations:	
Hay River Métis Council	\$29,000
Fort Resolution Métis Council	\$2,000
Akaiicho First Nations:	
Deninu Kue First Nation	\$22,000
Lutsel K'e First Nation	\$60,000
Akaiicho Territorial Government	\$6,000
Dehcho First Nation:	
Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band	\$12,000
Sambaa Ke Dene Band	\$21,400
Katlodeeche First Nation	\$3,000
Kakisa First Nation	\$8,000
Other Contracts (S. Buckley, Fishermen's Federation)	\$6,000
Fish Ageing Contracts	\$16,000
AFS Coordinator/Technician (Hay River Métis)	\$70,000
Consultations/Co-management (GSLAC)	\$26,000
Program Support (Admin., travel, contract support, etc.)	\$69,000
Total	\$35,400

Employment

The AFS Program resulted in 963 person days of employment or nearly four person years. Twenty Aboriginal workers were employed seasonally.

Project Descriptions

The community field workers, hired by 8 Aboriginal organisations in five communities, continued to foster co-management initiatives at the community level. The program provides interaction with Dene Bands (Akaiicho and Dehcho), indigenous Métis organizations and the newly formed AAROM Boards, allow the gathering of harvest information, improve fish handling and processing practices, promote conservation education and cooperative fishery management projects.

Co-management fishery projects in 2005/06 involved:

- Supporting community co-management by building capacity in the various Aboriginal organizations we work with.
- Assessing fish stocks, important to Aboriginal people, through itinerant angler creel surveys, community harvest surveys, sampling for age and growth data and measuring catch per unit effort (CPUE).
- Conducting community surveys to gather harvest information and traditional knowledge of stocks and fishing patterns.
- Involving the Aboriginal community in finding solutions to fishery management problems.
- Conducting traditional ecological knowledge studies to compliment and enhance scientific studies.
- Providing learning opportunities to enhance the knowledge of fisheries management protocol by community workers and youth and conversely an understanding of traditional ecological knowledge by DFO personnel.

Sub-projects - 2005/06

Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band, Fort Providence

Digaa Enterprises Limited was contracted to hire a harvest surveyor who collected harvest statistics for the Fort Providence Aboriginal food fishery which occurs on the Mackenzie River and Horn River. This survey has now provided eight years of harvest data to the community.

Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Resolution

The Band was contracted to hire a community member to creel survey (1st year) recreational anglers on the Little Buffalo River because of concern over declines in walleye and pike stocks. One community member was also contracted to conduct a lake trout traditional knowledge (TK) study and present it at the Lake Trout Symposium in Yellowknife.

Lutsel K'e Dene Band

The Lutsel K'e First Nation once again hired two workers to boat patrol and creel survey recreational anglers in the east arm of GSL (8th year). The First Nation also completed the second year of an Aboriginal food fishery survey which provides harvest statistics useful in the management and allocation of fishery resources.

Akaiicho Territorial Government

Delegates were contracted to attend a circle conference and the Lake Trout Symposium in Yellowknife and report back to DFO.

Fort Resolution Métis Nation

A community member was contracted to attend the Lake Trout Symposium in Yellowknife.

Sambaa Ke Dene Band, Trout Lake

The Band was contracted for its 5th year in a row to monitor the recreational fishery on Trout Lake and two of its major tributaries (the Moose and Island Rivers), including guests of their lodge business. Two seasonal workers were hired to patrol the lake by boat during the summer months. The Chief was also contracted to attend the Lake Trout Symposium in Yellowknife.

Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, Kakisa

Walleye size and age samples were collected from the commercial catch on Kakisa Lake and during the commercial fishery closure on Tathlina Lake. Data collected during 14 years of monitoring on both lakes have been analysed and interpreted and used in the management of the fisheries. DFO has a good working relationship with the Band and has been working with them to address some recent walleye stock problems, especially those of the continued commercial closure on Tathlina Lake.



Checking a net on Tathlina Lake.

Katlodeeche First Nation (KFN), Hay River

The Band was contracted to provide one fisher and fishing boat in order to set and lift various size gillnets in the Hay River Domestic Area. The fisher and helper taught “youth” involved in the program fishing methods and preparation of fish in order to pass on traditional knowledge to them. The KFN contributed in kind by supervising the program and integrating the fishery program into their existing youth program.

