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Fisheries and Oceans Canada

News Release

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ADOPTION OF *WILD SALMON POLICY* CONTINUES REFORM OF PACIFIC FISHERIES

VANCOUVER – Geoff Regan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, today announced adoption of the *Wild Salmon Policy* and committed \$1.1 million to its implementation and related salmon science.

The policy, released as a living document, defines a new approach to salmon conservation in the Pacific Region. It advances the Government of Canada's agenda for reform of Pacific fisheries.

"The *Wild Salmon Policy* significantly transforms the management and conservation of wild salmon, their habitats and dependent ecosystems," Mr. Regan said. "It provides the foundation for other initiatives currently underway to reform fisheries and habitat management in the Pacific Region."

"First Nations, the fishing industry and environmental organizations have all made their voices heard throughout the policy's development. I'd like to thank them all for their dedication to the future of Pacific salmon," said B.C. Senator Jack Austin, Leader of the Government in the Senate, who attended the announcement.

The \$1.1 million is initial funding for this year. It includes \$400,000 that was part of the \$5.2 million investment that the Minister announced last week to revitalize Pacific fisheries management. This \$1.1 million will be used to support salmon science and to put the *Wild Salmon Policy* into action.

The following are key elements of the new approach:

- Conservation is unequivocally affirmed as the highest priority for resource management.
- Management will shift to focus on stewardship of essential building blocks of genetic diversity necessary for future continuance of wild salmon, rather than managing large, mixed aggregates.

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http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/release/p-releas/2005/nr047_e.htm

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- New, more effective strategies will be adopted for the monitoring and protection of the habitat necessary to sustain salmon.
- Ecosystem considerations will be incorporated in decision-making.
- An inclusive planning process will be established to ensure that conservation decisions reflect societal values.
- Conservation goals will be clearly defined, and our progress in achieving them will be publicly evaluated.

A blueprint for Pacific Fisheries Reform was introduced by the Minister on April 14, 2005, to address the underlying problems that face the salmon fishery and some of the specific concerns related to the Fraser River. The four themes identified for Pacific Fisheries Reform are:

- Sustaining strong salmon populations;
- Strengthening DFO programs;
- Making progress on increasing First Nations' access to economic fisheries; and
- Improving the economic performance of fisheries.

The *Wild Salmon Policy* advances the first theme of fishery reform: *sustaining strong salmon populations* by setting clear conservation objectives for each fishery.

"During the past decade, the management of Pacific salmon has become more and more complex, and it has been increasingly evident that new approaches are required to respond to contemporary challenges. The *Wild Salmon Policy* provides the policy and program blueprint that is necessary to secure a healthy future for Pacific salmon," Mr. Regan said.

The policy responds to feedback received from significant consultation. After the December 2004 draft was made available, DFO listened to feedback received at information sessions with First Nations and other interested parties as well as at a multi-interest dialogue forum March 2-3, 2005. The Department also received 246 written submissions. After considering this input, DFO presented a revised policy to a First Nations forum on April 29 and a multi-interest forum on April 30, 2005. The policy was then finalized.

"This policy is not designed to be set in stone," the Minister said. "The *Wild Salmon Policy* will grow and develop with the challenges of the future and longer-term conservation strategies will be shaped by input from First Nations and stakeholders."

First Nations, stakeholders and other interested parties were first asked to comment on a *Wild Salmon Policy* in 2000, when the initial draft was released. At that time, the Department held 16 public forums in communities across British Columbia, six meetings with stakeholder groups and an information process for First Nations.

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For further details on the *Wild Salmon Policy*, please see accompanying [backgrounder](#).

Wild Salmon Policy: http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/publications/wsp/default_e.htm

