



ABORIGINAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

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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 to be used 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 section 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.

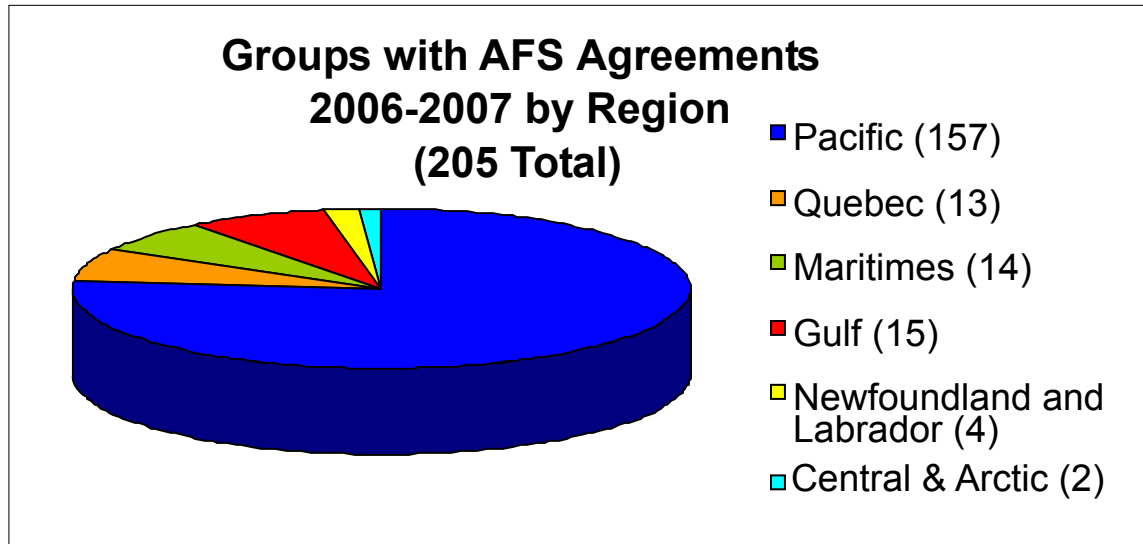
National Perspective

The AFS was funded at \$35,121,400 in 2006-2007. This included:

- \$22,431,869 for co-management expenditures, including \$721,400 in Operations and Maintenance (O&M), and \$9,400,000 for the Allocation Transfer Program (ATP), including \$200,000 in O&M.
- \$3,100,000 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.
- \$1,000,000 of this amount was AAROM funding spent under the AFS in 2005-2006 to 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 and \$230,000 was transferred to INAC for implementation of the Labrador Inuit Association Treaty.
- \$15,000 was returned to AAROM from Central and Arctic Region to replace funding provided from AAROM in 2005-2006.
- \$351,869 was transferred to AFS from AAROM to cover the Haida AFS Agreement, as this group did not migrate to AAROM in 2006-2007 as expected.
- \$46,000 in O&M was provided by Pacific Region in return for the same amount of AFS Grants and Contributions (G&C).
- \$25,795.50 in AAROM Access funding was moved to ATP in Pacific Region at year end.
- Science Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador provided \$25,000 in funding for an Amendment to the Labrador Métis Agreement.
- Later in the year, \$1,100,000 in G&C was transferred from the Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP) to AFS, to be returned over the next two fiscal years.
- All of this resulted in a final budget of \$33,185,064.50.
- There was some movement between co-management and ATP funding throughout the year resulting in final expenditures of \$21,482,519 in G&C for co-management and \$10,735,145.50 in G&C for ATP.
- \$908,700 was spent in O&M and \$58,700 in O&M was unspent at year end.

205 AFS Agreements, including amendments, were signed with 231 Aboriginal groups in British Columbia, 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.

Groups with AFS Agreements



These AFS Agreements have resulted in the creation of approximately 1,776 seasonal jobs in areas such as processing, monitoring and enhancement activities. 118 of those employed through the AFS are Aboriginal guardians, trained by DFO and employed by the Aboriginal group. The remaining 1,658 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.

Employment under the AFS – 2006-2007

| Region | Guardians | Others | Total |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pacific | 15 | 1159 | 1174 |
| Central and Artic | 0 | 20 | 20 |
| Quebec | 0 | 131 | 131 |
| Maritimes | 36 | 203 | 239 |
| Gulf | 37 | 145 | 182 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| Total | 118 | 1658 | 1776 |

