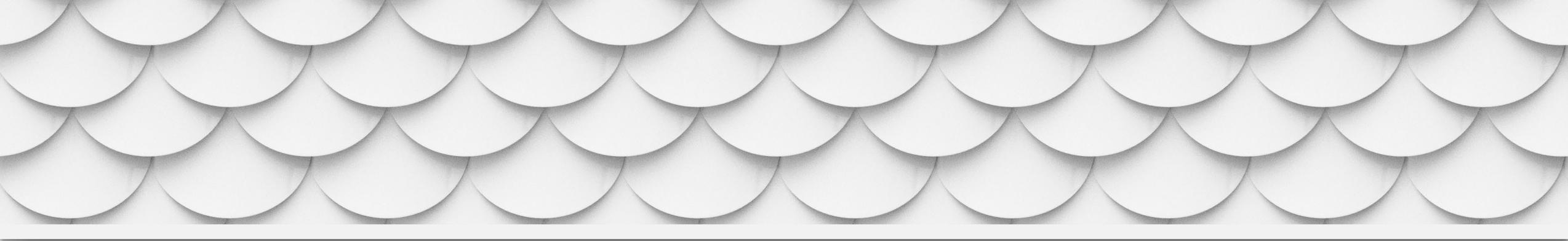


Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program

Saskatchewan First Nations Wave 3 Feedback & Insights

Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)
Lands and Resources Secretariat
March 1, 2024





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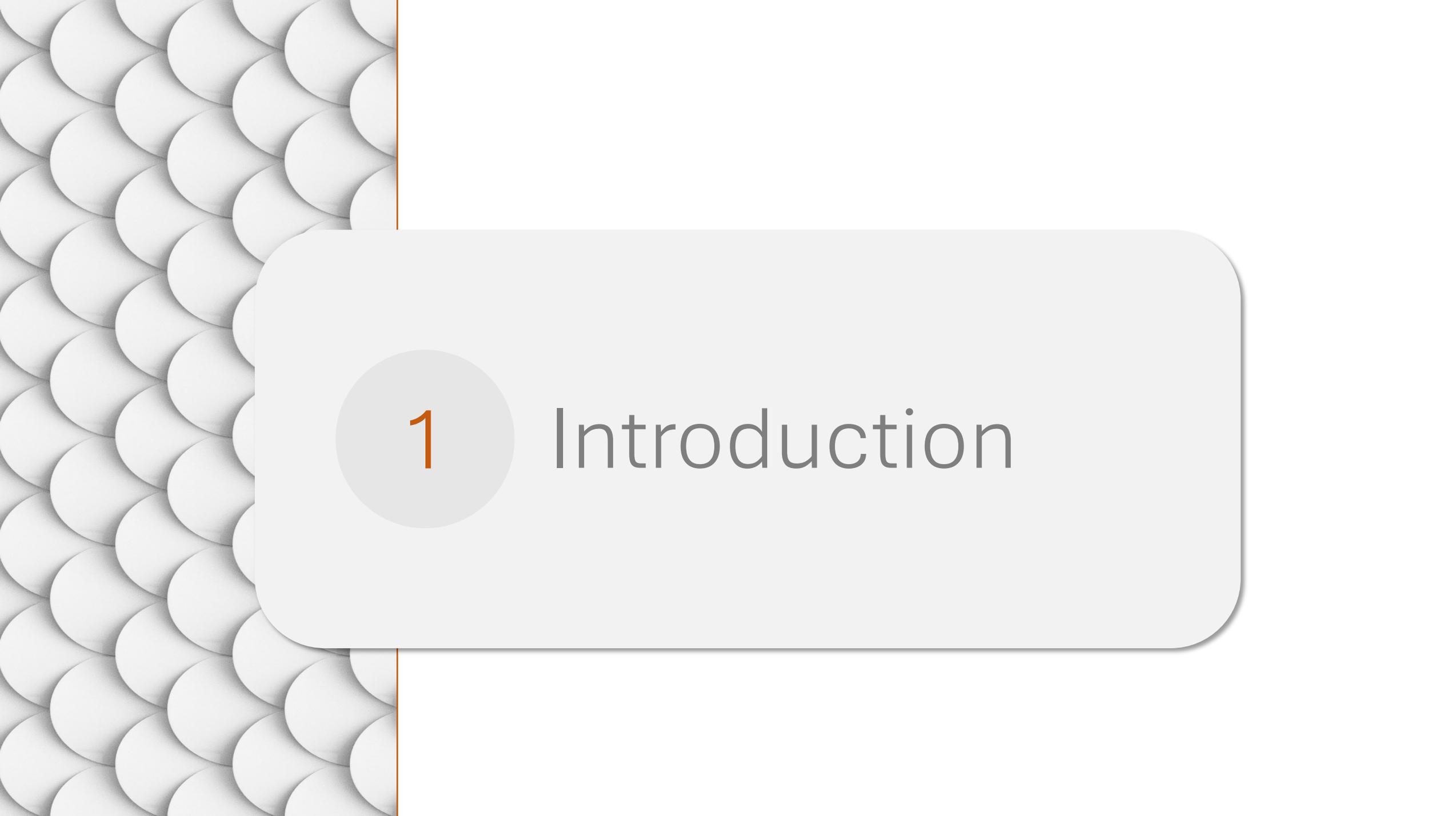
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Introduction

Wave 3 Engagements



Over the course of 3 workshops with First Nation Members, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) collected comments and feedback on the draft DFO Wave 3 engagement topics, including offsetting, habitat banking, and fish and fish habitat (FFH) conservation standards and codes of practice. Following a collaborative review of the discussions, FSIN has compiled the following information to guide DFO as they finalize the draft engagement documents in 2024.

Key Concerns & Topics

Raised by Saskatchewan First Nations

Inherent Rights

Inclusion and acknowledgement of First Nation Inherent Rights in DFO actions, policies, best practices, language and concepts

Funding

Accessible funding opportunities for FFH conservation activities, capacity building at First Nations; need for funding to support engagement and consultation

Communications

Timely and effective communication from DFO and other agencies to inform, share data and information with First Nations (FPIC)

Engagement

Meaningful engagement as an ongoing, prioritized activity undertaken with appropriate protocols, communication and actions

Collaboration

Collaboration with and inclusion of First Nation conservation knowledge, FFH observations, perspectives and best practices for improved outcomes

Key Concerns & Topics

Raised by Saskatchewan First Nations

Holistic Approaches

Conservation strategies can be enhanced through holistic, whole-of-ecosystem, intergenerational approaches that leverage First Nation knowledge systems

Water Security

Industrial impacts to water health and resulting impacts to fish and fish habitat are of concern. E.g. water diversion projects, agriculture run-off

Climate change impacts to the environment, water quality and quantity, and related impacts to fish and fish habitat

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement of DFO best practices and policies, ensuring appropriate and effective undertakings

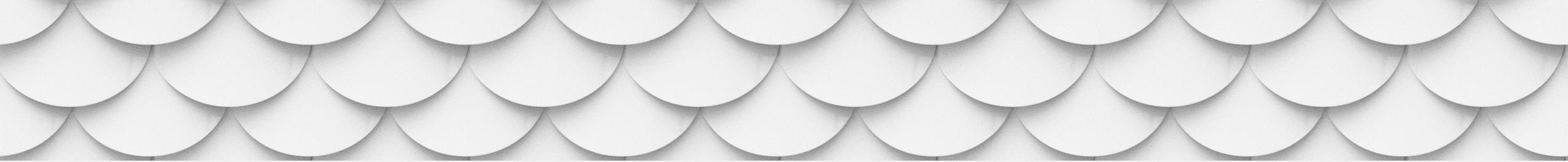
Proponent Accountability

Mechanisms to hold project proponents, in particular Big Industry and Government, accountable for FFH impacts and conservation

Key Concerns & Topics

“What are your biggest concerns around fish and fish habitat?”

