

Forum 2 – Day 3

Executive Summary

Theme: From Dialogue to Accountability

Day 3 of Forum 2 marked a decisive shift from technical exploration to governance accountability. While previous days focused on data, frameworks, and scenario analysis, the third day centered on decision-making authority, transparency, rights recognition, and the practical meaning of partnership. The tone was candid, at times urgent, but grounded in a shared commitment to conservation and long-term sustainability.

1. Governance & Decision-Making Transparency

Discussion focused on how decisions are made, particularly regarding Chinook management. Concerns were raised that ministerial decisions were informed by materials not fully shared with the Fraser Salmon Management Board (FSMB), including socioeconomic analyses. Rationale for decisions was often provided after the fact. A stepped approach was proposed: full Board review of materials before submission to the Minister, shared review of Ministerial responses, and complete transparency of all information influencing decisions.

2. Recreational Fishery Impacts & Enforcement

Participants expressed concern regarding high recreational catch-and-release volumes, associated mortality, non-compliance rates, and perceived inequitable enforcement. Advanced fishing technology and its impact were noted. Nations emphasized that reductions in recreational impacts are necessary to honor Sparrow priority principles and enable FSC access.

3. Chinook Access & FSC Priority

Nations indicated they are not seeking increased overall mortality, but rather reduced recreational impacts and meaningful FSC access, particularly symbolic spring access for Lower Fraser Nations and expanded opportunity for Upper and Mid-Fraser Nations. Food security data highlighted significant unmet needs among communities.

4. Sockeye: Structured Deliberation & Emerging Proposal

No final decision was reached on sockeye scenarios. Regional technical sessions will occur prior to Forum 3. A proposal gained traction to maintain the five-week window closure for commercial and recreational sectors while exploring limited FSC access in Weeks 4 and 5, designed and managed by Nations within conservation limits.

5. Coho: Cautious Flexibility

Participants reaffirmed maintaining a 3–5% exploitation rate for Canada. If exploitation increases, additional impact should prioritize FSC. Further technical clarification is required before final direction is established.

6. Rights & Jurisdiction

Rights-based framing was prominent, referencing Sparrow, Marshall, UNDRIP, and DRIPA. Participants emphasized that reconciliation requires structural change and recognition of jurisdiction.

7. Capacity & Empowerment

There was recognition of growing First Nations capacity in technical analysis and governance leadership. Participants stressed that governance structures must now reflect this maturity.

Overall Tone & Forward Direction

Day 3 closed respectfully but firmly. Participants emphasized that listening must translate into action, transparency gaps must close, recreational impacts must be addressed, and partnership must be operational, not symbolic. Forum 3 will be a critical indicator of progress.