



Slow Fish Canada 2014-15 Goals and Action Plan

Introduction to the Slow Fish International Campaign:

Slow Fish began with an event in 2001 organized by Slow Food International. While the original event focused on Mediterranean fisheries, the campaign has spread through the Slow Food network and now includes projects that span the globe. The international website was launched in 2009 to raise awareness about the campaign and strengthen the network of fishers and fisheries advocates.

After Terra Madre 2012, a Canadian group of members and Terra Madre delegates decided to bring Slow Fish to Canada. At the 2013 National Meeting of Slow Food in Canada in Osoyoos, British Columbia, the general assembly agreed to support a national Slow Fish campaign and a Slow Fish Canada Committee was created.

For more information on the International campaign, visit the website:
<http://www.slowfood.com/slowfish/>

The Canadian context: why a Slow Fish Canada Committee?

1. Fishers:

The challenges facing small-scale fisheries are similar in many ways to the challenges facing small-scale farms. Both face urgent threats from increasingly industrialized food systems that feed international commodity markets. However, where farmers have been engaged for decades in advocating for small-scale terrestrial food production and regional marketing, fishers are new to the process of food justice and local food economies. Whereas Slow Food presently represents a rich network of farmers and their advocates, Slow Fish is faced with an immediate task: to engage fishers and fishing communities.

We need to recognise that farmers and fishers are two different personalities and have different perspectives: farmers are cultivating the land and fishermen are harvesting a resource. People interested in food are used to seeking farms and farmers, but have often never met a fisher and know little about them or the issues they face. Fishers also feel this disconnect with the public.

We must begin to build trust with fishers and support the pride in their work, with the awareness that commodification of fish and fishers are destroying both.

Many relationships in the fisheries sector are unhealthy and this needs to be factored in. The status quo in Canada, of small-scale fisheries feeding into large-scale commodity markets, is built on a situation of long-term abuse, and fishers are understandably finding it difficult to have a positive outlook. Canada's small-scale fisheries are being forced out of business, and our coastal communities are suffering (in some cases, being wiped off the map).



Whereas in many land based food systems, a direct connection is difficult, but possible, between the farmer and the end consumer through farmers markets, CSAs, or regional distribution systems, this not the case yet in fisheries. In general, the fishers' relationship with his or her catch ends when they reach land. They have no control whatsoever in where their catch ends up, how it is marketed, or what their price will be.

Inviting fishers into our network is not enough. We need specific actions to engage and collaborate with them, as well as fishmongers and cooks working directly with them. We need to give them a reason to engage with us, something concrete that they can gauge and reap the benefits of.

2. Non-fishers:

Most non-fishers, including "foodies", do not know anything about the complexity of oceans, waterways and fisheries. We wish to educate and empower consumers to become co-producers. Whereas most consumers interested in food know the issues linked to agriculture, most don't understand their choices and their implications when it comes to seafood. This is reinforced by a general lack of available information in the marketplace, and no price differentiation based on harvesting technique and origin. Even concepts like seasonality are rare in seafood. Most existing eco-labelling reinforce the industrial logic and add additional pressure on small-scale fishers who cannot afford it.

Remaining fishing communities (coastal and inland) live in remote areas, far away from urban centers, making it even harder for interested citizens to connect. Even in coastal cities like Halifax and Vancouver, fishing is something that the general population has a hard time connecting with.

Fishing is mysterious. It happens at sea, in rivers, in lakes. Under the water. Far from our eyes. Slow Fish has a role to play in connecting people who eat fish to the people who catch it.

3. Connecting ocean and land:

We will focus on sustainably putting local fish into the local food basket.

Demystifying the oceans, lakes and rivers are essential to saving those habitats and the people who rely upon them is one of the key challenges Slow Fish faces.

Challenges:

Fisheries are currently facing huge and immediate challenges. For example:

1. Privatization, commodification, and consolidation of fleets
2. Increasing regulatory requirements and operating and capital costs
3. Lack of youth and new entrants (succession) for future generations of fishers
4. Loss of fishing capacity, infrastructure and jobs in fishing communities
5. Lack of education and misrepresentation of the current issues.
6. Disconnect and geographical distances between consumers and fishing communities



7. Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Title, unresolved governance and jurisdiction issues related to the assumed.
8. Inland fisheries:
 - a. water sustainability act;
 - b. jurisdiction of the Province over resources that are subject to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights;
 - c. effective water protection, planning and management are missing and a better approach is needed
9. Effective fisheries planning and management processes are currently lacking and a more community based and collaborative approach, inclusive of First Nations and fishers, is required.