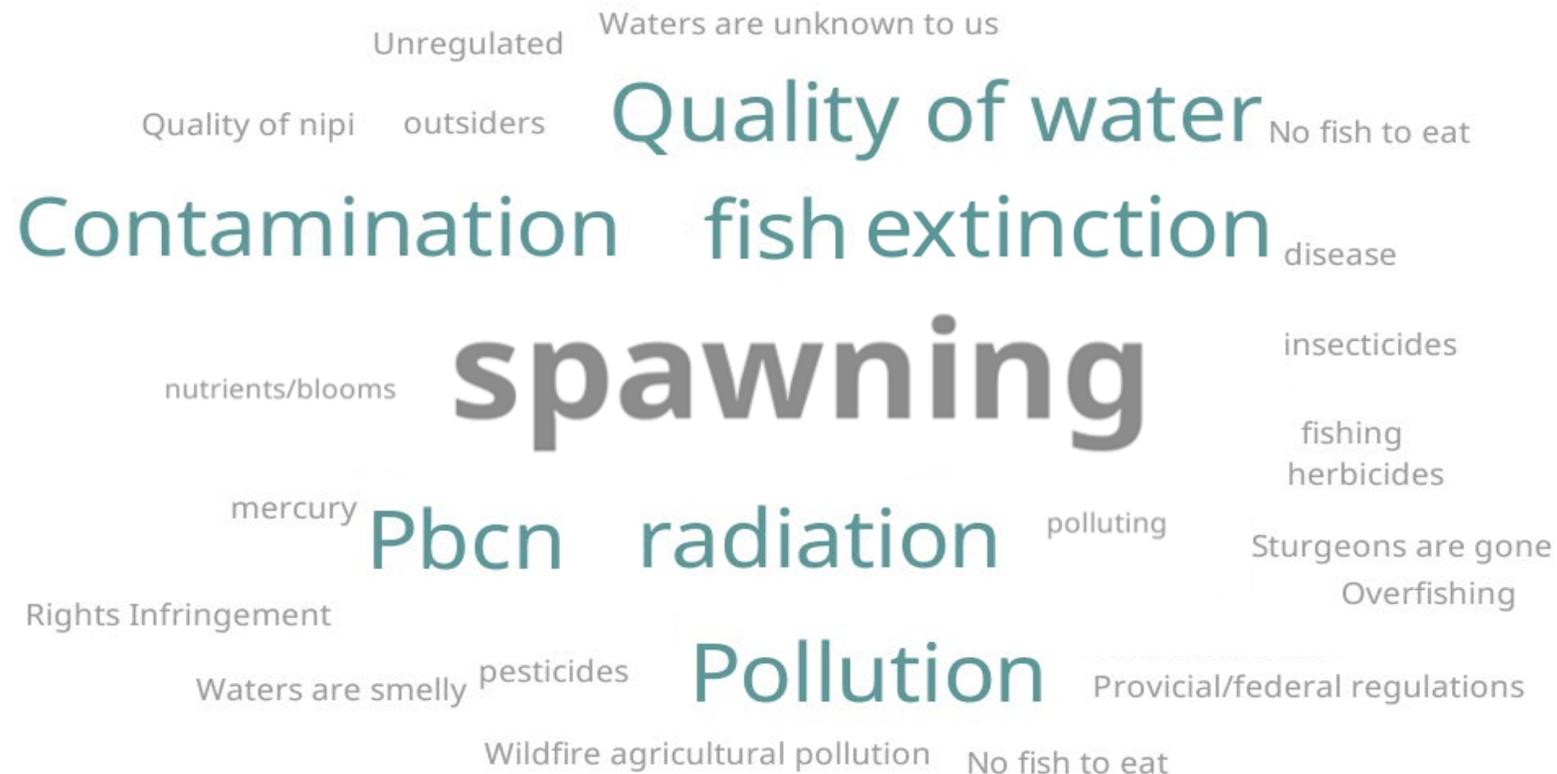
- Wetland drainage happening in the province, and we are already in a crisis
- Interprovincial water management or lack of it
- Algae blooms
- Low water levels
- Pollution from mining
- Impact of mining and forestry to habit and water
- Over-fishing and waste
- Cities allowing waste to be dumped into lakes affecting the drinking water quality
- Concerned about the safety and consumption of fish. How can we tell if the fish are poisoned? There are many instances of animals with growths inside them
- I want to be able to eat the fish not hear about contaminated water and hear the fish are good and healthy
- Mercury; other sources of contamination
- Lack of water, allowing fish to spawn
- Higher water temperature affecting spawning and habitats.
- Low water levels affecting spawning/migration patterns
- Fish issues because my community lives off the fish for food cause the water level is low
- Monitoring of sports fishery
- Unregulated dumping into waters and on lands

