

Saskatchewan River Sturgeon Management Board
April 5, 2005
The Pas, MB

Board members in attendance:

Ron Campbell (co-chair) - Manitoba Water Stewardship (roncampbel@gov.mb.ca)
John Carriere (co-chair) - Cumberland House (306-888-2198, no email?)
Marcy Bast - SaskPower (mbast@saskpower.com, replacing Erin Flory)
Franklin Carriere - Saskatchewan Northern Affairs (fcarriere@sna.gov.sk.ca)
Vincent Harper - Fisheries & Oceans (harperv@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
Murray Koob - Sask Environment (mkoob@serm.gov.sk.ca, replacing Lyle Wallin)
Shelley Matkowski - Manitoba Hydro (smatkowski@hydro.mb.ca, replacing Roy Bukowsky)
Lennard Morin - Cumberland House Fishermen's Co-operative, alternate for Barry Carriere
Dennis Strom - Saskatchewan Northern Affairs (dstrom@sna.gov.sk.ca, new), will replace
Franklin Carriere

Advisors / observers:

Andries Blouw - Fisheries & Oceans (blouwa@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
Rod Drummond - Manitoba Water Stewardship (roddrummon@gov.mb.ca)
Rob Wallace - Sask Environment (rwallace@serm.gov.sk.ca)

1. Opening prayer - Franklin Carriere.
2. Introductions - Members & observers introduced themselves.
3. Minutes from November 2004 meeting in Prince Albert were distributed and accepted, after some questions:
 - Species at risk status? Andries Blouw from DFO Winnipeg will describe this today;
 - Habitat assessment and minimum 75 cms flow? Vincent outlined background and studies;
 - SK index fishing payments? Rob described the need for reliable estimates.
4. The agenda was accepted, after some items were added to 'Other 2005 activities'.
5. Membership - There will be 2 new reps at next meeting:
 - Dennis Strom for Sask Northern Affairs, replacing Franklin Carriere
 - Barry Carriere for Cumberland House Fishermen's Association, replacing John Carriere.
6. Species at risk Act (SARA) - Andries described the federal SARA process briefly and then Lake Sturgeon specifically. The Act covers habitats, viability over long-term, and conservation & uses. There are 5 levels of status: Extinct (gone from Canada), Extirpated (gone in an area or watershed), Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern.
 - Lake Sturgeon:
 - initially reviewed in 2002 and 2004, and expect decision in May 2005 (about time according to JC, LM, SM, RW);

- sturgeon assessment report was divided into 7 watersheds (Saskatchewan River basin, Lake Winnipeg rivers, etc).
- Saskatchewan River basin will have a recovery plan, if species is designated under SARA
- SRSMB history was outlined: first work in SK was 1994-1997, index fishing since 1996 in both SK and MB, and 2001 review of objectives & progress & plans (RW & SM); Shelley gave a copy of SRSMB 10-year management plan to Andries;
- assessment should include effects on commercial fishing since 1996 (JC) and long-term problems with river flows (LM).

Andries described the overall SARA process in a slideshow:

- COSEWIC committee consists of scientific & independent advisors (not politicians or economists);
 - reviews habitat, abundance, trends, harvests, etc and recommends status to federal Minister;
 - Minister has 90 days to request info or agree or disagree, then 9 months to decide on listing;
 - deadlines for communications with public and mandatory Recovery Plans (1 or 2 years);
 - CESSC (Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council) oversees COSEWIC work
 - protection for listed species is automatic but exemptions can be given:
 - Extinct, Extirpated, Threatened species cannot be killed, captured, or habitat destroyed;
 - Minister may permit some kinds of harm (research, beneficial activity, commercial);
 - National Accord on Species at risk (1996) provided for partnerships with provinces;
 - partnerships with Canadians:
 - 1) Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) is federal funding after listing and recovery plan — any proposals must compete with east & west coast fish species (JC & AB)
 - 2) new Aboriginal Habitat Inland Program (AHIP) funds are not for projects but “infrastructure”:
 - First Nations can hire biologists or guardians, discuss resource uses, etc
 - DFO Winnipeg says AHIP proposals can go to HSP
 - First Nations and Metis organizations should both qualify (JC and AB).
 - Recovery Plans are done by DFO / Env Canada / provinces using guidelines from CESSC
 - both departments are setting aside funds for Lake Sturgeon now.
- Questions & answers on SARA and sturgeon:
- First Nations harvests can be restricted by Act, but are the last use to be cut (MB & AB);
 - effects of dams & stranding should be covered in Recovery Plan (LM & VH);
 - recovery teams can include both federal & provincial agencies, and probably SRSMB (AB);
 - ‘social & economic’ discussions can delay deadlines and change political decisions (SM & AB)
 - possible to de-list species when it recovers, after criteria are met (DS & AB).

