



A Big Week For BC's Wild Salmon

It has been a very busy time for developments related to the welfare of BC's wild salmon. Three events have confirmed the necessity for urgent action to reduce the ecological impacts of open net-cage salmon farming.

February 4th - The First Nations of the Broughton Archipelago filed a class action law suit against the BC government for damages to wild salmon in their Territories. Chief Bob Chamberlin of the Kwicksutaineuk / Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation (KAFN) referred to the "loss of the cultural, ecological, and spiritual integrity of the wild salmon habitat and fishing sites, including their ability to maintain cultural practices related to the wild salmon harvesting ...The Province is, or ought to have been, aware that the manner in which it has authorized and regulated the salmon farms in the Broughton Archipelago has had and continues to have significant, cumulative, and deleterious impacts on the wild salmon." The BC Wilderness Tourism Association applauded the action of the KAFN.

February 5th - The Pacific Salmon Forum recommends sweeping changes to open net-cage salmon farming in its government commissioned report. The PSF report acknowledges First Nations as a level of government to be involved in decision making. It confirms that the current system of salmon farm management and regulation does not allow for coordinated decision making; consideration of cumulative effects; nor transparent monitoring of ecological impacts. The recommendations include the formation of a Land and Water Agency and a move to closed containment of salmon farms. The PSF report also confirms the associated dangers of open net-cage salmon farms and the resulting presence of elevated levels of sea lice on wild juvenile salmon.

February 9th - The B.C. Supreme Court ruled that the British Columbia government does not have jurisdiction over the management of salmon farming. Open net-cage salmon aquaculture was ruled to be a fishery and not farming and therefore the responsibility of the Federal government. Biologist Alex Morton related that this court decision confirmed that it's not just what is *in* the nets that needs to be regulated and monitored, it's also what happens *outside* the nets. The decision has been suspended for twelve months to allow the two levels of government to arrange for the change of related laws.

Action - Eric Hobson and Catherine Emrick will be presenting the SOS solutions document in a meeting with Ron Cantelon, Minister of Agriculture and Lands on March 4th. There will be a subsequent discussion with Larry Pedersen, the Deputy Minister responsible for aquaculture, on March 17th. We believe these are significant meetings in moving towards the resolution of problems associated with open net-cage salmon farming.

Tragically, B.C.'s Minister of Agriculture and Lands, the Honourable Stan Hagen, passed away on January 20th. Ron Cantelon has been named the new Minister. While Minister Cantelon has been characterized as a "passionate defender of coastal salmon farming" he was the vice-chairman of the provincial Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture and, as such, is well versed in the issues associated with salmon farming.

The Evolution of "Save Our Salmon"

As of January 1st, the Save Our Salmon Initiative has officially become "**The SOS Marine Conservation Foundation**". The Foundation has been granted charitable status by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Eric Hobson will lead the new SOS Foundation as President with Catherine Emrick continuing as Program Director. Jackie Hildering joined the team as Communications Director on February 1. Jackie is a biologist and marine educator, with an in-depth knowledge of the issues associated with salmon farming and experience with advocacy and grant applications. She lives in Port McNeill and will be the BC presence of the SOS Foundation.

Upcoming SOS Foundation Events

Join us to learn more about the impacts of open net-cage salmon farming and gain further insights into how recent developments play into the strategy to **Save BC's Salmon**.

- April 15th- Calgary luncheon (location TBA)
- April 16th - Calgary luncheon (location TBA)
- April 21st - Vancouver Aquarium luncheon
- May 15th- Vancouver Aquarium luncheon

Further details to be sent out in the near future.

The SOS Marine Conservation Foundation

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