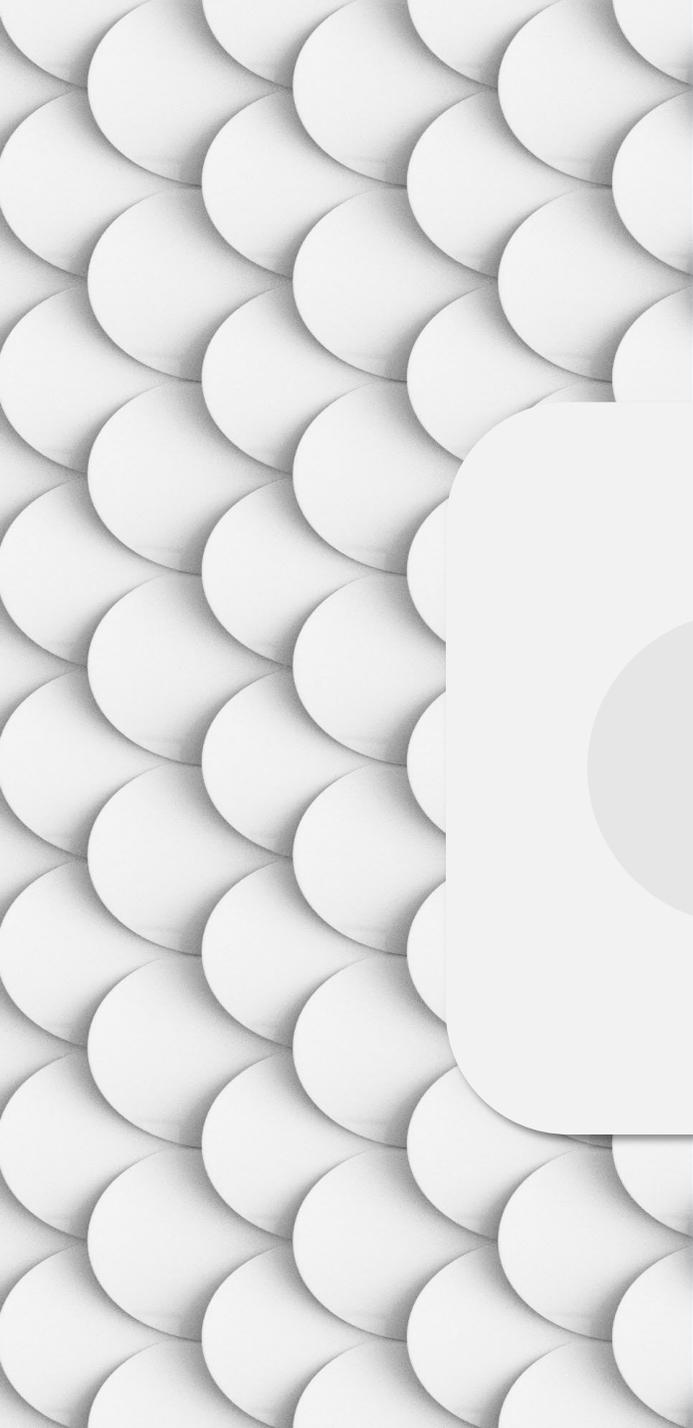


Key Concerns & Topics

“What are your biggest concerns around fish and fish habitat?”

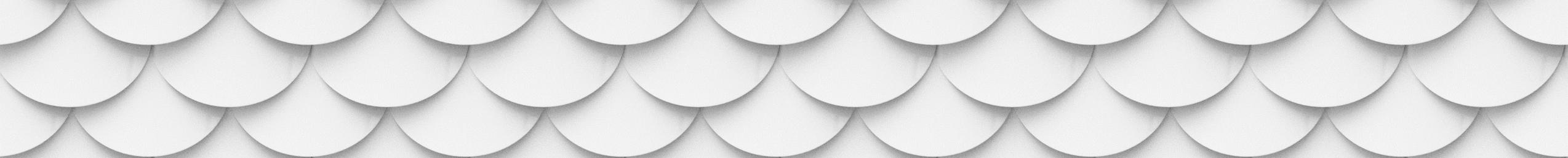
ONLINE SURVEY





2

Offsetting Policy



Offsetting Policy

General discussion, concerns and questions:

- **Duty to Consult**

- When is this triggered in the process of a proponent developing plans to offset?
- When DTC is triggered, DFO has a small consultation fund for communities, but it has to be a project that DFO is overseeing
- How can First Nation perspectives better inform DFO policies and the management of FFH?

- **Water Management:**

- Drainage Networks – farmers drain wetlands and divert water, leading to impacts from agricultural chemicals in the fish habitat
- DFO not involved in this – drainage networks fill out a permit to do this work through WSA.
- We must protect the wetlands as much as we can – they are critical including water storage, groundwater recharge, and filtering the water
- Need to broaden the table and have First Nation voices at these discussion and decision-making tables to protect the water

Offsetting Policy

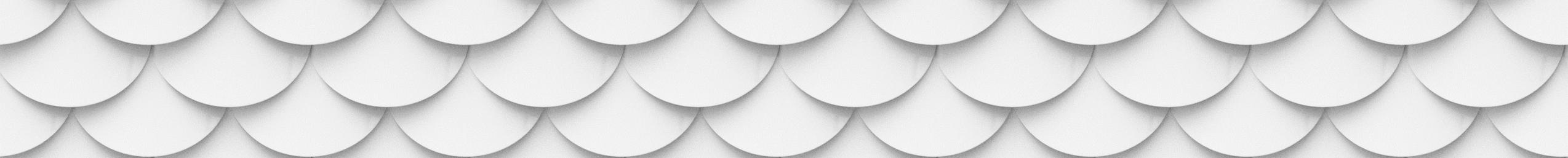
General discussion, concerns and questions (continued):

○ Restocking

- Who does fish restocking? It would be nice to know when and what species are released.
 - The province (Ministry of Environment Fisheries Unit – can DFO provide a contact?) does this work on a rotational basis (every ~ 10 years). They also do surveys every so many years on popular fishing lakes to assess if restocking is required.

○ Impacts to Communities

- Proponents can essentially police themselves with respect to whether there may be impacts to FFH.
- Is there an offsetting policy for the City of Regina and their release of sewage that ends up in Pasqua Lake and the Qu'Appelle chain of lakes? What if it's not deemed a project? How are they held accountable?
- There doesn't seem to be consequences of proponents being poor stewards of the fisheries
- SaskPower E.B. Campbell Power Station Refurbishing Project – DFO is engaging and consulting with First Nations on offsetting potential projects



Offsetting Policy

Part 1 – Legislative Context related to Offsetting

- **Recognition of First Nation Rights:** While the policy acknowledges the importance of fish and fish habitat to First Nations, there may be a need for stronger recognition of First Nation rights, including Inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights. The document mentions consultation with First Nations, but there could be further emphasis on the legal obligation to accommodate rights, title and interests.
- **Inclusion of Traditional Knowledge:** The document mentions the consideration of traditional knowledge provided to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in decision-making processes. However, there could be a need for clearer guidelines on how traditional knowledge is incorporated and respected throughout the offsetting process. First Nations may seek assurance that their knowledge is valued and utilized appropriately.

Offsetting Policy

- **Consultation and Engagement:** While proponents who are not Crown entities do not have a legal duty to consult and accommodate, there is a strong encouragement for engagement with First Nations. However, there may be concerns about the adequacy of engagement efforts, particularly if First Nations feel that their input is not adequately considered or if they are not provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. Further, there is a need for adequate funding for First Nations to undertake this work.
- **Impact Assessment:** First Nations may seek a more comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of proposed works, undertakings, or activities on their rights, interests, and livelihoods. This includes consideration of not only the direct impacts on fish and fish habitat but also the broader social, cultural, economic, and ecological implications. In some cases, there will be a need for this to be a funded, First Nation-led independent assessment that incorporates traditional land use and occupancy information.
- **Offsetting Measures:** While the policy outlines measures for offsetting harmful impacts to fish and fish habitat, First Nations may advocate for a greater focus on prevention and mitigation strategies to minimize harm in the first place. There may also be concerns about the effectiveness and adequacy of offsetting measures, particularly if they are seen as a "last resort" rather than a genuine effort to avoid harm.