Expenditures by Region 2006-2007

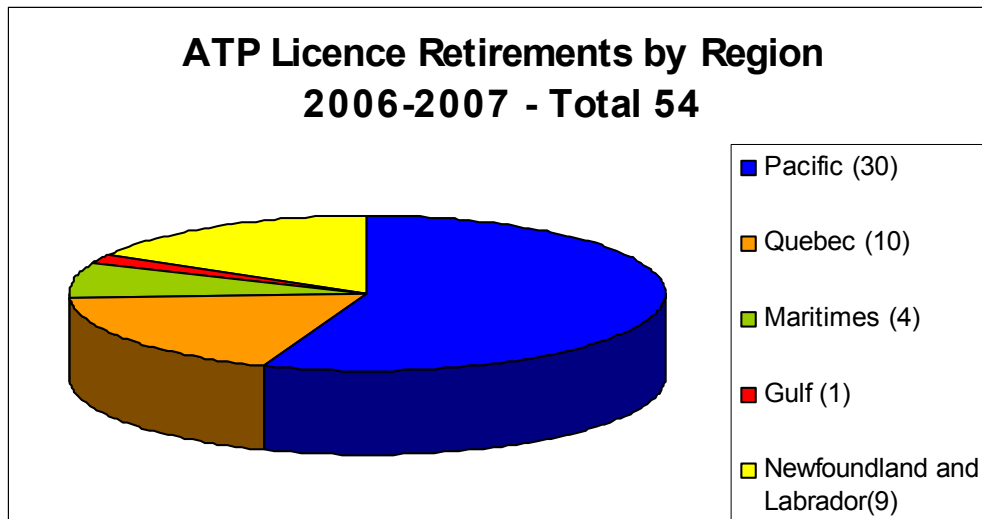
| Region | Co-Mgmt G&C | Co-Mgmt O&M | ATP | Total Expenditures |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>PACIFIC</i> | \$14,404,869 | \$300,000 | \$5,833,295.50 | \$20,538,164.50 |
| <i>CENTRAL & ARCTIC</i> | \$135,000 | \$398,400 | \$0 | \$533,400 |
| <i>QUEBEC</i> | \$910,500 | \$160,000 | \$3,389,150 | \$4,459,650 |
| <i>MARITIMES</i> | \$2,271,500 | \$0 | \$300,000 | \$2,571,500 |
| <i>GULF</i> | \$3,055,650 | \$0 | \$550,000 | \$3,605,650 |
| <i>NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR</i> | \$705,000 | \$0 | \$662,700 | \$1,367,700 |
| <i>HEADQUARTERS AFS</i> | \$0 | \$50,300 | \$0 | \$50,300 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | \$21,482,519 | \$908,700 | \$10,735,145.50 | \$33,126,364.50 |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL BUDGET | \$33,185,064.50 | | Unspent | \$58,700 |

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 \$10,735,145.50 in 2006-2007. 54 licences were retired and the Department purchased or contributed towards six vessels. In addition various quotas, equipment and gear were retired nationally.



Pacific Region

The initial core budget for 2006-2007 in Pacific Region was \$19,338,869, comprised of \$14,338,869 for co-management, including \$100,000 in O&M, and \$4,700,000 for the ATP, including \$200,000 in O&M. This also included \$351,869 provided from the AAROM budget to fund the AFS Agreement with the Haida Nation. This group was expected to migrate to AAROM in 2006-2007 but elected to remain under the AFS for the time being. A co-management top-up of \$66,000 in G&C was provided from Headquarters (HQ's) contingency funding. Additional ATP funds in the amount of \$1,100,000 were made available from surplus funds in the AIHP. This is to be repaid over the next two fiscal years. \$7,500 was also provided from Headquarters contingency funding and \$25,795.50 in AAROM Access was moved to ATP. This resulted in a revised total Regional budget of \$20,538,164.50.

During 2006-2007, a total of \$5,833,295.50 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. \$14,404,869 was spent on co-management agreements and \$100,000 in O&M was spent on contracts with First Nations. 29 licences have been issued to First Nations. The remaining licence will be issued under a future AFS Agreement.

Number of Agreements

The following Agreements were negotiated in 2006-2007:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement / Project Funding Agreements | 98 |
| Amendments to Agreements | 54 |
| Fisheries Agreements | 2 |
| Framework Agreement | 1 |
| Access Sub-agreements | 2 |
| Total | 157 |

Employment

In 2006-2007, 15 Guardians were employed seasonally under AFS Agreements and 1,159 other people were employed seasonally in projects funded through the agreements. Please note that this information is based on final reports received for 2006-2007, or on preliminary projected estimates provided by the group at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Commercial Access

30 commercial licences were retired in 2006-2007 under the ATP in Pacific region, as well as some quota, vessels and gear. 29 licences have been allocated to First Nations and the remaining licence will be allocated under a future AFS Agreement.

The following licences and quotas were acquired under the ATP in 2006-2007

| Licence | Value |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$75,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$75,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$73,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon gillnet | \$80,000 |
| Salmon seine | \$340,000 |
| Salmon troll | \$130,000 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$1,021,977 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$93,000 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$82,362 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$253,325 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$58,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$265,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$265,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$265,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$255,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$249,000 |
| Rockfish hook and line | \$150,000 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$429,759 |
| Sablefish | \$413,152 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$128,000 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$332,500 |
| Halibut hook and line | \$58,320.50 |
| Total | \$5,833,295.50 |

Key Project***Hupacasath First Nation***

Hupacasath First Nation in Port Alberni has a population of approximately 263 people; the main reserve is adjacent to the Somass River, which enters the Alberni Inlet, ultimately connecting to the Pacific Ocean through Barkley Sound, where the Band has reserves adjacent to clam beaches.

The Band claims to have occupied the southern half of the Comox Valley for millennia, and have participated in a wide variety of activities throughout their claimed "traditional territory" in recent years. The Band operated an AFS program through the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council in 1992-1993, and then annually since 1996-1997. They have had their own separate AFS Agreement from 1996-1997 to present, for operating Sockeye salmon counting fences at two locations during the spawning migration. The data collected from this enumeration project is essential to DFO biologists and managers for the annual management of the sockeye stocks.