Hay River Métis Council**AFS Coordinator/Technician**

The overall coordination of the AFS program is facilitated by an Aboriginal graduate of a Renewable Resources Technology Program whom is contracted thru the Hay River Métis Council in Hay River. This person is responsible for over-seeing the AFS programs with the various Aboriginal groups. The Coordinator trains and monitors seasonal workers and ensures that data is being collected according to current fisheries management protocol and is recorded in a clear and concise manner. The Coordinator also manages the organisation and computer analysis of data collected during the various community studies and prepares various reports and power point presentations. He presented results of the programs to the various Aboriginal organizations/communities and conducted four conservation education sessions in community schools. The Coordinator also assists with the collection of whitefish and walleye size and age samples from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) plant in Hay River.

Great Slave Lake Commercial Fishery Observation Program

The Hay River Métis Council was contracted to hire two seasonal field workers to conduct fishery observations on Great Slave Lake (GSL) commercial fishing vessels, collect fish samples and sample the commercial whitefish catch at the FFMC fish receiving stations.

Dogface Lake

The council was contracted to hire one community member to assist a DFO technician to investigate a complaint of poor fishing in Dogface Lake by: setting and lifting hoop nets, multi-mesh gillnets and sampling, releasing or preserving the catch; catching fish by angling and sampling and/or preserving the catch

The Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee (GSLAC)

The fish resources of GSL are shared by Aboriginal, commercial and recreational fisheries. At least six Aboriginal communities directly utilise GSL fish stocks for sustenance and over 90% of the participants in the GSL commercial fishery are of Aboriginal origin although many may not be beneficiaries of claims presently being negotiated in the NT.

The GSLAC makes recommendations to the DFO on the health and maintenance of fish stocks and the management of the fisheries of GSL. Voting members represent the Dene and Métis First Nations who use the lake as well as the commercial and sports fishing industries. Non-voting members represent DFO, the Government of the NT and the FFMC. Meetings are held twice a year, in spring and fall.

Key Project***Little Buffalo River Itinerant Angler Monitoring – Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Resolution***

DFO has been working with the Deninu Kue First Nation since 1994 shortly after the inception of the AFS program. There have been fish health (1999), CPUE (2000) and community harvest surveys (1994-2003) undertaken in the Slave River Delta, Resolution Bay and Little Buffalo River/Resolution Bay areas respectively.

In 2003 the community began expressing concerns over increased itinerant angler pressure on the Little Buffalo River which contains whitefish, sucker and inconnu stocks important to them. The river also hosts a spring walleye and pike run both of which were the primary targets for sport fishers. Limits were reduced in 2004 and a small creel survey undertaken (June/July).

The creel survey was expanded to June-September in 2005 and consisted of:

- 5 days/week of monitoring;
- 59 days of total survey time; and
- 236 surveys returned.

Results indicated:

- over 400 walleye caught and over 300 released for a 77% release rate (70% release rate for pike);
- mean number of fish caught/day = 5; per hour = 1.0;
- over 80% of anglers from Alberta; and
- fishermen that had been coming here for 8 years or more indicated fishing was the same or worse. Overall, almost 30% of anglers indicated that fishing was not as good as before.

The data collected in this study was analysed and interpreted by the AFS Technician/Coordinator and presented to the GSLAC. It is planned for this study to continue and possibly expand the survey period and collect biological samples of the mostly targeted sport fish stocks.



Carrying out an angler survey.

Quebec Region

In 2005-06, the Quebec Region had an annual budget of \$3,373,166 for the AFS Program. Of this amount, \$897,166 went to contracts and Co-Management arrangements, while \$2,476,000 was devoted to the purchase of fishing enterprises under the ATP. \$16,834 in O&M was unspent at year end.

Northern Quebec

Kativik Regional Government 2005–2006

Kativik Regional Government was funded for the most part in 2005-2006 under a multi-year AAROM Collaborative Management Agreement. They did sign a small AFS Agreement to purchase a vessel for the use of Renewable Resources Officers.