Offsetting Policy

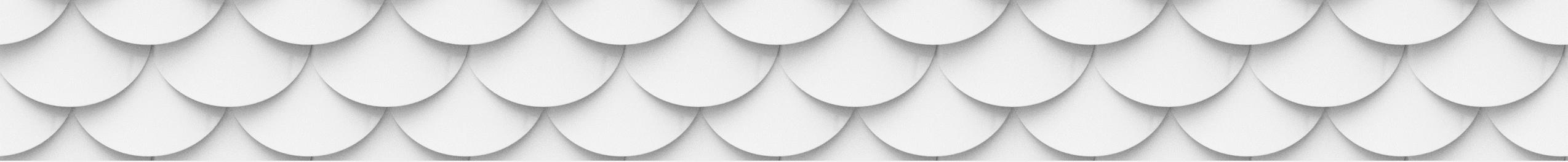
Part 2 – Measures to Offset Harmful Impacts

- **Principle 2** - Limits to Offset: While the principle acknowledges the importance of areas of exceptional ecological or cultural value, it should explicitly recognize First Nations' rights and traditional knowledge in identifying and protecting such areas. This could involve stronger language emphasizing the need to respect First Nation sovereignty and authority over their traditional territories.
- **Principle 5** - Locating Offsets: The policy should ensure meaningful consultation and consent from First Nations or communities regarding the location of offsetting measures. This includes recognizing First Nation stewardship practices and ensuring that offsetting measures align with First Nation priorities for habitat restoration, remediation, or enhancement.
- **Principle 6** - Self-Sustaining Benefits: First Nation perspectives may highlight the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in designing offsetting measures that support self-sustaining benefits. Incorporating Traditional Knowledge systems can enhance the ecological effectiveness and long-term sustainability of offsetting efforts.
- **Principle 7** - Time Lags: The policy should address concerns about the potential impacts of time lags between harmful impacts and offsetting measures on First Nations' rights and livelihoods. It should ensure that any temporary loss of resources or ecosystem services during the time lag is adequately addressed and compensated for.
- **Principle 8** – First Nation Engagement: This principle needs to acknowledge Inherent Rights held by First Nations. While the policy recognizes the importance of engaging First Nations, it should emphasize the requirement for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). This includes integrating Traditional Knowledge into all phases of offsetting planning, design, implementation, and monitoring. This principle needs stronger language to state that proponents “must engage early and often with potentially affected First Nations”. DFO must state how they will confirm with the First Nations what proponents reports to them regarding all aspects of engagement and how offsetting measures accommodate adverse effects on Inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights. Language should be changed to “additional measures to accommodate these effects will be required”.

Offsetting Policy

Part 3 – Measures to Offset

- **Flexibility in Measure Selection:** While flexibility in selecting offsetting measures is acknowledged, there should be explicit recognition of the need to incorporate Traditional Knowledge and practices into decision-making processes. First Nations possess valuable insights into local ecosystems and their management, which can enhance the effectiveness and cultural appropriateness of offset measures.
- **Principle of "Like-for-Like" or "Better than Like-for-Like" Approach:** While these principles provide options for offsetting measures, there is a need for clarity on how First Nation perspectives and priorities are integrated into determining what constitutes "better" habitat or fish community. First Nations should be actively involved in defining what constitutes an improvement and ensuring that any changes align with their cultural and ecological values.
- **Integration with First Nation Conservation and Restoration Priorities:** The policy should explicitly recognize and prioritize First Nation conservation and restoration priorities, including First Nation-led initiatives, traditional stewardship practices, and cultural values related to fish and fish habitat. This includes ensuring that offsetting measures align with First Nations' goals for ecosystem health and community well-being.
- **Consultation and Consent:** The policy should include robust mechanisms for meaningful consultation and obtaining free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from First Nations affected by offsetting measures. First Nations must have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, including the selection, design, and implementation of offset measures, in accordance with their inherent rights and jurisdiction.



Offsetting Policy

Part 3 – Measures to Offset (continued)

- **Consideration of Climate Change:** Given the increasing impacts of climate change on fish habitat and ecosystems, the policy should incorporate stronger language around the required considerations of climate resilience and adaptation into offsetting measures. Traditional Knowledge systems often include valuable insights into adapting to changing environmental conditions and should be integrated into climate-sensitive habitat restoration and enhancement efforts.
- **Invasive Species Management:** While the policy acknowledges the importance of preventing the spread of invasive species, there should be specific provisions for First Nation involvement in invasive species monitoring, management, and control efforts. Traditional Knowledge of local ecosystems can contribute to more effective invasive species prevention and mitigation strategies.
- **Monitoring and Adaptive Management:** The policy should include provisions for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management of offsetting measures, with meaningful First Nation participation. First Nation monitoring programs can provide valuable data on the effectiveness of offset measures and contribute to adaptive management approaches that respond to changing environmental conditions and community needs.
- **Funding:** all of these activities and engagements with First Nations require adequate funding from proponents.

Offsetting Policy

Part 4 – Preparing an Offsetting Plan

- Proponents can essentially police themselves with respect to whether there may be impacts to fish and fish habitat, and whether they engage with First Nations regarding their projects and offsetting plans.
- When developing offsetting plans, proponents should seek external guidance on potentially affected First Nations and who should be engaged with. FPIC principles should guide this process
- Suggested language revision: throughout the Offsetting Policy document, change “it is important and good practice to engage” with First Nations to “it is a requirement to engage”. DFO should be supporting this important engagement as a best practice that must be completed by proponents.
- It is not clear how DFO would ensure that the proponent is maintaining a “relationship during the design and implementation stages” with First Nations during an offsetting program. Does DFO contact the impacted First Nations to ensure they have been engaged with and to independently determine if they have been a part of the planning phase?

Offsetting Policy

Part 4 – Preparing an Offsetting Plan (continued)

- **Early Engagement:** While the policy mentions early engagement, it should be emphasized that meaningful consultation and consent-seeking processes with affected communities are crucial. Proponents should not only engage with First Nations but also seek their free, prior, and informed consent throughout the planning and implementation stages. Proponents should seek support in adequately identifying potentially impacted First Nations.
- **Recognition of First Nation Rights and Title:** The policy should acknowledge and respect First Nation rights and title over traditional territories. This includes recognizing their jurisdiction and authority in decision-making processes related to land and resource management, including offsetting plans.
- **Respect for First Nation Knowledge:** The policy mentions the potential inclusion of First Nation Knowledge in the planning process. However, it should explicitly state the need for respecting and incorporating such in decision-making, as it often provides valuable insights into local ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Consideration of Cumulative Effects:** First Nation communities often bear the cumulative impacts of multiple development projects in their territories. The offsetting plan should explicitly address cumulative effects on fish and fish habitat, considering the broader context of existing and planned developments.

Offsetting Policy

Part 4 – Preparing an Offsetting Plan (continued)

- **Involvement in Monitoring and Reporting:** First Nations should have meaningful involvement in monitoring and reporting processes related to the offsetting plan. This includes compensated participation in designing monitoring programs, collecting data, and assessing the effectiveness of offset measures.
- **Financial Guarantees and Land Access:** The policy should ensure that financial guarantees and land access requirements do not disproportionately burden First Nations. Provisions should be in place to protect inherent rights to access and use traditional lands for cultural, subsistence, and economic activities.
- **Capacity Building and Resource Sharing:** The policy should include provisions for capacity building initiatives and resource sharing with First Nations. This could involve training programs, employment opportunities, and revenue-sharing agreements to ensure equitable benefits from offsetting projects.
- **Adaptive Management and Flexibility:** Given the dynamic nature of ecosystems and First Nation knowledge systems, the policy should promote adaptive management approaches that allow for flexibility and responsiveness to changing conditions and community needs.