The Hupacasath have been energetic in expanding fisheries-related activities using the AFS program as a base for leveraging additional funding and expertise. They now operate an "otolith" lab, (for fish age determination) at their impressive new office and health complex. They annually conduct Economic Opportunity fisheries on Sockeye, Chinook, Coho and Chum salmon when stock size permits, and have participated in ESSR (Excess Salmon to Spawning Requirements) harvests at the nearby Robertson Creek fish hatchery for Chinook and Coho salmon. Funds raised through ESSR harvest have been utilized for salmon habitat rehabilitation projects in local watersheds. The Band distributes important nutrients to the local Ash River annually by adding salmon carcasses to the river in specified areas.

In 2006-2007, a project was completed on Gracie Creek, a Sproat Lake tributary, for Sockeye and Coho rearing and spawning habitat. Approximately \$1.5 million was raised for this project by the Hupacasath First Nation. The project addressed damage to an important salmon producing area. Logging had caused extensive earth slides in the main creek and tributaries. Salmon are now utilizing the rehabilitated creek.

Chinook salmon enumeration was carried out using a novel underwater camera arrangement under a contract between DFO Stock Assessment Division and Hupacasath First Nation.

The Hupacasath First Nation has a controlling interest in land desired by a granite aggregate producer. The Band partnered with the California Company to develop and operate an open-pit mine on the shores of Alberni Inlet. Extensive long-term employment opportunities are envisioned by the Band.

A test-boat for Alberni Inlet Sockeye salmon had operated for several years to provide data to DFO biologists for stock management. Hupacasath First Nation was contracted to operate this program and to train on-board observers.

The Hupacasath First Nation is an excellent example of a group who has partnered with various other interested parties to leverage additional funds which enable them to carry out programs that are beneficial to their own community, DFO, and the region as a whole.



Sproat Fishway



Fish Counter



Hupacasath AFS Fisheries Crew



Inside of the counting area of the fish ladder



Large woody debris placement

Central and Arctic Region

In 2006-2007 the Central and Arctic Region had an initial annual AFS budget of \$350,400 in O&M and \$150,000 in co-management G&C funding. \$15,000 in G&C borrowed from the AAROM budget in 2005-2006 was returned to the AAROM budget, and a top-up of \$48,000 in O&M was provided out of HQ contingency funding, resulting in a final budget of \$533,400. \$398,400 was spent on contracts with First Nations and \$135,000 on Agreements with two Aboriginal groups in the Region.

Most of the AFS budget was spent on Aboriginal fishery community projects and on consultations with First Nations including the funding of the Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee (GSLAC).

Aboriginal Fishery Strategy Project Workplan – 2006-2007

| Group | Project | Date | Budget |
|--|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Hay River Métis Council | AFS Co-ordinator | 03/04/06 – 30/06/06 | \$20,115.00 |
| | AFS Co-ordinator | 01/08/06 – 30/03/07 | \$64,185.00 |
| | Summer Fishery Worker | 22/05/06 – 08/09/06 | \$14,300.00 |
| Katlocheeche First Nation | Summer Fishery Worker | 01/06/06 – 06/09/06 | 28,115.00 |
| | Coney Project | 04/10/06 – 08/10/06 | \$8,030.00 |
| Deninu Kue First Nation | Community Angler Surveyor | 18/05/06 – 05/09/06 | \$19,360.00 |
| Lutsel K'e First Nation | East Arm Monitoring Patrol | 21/06/06 – 21/09/06 | \$37,455.00 |
| | Harvest Survey | 10/04/06 – 26/05/06 | \$8,470.00 |
| | Harvest Survey | 05/06/06 – 31/03/07 | \$22,000.00 |
| Kaa Gee Tu First Nation | Winter Fishery Workers | 21/11/06 – 20/12/06 | \$9,240.00 |
| Sambaa K'e Dene Band | Community Anglers Survey | 25/05/06 – 06/09/06 | \$32,890.00 |
| Fort Providence | Community Harvest / Angler Surveyor | 06/06/06 – 07/10/06 | \$21,340.00 |
| Akaiicho Territorial Government | Inconnu Conservational Education Project | 25/09/06 – 10/10/06 | \$20,591.95 |
| Individual | | | |
| Shawn Buckley, Commercial Fisherman | Purchase of fish samples | 23/02/07 – 31/03/07 | \$3,450.00 |
| Archie Buckley, Commercial Fisherman | Purchase of fish samples | 23/02/07 – 31/03/07 | \$7,500.00 |
| Sub-Total | 16 contracts | 953 days | \$317,041.95 |
| Fish Ageing Contracts (Laura Hearing) | | | \$21,358.05 |
| Consultations/co-management (GSLAC) | | | \$30,000.00 |
| Program Support (Administration, travel, contract support, etc.) | | | \$30,000.00 |
| Sub-Total | | | \$81,358.05 |
| Grand Total | | | \$398,400.00 |

Project Descriptions

The projects funded by the AFS in the Northwest Territories for 2006-2007 have given nine Aboriginal organizations in seven communities, the ability to increase their involvement in the management of the resource. The partnership of the AAROM program with the AFS has been beneficial to fisheries management by promoting co-management between Aboriginal organizations and government agencies, as well as building capacity within the Aboriginal organizations for future management of their resource.