Southern Quebec

Fisheries Agreements

In 2005-2006, we continued to implement the six agreements signed in 2003-04 with the seven Innu communities, since five of them were for a two-year term ending this year and one was signed for a three-year period ending in 2006-07.

This year, a portion of the available funds was allocated mainly to the recruitment of fishery coordinators and to theoretical and practical training (for a vocational diploma in fisheries), and a significant share went to the ATP for the purchase of fishing enterprises. Six communities hired consultants to help them consolidate and/or restructure their fishing enterprises. In the past six years, most Innu communities have seen an increase – at times substantial – in their responsibilities in terms of fishing activities. They have also had to face significant fluctuations in the price of marine products on the international market; some have had difficulty disposing of their harvests; and all have had to deal with an increase in oil prices. Outside assistance is therefore desirable; in some cases, it also compensates for constant changes within band councils and, in turn, in personnel assigned to fisheries, often resulting in a lack of knowledge. Nevertheless, the Innu have made impressive strides in the management and profitability of their fisheries. It should be noted that the Innu only joined the AFS in the early 2000s.

In addition to Agreements signed with Innu groups, small co-management Agreements were signed with the Mi'kmaq groups in Gesgapegiaq, Gespeg and Listuguj and with the Malécite de Viger.

Training of Innu Fishers

The Innu training program is still valid. Spread over several years, the 1,400-hour training program will allow young people and others to follow a training program that is recognized by the province's department of education while being varied enough to meet students' interests. Programs include marine mechanics, general deck work, fishing master certification and fisheries management and planning. Those who successfully complete the program are granted a vocational diploma in fisheries.

Real Benefits to the Community

The majority of Innu communities on the North Shore now have full all-Aboriginal crews, including certified masters. As well, the Centre spécialisé des pêches (CSP) hires Aboriginal instructors. Daily instruction is given by an Aboriginal who is himself a Class IV master and a 2001 CSP graduate. The training is offered at a school in Uashat, Sept-Îles, a strategic meeting place for North Shore Innu, thereby providing students from the east and west regions of the North Shore easier access to training. Students stay in boarding houses for periods of up to eight weeks.

This year, more than 50 Innu fishers from the seven communities enrolled in one or more of the training programs listed below. Over 789 hours of training were given. Training costs are absorbed by DFO, and instruction is given by the CSP in Grande-Rivière and in Sept-Îles.

Program	Number of Course Hours
General deck work Group	150 hours
Mechanics	210 hours
Professionalization Group 1	129 hours
Management and Planning	90 hours
ROC-MC (radiotelephony)	48 hours

Employment

In 2005–2006, 139 Aboriginals in Southern Quebec were employed in the fisheries sector for an average period of 22 weeks (between 10 and 34 weeks) as a result of licences obtained through the AFS. 23 of these were guardians or rangers.

Allocation Transfer Program

In 2005-2006, under the ATP, the Quebec Region purchased or financially participated in the purchase of the following fishing enterprises:

Community	Licence purchase	Vessel Purchases	DFO contribution 2005-2006	Total cost of enterprise
Betsiamites	Area 17 crab Groundfish	Léo	\$593,000	\$1,260,000
Essipit	Area 17 crab Groundfish	Léo	\$500,000	\$1,260,000
Uashat	Area 16 crab	Pathfinder VI	\$850,000	\$1,700,000
Pêcheries Shipek		Purchase of fishing equipment	\$150,000	
Natashquan		Natashquan	\$300,000	\$600,000
Gespeg			\$45,000	
Kativik Regional Gov't			\$38,000	
Total			\$2,476,000	

Comments

Betsiamites: The purchase of this enterprise was shared equally with the community of Essipit. Investments for Betsiamite only were \$193,000 in 2005-2006. The total invested in 2005-2006 was \$593,000.

Essipit: The fishing enterprise acquired by Essipit is the same as the one purchased for Betsiamites. DFO invested \$500,000 and Essipit borrowed the remainder. The total investment for Essipit in 2005-06 was \$500,000.

Uashat: This enterprise was purchased over two years with \$500,000 spent in 2005-2006. Another \$500,000 will be spent in 2006-2007. The total investment in 2005-2006 was \$850,000.

Pêcheries Shipek: The total investment for 2005-2006 was \$150,000.

