

RE: FISH DAY – PORT ALBERNI, BC

Hupačasath and Tseshaht Council's would like to let our communities know what led to the decision making for the past communal fishery the weekend of June 24<sup>th</sup> – June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Our council's shared a meal at an informal get together on Wednesday June 22<sup>nd</sup> to have discussions on areas where cooperation would provide substantial new benefits to both our communities. We acknowledged that there were areas where we may disagree, but working together would place greater opportunities, options and efficiencies for both communities.

### **Round Table Discussions**

Thursday's are the day where the round table discusses fishing plans. These plans are reviewed by DFO and other round table participants; including both Hupacasath First Nation, Tseshaht First Nation, the commercial gillnet and seine fleets and the recreational stake holders.

Fishing plans for both bands were adopted after long negotiations on how to ensure the resource is capitalized on and fairly distributed based on respective fish day policies, taking into consideration a river fishery, a seine boat option or fishing at Papermill Dam. As many may know Hupačasath doesn't fish at Papermill Dam and therefore must consider river fisheries and seine catch options both which can be costly but can result in substantial resource access of the total allowable catch. The option to try fishing at Papermill Dam was the most viable option for the relatively small amount of fish available for catch by both bands which was a total of 10,700 pieces.

### **Equitable Sharing**

Each nation has been working hard to ensure members are receiving an equitable sharing that would work for the communities. This means each eligible person under the respective fish day policies, regardless of which community they were registered in, would receive an equitable share. The premise of this plan is based on each Nation's fish day policy currently in place which details who is eligible for food fish. Both communities have distinctly different food fish policies.

The equitable sharing continues to challenge the fishery plans as the distribution or Fish Day policies differ for each nation. For example, Tseshaht First Nation distributes fish to only those aged 16 and up while all Hupačasath First Nation members are eligible to receive a share if they are present at fish day. The clear answer is both bands advocating for greater resource access would achieve greater fish day numbers for both communities and greater access for each Nation's fishermen.

### **Fishing at Papermill Dam**

As Council's we understand that communities were not given enough notice or enough information to proceed with a full joint sharing effort at this early stage of our relationship building. We want to continue to work together to provide a unified front to DFO and the round table and ensure greater access to our resources, but the fishing plans need more time to come together.

We are proud of the fact that most volunteers had fun and enjoyed working together. We understand where the frustration may stem from in seeing less Hupačasath than Tseshaht volunteers in the water with the concept of equal sharing. Plans were to ensure equal labour and equal opportunity were made possible for both bands and that the catch would be distributed such that eligible members of each community under their respective fish day policies received their optimum share.

There are a few unresolved issues that need to be worked out regarding past history at Papermill Dam, expenses and issues that are larger than fish day.

### **Alternative to Hupačasath Fishing at Papermill Dam**

Hupačasath have harvested their fish in a variety of different ways that come with different costs. The seine boat remains an option and one which can result in 10's of thousands of fish which again speaks to equitable resource distribution. River fishing is another alternative and with the river fishery so successful this year it also brings challenges to distribution. The equitable sharing model under which each eligible person under each band's fish day policies are challenging when varying costs and competing policies intervene.

We plan to continue to work hard to ensure both communities work for the benefit of our respective communities ensuring that the greatest portion of the resource possible is allocated to our two first nations and that the resource is shared according to agreements and plans acceptable to both communities