

**Summary of the 1st Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries  
Workshop,  
May 8-9, 2000  
St. Francis Xavier University**

The 1<sup>st</sup> SRSF workshop was concerned with a variety of initial goals. To begin with, it was intended as an introduction of SRSF and its community organisation partners to an initial cadre of interested and invited university-seated social researchers. This workshop was also designed to provide the community organisation partners, interested social researchers and SRSF research staff with an opportunity to engage in preliminary discussions respecting the research issues and information needs identified by SRSF's partners. Participants broke into smaller 'thematic' working groups for the purpose of furthering the latter process. Each working group was asked to nominate a 'note-taker' in order that the major points of discussion and conclusion could be reported back to the entire meeting.

The 1<sup>st</sup> in a series, this report presents a summary of the discussions as recorded and submitted by each working group's note-takers. Other than some slight editing, these notes are presented as submitted.

*Participants*

*SRSF*

Anthony Davis- Director  
John Kearney- Co-Director  
Flora Murphy- Project Officer

*Community Partners*

Sandy Benoit- Gulf Nova Scotia Bonefide Fishermen's Association  
Arthur Bull- The Bay of Fundy Marine Resources Centre / Fundy Fixed Gear Council  
Nell den Heyer- Interdisciplinary Studies in Aquatic Resources, St. FXU  
Chris Milley- Mi'kmaq Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Pat Rhynold- Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association

*Community Research Coordinators*

Ginny Boudreau- Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association  
Bill Crossman- The Bay of Fundy Marine Resources Centre / Fundy Fixed Gear Council

*Student Interns*

Tanya Baker- Fundy Fixed Gear Council  
Ashley Bouchie- Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association  
Kirk Mattie- The Bay of Fundy Marine Resources Centre  
Jana Purdy- Gulf Nova Scotia Bonefide Fishermen's Association

*Researchers*

Rod Bantjes- St. Francis Xavier University  
Sean Cadigan- Dalhousie University  
Tony Charles- St. Mary's University  
Peter Clancy- St. Francis Xavier University  
Graham Daborn- Acadia University  
Monica Diochon- St. Francis Xavier University  
Marilyn Gerriets- St. Francis Xavier University  
Diana Doyle- Research Assistant  
Rod Haddow- St. Francis Xavier University  
Melanie Wiber- University of New Brunswick

Group 1

Morning Session

Tanya Baker: Intern, Fundy Fixed Gear Council

- Initial work will be an integrated profile of the community, including; licensing, incomes, economic activity, and other statistical data with the identification of spawning grounds in the Fundy ground fishery.
- This socio-economic and ecological integrated profile will be used for accurate and valid decision making in community-based management.
- Ecological- Spawning grounds of groundfish (working with Maria Recchia at the Centre for Community-Based Management on the New Brunswick side of the Bay of Fundy). Spawning times, locations, methodology, etc. The fish may have different flavours or tastes according to the spawning season and ground areas. The research will fill in the gaps from the economic data.
- Socio-Economic- Season reviews, fleet profiles, numbers of catch, duration, etc. This will look at the impacts that changes over the last four seasons have made on the Fundy Fixed Gear Council (FFGC). May address the question of "who is leaving the fishery and what are they doing instead?" "What role does boat size play in the management?" A historical to present look at what is happening to the industry in the Digby area.
- This is the tail end of a collapsed fishery, the key question is "How do we keep it alive?" -What is the current situation? What is the extent of the situation? Which areas need to be addressed?
- The tides in the Bay of Fundy have a huge impact on the duration of the catch period. The tide limits the times fishermen are able to catch. The tide acts as a regulatory element, the quotes do not reflect the eco-system of the area.

- **Goal (FFGC)**- To limit the control of the Department of Fisheries within the Bay of Fundy fishing grounds. DFO gave the fishermen of Digby the responsibility of monitoring their stocks and grounds but at the same time DFO continues to enforce regulations and polices on boat sizes, thus restricting the Digby area fishermen's autonomy.
- The Fundy Fixed Gear Council is trying to help the community gain control and increase their autonomy from the Department of Fisheries.
- Common property regulations may be a concern in this situation.
- The communities involved are Digby Neck, The Islands, the Upper Bay of Fundy, and Clare.

### Group 1

Afternoon Session

Kirk Mattie: Intern, The Bay of Fundy Marine Resources Centre

- Short-term and long-term goals with an immediate address of dollar value in the market, and to build the capacity for long term linkages with the community.
- Short and long term goals are necessary to address a neglected community-based management.
- **Socio-Economics**- Capital resources at the community level. Costs must be analyzed and updated with changes in the market. Fishing patterns are not uniform so a good understanding of the background is necessary to facilitate a move toward future concerns.
- Marketing Research, then the advertising and promotion. Quality, change of species, and a global approach may be a marketing strategy that will differentiate their product from others presently on the market. A supply and demand survey is necessary.
- If the fishermen come together to meet the supply and demand fluctuations they will increase their chances of success.
- Necessary to assess which areas are the priorities to address.
- Are the MRC and the fishermen able to implement a marketing system for all species or instead should they concentrate on different regions?
- It is a necessity to look at the possible regulatory concerns regarding the processing and marketing of fish (food inspection agency).
- Questions concerning the posting of data obtained from the SRSF projects. What are the limits/constraints on the participants and partners confidentiality?