Maritimes Region

The total operating budget under the AFS for Maritimes Region for 2005-2006 was \$2,421,500. \$350,000 was provided to fund the Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS), and the remaining \$2,071,500 funded Agreements with 13 First Nations. All of the funding for First Nations was for Co-Management Agreements. \$200,000 of the NCNS funding was for Co-Management projects. The remaining \$150,000 was for commercial access for this group.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2005-2006, AFS Agreements were signed with the NCNS and with 13 First Nations in Maritimes region. Under these 14 Agreements, 36 Aboriginal Fishery Guardians were employed for a total of 180 months, and approximately 203 Aboriginal workers were employed for a total of 852 months in other projects.

Commercial Access

The ATP mandate for Maritimes Region for 2005-2006 was \$150,000. The total amount was spent on costs associated with the building of a new vessel for the NCNS as follows:

New engine (Kitpu Eagle II)	\$56,025
New reduction gear (Atlantic Rival)	\$20,453
New vessel electronics (Northern Edge)	\$38,095
Ship safety requirements (Northern Edge)	\$16,344
New lobster traps	\$27,442
TOTAL	\$158,359

(NCNS paid the difference of \$8,359)

Key Projects

Fort Folly First Nation – participation in the National Recovery Strategy for the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) populations in the inner Bay of Fundy (iBoF) are diminished to such an extent that COSEWIC designated them “endangered” in May 2001. The Big Salmon River is one of the key river systems of the iBoF that maintains a few returning adult iBoF salmon and has also historically supported large returns of iBoF salmon. In recent years, however, the number of adults returning from the ocean to spawn has drastically declined. The Recovery Team concedes that until the issue of marine survival is understood and corrected, natural recovery of the population is not feasible. Research into the marine survival issue, as set forth by the Recovery Team, is ongoing. This collaborative project focuses on: monitoring of the remnant wild fish at four different life stages (emergence, juveniles, emigrating smolts, and returning adults), as well as the maintenance of this important genetic lineage of Atlantic salmon by annual collections of juveniles, for captive rearing and spawning as part of the Live Gene Bank (LGB) program.

The AFS funds to Fort Folly First Nation was critical in facilitating the capacity of Fort Folly Habitat Recovery (FFHR) to participate in this important recovery team work. It is important to note that when other funding proposals were prepared, the Fort Folly First Nation staff responsible for submitting these proposals were greatly aided by being able to list the AFS funds as secured funding. The AFS funds are the only secured funding the FFHR has had with the continued blessing of the Fort Folly First Nation from year to year.

FFHR staff began a shift rotation monitoring of smolt-wheel or rotary screw trap (RST) on the Big Salmon River. The smolt project on the Big Salmon River involves the use of a RST (smolt wheel) installed at a strategic location during the spring smolt migration (May-June). There are scheduled releases of marked smolts from the LGB into the Big Salmon River and mark/recapture methodology determines run strength and potential behavioral differences between smolts from the wild and from the LGB. Biological data characteristics including tissue samples (genetically analyzed to determine origin and family), scale samples (age), and length and weight data are collected from captured fish to provide data about the population. These data provide a base estimate for the number and relative condition of smolts emigrating to sea in 2005 and are used to determine sea survival rates based on numbers of returning adult salmon in 2006. The data

also provides an indication of the success of the LGB program (survival rates of LGB releases) as well as evidence of remaining wild reproduction. Smolt monitoring also permits the in-river collection of smolts for captive rearing and live gene banking. The crew did daily checks of the rotary screw trap and processed the outward migrating smolt as per protocols established by the Population Ecology Division of DFO.

FFHR staff also participated in electro-fishing surveys. Juvenile densities are estimated by electro-fishing (EF) surveys in accordance with DFO EF policy. Long term data sets of juvenile abundance, based on six or seven historical index sites, exists for the Big Salmon River. Current EF surveys allow present densities to be compared to historical electro-fishing densities at these same locations. These surveys help determine; areas of high quality habitat with low densities that are optimal for release of LGB progeny, the spawning distribution of adults and, the success or failure of LGB spawners. This analysis is invaluable to determine population status and direct in-river planning for the iBoF Recovery Team.