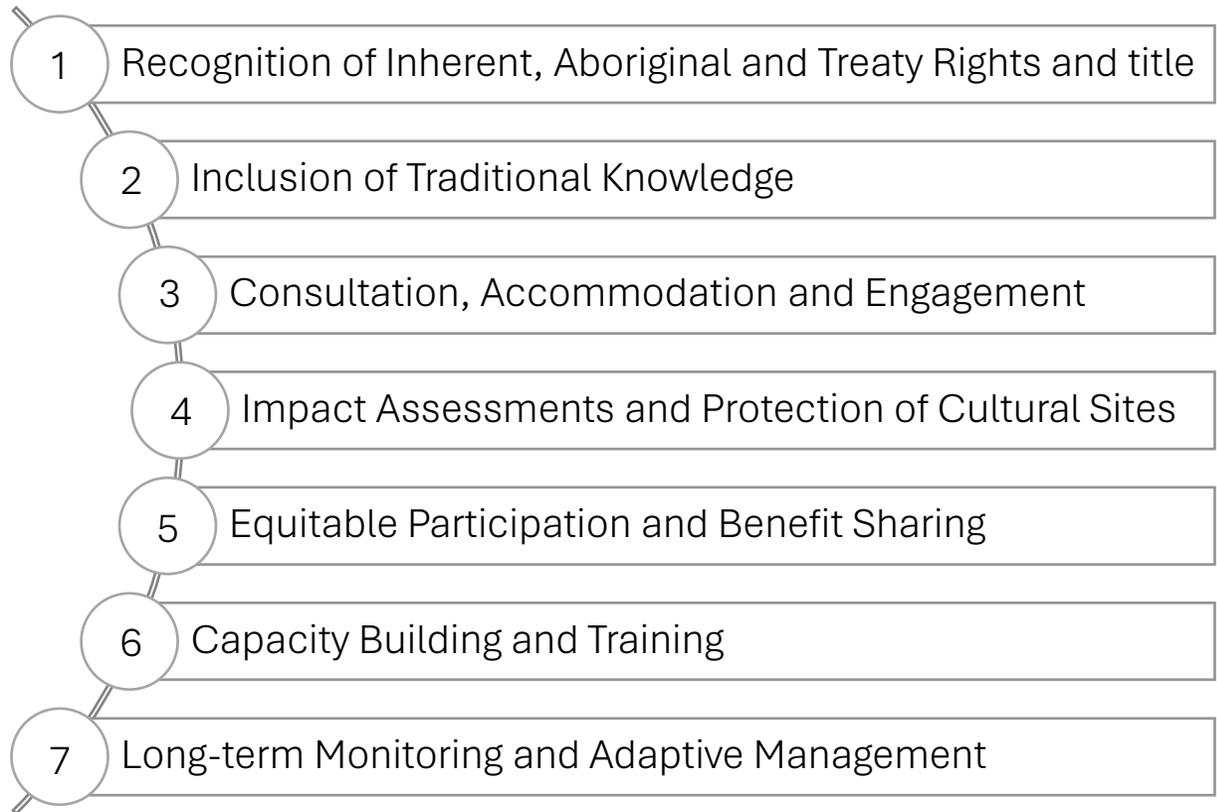
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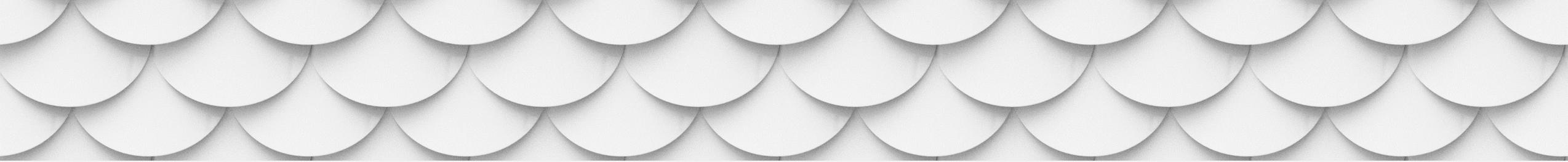
Habitat Banking

Habitat Banking

General Comments

- The recommended edits made previously in this report about the Offsetting Policy principles also apply to this draft Guidelines for Establishing and Managing Habitat Banks, as habitat banks are governed by the Offsetting Policy principles.
- Important themes that carry through all aspects of these draft Wave 3 Engagement documents include the following, unranked, non-exhaustive list of priority considerations for First Nations. Appropriate funding from DFO and proponents is required for meaningful actions across these priorities:





Habitat Banking

Priority Considerations for First Nations

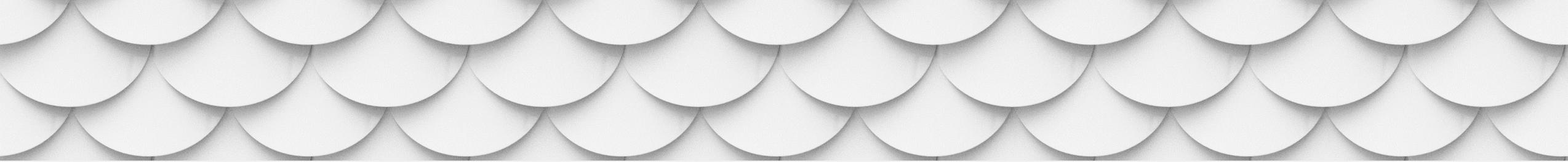
1. Recognition of Inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and title: The policy mentions the need to consider First Nations perspectives and consult with First Nations Peoples when there is potential to adversely impact Aboriginal and treaty rights. However, it's important to ensure that First Nations rights are not only considered but also fully recognized and respected throughout the process. This includes meaningful engagement and partnership with First Nations communities in the establishment, management, and operation of fish habitat banks.
2. Inclusion of Traditional Knowledge: First Nations communities possess valuable traditional ecological knowledge about fish habitat and aquatic ecosystems. It's essential to incorporate this traditional knowledge into the planning, implementation, and monitoring of fish habitat banks. This can help ensure that conservation efforts are culturally appropriate and effective.
3. Consultation, Accommodation and Engagement: While the policy acknowledges DFO's legal duty to consult with First Nations, it should clarify the specific steps and responsibilities of both proponents and DFO in fulfilling this duty. There should be transparent processes for consultation and accommodation, including mechanisms for addressing concerns raised by First Nations and integrating their feedback into decision-making.
4. Impact Assessments and Protection of Cultural Sites: The policy should include specific provisions for the protection of culturally significant sites and areas of cultural heritage value to First Nations within the context of fish habitat banks. Adequate measures should be in place to identify, assess, and mitigate potential impacts on these sites during the planning and implementation of conservation projects. This could involve conducting comprehensive impact assessments in collaboration with First Nations.

