**SFAB REVIEW – Journey Towards a Modernized Process**

In 2009, the Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) engaged Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the BC Ministry of Environment, to begin drafting a plan to ensure progress toward a collective vision for the recreational fishery. The result was the BC Recreational Fisheries Vision 2009-2013. The 2009-2013 Vision, while approved and supported by federal and provincial governments and the SFAB, was not realised. Recognizing the value and need to both activate the Vision and update it; a series of workshops took place in 2018 that resulted in a revised Vision 2021. As with the original, Vision 2021 sets out a strategic action plan to maximize the social and economic potential of the recreational fishery, modernize the SFAB as an entity that could perform services for fishery stakeholders, and receive and manage funds on behalf of the public fishery.

The SFAB in its current state as an advisory board, is unable to receive funds and provide services to the public fishery or to benefit its management. As such, the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI) was engaged by the SFAB to apply on its behalf to the BCSRIF for project funding to support implementation of Vision 2021. One core project of Vision 2021 is to conduct a review of the current SFAB process, identify a modernized operating model and determine a reliable and sustainable funding source. Following SRIF approval, the SFI contracted Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) to complete a stakeholder review and workshop to design an improved future state operating model. SFAB participants and other stakeholders were engaged via a set of surveys and interviews to help identify gaps and opportunities.

Following the review, a proposed Operating Model (OM) was presented to the SFAB and endorsed. It is currently being reviewed by DFO for their input and endorsement. The new OM is designed around aligning the SFAB process to key Topic Based Working Groups (TBWG) utilizing modern technology to enhance communication and stakeholder engagement.

How would a Topic Based Operating Model work?

One of the fundamental strengths of the SFAB process is the grass-roots involvement of stakeholders across diverse areas and specific fisheries. The new process will be supported by investments in communication technology to enhance both web-based and in-person meeting utilities to improve stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the new OM will require that DFO specify advice sought from the SFAB through a Request for Advice (RFA). RFA’s provide details of the advice requested and provides technical definition of the scope of the advice DFO expects back from the SFAB. Similarly, the SFAB would formalize Requests for Consideration (RFC), outlining specific action requests it expects to be addressed by DFO. This new process will result in better tracking of requests, definition of issues and the scope of how they will be addressed within the process.

To ensure improved consistency, local SFAC groups will receive RFA’s and standard meeting agendas with supporting background information ahead of their local Area meetings. SFAC’s will be supported by a newly formed SFAB Administrator role. Motions or RFC’s will be advanced from local SFAC groups to Topic or Species Based Working Groups, and all others which do not align to a TBWG will be referred to the Main Board. There will be 6 TBWGs – Ground Fish, Salmon, Pelagics, Invertebrates, Non-Tidal Anadromous, and Management. Motions or RFC’s would be reviewed and refined by the TBWG’s and then advanced to the Main Board. Local Area SFAC representatives would participate in any relevant TBWG’s. The current Regional SFAB’s, South, Central and North, would not exist under the new model. To improve communication and equip local SFAC Chairs to respond to broader issues, the new Main Board meeting format will transition to a bi-annual Conference Style meeting which all SFAC Chairs or designates would attend.

The Main Board Conference would be structured to ensure that day 1 is reserved for technical and science presentations, followed by Day 2 and 3 focussing on reports and motions from each of the TBWG’s. Again, it is important to note that all SFAC Chairs and Member Organizations will participate in all 3 days of the Main Board Conference. The purpose is to ensure the new process improves the ability of SFAB participants representing every SFAC to engage, learn, grow, and communicate as a provincial team. There will be 2 Conferences planned each season. The Fall Conference will focus on post-season review, and the Spring Conference will focus on pre and in-season planning.

The SFAB modernization project has been planned over 3 distinct phases. Phase 1, where we are today, aimed to design the OM and define funding options. Phase 2 will define the process steps in greater detail including development of SFAB procedural standards, an implementation plan, communication strategy and change management plan. Phase 3 is dedicated to implementing a proof of concept Pilot which will finalize establishing the new SFAB entity, funding and year 1 administrative and technical support to pilot the new SFAB model. During the Pilot, the team will explore and develop services the SFAB could undertake and deliver to stakeholders, DFO and public fishery participants. Lessons learned will be applied in the post Pilot review to refine and iterate future enhancements.