7. Action items from November 2004 were discussed:

- 1) Sturgeon in Schools – This program was described at fall 2004 meeting (Naomi talked to schools, SEnv provided fingerlings, etc). Fingerlings from 2005 will be released in Saskatoon soon (MB).
- 2) Terms of reference - MB used comments from Nov2004 meeting & later emails to provide a revised version today to reps. Several items were discussed and some changes were agreed:

- Board #1 stays 'Make annual plan including budget for recommendation, by Dec 31...'
- Board #2 needs revision to 'Review and update long-range plan annually'
- Board #5 needs revision to 'Provide minutes to reps for distribution', but no annual report
- Board #7 moves to Members #5, because it's a good idea but not always done.
- Members #5 new item is 'Hold meetings to inform community, with assistance of Board'
- Chairperson #4 stays 'Circulate a Record of Decisions after each meeting'

MB will make these changes for Nov 2005 meeting. RW will send out 'Record of Decisions' from today's meeting as a trial. DS & AB noted there is no legal structure of this Board, which is OK for some funding but a restriction for other funds.

3) Educational videos - SaskPower and Manitoba have problems getting videos done in-house, but can provide funding (MB and SM). AB notes public communication is a big part of SARA, but he can assist if he gets a 1-page outline. DS and AB urged that Ministers and public need to know ! Some good and bad examples of agency displays were discussed: MB Water Stewardship has done posters, pamphlets, etc (RC); SK Env noted short lifespan of videos and trouble getting new ones (MK & RW); MB Hydro and MB Water has worked together on hatchery displays.

4) SK index fishing: MK noted budget available for 2005 will stay at \$/pound. RW outlined reasons for approach and the 2 different trends used: catch per crew-week since commercial fishing in 1983, and mark-recapture abundance since 1996. RW needs more fishing areas covered, so SK may provide \$ for gas costs, higher rates, etc. Some specific ideas were noted for Torch River, EBCampbell site, and sites near MB border.

5) Keewatin Community College: MB Hydro will fund Grand Rapids Hatchery, MB Water will run it, and KCC students will visit for education (SM). Dr. Steve Peake will research 'natural foods' & marking young for next 4 years. MB Hydro has proposed assessing the past stocking of Assiniboine River since 1996, probably by U of M student (SM).

8. Other 2005 activities:

— DS asked about SK hatchery. MK said Fort Qu'Appelle Hatchery produced more trout species (using cooler water source) but hatched and reared sturgeon since 2003 (potential of 10K fingerlings). SM noted Grand Rapids Hatchery does walleye, whitefish, and then sturgeon since mid-1990s (about 10K fingerlings).

— JC asked if juveniles have been seen. LM saw only a few in 2004, RW said a few in 2 weeks of special effort in 2003, and RC noted only 1 seen in 2004. LM noted hooks don't catch juveniles and nets need eddies or quiet water, which are limited in SK. Most juveniles & habitat seen to date have been near or inside MB.

— LM and MB discussed damages to outboards. SaskPower compensates Sandy Bay & Cumberland House people since 1982 for boats & snowmobiles, but coverage was cut from 100% to 50% recently. JC notes Peter Ballantyne Band has a court case on this topic.

— All members thanked Franklin Carriere sincerely for his years of service & advice to SRSMB.

9. Budgets:

- MB Hydro will know soon about its \$11K.
- SK Env index fishing (spring / summer \$15K) looks good.
- SK Env egg collection for Fort Qu'Appelle \$29K (field, student, & feed) looks good.
- SK Northern Affairs index fishing (autumn, but not during Sept guiding) is unknown.
- SaskPower 'Sturgeon in Schools' will release fish soon (\$5K spent)

— Budget items for 2005 for reference (from minutes of November 2004):

Rank	Activity	Budget Needed	Source
1	MB Index Fishery (spring)	\$ 11,000.	MB Conservation Fund
1	SK Index Fishery (spring)	\$ 15,000.	SK Env
1	SK Index Fishery (fall)	\$ 10,000.	SK Northern Affairs
2	SK sturgeon in schools	\$ 7,000.	SaskPower
2	SK eggs & hatchery	\$ 29,000.	SK Fish&Wildlife Development Fund
3	Education in communities.	\$ 13,000.	SaskPower
4	Community expenses	\$ 2,000.	SaskPower & MB Hydro
...	Feeding trials (KCC / Peake)	\$...	MB Hydro
	Total	\$ 87,000.	

— DS asked about budget for website & public outreach, since recent costs maybe \$2k for small one — no websites done for SRSMB to date.

10. Other issues:

- Co-chair John Carriere finishes his term soon. Ron Campbell will ask Robert McGillvary The Pas.
- Co-chair Ron Campbell finishes soon, and needs replacement (maybe time for SEnv or DFO).

11. Next meeting: 16 November 2005 in Nipawin.

12. Closed with prayer - John Carriere.

13. Adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Minutes by Rob Wallace, 15 November 2005