Habitat Banking

Priority Considerations for First Nations

5. Equitable Participation and Benefit Sharing: First Nations should have equitable opportunities to participate in the establishment, management, and operation of fish habitat banks. This includes involvement in decision-making processes, governance structures, and benefit-sharing arrangements. First Nations should receive meaningful benefits from fish habitat banks, such as capacity building, employment opportunities, and revenue sharing.
6. Capacity Building and Training: Proponents of fish habitat banks should invest in capacity building and training initiatives for First Nations to enhance their participation in habitat conservation efforts. This could include training programs on ecological monitoring, habitat restoration techniques, and sustainable resource management practices.
7. Long-term Monitoring and Adaptive Management: There should be clear provisions for long-term stewardship and governance of fish habitat banks, including the ongoing involvement of First Nations in monitoring, management, and decision-making. First Nation perspectives and priorities should be integrated into adaptive management processes to ensure the sustainability and resilience of aquatic ecosystems.

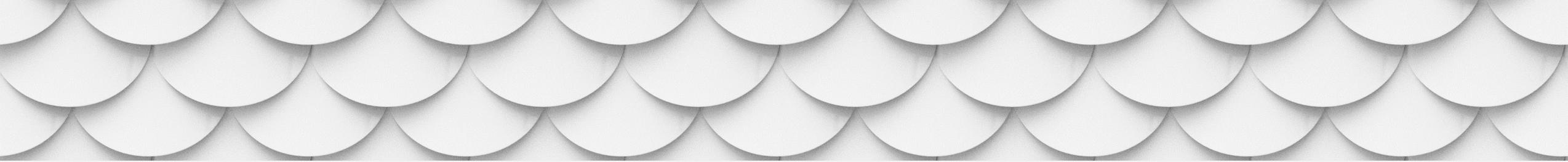




Habitat Banking

Part 1 – Principles

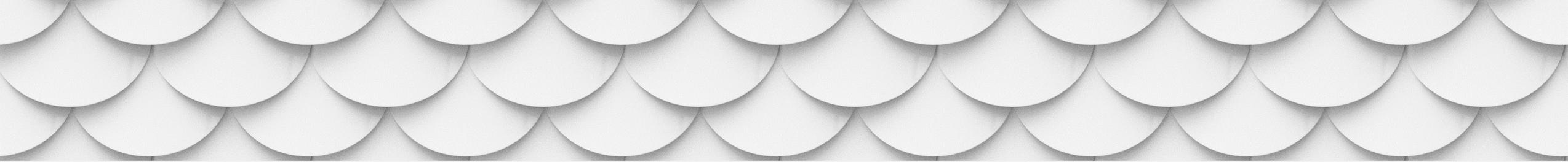
- The recommended edits made previously in this report about the Offsetting Policy principles also apply to this draft Guidelines for Establishing and Managing Habitat Banks, as habitat banks are governed by the Offsetting Policy principles.
- Add Inherent Rights to this sentence: “Fish habitat banks and their conservation projects should not adversely impact Inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights”.
- With respect to consultation being conducted by DFO when there is potential for adverse impacts to (add Inherent here again) Aboriginal and treaty rights, does DFO decide unilaterally if there is potential for impacts? How are First Nations involved in this assessment of impacts to their rights? There needs to be more clarity and language around this in the guidelines.



Habitat Banking

Part 2 – Legislative Context for Fish Habitat Banks

- While the Fisheries Act outlines prohibitions against harmful impacts to fish and fish habitat, it's essential to ensure that these regulations align with First Nations rights and perspectives. They should be actively engaged in decision-making processes to ensure that their traditional territories and resources are adequately protected.
- The Species at Risk Act prohibitions against harming listed species and their critical habitat are crucial for biodiversity conservation. However, Traditional Knowledge and stewardship should be integrated into conservation efforts to enhance effectiveness and respect First Nation rights.
- The empowerment of the Minister to establish fish habitat banking arrangements highlights the need for meaningful engagement with First Nations. Their perspectives on conservation project proposals and management should be prioritized in these arrangements.
- Recognition of First Nation Inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights and the duty to consult and accommodate are fundamental aspects of Canadian law. However, it's essential to move beyond mere consultation and ensure First Nations have decision-making authority and benefit from habitat banking initiatives.
- Proponents must recognize these rights, even if they are not legally obligated to consult and accommodate. Meaningful engagement with First Nations should be prioritized throughout all stages of habitat banking projects.
- Compliance and Enforcement: The policy should outline clear mechanisms for monitoring, compliance, and enforcement to ensure that fish habitat banks operate in accordance with First Nation rights, environmental regulations, and best practices. First Nations should be involved in monitoring efforts and should have access to information about the performance and outcomes of fish habitat banks.



Habitat Banking

Part 3 – Establishing, Managing and Operating Fish Habitat Banks

Phase 1: Establishing a Fish Habitat Bank Arrangement and Defining the Service Area:

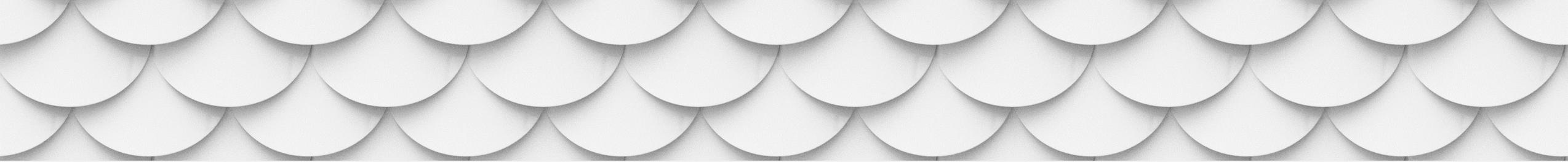
- The draft guidelines state that establishment of a fish habitat bank arrangement between DFO and the proponent must prioritize transparency, accountability, and information sharing. However, it's crucial to ensure that First Nation perspectives and rights are fully incorporated into the arrangement.
- Proponents must engage with First Nations early in the process to gather feedback and address concerns regarding the proposed establishment of the fish habitat bank arrangement. This engagement should be co-developed with the proponent and the First Nation and documented and shared with all parties including DFO to inform decision-making.
- DFO has a legal duty to consult with First Nations if the establishment of a fish habitat bank arrangement may adversely affect their (insert “Inherent”), Aboriginal and treaty rights. Information from early engagement with First Nations should be considered during the consultation process.
- 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.2.5, 3.3.2 and all other sections referencing this activity: change “It is recommended that proponents engage early and often with (First Nations)...” to “Proponents must engage early and often with First Nations...”
- When describing the Service Area, proponents should also be required to include spatial information (i.e., on Service Area maps and descriptions) regarding the location of the project(s) relative to First Nation traditional (where available), Treaty and reservation lands.

