

## Lillooet Public Forum Summaries

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Date: August 18, 2010  
Time: 2:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. (approximately)  
Venue: Lillooet District REC Centre (Gym)  
Presentations: 11

### **Welcome**

Grand Chief Desmond Peters Sr. and Chief Perry Redan of the Cayoose Creek Band welcomed the Commissioner to Lillooet on behalf of the St'at'imc people. Chief Redan emphasized the significance of the Commissioner's task, and thanked the Commissioner for his commitment.

### **Chief Art Adolph (Xaxli'p First Nation)**

Chief Art Adolph delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of salmon to St'at'imc culture and the need for a new Fraser sockeye management plan. He described the history of the St'at'imc people, identified important sites and legends, and discussed how fishing knowledge, including traditional ecological indicators of the arrival of salmon runs, are passed from generation to generation. He noted that the transmission of fishing knowledge from elders to youth is an important method of enculturation for the St'at'imc. He explained that managing First Nations is not the same as managing fish, and that while others are permitted to negatively affect salmon and their habitat on an industrial scale, First Nations are often arrested for fishing to feed their family. He suggested that proper management of Fraser sockeye requires a comprehensive understanding of the numerous factors that impact both the Fraser River and sockeye salmon, including federal and provincial legislation, fish farms, industrial effluent, and herbicides and pesticides.

### **Norm Leech**

Norm Leech presented the Commissioner with a copy of the T'it'q'et Constitution, which he explained guides the T'it'q'et people and reflects their values and principles. He said that the T'it'q'et have a sacred responsibility to protect their natural resources, and that prior to the arrival of European settlers, the T'it'q'et ensured healthy salmon returns by managing fish at their spawning grounds. He argued that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is focused on people management rather than fisheries management and is distracted by conflicting interests. He called on the Commissioner to recommend that certain fisheries management responsibilities be returned to First Nations, who he said would work with DFO to restore Fraser sockeye for the benefit of all British Columbians.

### **Michelle Edwards**

Michelle Edwards explained that she stopped fishing in 1994 due to the numerous challenges facing Fraser salmon. In her presentation, she described how the St'at'imc people's management practices had historically guaranteed abundant returns. She also emphasized the need for cooperation among the organizations and individuals working to conserve Fraser salmon, and highlighted the importance of respecting salmon and their spawning grounds.

### **Kerry Coast Henselwood** (Salmon Talks)

Kerry Coast Henselwood presented at length on shortcomings in fisheries management and habitat protection, which Salmon Talks believes are the primary causes of the decline of Fraser sockeye. Her presentation touched on five aspects of fisheries management in particular:

- The lack of political energy and funding for implementing the Wild Salmon Policy.
- The need to relocate the commercial fishery to terminal areas to prevent entire runs from being wiped out by purse seine and gill net fishers.
- The absence of effective monitoring of the recreational fishery compared to DFO's strict monitoring of Aboriginal fisheries.
- The continuing loss of salmon habitat from development, including independent power production projects, and the need for Canada to reach its Kyoto Accord targets.
- The failure of DFO to engage in real bilateral decision-making and planning with First Nations.

Her presentation included specific recommendations for addressing each issue, as well as numerous supporting materials, including news releases and fact sheets, media articles, and technical reports.

### **Kim North** (Sat'atqwz7 Restoration Advisory Committee and Outreach Crew and Lillooet Naturalist Society)

Kim North discussed the need for citizen engagement in the recovery of Fraser sockeye. She offered four recommendations for connecting citizens with non-profit organizations and government and for taking advantage of the groundswell of public concern for the decline of Fraser sockeye:

- Start a citizen mapping program in communities on the Fraser River to enhance appreciation among citizens and governments of the interconnectedness of the Fraser River watershed.
- Through the citizen mapping program, identify salmon ecosystem assets and liabilities, including critical spawning grounds, temperature sensitive streams, groundwater sources, travel corridors, and other important sites.
- Develop a prioritized action plan for salmon conversation tailored to the needs of each community.
- Involve citizens in the implementation of the action plan in each community.

