

TERMS OF REFERENCE

NOVA SCOTIA FRESHWATER FISHERIES RESEARCH COOPERATIVE

Mission Statement:

The Nova Scotia Freshwater Fisheries Research Cooperative will facilitate studies to assess the factors that influence sport fisheries and evaluate the strategies that are used to improve and sustain the freshwater sport fishery.

Background:

The purpose of the Freshwater Fisheries Research Cooperative (FFRC) is to aid in determining the health and status of the freshwater sport fishery and to evaluate the strategies used to improve and sustain the freshwater sport fishery. The freshwater fishery in Nova Scotia has experienced changes that are associated with habitat condition, invasive species, and exploitation. In response, the government has introduced new fishing regulations and supported numerous population enhancement and habitat restoration projects to benefit the fisheries. These initiatives have been supported by anglers and their organizations through the Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee and the six regional Recreational Fishing Advisory Councils. Along with the expansion of new initiatives to improve the sport fishery, a need has developed for additional fisheries assessment activity in the areas of management for trout species, warm water species, and Atlantic salmon.

The FFRC will augment current initiatives of the Resource Management Section to further assess and improve the recreational fishery. Research topics that are related to inland fisheries management issues include habitat restoration, exploitation, fish population dynamics, migration, invasive species, fish health, and population enhancement.

Budget:

The Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture will normally provide a maximum of \$50k annually to support initiatives associated with the FFRC projects. The Director of the Inland Fisheries Division will be responsible for administering the funding through the FFRC.

NSFFRC Organizational Structure:

The core membership comprises representatives of Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture (Chairperson John MacMillan, John.L.MacMillan@novascotia.ca), Fisheries and Oceans Canada, non-government organizations, and Nova Scotia academic institutions. Other individuals may be invited to join the FFRC for a limited term to provide expertise as needed.

Process:

Interested applicants are encouraged to discuss planned proposals with the chairperson or members of the FFRC Committee. Depending on the proposed project, the Inland Fisheries Division could facilitate projects through logistical support or other means. The Inland Fisheries Division may select specific fisheries management issues to be addressed and submit them to the Nova Scotia Freshwater Fisheries Research Cooperative. The FFRC may develop a specific project or question to be addressed based on the submitted fisheries management issue. Successful applicants will have specific objectives in their proposal that are relevant to management strategies for freshwater sport fisheries.

Project proposals must be received by March 1. The project duration is approximately one year. Multi-year projects will be reviewed on an annual basis. If unforeseen circumstances prevent a project from being completed within the approved timeline the proponent may defer the completion of the project. A request for project deferment must be made to the chairperson and supported by the other members of the FFRC Committee. Academic institutions, consultants, non-government organizations or individuals are invited to submit proposals. The FFRC Committee meets annually to review applications and make recommendations to the Director of Inland Fisheries. The Director obtains final approval from the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Reporting:

Project updates are due November 1. The interim report must include an updated statement of secured funding to date. Final reports or interim reports for multi-year projects are due on March 31. Reports are reviewed by members of the FFRC Committee. The FFRC Chairperson will report on the activities of the FFRC to the Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee on an annual basis. Annual presentations will be provided to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Councils as well as to non-government organizations.

Desired outcome:

Address research questions that are directly relevant to sport fish management issues and incorporate results into strategies to maintain and improve freshwater sport fisheries.

Cooperation:

The members of the FFRC Committee will share responsibilities in the review and development of research projects.

Communication:

Planned projects, data and reports that are produced through the FFRC will be distributed through the Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee and regionally through the Recreational Fishing Advisory Councils. Publications and related reports will be made available to stakeholders and the public through the Department website and conferences, etc. The Nova Scotia FFRC will be credited and acknowledged in reports, publications, and presentations.

Frequency of meetings:

The FFRC Committee will meet at least once annually or will meet as deemed necessary by the membership.