Habitat Banking

Part 3 – Establishing, Managing and Operating Fish Habitat Banks

Phase 2:

- Habitat bank conservation projects are crucial components of a functioning habitat bank arrangement. It's essential to ensure that these projects align with the conservation goals and objectives of First Nations whose territories may be affected.
- The objectives of conservation projects should include considerations for aquatic species at risk and their habitat. Proponents must engage with First Nations to gather relevant information and incorporate Traditional Knowledge systems into project planning and implementation.
- Conservation Project Plans, included as Annex B to the arrangement, outline key details of each proposed habitat bank conservation project. It's important to ensure that these plans are developed in consultation with First Nations and reflect their perspectives and concerns.
- Proponents must address any harmful impacts on fish and fish habitat resulting from project implementation and propose measures to avoid or mitigate these effects. First Nations should be consulted to ensure that their concerns are adequately addressed in project plans.
- Proponents are responsible for securing access to lands, water sources, or waterbodies required for project implementation. First Nation perspectives on land tenure and ownership must be respected, and proponents should engage with First Nations to address any concerns related to land access or use.
- The value of habitat credits generated by conservation projects should be determined through mutual agreement between DFO and the proponent. First Nations should be consulted to ensure that credit valuation reflects the ecological and cultural significance of fish habitat within their territories.
- Traditional Knowledge systems may inform the selection of relevant fish habitat indicators and progress targets, contributing to more culturally sensitive monitoring and reporting processes.
- First Nations should be involved in the development and implementation of monitoring plans, ensuring that monitoring activities respect their rights and interests.

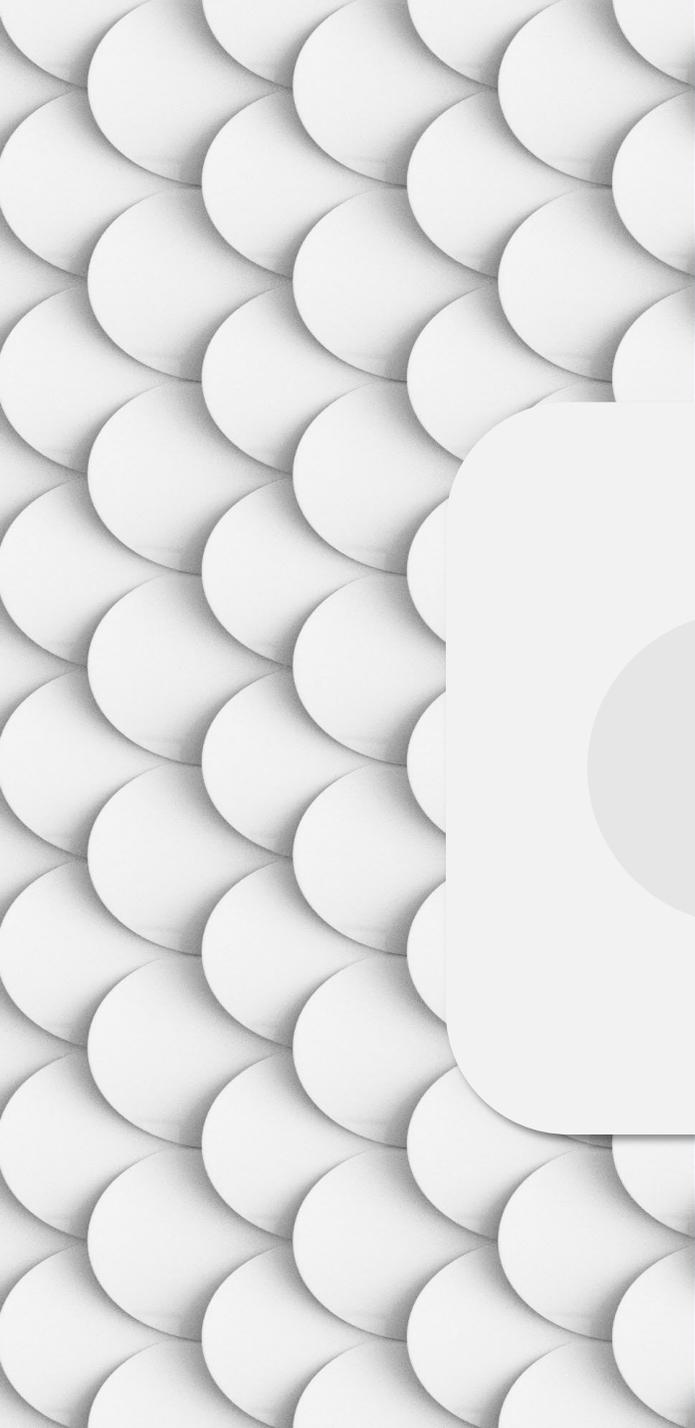


Habitat Banking

Appendix 1: Fish Habitat Bank Arrangement Proposal Information

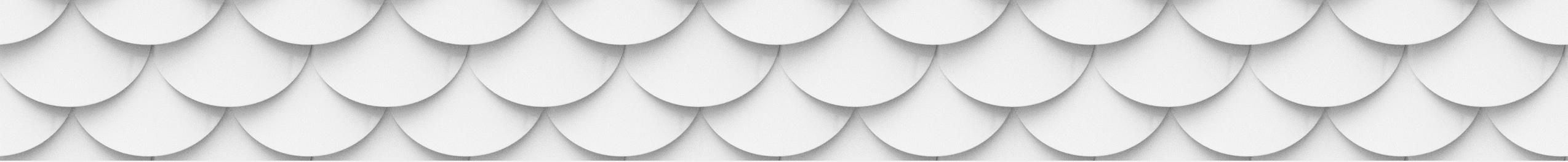
Habitat Bank Proposal:

- Part (e), description and results of “any” engagement or consultation activities with First Nations: change this language to “description and results of the required engagement or consultation activities...” to enforce that it is a requirement.
- Information provided by proponents in this section should clearly indicate the First Nation(s) that are potentially or directly impacted by the proposed work. It should be required to describe the engagement undertakings that the proponent has completed, and the outcomes, any required impact mitigation actions, and future engagement information.
- In the Service Area Location information, the proponent should (as previously mentioned) be required to include spatial information (i.e., on Service Area maps and descriptions) regarding the location of the project(s) relative to First Nation traditional (where available), Treaty and reservation lands. Where there is a discrepancy between impacted or potentially impacted First Nations in maps or other spatial information or descriptions and the proponent’s list of First Nations engaged or consulted with, the proponent must justify why certain First Nations were not engaged or consulted with.



4

Standard & Codes of Practice



Standard & Codes of Practice

- Standards and Codes of Practice are DFO's guidance for self-declared "low risk" proponent projects. However, the need for meaningful engagement is still required with impacted or potentially impacted First Nations.
- The voluntary notice to DFO of proponent's use of the Standards and Codes of Practice (SCoPs) allows proponents to police themselves. It allows in-water works and other actions to legally be completed by proponents with no oversight of DFO or other regulatory bodies.
- It is recommended that the use of the SCoPs by proponents must be reported to DFO, so they are aware of the projects being undertaken by proponents and can investigate further if activities are deemed to be not low risk. Further, it is recommended that proponent project information is public domain, on an accessible online platform.
- It should be stated that proponents who employ any SCoPs must engage with impacted or potentially impacted First Nations. Following FPIC principles, adequate notification and comment periods are required.
- Under the "How standards and codes of practice are used" section of the Fact Sheet, add that project proponents must engage with impacted or potentially impacted First Nations.