Kim North also acknowledged the August 6, 2010 written submission to the commission by the Lillooet Naturalist Society. She explained that the submission confirms the society's opposition to open-net pen fish farms and requests the Commissioner to recommend that fish farms be moved onto land.

### **Grand Chief Saul Terry** (Chair and Executive Officer, Intertribal Treaty Organization)

Grand Chief Saul Terry described the membership and purpose of the Intertribal Treaty Organization (ITO). He explained that it is the opinion of the ITO that mismanagement of the fisheries is the root cause of the decline of Fraser sockeye. He argued that fisheries management would be enhanced and

revitalized through the direct involvement of First Nations. He recounted the numerous documents and recommendations produced by First Nations for increasing their involvement in fisheries management, all of which he said have been ignored or changed. He called on the Commissioner to recognize the hardships faced by First Nations people due to the decline of salmon and to recommend that First Nations be integrated into fisheries management decision-making.

**Mike Leach** (Chair, St'at'imc Chiefs Council)

Mike Leach reminded the Commissioner that despite numerous inquiries, studies, and management schemes, the decline of Fraser sockeye has remained constant. He argued that corporations have convinced the federal government to ignore environmental issues. He said that the relationship between science and indigenous knowledge has been broken, and that solutions to the decline of Fraser sockeye depend on restoring respect for indigenous knowledge and including First Nations in fisheries management. He explained that only through establishing an effective relationship between DFO and First Nations will Fraser sockeye restoration efforts be successful.

**Colleen Jacob**

Colleen Jacob described a study she conducted as a University of British Columbia student in 2005. The study explored how the St'at'imc have been affected by the decline of salmon due to climate change. She explained that the study was an emotional undertaking that brought back childhood memories of fishing at the Bridge River and Six Mile Rapids. The study made her reflect on St'at'imc values and the relationship of salmon to the entire Fraser River watershed. She emphasized to the Commissioner the importance of respecting the land and its resources, and she called on the Commissioner to adopt an ecological perspective on the decline of Fraser sockeye. She also recommended that funding be provided to assist rural communities suffering from the salmon decline, and that fisheries management decisions be made on a holistic basis.

**Chief Larry Casper** (Seton Lake Band)

Chief Larry Casper presented the Commissioner with a draft socioeconomic study of the St'at'imc territory, which provides information about the importance of salmon to St'at'imc history and culture. He also responded to three of the five questions posed by the commission, calling for the establishment of a true partnership between First Nations and DFO, the cessation of sewage and landfill dumping into the Fraser River, increased regulation of the sport fishery, the release of data on the impact of aquaculture on wild salmon stocks, and funding for habitat enhancement to mitigate the effects of dewatering on spawning areas. He concluded by presenting the results of a survey he conducted on salmon dependency among Seton Lake Band households, noting that in 2009, households received 666 of an expected 4,758 salmon, or approximately 14% of their annual salmon needs.

**Chief Perry Redan** (Cayoose Creek Band)

Chief Perry Redan suggested that reduced government funding for environmental protection, perhaps due to corporate lobbying, may be among the causes of the decline of Fraser sockeye. He urged the Commissioner to investigate the discharge of effluents into the Fraser River, particularly downstream of the Port Mann Bridge. He also explained that First Nations wish to share fishery management

responsibilities with DFO, and asked the Commission to recommend additional funding for restoring the quality of the Fraser River and enhancing the relationship between communities and the provincial and federal governments.

**Carl Alexander**

Carl Alexander described the condition of the St'at'imc fisheries prior to the decline of Fraser sockeye. He recalled fishing with his father as a young man, and described catching spring salmon and fishing from a kayak. He told the Commissioner that it once took only one or two weeks to catch a barrel of fish, which was sufficient for the entire year. He suggested that numerous factors have caused the decline of Fraser sockeye, including poor resource management, climate change, declining water levels, logging, and dams. He concluded by stating that returning to proper fish management would ensure the survival of Fraser sockeye for future generations.