

Saskatchewan River Sturgeon Management Board  
October 19, 2006  
The Pas, Manitoba

Board members in attendance:

Marcy Bast – SaskPower (Co-chair)  
Dennis Strom - Saskatchewan Northern Affairs  
Al Young– Saskatchewan Watershed Authority  
Ron Campbell – Manitoba Water Stewardship  
Shelley Matkowski – Manitoba Hydro  
Lennard Morin – Cumberland House Fishermen's Co-op  
Murray Koob – Saskatchewan Environment

Advisors/observers:

Barry Carriere – Cumberland House Cree Nation  
Raymond Chaboyer – Cumberland House Cree Nation  
Rob Wallace – Saskatchewan Environment  
Fred Hnytka – Fisheries & Oceans Canada  
Lareina Rising – Fisheries & Oceans Canada

1. Opening prayer by Lennard.
2. Introductions
3. Minutes of March 15, 2006 meeting in Prince Albert
  - reviewed; no corrections.
  - Action items update: page 3 – Lennard contacted Al Hilton, ADM of SNA to appeal for re-instatement of \$10,000 funding for index fishing. Dennis Strom will be working to secure funding for 2007.
  - Other action items – see Rob and Marcy member updates.
  - Motion to accept minutes moved by Lennard, seconded by Murray.
4. Record of Decisions from March 15, 2006 meeting
  - reviewed;
  - Raymond asked whether point re CHCN contributing traditional knowledge to meetings as members available meant he should be bringing an appropriate person along. General discussion of value of community knowledge.
  - Marcy indicated we want to ensure that those who want to participate feel welcome; she can provide support for a total of four from Cumberland House to attend.
  - Discussion regarding usefulness of record of decisions and whether signing at subsequent meeting is too late.

**DECISION: Co-chairs will send out Record of Decisions to members for review as soon as possible following each meeting, seek verbal or email approval by members, list members who have approved at bottom of RoD, and distribute to members .**

5. Review Agenda
  - Add discussion of logo at Other Items
6. Membership
  - Marcy indicated that SRSMB membership from Cumberland House was undergoing changes and is not yet finalized.
  - Ron and Grant McVittie have gone to meetings at both Moose Lake and Easterville and invited both to become members of SRSMB. Now waiting for formal letters of response from each.
  - Discussion on number of SRSMB members from each community – As agreed at a previous meeting each community will have one board member representing the First Nation and one board member representing the fishermen and/or community in general. Observers, elders and advisors are always welcome at meetings.
  - Barry indicated that CH fishermen will hold a meeting to determine who will represent them.
  - Raymond indicated that CHCN wishes to send two additional people to SRSMB meetings and can fund attendance if necessary.
  - Lennard expressed concern regarding lack of attendance from communities; need to hold information meetings in communities to update people and regain interest.
  - Raymond indicated that on October 27<sup>th</sup> there will be a community meeting in Cumberland House and SRSMB membership may be discussed. Barry asked if he could invite community to attend SRSMB 2007 planning meeting.

**DECISION – SRSMB will hold a community information meeting in Cumberland House on the day following the 2007 spring planning meeting in Nipawin.**

- Still no members appointed from OCN.

**ACTION - Ron will continue to work with OCN to get new members for the board.**

- Rob asked Fred whether, if sturgeon is listed under SARA, the status of SRSMB would be different if we did not have First Nation members from OCN? Fred indicated that it would not take away from the value of the board and DFO must do extensive FN consultation.

## 7. Member Updates

- Cumberland House
- Lennard – Assisted with egg collection below Francois-Findlay Dam. Index fishing was conducted by 8 fishermen; available \$20,000 was used up quickly. More 1-5 pound sturgeon caught than previously. Can't tell if they are stocked or

- natural production. Probably flushed downstream from above EB Campbell in high water. SNA did not provide the \$10,000 they have in previous years for index fishing. Fishermen were not happy. Hope Dennis will be able to find funding for 2007. Fishermen's Co-op applied for Northern Lights Development funding, but were not successful because needed support from CHCN.
- Raymond indicated that he will look into getting support from CHCN from application to Northern Lights Development Corp.
  - Lennard – APTN and CTV did interviews of Murray, Rob, Lennard and commercial fishermen during egg collection and index fishing. A show was produced and continues to be repeated on TV.