Standard & Codes of Practice

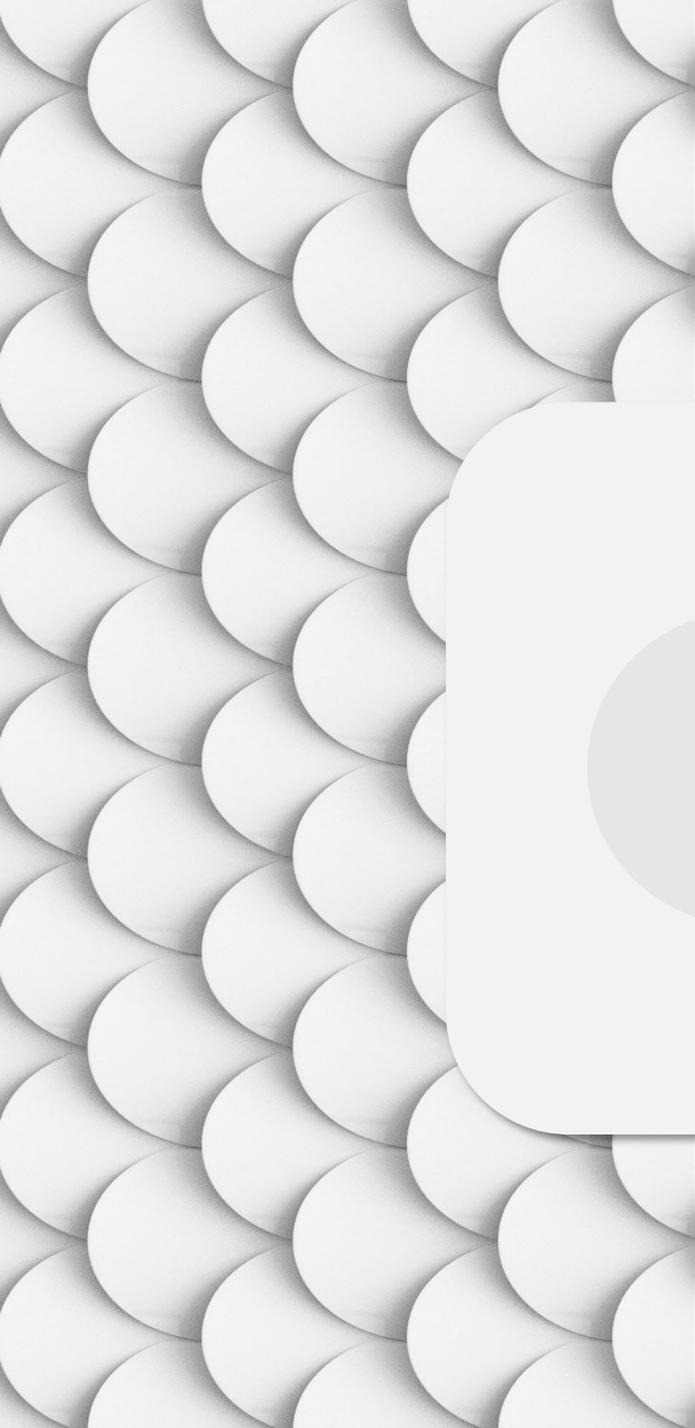
The following sentence, present in all Codes of Practice documents, needs to be re-written:

“It is good practice to notify nearby Indigenous communities before starting the project”

- To include stronger language regarding the proponent’s need to inform and engage with First Nations about their proposed activities that impact or have the potential to impact fish and fish habitat and other considerations as identified by engaged parties, a suggested rewrite of this sentence is:

“Proponents must meaningfully engage with and notify nearby (First Nations) before starting any project activities”

- *“There should be an overall guiding statement to cover things to make sure that First Nations have been meaningfully engaged somewhere prominent, not buried as a little statement in a document – it needs to be front and center, so proponents see it”.* (comment on SCoP documents from November 2023 Wave 3 Engagement participant)
- Further, every Code of Practice document should have a dedicated section with information on these expectations. It should outline that proponents must notify nearby First Nations and have realistic timelines for communicating (10 working days notice period is not sufficient). These interactions should be guided by FPIC principles. When First Nations are notified so that they have time to consider the activity, they can advise the proponent of any residual harm to fish and fish habitat or any other impact as a result of the proponent’s undertakings.



5

Additional Feedback & Insights

Additional Feedback & Insights

First Nation Community Observations, Discussion Points and Questions:

- Fort Qu'Appelle has a lot of carp – outcompeting Bigmouth Buffalo species (similar anatomy and preferred habitat)
- Perch used to be in abundance at Fishing Lake – haven't seen perch in years. Ministry of Environment restocked lake in the past, but not sure what they stocked it with.
- No communication between government and First Nations. Need better communication – both feds and the province
- Fishing Lake experienced a couple of floods – many cabins were lost, many contaminants entered the lake, then they lost pickerel in the lake
- Lakes need to be restocked
- Concerns about crayfish
- Funding applications need to be user-friendly – what good is the funding program, if there is difficulty applying for the funding?
- Who does the groundwork to identify if waterbodies have species at risk?
- Need data to prove that contamination killed off fish where that is a concern
- There's a need for funding for First Nations when DFO, the province or industry engages with them to address the lack of capacity at the nation. Gaps in not having Western science knowledge and timelines are too quick to get the right people to help them understand.
- Rehabilitation for fish and fish habitat on historic projects (e.g. dams, other water diversion structures) – there should be commentary around offsets for historic projects, just like old mines being cleaned.
- Data gaps for what species are present in what lakes, or observations on fish species that have disappeared is valuable information for DFO the First Nation communities know about, especially all the inland fishers in SK.
- Overlaps in jurisdiction between DFO and province re. First Nations removing beaver dams that are impacting spawning ground – Conservation Officers not happy that First Nations doing this.

Additional Feedback & Insights

Government Monitoring

- Issues with fish net placement by government agencies that do their fish counts / monitoring – they put them back exactly where it was last time (by GPS) – at Big Sandy this was an issue. They should move them to where the fish move. They do the testing in July – it's shallow then, so fish have already moved. Walleye do not move – netting needs fish to move, and so of course you won't catch them. If they would do it in September, they would catch the actual population of what's in the water. They determine things and make decisions on this netting information.
 - Need to incorporate IK into these activities.
- Limits are set based on this info the government collects, so it can really impact things if they make poor decisions based on poor data collected.
- Need more oversight of recreational fishing / angling – no control on angling in terms of what they catch.

Agriculture

- Need buffer zones from agricultural run-off to protect fish and fish habitat

Federal Agencies

- Lack of awareness around Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) – who are they, what is their mandate?