Co-management fishery projects in 2006-2007 involved:

- Supporting co-management by building capacity within the various Aboriginal organizations that are present in the area.
- 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.
- 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.
- The promotion of/and involvement in Science/Culture based youth camps and conservational education based projects which raise awareness and educate people about fisheries management.

Specifics – 2006-2007

1) Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band, Fort Providence

Digaa Enterprises Ltd., 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 nine years of harvest data to the community. The same individual was also hired to carry out the initial year of the Itinerant Angler Survey, which included interviewing and recording catch information from anglers at the winter road crossing and Horn River.

2) Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Resolution

The Band was contracted to hire a community member to perform the second year of the Little Buffalo River Angler Survey, which was created to collect information on the recreational fishery because of concern over declines in walleye and pike stocks.

3) Lutsel K'e Dene Band, Lutsel K' e

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

4) Akaitcho Territorial Government

The Akaitcho Government was given an agreement to hire a photographer/diver to provide video footage and still photography to be used in the production of a documentary and educational video on GSL inconnu. The footage included scientific sampling methods, commercial fishing, youth camps and interviews with elders in their traditional language.

5) Sambaa K' e Dene Band, Trout Lake

The Band was contracted for its sixth year in a row to monitor the recreational fishery on Trout Lake by surveying and recording catch information from both itinerant anglers and lodge guests.

6) Kaa Gee Tu First Nation, Kakisa

Since the closure of the commercial fishery on Tathlina Lake, DFO along with the Ka' A' Gee Tu First Nation have been gathering scientific data to determine the status of the walleye population. Two individuals were hired to assist in the collection and sampling of 250 walleye by providing a winter camp, breaking trail, hauling equipment and assisting with the setting and lifting of gillnets.

7) Katlodeeche First Nation, Hay River Reserve

The Band was contracted to provide one fisher and a fishing boat for the setting and lifting of scientific gillnets in the Hay River Domestic Area. This is part of a three year joint project between the West Point First Nation, Hay River Métis Government and Katlodeeche First Nation to gather baseline information on the domestic area. The project was funded in partnership through the AFS and AAROM programs.

8) Hay River Métis Council, Hay River**AFS Coordinator/Technician**

The overall co-ordination of the AFS program is facilitated by an Aboriginal graduate of a Renewable Resources Technology Program whom is contracted through 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 Co-ordinator also manages the organization and computer analysis of data collected from the various community studies and prepares reports and presentations for the various Aboriginal organizations / communities. The Co-ordinator also assists with the collection of whitefish and walleye size and age samples from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) plant in Hay River.

Summer Fishery Worker

The Band was contracted to provide one fisherman to assist in the setting and lifting of scientific gillnets in the Hay River Domestic Area. This is part of a three year joint project between the West Point First Nation, Hay River Métis Government and Katlodeeche First Nation to gather baseline information on the domestic area. The project was funded in partnership through the AFS and the AAROM program.

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 Northwest Territories (NWT).

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 NWT and the FFMC. Meetings are held twice a year, in spring and fall.

Key Project

Great Slave Lake Inconnu Con Ed Program – Katlodeeche First Nation, Hay River Reserve/ Akaitcho Territorial Government

The GSL inconnu population is culturally significant to Aboriginal groups around the lake and has influenced the lives and jobs of many people. However, the population currently faces conservation issues due to heavy exploitation throughout the 1970s. In the past there were major spawning migrations up the Talston, Slave and Big Buffalo Rivers, with smaller runs up the Hay River and Little Buffalo River.

In 2006, multiple projects were developed that were collectively referred to as the Great Slave Lake Inconnu Conservational Education Program (Coney project). The objective of the project was to raise awareness and educate all ages on the state and importance on the GSL inconnu population.

The first part of the project had a professional photographer/diver come up to record interviews with local hunters, fisherman, elders, and technical experts on the history and management of the GSL inconnu. These interviews took place at several traditional fishing locations in the area including Slave River, Buffalo Lake and the Yates River. Interviews include past knowledge of where the Coney were at certain times of the year, their abundance, what they were used for, how they were prepared and how they were managed both presently and traditionally. Video footage was also taken of scientific sampling methods, commercial fishing techniques, various preparation methods and some underwater footage of fish habitat. All of this material was given to DFO and the Akaitcho Territorial Government for archiving and future use as educational material.

The second part of the project was focused on the youth; as the future managers of our northern resources it was determined they should be made aware of why this fish species is so important both biologically and culturally to the GSL. A Coney Culture Camp was designed that will bring together the traditional knowledge and science components of fisheries management and strengthen the ties between them as well as local bands, elders and youth. Modules such as the Coney life cycle, catching / cleaning / cooking / conservation, food chain interactions, bio-magnification, and water quality/quantity were presented at two camps, one at Sandy Creek on the Hay River Reserve and the other was held in 2007 with the Salt River First Nation. The footage of these camps was used to produce a youth orientated educational video on the GSL inconnu for use in the schools.

This project is an excellent example of how the AFS can be used along with the AAROM program to manage fishery resources and help in promoting co-management among organizations.