**ACTION – Murray to get APTN production to show at next SRSMB meeting.**

- DFO
- Fred – Sturgeon Recovery Planning Workshop was held in Winnipeg in February, 2006. Organized in anticipation of review of lake sturgeon by the Committee On the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada (COSEWIC). Attended by FN, researchers, sturgeon boards and stakeholders. First half was presentations on research and recovery planning. Second half was on allowable harm assessment. Proceedings report to be finished by end of December and will be circulated to SRSMB, including CD with all presentations.
- COSEWIC assessment of lake sturgeon – At April 2006 meeting COSEWIC determined they needed better documentation of the basis for division of sturgeon from different parts of Canada into Designatable Units (8). Therefore they deferred the assessment until November 21, 2006. Expect that the recommendation following assessment will not be passed on to the Minister of Environment until April of 2007. This has delayed DFO activities such as consultation.
- Annotated Bibliography of literature on lake sturgeon- DFO has been updating, now more than 1300 references and database. Should be finished in a month.
- Federal Government funding for lake sturgeon – lake sturgeon are eligible for funding from the Habitat Stewardship Program. Also eligible for funding from a number of other programs including the Endangered Species Recovery Fund and the Aboriginal Capacity Building and Critical Habitat Protection and Recovery Funds. Once a recovery plan is drafted funds would also be available from the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund. Calls for applications out now.
- Fred introduced Lareina Rising working out of Sarnia, ON on species at risk Aboriginal consultation.
- Lennard asked about whether listing sturgeon under SARA would affect activities of commercial fishermen.
- Fred explained that activities like fishing that caused incidental harm to sturgeon may be allowed if written into a recovery plan. Other planned activities like FN use of sturgeon may be allowed through a permit.

- Manitoba Water Stewardship
- Ron reported on index netting. Same fishers and techniques were used in 2006 as in the past 5-6 years. Fifty-six sturgeon were captured over three weeks. The year to year decline in catch appears to show a population decline, although the statistical analysis has not yet been completed.
- Display and pamphlets – Ron indicated that the display is on hold until an SRSMB logo is developed. Discussion on how to go about getting a logo design was deferred until later in the agenda.
- New members - MWS met with the communities of Moose Lake and Easterville to explain what the SRSMB is and does and to invite the communities to become members. MWS is now awaiting written responses from both communities.
- Sturgeon video project did not happen in 2006 due to scheduling difficulties with Andries Blouw of DFO, who was to do the underwater video.
- Manitoba Hydro
- SRSMB web site – 90% of written content has been gathered and is in process of modification to a format that is suitable for a web site. Need additional content on water management.

**ACTION – Al will provide Shelley with information on water management for web site.**

- In need of photos, articles, sturgeon stories, video, artifacts, etc. to make the web site interesting and representative of the local people, fishermen and communities.

**ACTION – Everyone will send photos, articles, stories, video, etc. to Shelley for web site.**

- Grand Rapids Hatchery – The Parks Management class of the University College of the North finished and presented their project of redesigning the educational/interpretive area and displays at Grand Rapids Hatchery. There were many good low-budget ideas that will be useful when Manitoba Hydro takes ownership of the hatchery and fixes up the display areas. Purchase of the hatchery by MH has been delayed until at least January 2007, perhaps until April 2007. An outbreak of a viral disease, Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis, occurred in one tank of trout at the hatchery this fall. All trout have been destroyed. Most 2006 year class sturgeon had already been shipped out of the hatchery before the diagnosis. Those remaining are being tested for the virus, however it has never been found to infect sturgeon before. The hatchery will be thoroughly disinfected.
- Saskatchewan Environment
- Egg Collection and Sturgeon Culture – Murray reported that in 2006 an attempt at taking eggs earlier, starting May 11, below Francois-Finlay Dam was unproductive and ripe fish were not found until June 10-13. Two ripe females produced 218,000 eggs. Hatch was 25% producing 54,000 fry. Culture at Qu'Appelle resulted in 36,000 fingerlings by fall. As replacement for eggs collected 10% of the fingerlings produced, 4,000, were stocked back to Tobin Lake. The remaining 32,000 were stocked near Cumberland House (20,000 at the

