



A First Nation Fisheries Reconciliation Table with Canada



Fisheries Reconciliation Table participants

Gitga'at
Gitxaala
Heiltsuk
Kitsao/Xai'Xais
Metlakatla
Nuxalk
Wuikinuxv

Fisheries for the Future

For decades, our communities have worked to make change on important fisheries issues with the federal government. Through letter-writing, court challenges and countless meetings, coastal communities have tried to develop a relationship that works for First Nations.

Now it's time to move forward. Through Coastal First Nations, along with the Gitxaala Nation, our leaders have come together to build a Fisheries Reconciliation Table with Canada. This would be one of three First Nations reconciliation tables with Canada. Our goal is to give First Nations priority access to food fisheries, greater access to commercial fisheries, and a greater say in how fisheries are managed in our Traditional Territories.

The environment is right for change. We have a new federal government committed to a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations and we have the experience and strength to make this happen. Since 2000, our communities have worked together through the Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative to reach historic agreements on land and water with the Province of British Columbia in the Great Bear Rainforest. A fisheries reconciliation process with Canada will build on this success.

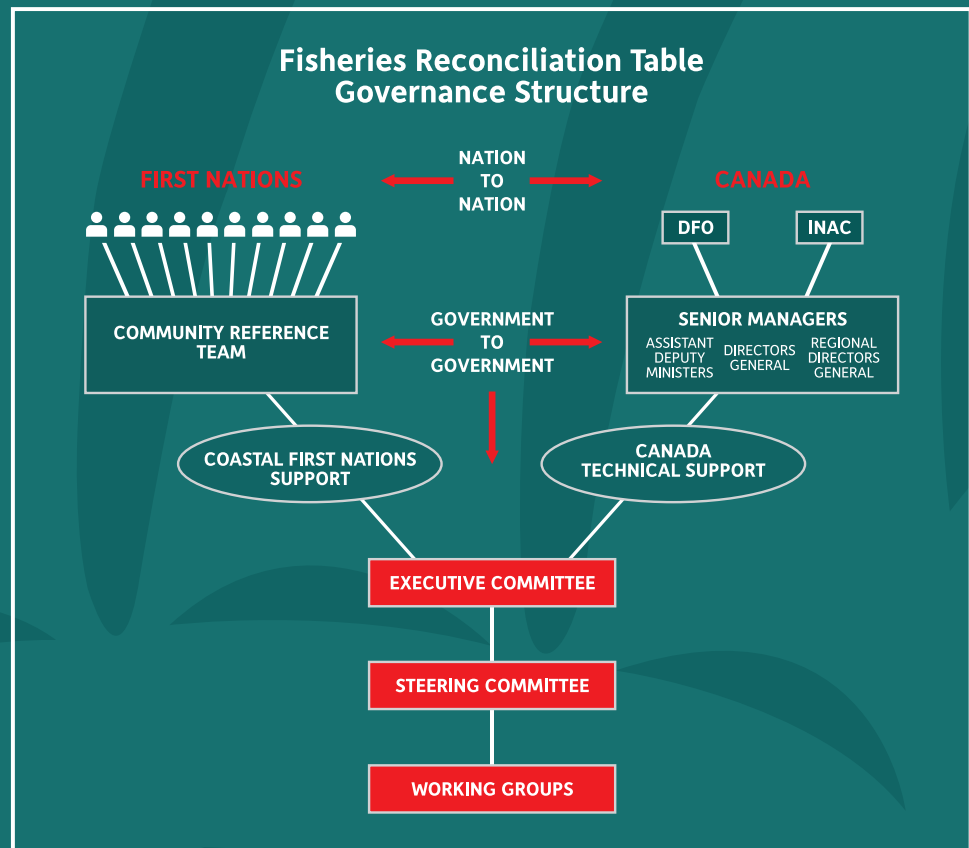
The Reconciliation Process

Coastal First Nations, along with the Gitxaala Nation, have jointly developed the proposed Fisheries Reconciliation Table with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The Haida Nation is considering an opportunity for its own fisheries reconciliation table but works closely with CFN on these issues.

Coastal First Nations have been recognized by the Government of Canada as leaders in pursuing these reconciliation discussions.



How will A Fisheries Reconciliation Table work?



A Fisheries Reconciliation Table will:

- Engage First Nations at a government-to-government level with senior federal officials.
- Be made up of a Community Reference Team with representation from one member of each community. (Reference team members will work closely with communities and leadership to ensure that local values and needs are included in the collective work. The Team will be supported by senior advisors from Coastal First Nations and the respective Boards.)
- Send all major decisions back to First Nations communities for approval.
- Give First Nations joint final decision-making with Canada.

A Fisheries Table will help develop a common framework agreement with Coastal First Nations and Canada and allow each community to negotiate its own agreement with DFO. It will not negotiate detailed fisheries agreements for each community.



What do we hope to achieve?

In the spring of 2016, our Fisheries Table Community Reference Team developed a common interest paper called "Bridging the Gulf" and in October 2016 began developing a Framework Agreement with Canada to identify how the negotiating table will work. The team decided on the following shared community issues for negotiation:

Develop a Nation-to-Nation relationship – Between First Nations and Canada on governance and management of marine resources.

- Develop a partnership with Canada through new collaborative structures and processes for the management of all fisheries in our territories. These will include collaborative decision-making.
- Collaborate on the integration of traditional knowledge and science to support precautionary harvest rates for all species.
- Collaborate on the development of fisheries harvest management plans for all fisheries that ensure priority access for community food, social and ceremonial needs.
- Integrate DFO and First Nations resources on the ground, including our Guardian Watchmen, to collect data and oversee and manage fisheries.
- Continue to build First Nations capacity.

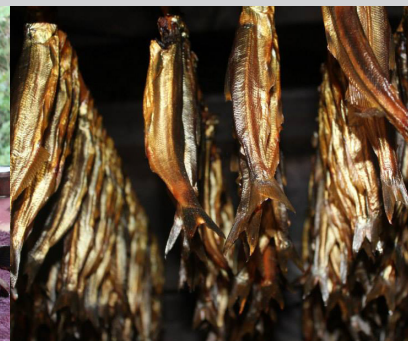
Stimulate the Coastal Economy – To support economic fisheries opportunities and jobs that will support healthy, self-sustaining First Nations communities and regions.

- A CFN study has been completed to determine the level of commercial fisheries access our communities need to support:
 - i. the number of fishery jobs required now.
 - ii. the level of profits required to allow further access and job growth.
- Increase the number of fishing quotas and licenses, targeting a large portion of the total commercial fishery available in each territory.

- Allow flexible use of commercial access by First Nations that considers preferred means (e.g. Mosquito fleet) and areas close to home.
- Where appropriate, allow First Nations to control levels of aquaculture development in order to create new opportunities and new partnerships with industry.

Achieve Predictability and Stability – Successful reconciliation of these important issues through nation-to-nation treaty and non-treaty arrangements will create predictability, cooperation, and peace on the water for all.





Timelines

Phase 1

Through to mid-2017, development of two major concept papers by the Community Reference Team and Canada:

- Economic opportunities.
- Collaborative governance.
- An additional application paper will be developed for Nations that are in Treaty negotiations.

Phase 2

Concept papers finalized for DFO and INAC to take back to the new federal cabinet in mid-2017 to seek a strong mandate to negotiate the issues.

Phase 3

Negotiations start April 2017 with results expected by March 2018.

To view the Fisheries Reconciliation Table video, visit:
www.coastalfirstnations.ca

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