Quebec Region

In 2006-2007, the Quebec Region had an annual budget of \$3,263,000 for the AFS Program, of which \$200,000 was O&M. The Region provided \$100,000 in O&M funding to HQ in return for the same amount of G&C. Later in the year, an additional \$60,000 in O&M was provided to the Region from HQ contingency funding. An additional \$450,000 in ATP funding was provided by Newfoundland Region. This is to be returned in 2007-2008. A top-up in ATP funds of \$686,650 was provided from HQ contingency funding and \$102,500 in co-management funding was converted to ATP. All of this resulted in a final Regional budget of \$4,459,650. Of this amount, \$160,000 went to contracts and \$910,500 was spent on co-management arrangements, while \$3,389,150 was devoted to the purchase of fishing enterprises under the ATP.

Southern Quebec

Fisheries Agreements

In 2006-2007, seven Innu groups and amalgamations of groups signed eight AFS agreements.

This year, a portion of the available funding was allocated to the recruitment of fisheries coordinators, theoretical and practical training (for a professional fishery diploma), and, in large part, to the ATP for the purchase of fishing enterprises. Six communities hired a consultant to help them consolidate and/or restructure their fishing enterprises.

In the past seven years, most Innu communities have seen a significant increase in their responsibilities in the area of fishing activities. They have also had to deal with large fluctuations in seafood prices in world markets. Some have had problems selling their catch, and all have had to contend with rising oil prices. Need for further training and worker turnover continue to be serious obstacles to the prosecution of a viable fishery in several communities. Outside assistance is therefore desirable. Despite this fact, the Innu have made impressive progress in terms of the management and viability of their fisheries.

Marshall Bands

For Quebec Region, the four Mi'kmaq and Malecite communities of the Gaspé Peninsula receive AFS funding for co-management only. The community of Listuguj receives a higher level of funding given the management of the Restigouche River. It is important to note that this river is managed jointly by Quebec Region and Gulf Region.

Northern Quebec

The Kativik Regional Government which represents 14 Northern Villages, receives most of its funding under the AAROM Program. However, a small Agreement was signed with this group under the AFS Program.

Employment

In 2006-2007, 106 Aboriginal people and 25 non-Aboriginal people were employed in Innu communities in the fisheries, for an average of 22 weeks (between 10 and 34 weeks). This does not include the many indirect jobs that were created on the North Shore through the AFS. For example, over 80 Innu are employed in a processing plant in Sept-Îles that is owned by three Innu communities (Essipit, Uashat and Betsiamites).

Statistics on Food Fisheries

The following statistics are only an estimate of the actual food fishery:

| Community | Species | Catch |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Betsiamites | Snow crab Groundfish Whelk | 199,281 lb 96,616 lb 10,669 lb |
| Essipit | Whelk Herring Capelin | 900 lb 250 lb |
| Uashat | Snow crab | 8,255 lb |
| Pêcheres Shippek | Snow crab | 10,073 lb (5,000 lb final product) |
| Natashquan | Crab | 9,632 lb |
| La Romaine | nil | nil |

Acquisition or Financial Participation in the Acquisition of Fishing Enterprises by DFO

Under the ATP in 2006-2007 Quebec Region acquired or participated financially in the acquisition of the following fishing enterprises:

| Community | Gear | Acquisition Licences | Acquisition Vessels | DFO Participation | Total Cost of the Enterprise |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Betsiamites* | | Snow crab Stimpson's surf clam Groundfish | Jimmy S. (43 ft) Léo-Mina (46.9 ft) | \$437,000 \$553,550 | \$1,300,000 \$930,000 |
| Essipit | Purchase of fishing gear | | | \$33,600 | |
| Uashat | | Snow crab | N/M Pathfinder VI | \$500,000 | \$1,700,000 |
| Pêcheries Shipek | | 5 whelk licences Snow crab | Crab fishing boat (42 ft) | \$165,000 \$1,700,000 | \$165,000 \$1,700,000 |
| Natashquan | No purchases | | | | |
| La Romaine | No purchases | | | | |
| Total | | | | \$3,389,150 | |

***Betsiamites:** The fishing enterprise was acquired over two years. DFO will invest the balance in 2007/2008 for a total of \$930,000.

With respect to the snow crab enterprise, it was purchased on a 50/50 basis with Essipit. In 2005-2006, DFO provided \$500K to Essipit, which purchased the enterprise from the fisher. In 2006-2007, Betsiamites purchased 50% of the enterprise from Essipit.

Key Project

Training of Innu Fishers

The Innu training program continues to be in effect. The program consists of 1,400 hours of training spread over several years, and provides young people and others with fishing training that is recognized by the Quebec Education Department. A range of courses is available to meet interests, including marine mechanics, general deck work, master's certification and fisheries management and planning. Those students who complete the program will receive a Professional Fisheries Studies diploma.

Tangible Benefits to Communities

Most Innu communities of the North Shore now have crews composed entirely of Aboriginal people, including duly certified masters. Aboriginal instructors are also hired by the *Centre spécialisé des pêches* (CSP). Day-to-day supervision of the students is the responsibility of an Aboriginal person, who is himself a Class IV master who graduated from the CSP in 2001. Training is given at a Uashat school in Sept-Îles, a strategic meeting place for the Innu of the North Shore, allowing students from across the North Shore to more easily access the training. All students are billeted with families for periods of up to eight weeks.