Adult surveys are conducted through snorkeling counts and partially through mark-recapture methods on the Big Salmon River. This provides a current measure for the status of the adult population, as well as monitoring for the presence of aquaculture escapes and rainbow trout in this river. The status of adult salmon is estimated by seining (netting) holding pools to capture, sample, mark, and release adult iBoF salmon (could include both wild and LGB). These are performed at least monthly from July to November, to distinguish early and late (run timing) fish, as well as to increase the opportunities of capture. One or two late season swim-throughs provides a count (marked and unmarked salmon), which will form the basis of the mark/recapture population estimate. Successful spawning is determined by redd counts. Valuable biological information is collected from each iBoF adult salmon captured during the adult surveys. Origin (wild or LGB) of returning adults to the river is determined by scale and DNA analysis. These data are important in determining the returns of wild salmon to this river as well as the returns of LGB salmon released at various life stages. All information collected will enable biologists to adjust recovery plans and focus efforts towards distributions of stages found to have the most likely success for survival and return.

In conclusion, the Fort Folly First Nation is thankful of the continued support of DFO for the contribution in their endeavours to restore this species of extreme importance to First Nations Peoples.



Smolt wheel – photo taken by Laura Buck, Fort Folly First Nation



Adult surveys – photo taken by Tim Robinson, Fort Folly First Nation.

Gulf Region

Gulf Region AFS had a total operating budget for 2005-2006 of \$3,195,650. This included a top-up of \$130,000 provided to Gulf Region from Headquarters contingency funding. \$150,000 of this funding was transferred to the *Marshall* budget to cover a debt owing to the Crown.

\$225,000 was provided to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island (NCPEI) of which \$150,000 was spent on Co-Management projects and \$75,000 was spent on commercial access for this group.

\$260,300 was provided to the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) of which \$135,300 was spent on Co-Management projects and \$125,000 was spent on commercial access for this group.

The remaining \$2,835,350 was spent on Co-Management Agreements with 12 First Nations.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2005-2006, AFS Agreements were signed with the NCPEI and the NBAPC and with 12 First Nations in Gulf Region. Under these 14 Agreements 57 Aboriginal Fishery Guardians were employed for a total of approximately 196.5 months, and approximately 290 others were employed for a total of approximately 839 months in various other projects. In addition 35 non-Aboriginal people were employed by the NBAPC and Burnt Church First Nation to assist in harvesting of commercial catch.

Commercial Access

\$125,000 was spent to retire licences and repair a vessel for the NBAPC as follows:

Item	Cost
traps and life rafts	\$24,855.10
vessel upgrade	\$100,144.90
Total	\$125,000.00

\$75,000 was spent on repairs to a vessel, traps and a motor for NCPEI as follows:

Item	Cost
2 engines and vessel upgrade	\$50,000
traps, ropes, buoys and electronic equipment	\$25,000
Total	\$75,000

Key Projects

Pabineau First Nation

The Pabineau First Nation continued its yearly operation of the Salmon Enhancement Project on the Nepisiguit River. The salmon counting fence was constructed in June, 2005. Grilse and salmon were counted and weighed, and scale samples taken as they made their way up the Nepisiguit River for fall spawning. In collaboration with the Nepisiguit Salmon Association, salmon fry (fall fingerlings) were stocked in various locations throughout the Nepisiguit River system.

The salmon counting fence was de-constructed for the year in mid-October. A total of 11 members of the Pabineau First Nation worked on the 2005 Salmon Enhancement Project, of which four of them were Guardians and seven of them were Fisheries Technicians.

Indian Island First Nation

The fisheries guardian program was undertaken this year by Indian Island First Nation. There were eight fisheries Guardians employed for approximately 10 weeks between the periods of June 27th – September 2nd, 2005.

The guardian's duties included assisting in the preparation of the fishing season as well as assisting the fishermen. The Guardians also did patrolling off the waters of Indian Island as well as the fishing grounds. They also undertook the monitoring of all fishing activities.

Tobique First Nation

The AFS Agreement provided employment for 23 members of the First Nation in 2005-2006.

