



# NEWSLETTER

## Aboriginal Aquaculture Association

December 2019

[www.aboriginalaquaculture.com](http://www.aboriginalaquaculture.com)

### DFO Initiates Aquaculture Advisory Process

In June of this year the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a number of initiatives aimed at “enhancing the sustainability of aquaculture in Canada”. In BC, this included the establishment of an advisory process that is headed by the Indigenous and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Body (IMAB) with the objective to provide recommendations to the Department on how to improve the overall management of aquaculture in British Columbia.

Chaired by the DFO Deputy Minister the IMAB consists of First Nation, industry, ENGO’s and government representatives. Three technical working groups have also been established to support the work of the IMAB putting forward reports including recommendations for consideration. Their focus includes; Aquaculture Production Technologies, Marine Finfish and Land-Based Fish Health and Area Based approaches to Aquaculture Management.

Of particular interest to First Nations would be the proposed area-based approach to aquaculture. Potentially this could impact where aquaculture could be developed in your territory.

The draft terms of reference states that this process is not intended to replace the Crown’s duty to consult. The AAA reminds the Department that their obligation is with the individual First Nation and not third party entities and that any proposed changes that impacts First Nations need to be discussed with the First Nation directly.

The AAA interest in participating in this process is to help inform First Nations, particularly those that are involved or interested in aquaculture development. The AAA will host a meeting early in the new year to provide information about the process, the work to date and to gather input for consideration by the Advisory Body.

There has been uncertainty lately about the future of aquaculture in British Columbia. The AAA hopes this advisory process continues and that the recommendations brought forward to the new Minister will help the sector to grow.



*Nanaimo - Illegal Clam Haul*

### Shellfish Traceability

*“illegal shellfish harvesting a threat to aquaculture future”*

Senior DFO officials announced at the fall Shellfish AMAC (Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee) meeting in Courtenay that enhanced efforts and new protocols around shellfish traceability will be the focus of DFO policy makers, conservation and enforcement officers throughout the Province and, that the current state of illegal shellfish harvesting could have a tremendous impact on the future of shellfish aquaculture in British Columbia.

This announcement was an eye-opener for representatives of shellfish industry growers, processors and aquaculture organizations. It has always been known that some illegal harvesting of shellfish takes place in BC but no-one expected DFO’s statement that, a recent investigation of one illegal clam harvesting operation netted three times the entire annual production of clams farmed and harvested in BC; this was a jaw dropping revelation to all present to say the least.

## Shellfish Traceability *continued*

The long-reaching impact of “illegal shellfish” (or black market as some would say) on the aquaculture industry is that shellfish harvested illegally during area closures or, from beaches shut down for sanitary purposes that get put through the “system” as legitimately farmed and processed “clean clams”, have made people sick as far away as New York with little recourse as to the source of the illness.

The FDA and CFIA have made it clear to the aquaculture industry that better traceability protocols must be created, adhered-to and enforced in order to stem the flow of illegal Canadian shellfish in the US, Asian and EU markets. Otherwise, shellfish exports may be put at risk of being shut down entirely. This would be a death blow to Canadian shellfish growers and legitimate harvesters.

Aquaculture traceability is one of several DFO tools in reining in the illegal harvest and sale of shellfish in BC. In order to ensure that all shellfish is harvested by licensed harvesters from open and safe areas and handled properly to the point of consumption, DFO and the CFIA will be allocating greater resources to ensure that current traceability policies, record keeping, annual statistical reporting and aquaculture conditions of license are maintained at all times. They will be holding non-compliant harvesters, growers and processors accountable for their actions by issuing charges, seizing assets etc.

Maintaining a record logbook of all shellfish movement activities on a shellfish farm as well as timely filing of Annual Aquaculture Statistical Reports and the proper tagging of all shellfish as per a farm’s conditions of license is required and will be enforced by DFO officers. Failing to do so may interrupt your shellfish farm business, cause you to incur fines or even potentially lose your license as a grower or processor. The greater risk to the Industry is that “Canada” will lose its reputation for safe and high-quality shellfish production and even, possibly, could see the closing down of export markets for BC growers. DFO considers this issue to be of great importance to them and the future of shellfish aquaculture.



Call us if you need help with navigating your way through DFO’s requirements for growing, transporting and processing farmed shellfish before an inspector shows up at your farm site asking for your records and files.

## DFO Shellfish AMAC

DFO’s Shellfish Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee (SF-AMAC) is a DFO committee dedicated to address issues associated with shellfish aquaculture management in BC. The Committee meets twice a year to discuss and make recommendations to the Department on policy, planning and operational matters related to aquaculture management. The committee is made up of 7 industry representatives as well as government, NGO and associations affiliated with shellfish aquaculture. Over the past six years, the committee has provided valuable input that resulted in beneficial policy changes affecting shellfish aquaculture rules and regulations. First Nation engagement has always been planned and anticipated since the committee’s inception but there has been very little participation.