This year, there were over 176 enrollments in the various courses offered (the same candidate can enroll in several courses). 691 hours of training were delivered. The training costs are covered by DFO, and the training is delivered by the CSP in Grande-Rivière and Sept-Îles. AMIK is responsible for the organization of the training.

| Program | Number of course hours |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| General deck work | 150 |
| Mechanics | 210 |
| Professionalization | 135 |
| Master with restrictions | 180 |
| Marine advanced first aid | 16 |

Maritimes Region

The initial operating budget under the AFS for Maritimes Region for 2006-2007 was \$2,421,500. A top-up from Headquarters of \$150,000 in ATP funds was provided for the Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS). This resulted in a final AFS budget of \$2,571,500. \$500,000 was provided to fund the NCNS, (\$300,000 in ATP and \$200,000 in co-management) and the remaining \$2,071,500 funded Agreements with 13 First Nations. All of the funding for First Nations was for co-management Agreements.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2006-2007, 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 2006-2007 was \$300,000. The total amount was spent on costs associated with the building of a new vessel for the NCNS as follows:

| | |
|---|------------------|
| New lobster traps, rope buoys and Swordfish longline equipment | \$50,000 |
| Lobster, mackerel, herring Herring/mackerel bait licence package | \$161,000 |
| Open lobster-style vessel | \$75,000 |
| Used gear and equipment | \$14,000 |
| Total | \$300,000 |

Key Project

Annapolis Valley First Nation

Annapolis Valley First Nation dedicated a portion of their AFS funds to educate the members, including the young people, in the community.

This started with an Oceans Day event with the Three Wishes Daycare. The event took place on the Bay of Fundy shore where the adult supervisors and the children spent several hours on the beach looking for shells, marine organisms, fossils and different rocks. They even picked up five bags of garbage along the beach. The children were extremely keen to learn and asked many questions. They really enjoyed themselves and want to do this again.

In November and January, the Community hosted two *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) information sessions. They all played a Species at Risk Jeopardy game and watched DFO's presentation on SARA. During the second session, displays were set up, resource material was handed out and another presentation was given. Most people agreed on the importance of SARA and want to learn more and become involved. Ideas on how to become involved were discussed and tentative plans were made.

In February, Community members, including youth and the Fisheries Committee took a daytrip to Millbrook to visit the aquaculture site as the workers went through their daily activities. They had a very positive response, especially from the youth who took the tour. Annapolis Valley First Nation is starting to see a greater interest from community members in the marine environment and different ideas related to future endeavours in sustaining the marine resources.

In March, the First Nation welcomed Shalan Jodry from the Bear River First Nation to hold another SARA session. This event was a huge success and community feedback was positive. As a result of the session, the Band has made plans to investigate possible projects under SARA.

Also in March, the Annapolis Valley First Nation held a one day information/training session for all community members. The Captain and crew of the First Nation Drifter fishing vessel were available throughout the day, teaching different knots used while fishing, how to splice a rope, building and maintenance, and how to build fish trawls for cod, haddock and halibut. This was a popular event.

Gulf Region

Gulf Region AFS had an initial operating budget for 2006-2007 of \$3,190,650. A top-up of \$350,000 in ATP funding and \$35,000 in co-management funding was provided from HQs contingency funding. This resulted in a final budget of \$3,605,650.

\$375,000 was provided to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island (NCPEI) of which \$150,000 was spent on co-management projects and \$225,000 was spent on commercial access for this group. \$460,300 was provided to the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) of which \$135,300 was spent on co-management projects and \$325,000 was spent on commercial access for this group.

The remaining \$2,870,350 was spent on 15 co-management Agreements with 13 First Nations.

Number of Agreements and Employment

In 2006-2007, AFS Agreements were signed with the NCPEI and the NBAPC and 15 Agreements were signed with the 13 First Nations in Gulf Region. Under these 17 Agreements 37 Aboriginal Fishery Guardians were employed, and approximately 145 others were employed on a seasonal basis for other projects. In addition ten non-Aboriginal people were employed by the NBAPC and Burnt Church First Nation to assist in harvesting of commercial catch.

Commercial Access

New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Retirement of licence | \$160,000 |
| Gear | \$15,000 |
| Gear and equipment for vessel Including GPS monitoring system, survival gear, computer, engine upgrade | \$150,000 |
| Sub-Total | \$325,000 |

Native Council of Prince Edward Island

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Vessel upgrade, electronics and rock crab traps | \$150,000 |
| two flat bed trailers for hauling gear | \$75,000 |
| Sub Total | \$225,000 |

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Grand Total | \$550,000 |
|--------------------|------------------|

Key Project

Burnt Church Salmon Science Trap Net Program

The Burnt Church Band has been participating in a salmon science trap net program for the past three years. In an effort to estimate the size of the spawning run of Atlantic salmon to the Tabusintac River, two trap nets are fished daily between July and October to capture, tag and recapture adult salmon during the upstream spawning migration. All Atlantic salmon are measured for forklength, sexed based on external characters, scale sampled for ageing, and checked for wild origin presence or absence (hatchery) prior to release to the wild or used for food purposes.

Both nets are located in waters adjacent to land owned by the Burnt Church First Nation. Counts on other species of fish in the Tabusintac River are also kept. This project is supervised by a biologist hired by the Band, a manager and 10 trapnet workers.