Nine river monitors were hired to patrol the river adjacent to the Tobique First Nation. The duties of the river monitors were very limited; however, they did do some patrolling on the river and in the vehicle. Any gillnets identified were reported to the Director of Fisheries and appropriate action was taken.

Four field technicians were hired to conduct brook and stream surveys and to collect statistical data which was provided to the DFO Science Branch Gulf Region.

Six individuals were hired to clean up debris and garbage along the banks of the Tobique River and to install digger logs and stream deflectors at the Indian Brook location.

Four individuals were hired to develop a community fisheries newsletter which reported on current fisheries issues in Atlantic Canada.

Elsipogtog First Nation

The Elsipogtog First Nation participated in DFO's Gulf Region Community Aquatic Monitoring Program, otherwise known as CAMP, during the 2006 season.

The objective of this program is to determine the ecological health of estuaries and bays in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. It provides baseline data to measure change and help identify the relationships between the health of the estuaries and the biodiversity of the fish and plant populations in the estuary. The program is also a great stewardship tool as it helps heighten community awareness on what they have in their own backyards.

A thirty meter x 2 meter beach seine is used to sweep an area of the estuary that is approximately 225 m². The seine is then pulled along shore and the wings of the net are checked for any fish while the pocket of the net remains in the water. Once this is done the contents of the pocket are dumped into a perforated tub which is placed in the water and all the fish inside are then identified and counted per species. Water quality parameters (oxygen, salinity, temperature) are recorded and a description of the plants within the sampling area is also recorded. This sampling is done at six sites in the Richibucto estuary once a month for five months, from May to September. Elsipogtog partnered with other organizations throughout the season to do the CAMP sampling.

The Friends of the Kouchibouguacis watershed group, who has been doing CAMP in the Kouchibouguacis estuary the past three years, assisted Blayne Peters and his Elsipogtog crew over the summer and vice versa. Staff from the Kouchibouguac National Park also helped out on occasion. DFO staff, Jim Weldon and Anne Turcotte, gave the training at the beginning of the summer.

The following pictures are from the initial training day.



The seine is pulled along the shore.



Identifying species from the tub.



Getting the seine net ready.

Students from a Grade 2 class at Elsipogtog First Nation visit the Miramichi Salmon Conservation Centre (private centre) to see salmon parr they later helped release into the Richibucto River last fall. The salmon parr were raised by staff at the Conservation Centre after they had been collected as eggs from adult salmon in the Richibucto River. DFO staff collected the salmon eggs for the restoration project.



Students watch as salmon parr are checked by staff at the Conservation Centre.



Students feed young salmon in an indoor pool.



Parr are transferred to smaller tubs to be checked by DFO staff.

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Region had a total AFS mandate for 2005-2006 of \$1,770,000, comprised of \$870,000 in Co-Management and \$900,000 in ATP funds. During the year they received a top-up from Headquarters of \$25,000 in Co-Management Contribution funding and \$100,500 in ATP, resulting in a revised mandate of \$1,895,500. \$921,000 was spent on Co-Management and \$974,500 on ATP expenditures.

During 2005-2006, different levels of success were attained by the Groups. The AFS program is recognized as an essential promoter of the Aboriginal involvement and ownership in Fisheries Management. The program plays a significant role in not only bridging relationships within the Aboriginal communities, but also fosters proactive and efficient processes of enforcement.

Protection and enhancement of fisheries resources and fish habitat; employment of guardians on a full time basis; and extensive, continuous training to become Fishery Officers are identified as common goals by each Group. The collection and reporting of scientific information and statistics on fish and fish habitat through river stock assessment projects, for example, are seen as positive endeavors.

Number of Agreements and Employment

During 2005-2006, the NL Region had AFS Agreements with five groups. The Agreements with Miawpukek (Conne River) and the Labrador Inuit Association included FSC access and co-management arrangements, while the Agreements with the Innu Nation, Labrador Métis Nation and Federation of Newfoundland Indians were limited to funding for guardians.

These agreements resulted in seasonal employment for 53 Aboriginal people, 37 as fishery guardians and 16 in other areas of fisheries management.