Mission Statement:

We will work with convivia and the general public to enable them and support them to make responsible choices that are aligned with Slow Food values. We will provide them with information and resources to raise awareness on the issues facing Canada's small-scale fisheries. We will do this through collective advocacy or political action, and by bringing fishers and people directly involved with fisheries into the Slow Food network.

Purpose Statement:

To support, celebrate, and promote Canada's small-scale fresh water and saltwater fisheries while ensuring that every Canadian has access to good, clean & fair seafood.

This entails:

1. Building and sharing a better understanding of the issues facing Canada's small-scale fisheries
2. Providing access to good, clean and fair fish by integrating a network of small-scale fishers to this movement, while helping identify and set in place the logistics to get their fish to various market segments
3. Getting the story out, celebrating our fishermen, sharing our resources.
4. Supporting as we are able the priorities of, and virtuous initiatives developed and identified by Canadian small-scale fishers
5. Building alliances with people and organisations engaged or interested in this process

Immediate Action Plan:

1. **Stimulate and assist in organising of events around Good, Clean, and Fair fish**



Promote events:

- Provide event examples for how to celebrate Slow Fish
- Offer guidance in the promotion, organization and capturing of events
- Encourage convivia to celebrate Slow Fish month, in October in 2014. Feedback from convivia and other participants engaged in this campaign will be asked to define the best Fish month in the future, but in any case, events that take place during other month of the year will also be communicated as part of the same collective effort.
- start a list of films and documentaries on fisheries, that can be a reference to those who want to combine events with movie screenings.

Kit ideas for events:

posters
place mats
ocean literacy quizzes
preformatted invitation cards
small animated simulation & online games
conversation starters & fun facts
event packages around the different themes
banners
name cards
resource list
t-shirts and toques
press kit

Stimulating the use of undervalued species: (i.e. #coolfish)

Providing criteria for events:

Fair pricing for events: Payment & Reciprocity:

- As with all Slow Food events, food producers are to be paid for their products. If an exchange or barter is to occur, it must be reciprocal and initiated by the food producer.
- In the interest of creating a meaningful relationship, engage producers from the start and communicate the value for them of the event.
- Building in opportunity for fishers to sell at the event where possible can create an economic opportunity for fishermen
- Branding cannot be the only mechanism to give value to the producer to encourage event involvement, because this will lead us to depend on larger producers and put additional threat on small-scale producers which do not have a brand and whom we should be promoting.
- Service trades can occur, like convivia members operating as deckhands (where legal and safe)
- It is always encouraged to have food producers present at the events. Try to get a fisher there and make the extra step to have that happen.
- Creating a platform to develop proposals and partnerships. Example: a joint events/communication campaign with microbrewers, to make events more informal and



attractive to youth, to unite farmers, fishers and microbrewers in events celebrating local communities, finding local fundraising opportunities that can be leveraged with national strategies, etc.

2. Ark of Taste is a priority:

- facilitate the compilation of a list of candidates by all convivia
- assist Laura Buckley in getting complete nomination forms

3. Presidia:

- Assist Laura in accumulating the basic documentation to start the application process for 3 Presidia identified during the Slow Food Canada general meeting:
 1. New Brunswick Weir fishery
 2. Chedabucto Bay Trap Caught Shrimp, Canso, Nova Scotia
 3. Okanagan harvesting techniques
- Collect any other proposal from all convivia and assist on how to do that.

4. Terra Madre 2014:

- The Canadian delegation will include fishing and coastal communities and other people working directly with these, from different parts of the country, to join the International network, discuss possible international strategies, and to be inspired by and inspire others with local work. A specific focus on Ark of Taste products and Indigenous will be developed during the Terra Madre event.
- In 2014, the Slow Fish Canada delegation will be composed by : Brooke Fader, Dave Adler, Dan Donovan, Wanda Vantasell, Philip Docker, John Volpe, Brian Wadham, Des Nobels, Dan Edwards, Tasha Sutcliffe, Kevin Kossowan, Ingrid Jarred, Richard and Tracey Bussanich and other representatives of the Okanagan community.