- ferry landing; 12,000 nine miles downstream of the dam). The sturgeon culture program is scheduled to be reviewed in 2007 (after five years). Major difficulty is inability to easily mark the fingerlings and therefore inability to assess the contribution of stocking to the population.
- Discussion of marking techniques and trials and the need to plan on looking for tags in future.
  - Index fishing – Rob reported on 2006 index fishing administered by Howard and Lennard with nine additional fishermen. A total of 224 sturgeon were caught: 148 new and 76 recaptures. There appeared to be more smaller fish this year, but there was also more effort with the smaller mesh sizes than in past. Rob is currently analyzing the data.
  - Second opinion on analysis – Rob is in the process of finding an expert to do a second analysis of the index fishing data. This will serve to verify our methods and results.

**ACTION – Rob will talk with Dr. Arnason from U of Manitoba about statistical analysis this winter.**

- Saskatchewan Watershed Authority
- 2006 Torch River Project – Al did a presentation on his study of the fish community, hydrology, and habitat of the Torch River relative to the effects of the Candle Dam. No sturgeon were caught, flows were extremely high early in summer. Habitat survey was completed under high and moderate flow conditions. Survey under low flow conditions will be done in 2007 if possible. Al feels there is lots of good sturgeon spawning habitat in the Torch River under high flow conditions, but is turbidity too high?
- SaskPower
- Contributions were made to index fishing as usual and will be made for development of the SRSMB web site.
- Marcy indicated that, as we discussed at the spring meeting, the Ten-Year Management Plan indicates that we should establish population and harvest goals by December of 2007. Should we use consultants, work with DFO who are also working on establishing recovery targets, use techniques discussed in spring meeting, etc.
- Discussion on goals in Ten-Year Management Plan. Rob provided handouts on to possible techniques for meeting the population and harvest goals.

**ACTION – Marcy will talk to Bill Franzin of DFO regarding establishing targets for recovery and will ask Bill to attend the spring SRSMB meeting to discuss recovery targets. ( Marcy you had mentioned having a draft TOR by spring for consultants to provide options for establishing pop'n & harvest targets. Is this still something we want to do?)**

- Raymond asked what is being done to address the issue of sturgeon habitat. Marcy gave an update on the study that SaskPower and DFO are doing between EB Campbell Dam and the Torch River to determine how to allow both hydro-peaking operations and the maximum suitable fish habitat. Consideration is being

given to fishery objectives and stakeholder concerns. Raymond made the point that the local people want to be involved in establishing the flow regime.

- Saskatchewan Northern Affairs
- Dennis explained why SNA did not fund the index fishing in 2006; auditors determined that the source of funds was meant to be used for business programming. SNA wishes to fulfill the original 10-year commitment to funding index fishing, but an alternate source of funding will need to be found.

**ACTION – Dennis will investigate alternative funding sources including the Habitat Stewardship Program and will keep in touch with Lennard and others at Cumberland House regarding funding.**

8. Ten-Year Management Plan – review goals and management strategies.
  - The chair indicated that based on previous discussion we are not at a stage where we can determine what steps to take regarding the upcoming goals and strategies. As indicated in the action noted earlier Marcy will be consulting DFO and others to gather information on how they may be proceeding.
9. Logo
  - Discussion on options for developing a logo for SRSMB; school contest, professional designers, in-house designers, local artists, etc. There was much support for a local school contest, but concern about the quality of designs that might be produced.

**DECISION – Members will ask in-house professionals and local artists to draft logos for consideration by SRSMB. Logos will be considered at the 2007 spring planning meeting.**

**DECISION - At a future date SRSMB will hold a community school contest, perhaps for SRSMB posters.**

**ACTION – Ron will develop logo guidelines for members to provide to local artists and in-house professionals when asking for voluntary logo designs.**

#### 10. Next Meeting

**DECISION - Nipawin, February 21, 2007, followed by a community information meeting on February 22, 2007 at Cumberland House.**

**ACTION - Al will make arrangements for the 2007 Spring Planning meeting and the Community Information Meeting.**

#### 11. Closing prayer by Lennard.

#### 12. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes by Shelley Matkowski

DRAFT