Setting up of trap net



Trap net is checked by Burnt Church fishermen

Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Region had an initial AFS mandate for 2006-2007 of \$1,565,000, comprised of \$665,000 in co-management and \$900,000 in ATP funds. During the year they received a top-up from HQs of \$15,000 in co-management Contribution funding and \$212,700 in ATP. They also received \$25,000 from the regional Science Sector for an Amendment with the Labrador Métis Nation (LMN). All of this resulted in a revised mandate of \$1,817,700. However, later in the year one group was unable to acquire the licence they wanted. This resulted in \$450,000 in ATP funds being provided to Quebec Region with the understanding that this funding would be returned for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Their overall mandate, therefore, was \$1,367,700. \$705,000 was spent on co-management and \$662,700 on ATP expenditures.

Through the AFS Program and the ATP, the NL Region continued to provide funding to eligible Aboriginal Groups located within the Newfoundland and Labrador Region during fiscal year 2006-2007. The Region was successful in negotiating Fisheries Agreements with four recipient Groups namely; the Miawpukek First Nation (MFN), the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI), the LMN, and the Innu Nation.

AFS and ATP funding was disbursed to these Groups as follows:

| GROUP | AFS AMOUNT | ATP AMOUNT |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| MFN | \$190,000 | \$188,700 |
| FNI | \$200,000 | \$464,000 |
| LMN | \$190,000 | \$10,000 |
| INNU | \$125,000 | - |
| Total | \$705,000 | \$662,700 |

All Groups primarily utilize their AFS funding to cover costs associated with conducting their Fisheries Guardian Programs. During 2006-2007, the MFN as in previous years continued to apply \$50,000 of their contribution against costs associated with the Conne River Enhancement Project and the LMN applied approximately \$40,000 of their contribution against costs associated with a monitoring and sampling program.

Employment

The individual Fisheries Guardian Programs provided full-time seasonal employment as follows:

| GROUP | GUARDIANS EMPLOYED | AVERAGE WEEKS EMPLOYED |
|-------|--------------------|------------------------|
| MFN | *6 | 26 |
| FNI | **15 | 16 |
| LMN | 5 | 31 |
| INNU | 4 | 24 |

* The MFN conducted its Fisheries Guardian Program for the entire year . Four guardians are employed during the summer and two are employed during the winter.

** Includes the Guardian Program Coordinator who is employed for approximately 40 weeks.

Commercial Access

ATP funding was spent as follows:

| GROUP | DESCRIPTION | COST |
|--------------|--|------------------|
| MFN | Purchase of supplies and materials for two complete 18 ton Refrigerated Seawater System (one system for each of their two vessels) and associated vessel modifications cost | \$172,700 |
| | Purchase of fishing gear and equipment | \$16,000 |
| FNI | Acquisition of an enterprise consisting of 44'11" vessel and associated commercial fishing licences including Groundfish, Herring, Mackerel FG, Mackerel MG, Capelin MG, Squid, Lobster Snow Crab and Bait | \$450,000 |
| | Purchase of 2 motors and lobster traps to participate in the lobster fishery | \$14,000 |
| LMN | Purchase of a motor to participate in the seal hunt | \$10,000 |
| Total | | \$662,700 |

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

Key Projects

All groups reported busy schedules for their guardians while engaged in monitoring the fishing activities, and each group re-iterated that they felt they have achieved great success. The 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 are seen as positive endeavors.

Examples of program highlights are as follows:

Miawpukek First Nation

Overnight patrols and stakeouts were performed with DFO and a few charges resulted. The Fisheries Guardians were also requested by the Band to collect data in relation to the MFN's subsistence hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering practices.

In addition to their routine enforcement duties, the Fisheries Guardians made presentations on fisheries regulations, *Fisheries Act*, Communal licence, conservation, the environment, and SARA to local schools, council and to the Annual General Assembly.



Aboriginal Fisheries Guardian Cabin

The Conne River Stock Assessment Project funding came from both the AFS Program and the Band. The Band employed eight members who work together with DFO Science staff and conducted activities ranging from electrofishing to repair and maintenance. All fish that moved into and out of the Conne River were identified and enumerated.

2006 was one of the best salmon seasons for Conne River – more than 4,000 salmon entered the river. A crill census was conducted and sampling was done on all salmon that were caught. They were cleaned for the fishers, measured, weighed, sexed and a scale sampled. The numbers of anglers was also recorded.



Counting Fence Facility

Federation of Newfoundland Indians

A partnership between AFS and AAROM was developed - two Guardians worked for ten weeks on the Banded Killifish Project monitoring the By-Catch in the Eel Fishery which was one of FNI's AAROM projects.



The Banded Killifish



Checking fyke nets for American eel

Labrador Métis Nation

The LMN and DFO Oceans staff joined together and designed a monitoring program for the Gilbert's Bay Marine Protected Area. Monitoring ran from November through December. This monitoring was a new initiative and was viewed as a great success. The Guardians worked hard well into the winter to monitor the Marine Protected Area and contributed to an incident free season.



Monitoring the Gilbert's Bay Marine Protected Area

Innu Nation

The Guardians worked cooperatively with DFO Fisheries Officers and the Nunatsiavut Government Fisheries Guardians to ensure that any fishing activities were conducted according to the terms of communal licenses for Aboriginal fishers and DFO regulations for non-Aboriginal fishers.

