

2017 was a very challenging year for both the fish and the fishers. Numerous sport fishing closures were the norm with many questioning the discriminatory nature which favoured only one sector. While recognizing the constitutional rights of First Nations, we must question if DFO is managing the fishery exclusively for the benefit of this sector? Concerns for the preservation of our Canadian fishing heritage on the Fraser River prompted the formation of the Fraser River Sport Fishing Alliance (FRSA) in which the BCFDF plays an integral role. With all due respect to the advisory process which is led by the SFAB & supported by the BCFDF, it was time to take the gloves off and seek the support of the angling public at large toward protecting our rights through all necessary avenues, including potential legal challenges. Support to date for the FRSA has been substantial and we expect it to play a significant role in sport fishing issues in 2018.

Mother Nature dealt us all a tough hand in 2017 with low returns of most salmon species which certainly impacted fishing plans. There are some indications already that the phenomenon of rising ocean temperatures has abated and we can only be optimistic that returns will improve for 2018. The stocks of extreme concern in most areas of B.C. are steelhead, particularly in the interior Fraser system Thompson/Chilcotin Rivers. These runs at 165 and 145 fish respectively are projected to be extinct within 5 years unless dramatic recovery options are instituted immediately. The Gold River once a standard of dependable steelhead fishing is also a great concern. We don't need more meetings detailing all the problems which have been well known for decades. We need actions now!

We need the province and DFO to stop the buck passing and realize they are jointly responsible for the protection of the B.C. icons. We need all major angling organizations to put aside petty differences and start to look outside the established mgt system and realize that any and all measures to save the remnants of

these runs must be considered. All anglers must demand accountability from their politicians and remind them of their responsibility to represent all sectors of the fishing community in saving threatened species and guaranteeing equitable allocation of stocks. With prior governments I believe some progress was made toward increased recognition of our fishing rights. It appears that some of that hard fought recognition is eroding under the current Federal governing party.

The BCFDF has worked hard to establish positive relations with First Nations recognizing that we can usually accomplish more toward conciliation without government in the room. The 9 year track record of Fraser River Peacemakers indicates we are still on the right track. Recognizing that the only constant is change, we are currently reviewing all aspects of Peacemakers toward ensuring the process remains relevant to todays fisheries. Considering the recent National Recreational Fisheries Award to Peacemakers, obviously others appreciate our efforts.

Recognizing that the sturgeon fishery is important to the local economies and enjoyed by many of our members, the BCFDF has formed a sturgeon committee to participate in various provincial advisory processes. This further solidifies our position as the "Voice of River Anglers". Over the years we have attempted to be representative of issues on both Vcr. Island and the Skeena country. We still have a lot to do on this initiative and are certainly appreciative of the efforts of our out of town directors.

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I want to personally thank all of you who play such a crucial role in helping steer the course of the BCFDF. Our organization is only as strong as the will of our directors. I am pleased that we have recruited several young directors over the past year. These people are the future and we know the mandate of the BCFDF will continue under their guidance.

This coming year will see some changes in the organization executive with more responsibilities being allocated. As some of us are getting older with diminishing energies, we must recognize succession responsibilities, including top executive positions. I personally will retain my position until we have the right people in place but that is predicated by reducing my work load particularly relating to the annual banquet. That was addressed at our last directors meeting and is a priority for this coming year.

In closing I want to wish all of you and your families the very best for the holiday season. I also want to sincerely thank all of you for your support over the years and your wonderful efforts in ensuring that the BCFDF continues to be recognized as one of the leading provincial organizations in protecting fish stocks and preserving angler opportunity.

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