Long-term action plan:

1. Tell the Story:

- Interviewing the fishers with pictures and distributing this information during events. These interviews will be published on national and international Slow Fish websites and distributed to the press.
- Building video profiles: sharing the beauty of our waters builds stewardship . Many videos, produced by Ecotrust Canada, can already be spread among our networks:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/thisfishinfo>
- Through Ark of Taste and Presidia nominations
- Strategy of the Commons (common bowl, co-management): giving examples of collective organisation around fisheries, with market and conservation elements. In Canada, this might have been true in the past, but today you mainly find this in indigenous communities.

2. Start a living Q&A document:

- create a space or a format with questions convivia are asking and an ability to reply
- create elevator pitches, FAQs, and a resource bibliography of relevant articles



3. Traceability: Giving fish an identity

Introduction:

Traceability, which allows consumers to know the story behind their seafood- including how, where, when and by whom it was caught, is an essential component of a transparent and sustainable seafood system. Most of the challenges fisheries face relate to a lack of transparency and traceability. People don't realise that those who fish do matter, and that the fish have probably been processed in many different places before landing on their plates.

Traceability, unlike certification labels, does not consider sustainability criteria, but aims at giving reliable information that will help consumers make informed responsible choices. Traceability are favoured by artisan fishers because they can allow them to connect with consumers and help consumers know the story behind their seafood. Most certification schemes use sustainability criteria designed by and for the industry and are actually an additional threat to the most sustainable fishers.

Tools: Slow Fish International is partnering with [Ecotrust Canada](#) on their traceability program called [This Fish](#). We should encourage consumers to look out for This Fish and encouraging fishers to use the tool whenever possible.

4. Knowledge & Power:

To do this, we will engage with outside players and partners and build alliances with other organisations and individuals, which is an opportunity for joint work and outreach outside of our classic target. This allows us to build national and international credibility, in sync with the Slow Fish international campaign, and brings new people into Slow Food.

Specific issues to be discussed, by order of priority:

- Aquaculture (provide framework, criteria, or a position document for Slow Food convivia to understand the issues, make responsible choices and design advocacy strategies and alliances that are regionally relevant).
- Privatization and Catch shares
- (FAO) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
- Marine Protected Areas
- (DFO) Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- The issue of scale. Matching scale to scale.
- Value chain challenges.
- Marine ecology (including plankton!)

Process:

We shall work towards a process that provides efficiency, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability. This is the initial process, which can be changed if it does not meet its goals.



- Bi-monthly committee calls. More often when specific issues come up, if needed. Pertinent information from bi-monthly calls or emerging issues will be communicated to the executive board through the national liaison.
- Ark of Taste and Presidia: The Slow Fish Committee will invite the Ark of Taste chair to sit in on any discussions regarding Ark of Taste or presidia fisheries. We suggest that one Slow Fish member sits in on Ark of Taste discussions.
- National liaison: Voula Halliday has agreed to join the Slow Fish Canada committee as the national liaison.
- Keep up relations with convivia through mentors, and through convivia leaders when needed.
- Mechanisms of approval, feedback and outreach will be designed, to make this a collective work, and to share ongoing collective strategies and documents among convivia, such as the FAQ document.
- Caroline will be in charge of external communications as well as some internal communication through the tools she is developing.
- Slow Fish month: a communication will be issued to all convivium leaders and the board early September about the Slow Fish month, which will be in October this year unless a majority of chapters prefer another date. Mid November, a survey will be submitted to convivium leaders to follow up, ask what worked and what didn't, and ask for ideas and date preference for next year's Slow Fish Month.

Slow Fish Canada Committee 2014-2015:

Michele Mesmain - Italy
Dave Adler – Nova Scotia
Dan and Kristen Donovan - Toronto
Brooke Fader – Vancouver Island
Tasha Sutcliffe - Vancouver
Richard Bussanich - Okanagan
Kevin Kossowan – Edmonton
Bobby Gregoire - Quebec
Voula Halliday- Executive Liaison

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