### Group 2

Sean Cadigan: Dalhousie University

Ecological Knowledge Objective

Our group began to discuss generally how the CURA project might accomplish its goals under the above heading. At the suggestion of Chris Milley, of the Mi'kmaq Fish and Wildlife Commission, we decided to work within the context of a specific issue: the American eel fishery. We thought that this specific issue would serve as a useful pilot study that would have broader implications for many other problems and contexts.

There were a number of basic issues identified that would require the attention of the CURA initiative's research capacity building:

1. The population ecology of the American eel
2. An analysis of land use and other factors that affect eel habitat
3. An identification of present public policies that might affect the eel fishery.

We suggested that the overall objective of such work would be to facilitate better Mi'kmaq development of the eel fishery. Our understanding of how this objective might be achieved began with a consideration of the usual means by which university-based researchers might explore the issues above. Such means would involve the identification of existing literature and data on the subject. This identification, in turn, would prepare the way for the identification of other types of research that would fill in the gaps of existing knowledge.

The purpose of the "Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries" (SRSF) would not be met adequately by conventional research strategies. We began to discuss the development of practical methodologies and expertise that would be community-centred, but in a dialogue with university research. We thought that traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) might be the best place to start. TEK is advantageous not only as a research methodology, but also as a form of community empowerment.

While there are problems to be overcome with TEK - it is, for example, a much better way of establishing correlations rather than causation between phenomena - it is a good way to begin research with the community.

Developing a capacity in TEK-based research design and data collection methodology would be a useful element in achieving SRSF goals.

### Group 3

Melanie Wiber: University of New Brunswick

Main research question from the fishers organisation was the impact of the Canso Causeway on lobster landings. But after discussing this natural science question for awhile, we began to see some implications for social science research:

1. The fishers organization collectively manages the crab fishery quota given to the community (124 fishers as a group) and use the N.S. enabling legislation that allows them to collect dues to facilitate the organization.

Two immediate research implications arose from their explanation of how this is working:

1a. This group could really use help with an *information management system* as their decision-making is getting quite complex - especially since the DFO regulations make it hard to collectively manage group quota and they are forced to sign contracts with each individual skipper. But also because the DFO single species management system means that often regulations come down which are not complementary (i.e. there were two kinds of fisheries open at the same time in that community this year due to DFO scheduling problems. Since many of the fishers are the same people, this makes for confusion as well as some conflict).

1b. As they put it "Contract law has become the de facto system for community based management" and they could use some help sorting out *the ways the DFO disables community based management with their regulations*. There seems to be a great deal of DFO resistance to flexibility in licensing etc., for example with a sole ownership bias. There also needs to be more assessment of the implications of management by contract.

## 2. Further causeway issues that have study implications:

2a. A *socio-economic impact of the causeway* would be useful to the community. Particularly in collecting and assessing local knowledge about the environmental and economic impact of the causeway. This might include the social, economic and historical context of lobster landings since the causeway was built, in order to *contextualize lobster landing data*.

2b. There is another research implication linked to this first one, and that is the question of the local role of fishers in community politics. Their memory is that the connection between fishers and local governance was severed sometime in the late 1950s and this in turn was connected with other socio-political movements including the regional schooling movement. They now feel that those in control of the local governance are not concerned with community sustainability but with resource extraction.

2c. In connection with both of the above, there is the need for a demographic assessment of the communities - with young people and retirees leaving not only the community, but the fishers association membership is rapidly changing. It is unclear how DFO regulation will affect fishers organization longevity under these pressures.

### Group 3 (second report)

Ashley Bouchie: Intern, Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association

- There has been a decrease in Canso lobster landings (while south toward Ecum Secum landings increase.)
- General knowledge of fishers suggests the Canso Causeway has led to the drop in landings compared to landings of the first half of the century.
- Fishers are interested in the possibility of a change or alteration in the structure of the causeway.
- Before the GCIFA could proceed further with SRSF, all SRSF partners should have an understanding of the fishery which the association works in.
- Discussion on the history of the association, its governance, and steps that GCIFA is taking toward community based fisheries management.
  - obtaining Crab quotas, the dividing of profit among the association members.
  - the association has been a steady student employer in Canso since the 1970's,
  - fishers seem to abide by association rules and regulations more readily than the regulations imposed by DFO,
  - meetings are designed so that each of the fisheries in our area has fair representation and all are addressed.
  - membership increased in 1998 due to legislation, all core fishers must join an association and pay dues.
- It is the GCIFA's hope that this project will help to broaden the fishers scope of understanding on social research. Fishers are used to DFO science, which is the science of fish stocks, more biologically based.
- It is hoped that DFO and other levels of government will begin to acknowledge the achievements of GCIFA and will be encouraged to apply these methods elsewhere. The association feels that DFO is not always eager to work with them.
- The fishers in this area are very helpful in gathering data, and want this research to be a participatory project, but are aware that they need guidance.
- Today fishers have to be accountants, lawyers, biologists and many more things that they really didn't have to before. The fisherman used to be the base of many Nova Scotian communities but now they seem to play a rather inactive role.
- The end result is that the fishers of this area should be a socially important factor, with research projects like this they will hopefully gain back some ground in a fishery that they before had controlled.