Nominations are currently open for committee members and DFO is inviting First Nations to join the committee and participate in the SF-AMAC process. This is a great opportunity to network and learn from those in the industry and others. The committee brings together governments, industry and other shellfish aquaculture stakeholders to provide valuable feedback on upcoming policies and regulations affecting shellfish aquaculture. The AAA posts meeting materials on the AAA website. The SF-AMAC is strictly an advisory board and not a consultation body- Rights and Title discussions are conducted government to government between the First Nations and government.

Sitting at the SF-AMAC table is a valuable opportunity to voice your concerns and help protect your aquaculture interests while getting practical information and learning about the latest science and policy updates on shellfish aquaculture directly from industry leaders, scientists, associations, DFO managers and provincial and federal representatives. Right now, there are 7 seats open and available to First Nations on the SF-AMAC committee. The deadline for nominations is January 20, 2020. Those First Nations who require travel assistance to attend the meetings, generally held in Courtenay, are encouraged to discuss this directly with DFO.

To request the terms of reference or nomination forms please contact the Department at: [impags@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:impags@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)



## Shellfish Aquaculture Marine Debris

DFO and the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Development (FLNRORD) have implemented a new policy to mitigate aquaculture related marine debris and minimize its impact on the environment. From now on, all new shellfish aquaculture tenure applications will be required to submit a “Debris Management Plan” which will state the applicant’s proposed actions in preventing and managing the loss or disposal of aquaculture gear in the marine and land environment as well as information on the type of gear used in operating an aquaculture farm, expected gear lifespan, identification of the gear, ownership and site provenance of the gear and debris management protocols as well as an implementation plan will all be required in the new Debris Management Plan.

DFO will be harmonizing with FLNRORD its effort to educate and enforce aquaculture conditions of license that address aquaculture gear and infrastructure debris. Increased field presence by Aquaculture Environmental Operations and Provincial compliance partners along with Beach Clean-ups, outreach and collaboration with the Industry will hopefully reduce the quantity of debris washing up on our beaches and shorelines as well as in the water where plastics break down into micro-plastics which have been identified as a serious threat to the BC Farmed Shellfish brand and public health.

One of the first new components of Shellfish Aquaculture Conditions of License is the complete ban of using Styrofoam for floatation unless it is fully wrapped in containment material that won’t allow degradation of the foam. Foam billets used for floats as is or wrapped in lightweight material such as Tyvek or poly will no longer be permitted. All new raft construction should be using HDPE floatation tanks instead of foam if gear is to remain compliant with the new policy over its lifespan.

If you have derelict aquaculture gear or gear that poses an environmental problem in your area, give us a call and we can help you identify funding grants or human resources that may allow you to have it removed or managed.



## BC Salmon Habitat Restoration Fund

The BC Salmon Habitat Restoration Fund (BCSHRF) was created to provide investment support for BC’s fish and seafood sector, and to ensure the sustainability of wild Pacific salmon and other BC fish stocks. The fund provides up to \$142.85 million over five years where the Federal government will provide 70% of the funding and the Provincial government the remaining 30%.

This past November, it was announced that the fund will open up its eligibility criteria to allow for the funding of shellfish aquaculture-based projects sometime in early 2020. It is expected that a call for project proposals will be made later in February 2020.

This is a tremendous boost to the shellfish aquaculture sector and, First Nation led aquaculture projects that feature innovation, infrastructure investment and science partnerships will have an opportunity to apply for funding under the revised BCSHRF program. The AAA can help your organization identify projects in shellfish aquaculture that target the fund’s priority of improved performance and sustainability of the aquaculture sector.



*Kelp Aquaculture*

## PICFI – Pacific Region New Entrant Call

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is announcing that the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) will be accepting applications for new entrants for the first time since the inception of the program. PICFI was announced in 2007 with an aim to assist eligible First Nations to develop commercial fisheries capacity and increase access to commercial fishing the Pacific Region. In Budget 2017, PICFI received permanent long-term funding and DFO committed to expanding the program to allow participation from a greater number of First Nations.

This application callout and information package has been sent out to First Nations in BC and the Yukon. Any First Nation currently not a member of an existing CFE is eligible to apply. Aggregates and partnerships are encouraged.

For those First Nations who intend or are considering putting forward an Expression of Interest please note that the AAA is willing to assist in a CFE partnership if there is a benefit to your Nations. The AAA has experience in wild capture fisheries as well as being leaders in First Nation aquaculture development and management. The AAA would bring the capacity and knowledge to effectively access PICFI programs to acquire and manage commercial fisheries assets as well as develop and grow a successful aquaculture enterprise.

If you wish to discuss this further, please email Richard Harry at [richard@aboriginalaquaculture.com](mailto:richard@aboriginalaquaculture.com)

The deadline for submission of an Expression of Interest is December 31, 2019.



# Seasons Greetings

The AAA

**Board of Directors & Staff**

Wish You and Your Family a

*Merry Christmas*

and a

*Happy and Healthy New Year*



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[www.aboriginalaquaculture.com](http://www.aboriginalaquaculture.com)

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