



NEWS RELEASE

Pacific Salmon as an official BC symbol?: Call for public comment

For immediate release

Vancouver, BC (July 27, 2010) The Pacific Salmon Foundation, Fraser Basin Council and Living Rivers - Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island are inviting people from across British Columbia to express their views on a proposal to designate wild Pacific salmon as BC's provincial fish. The organizations are encouraging public comment, which can be submitted at www.thinksalmon.com. They will receive and post comments until September 30 and will relay all submissions to the Province of BC.

"Pacific salmon are part of the social, cultural, economic and environmental heritage of British Columbians," said Brian Riddell, President & CEO of the Pacific Salmon Foundation. "They have helped shape our history, and for First Nations, the relationship with salmon goes back thousands of years."

"Pacific salmon are already a symbol in the hearts and minds of many British Columbians," said David Marshall, Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Council. "Making salmon an official symbol could help raise awareness of the value of salmon and strengthen the public's commitment to manage this important resource for the benefit of future generations."

"Through its Living Rivers Trust Fund, the Province of BC has helped many organizations restore and maintain wild salmon ecosystems that are threatened by climate change and other impacts," said Al Lill, Manager of Living Rivers – Georgia Basin / Vancouver Island. "Working partnerships among these organizations will be enhanced by making wild Pacific salmon the provincial fish."

If designated as BC's official fish under the *Provincial Honours and Symbols Act*, Pacific Salmon would join the Steller's Jay, Western Red Cedar, Pacific Dogwood and Kermode (Spirit) Bear among other provincial emblems. This proposal considers "wild Pacific Salmon" collectively to include all the species of Pacific salmon.

Here are some reasons cited by the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the Fraser Basin Council and Living Rivers – Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island for considering Pacific Salmon as a symbol for BC:

- **Salmon tell an inspiring story.** Their epic journey from natal streams to the ocean and back is a natural drama of survival in the face of almost overwhelming odds.
- **Salmon support communities.** Salmon have a presence across the province, from BC's coastal communities to BC's interior. They have long been connected to the cultural traditions, food supply and economic well-being of First Nations, to the work and lives of those in the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, and to all British Columbians.
- **Salmon are integral to ecosystem health.** As salmon travel through BC's waterways, their bodies spread nutrients and feed a wide variety of other species. Salmon health and abundance is also a sign of environmental health — helping to show whether aquatic ecosystems are in balance and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Former Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo recently endorsed the idea of making Pacific salmon a provincial symbol, calling wild salmon "a precious inheritance that is deserving of our formal recognition."

The Pacific Salmon Foundation is a charitable non-profit society dedicated to the conservation and recovery of Pacific Salmon. The Fraser Basin Council is a charitable non-profit society that brings people together to advance sustainability in the Fraser Basin and beyond. The two organizations co-manage the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program (FSWP), which supports the health of Fraser River salmon and watersheds and funds projects focused on fisheries management, watershed governance, habitat enhancement and public education and outreach. FSWP is funded through the provincial Living Rivers Trust Fund and Fisheries and Ocean Canada.

The British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) is a charitable non-profit society that undertakes fish and wildlife programs throughout BC. Living Rivers – Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island (LR-GB/VI) is managed by BCCF for the provincial Living Rivers Trust Fund and also receives funding from several additional partners. LR-GB/VI supports a wide range of watershed projects of direct benefit to salmon now and in the future.

LR-GB/VI and FSWP both place a strong emphasis on working with First Nations in developing increased capacity and involvement in salmon conservation projects.

For more information, contact:

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