Commercial Access

During 2005 - 2006 the Newfoundland and Labrador Region disbursed ATP funding totaling \$974,500 as follows:

Group	Description	Cost
Miawpukek First Nation	- Purchase of Fishing Gear and Equipment	75,000
Federation of Newfoundland Indians	- Portion towards the towards the purchase of vessel - Purchase of Fishing Gear and Equipment	78,500 61,500
Innu Nation	- Purchase of Fishing Gear and Equipment	25,000
Labrador Métis Nation	- Purchase of Commercial Fishing Enterprise - Purchase of fishing gear and equipment	700,000 34,500

Funding from the ATP continues to help the recipient Groups achieve the goals set out in their Commercial Fisheries Strategies.

Key Projects

Nunatsiavut Government (formerly Labrador Inuit Association) Guardians

In 2005-2006 the Labrador Inuit Association, now known as the Nunatsiavut Government, entered into its last Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy Fisheries Agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Labrador Inuit Association received funding from DFO under the AFS Program for an Aboriginal Guardian Program since 1993 where they employed seven guardians on an annual basis. During the time that these Aboriginal Guardians were employed, they received training in enforcement as it relates to issuing warnings, inspecting fish and fishing gear, preparation of court documents and providing evidence for court. They worked closely with DFO enforcement personnel when monitoring fishing and habitat activities.

In December, 2005 the Labrador Inuit Association signed their Land Claims Agreement with the federal government and became their own self-government, Nunatsiavut Government. The experience and training that these Guardians gained under the AFS Program provided them with the opportunity to have the necessary qualifications required for employment in this field of work with the Nunatsiavut Government on a fulltime basis. It has also provided some guardians with training and knowledge to pursue careers with the RCMP and Fisheries and Oceans.



Guardians at work on the English River, Labrador.

Significant Issues for the 2005-2006 Season

At-Sea Mentoring Initiative and Fisheries Operation Management Initiative

Following the Supreme Court of Canada's *Marshall* decision of September 17, 2007, DFO initiated the *Marshall* Response Initiative to provide the 34 Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations affected by the decision with increased access to the commercial fishery in pursuit of a moderate livelihood. As a result, these First Nations have taken on a much more significant role in the commercial fishery.

Many have made dramatic progress and their communities have derived a number of benefits as a result. However, with this increased participation came the need to ensure that First Nations were able to master the skills necessary to run a safe and successful fish harvesting operation. Support was needed to acquire the expertise to manage the operation, to maintain vessels and gear, and to provide greater accountability to their community.

In February 2004 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a new \$6 million At-Sea Mentoring Initiative (ASMI) would be carried over for the next four years. Under this initiative, mentors provide at sea, hands on training to captains and deckhands in both the inshore and midshore fisheries during the commercial fishing season. The cost for this program is shared between DFO and the First Nations, with the First Nations contributions to increase over time and is aimed at providing the skills for fishers to fish all their licences, diversify their catch to maximize economic benefit, and, over time, result in more crews being made up of First Nations members.

The complementary Fisheries Operation Management Initiative (FOMI) will assist First Nations groups in improving their management skills. \$1 million dollars has been provided over four years to help improve the operations and management of First Nations commercial fishing enterprises, including information sharing, reporting and communications responsibilities.

Under ASMI, 15 eligible First Nations have completed Fisheries Training Plans and signed Contribution Agreements. Trainees are selected by the Bands. Some had previous experience but many had virtually no knowledge or experience. The mentors were selected by the Bands and almost all were fully certified - many trained and certified during the course of the *Marshall* response. As the program evolves, a progressively larger percentage of the mentoring is being delivered by First Nations mentors.

The level of activity has been well-sustained. Two Bands have exceeded the planned level of mentoring, nine Bands have reached their planned level and the remaining four have completed a major part of the planned work. The work to date has focused on commercially important species.

Under FOMI, fisheries business management work has specifically been focused on the harvesting component of fisheries business operations. There is a recognized need to include other aspects of the fishing business to help put First Nations operations on a fully accountable business footing. To work with Communities, mentors will need real and diverse experience and appropriate contacts in the industry. Because of the many processes involved, several mentors may be required for each Band.

These two programs together provide the practical support First Nations need to establish themselves as viable participants in a competitive industry, and help lay the foundation for greater economic self-reliance and a better quality of life for these communities.