In Natuashish, patrols were made around local waters as far south as Flowers Bay and Big Bay and as far north as Zoor. Inland waters were also patrolled.

In Sheshatshiu, patrols were primarily made around Lake Melville, Grand Lake and Kenamu. The cabin at Kanamu is regularly used by the Guardians while on patrol. Time spent there entails checking nets for proper identification, ensuring proper bag limits are maintained, and that those fishing have the proper permits and are using the proper tags.

Renovation of the Aboriginal Fisheries Guardian Cabin on the Kenamu River

Housing facilities for the Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians while on patrol is a challenge, particularly for the Innu Guardians in Labrador. Each year a number of patrols are carried out along the Kenamu River and it was recognized that overnight stays would enhance the presence of the Guardians on the river. The existing patrol cabin on the Kenamu provided temporary accommodations but was deemed inadequate for overnight stays.

During 2006-2007, a portion of the Fisheries Guardian Program funding went towards an expansion and modification of the patrol cabin. The renovated cabin can now provide the Guardians an opportunity to overnight while on patrol. The ability to overnight will increase their number of patrols due to the decrease in travel time to and from their communities. Overnight stays will also result in a decrease in travel expenses.

Increases in the patrol time spent on the river will provide a significant contribution towards the continuing success of the monitoring of the fishing activity.



Expanded and modified Aboriginal Fisheries Guardian Cabin on the Kenamu River

Significant Issue for the 2006-2007 Season

Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk

The Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk (AFSAR) were established in 2004 as an important element of the implementation of the SARA. The protection of species at risk in Canada depends upon a meaningful collaboration with Aboriginal people and organizations in the implementation of programs under SARA. The *Act* recognizes the role that Aboriginal people play in wildlife conservation and requires that Aboriginal traditional knowledge be taken into account when assessments of which species are at risk are carried out and when protection and recovery measures are developed and implemented. Two funds are part of AFSAR: the Aboriginal Capacity Building Fund (ACBF) and the Aboriginal Critical Habitat Protection Fund (ACHPF).

The ACBF is designed to help Aboriginal organizations and communities across Canada build capacity to enable them to participate actively in the conservation and recovery of species protected under SARA and species at risk designated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The ACBF enables Aboriginal organizations and communities to acquire, develop, and use knowledge and skills so that they can play an active role in the implementation of SARA. Capacity building includes skill development (education, training, learning), tool development (systems or mechanisms), and information management (data).

The AFSAR National Management Team (NMT), comprised of a member from each of Environment Canada (EC), DFO and the Parks Canada Agency, with participation of INAC and the National Aboriginal Council for Species at Risk, and in consultation with AFSAR regional Coordinators from EC and DFO identified seven distinct types of AFSAR target activities. These activities meet the goals of the AFSAR Program to address both capacity building within Aboriginal groups and protection and recovery via the ACBF and the ACHPF.

The seven types of activities are as follows:

- Communications, outreach and education;
- Collection of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge;
- Conservation Planning;
- Data collection;
- Habitat improvement;
- Habitat protection; and
- Project evaluation

The AFSAR Program is proposal driven. All Aboriginal communities and organizations are eligible for funding under the AFSAR Program. A non-Aboriginal organization that has been mandated by an eligible Aboriginal community or organization, and which submits a letter of support along with its proposal, is also eligible for AFSAR funding.

In DFO, the implementation of the Program for individual communities and organizations is carried out using the established terms and conditions of the Integrated Aboriginal Contribution Management Framework. Under the AFSAR Program, EC and DFO enter into Contribution Agreements with Aboriginal communities and organizations to conserve species at risk and their critical habitat. Project development and selection is enhanced by involving species at risk experts from various sectors in the review process. A Regional Management Team is required to oversee the project review and ranking process in each region and provide recommendations and advice to the NMT. The NMT provides a national oversight role for the AFSAR project review and selection process and provides direction on longer-term implementation issues to the Species at Risk Assistant Deputy Ministers Committee.

The overall long-term goal of the AFSAR Program is to facilitate meaningful collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations in SARA implementation. In fiscal year 2006-2007, a total of \$498,223 was provided to 20 groups to fund 21 aquatic-focused projects under the AFSAR Program. These projects were administered by EC.



Soowahlie Indian Band workers conducting habitat restoration work in Sweltzer Creek. Photo credit: Ellen Huse



*Okanagan Nation Alliance Field technician conducting habitat assessment work.
Photo credit: Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)*



*Technician tending Nechako White Sturgeon eggs
Photo credit: Carrier Sekani Tribal Council*



Labrador Métis Nation (LMN) salmon monitor collects data on specimen as part of the salmon monitoring field work supported by the AFSAR Program



LMN Salmon monitor, Kimberly Russell weighs a specimen



Kimberly Russell is assisted by LMN Fisheries Guardian George Morris



Members of Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) use a beach seine to look for eels and other species found in eel grass



UINR researchers dissect an eel to check for parasites



Eel swimbladder parasites found in a sample



Shelley Denny of UINR collects eel specimens as part of UINR's eel science work being conducted under the AFSAR Program



Aboriginal Community members take part in an information session as part of the Maritime Aboriginal Peoples Council engagement/outreach program under AFSAR

NOTES

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