

My name is Rick Glumac and I am one of the founding members of a group called the Wild Salmon Circle. I was raised in Port Alberni, BC, a city that once had a proud sign at the entrance to town that stated 'salmon capital of the world'. That sign has since been removed. I grew up fishing for salmon in my home town and now as a father I am teaching my daughter how to fish in the lakes and rivers of the lower mainland where the sockeye salmon come to spawn.

My vision and hope for the future is a healthy, abundant, and sustainable Fraser sockeye fishery, for all of our children. After all, when we talk about the future, it is our children that we are thinking of. And let's make no mistake, what we do here with this commission will impact their future.

As a founder of the Wild Salmon Circle I have been able to witness the concern that people have for the iconic wild salmon of British Columbia. Our group was formed shortly after the catastrophic collapse of the Fraser River sockeye fishery in 2009. We helped organize one of the biggest environmental rallies that Vancouver has ever seen in which more than 700 people from all walks of life came out to demand that something be done. And shortly after this commission was formed. We now eagerly await recommendations from this commission but I request that all members of the commission be mindful of previous recommendations as well because there have been a lot of them. And despite the dedication, time, and money that has gone into making these recommendations, they have so far been predominantly ignored. Please read these recommendations and consider them when making your own.

There are 2 reports that I would like to highlight.

Back in 2003, the Pacific Fisheries Research Conservation Council issued a number of recommendations, directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and BC's Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries as well as the Canadian public. They stated,

It is worth reiterating that wild salmon must come first; they cannot be replaced. Their survival depends, in large part, on the actions we take and the care we exercise. Like other activities that impact wild salmon, aquaculture has to be managed with a view to limiting all sources of potential mortality. **The wild Pacific salmon represents a significant part of our natural heritage that we are bound, by duty and conscience, to protect for future generations.**

Their first recommendation bears repeating:

The Council recommends that the **precautionary principle should be applied in a much more rigorous way** than is currently used in the evaluation of interaction risks between farmed and wild salmon stocks.

This and further recommendations are available in their report called "Advisory: Wild Salmon and Aquaculture in British Columbia". If you haven't already had the opportunity please do read this report.

Shortly after this, in late 2005, the BC government put together a Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture. The committee underwent an extensive public consultation process; travelled to 21 communities around the province; collected 814 written submissions; received testimony from more than 80 expert witnesses; visited 16 sites; and commissioned an economic study of the wild and farmed salmon industries. It took 18 months to write their report. And their very first recommendation was this:

That a rapid, phased transition to ocean-based closed containment begin immediately. Within three years ocean-based closed containment must be developed. Once developed, industry must transition to this technology within the subsequent two years.

If this recommendations was followed, you guys would be at home with your families right now. And so would I. In total there were 52 recommendations. If you haven't already had the opportunity please do read this report.

There are countless other reports and studies that have come over the years, including the 1993 – The Pearse-Larkin Report entitled: Managing Salmon in the Fraser: Report to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on the Fraser River Salmon Investigation, The 1995 Fraser River Sockeye Public Review Board's report: Fraser River Sockeye 1994: Problems & Discrepancies, The December 2000 Auditor General of Canada report which includes a chapter called: The Effects of Salmon Farming in British Columbia on the Management of Wild Salmon Stocks in which he states:

“The Department (of Fisheries and Oceans) is not fully meeting its legislative obligations under the Fisheries Act to protect wild Pacific salmon stocks and habitat from the effects of salmon farming”

There's also the The 2001 Living Rivers Strategy, the 2002 Alaskan government legislation which requests a moratorium on BC fish farming until the safety of their own wild salmon can be guaranteed, the 2003 DFO External Steering Committee report reviewing the Fraser River Sockeye Fishery, the 2004 BC Auditor General report called Salmon Forever: An Assessment of the Provincial Role in Sustaining Wild Salmon which states:

“It is not known what long-term effects salmon aquaculture is likely to have on the natural resource or the environment.”

The 2004 Auditor General of Canada report which includes a chapter called Salmon Stocks, Habitat, and Aquaculture in which she states:

"Salmon aquaculture poses risks to wild salmon stocks and the marine environment"

The March 2005 Parliamentary Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans report called "**HERE WE GO AGAIN... OR THE 2004 FRASER RIVER SALMON FISHERY**" which states:

"By the end of the summer of 2004 preliminary escapement estimates of Fraser River sockeye suggested a **major ecological disaster was unfolding.**"

*(Also: the June 2005 Pacific Salmon Commission's report on the Fraser River Sockeye, the Ford and Myers scientific study called " **A Global Assessment of Salmon Aquaculture Impacts on Wild Salmonids** which states: "the presence of salmon farms reduced wild salmon survival by more than 50% per generation.")*

And there are others. But you get the idea. In these reports I see a common theme: there is a concern that salmon farming could pose a risk to wild salmon, and the precautionary principle demands that we eliminate that risk. I speak on behalf of the 1300 members of the Wild Salmon Circle when I say: **We need to transition the salmon farming industry to closed containment and we need to do it now.**

With the incredible sockeye run this year, some may be tempted to misuse this as an opportunity to say that it proves that salmon farms are not a risk to wild salmon. However, another recent report would counter this statement. Back in 2008, the Pacific Salmon Forum reported that only 4%--7% of the Chum and Pink salmon fry, tested in the Broughton, were infected with sea lice compared to 2007, where up to 70% were infested. Sockeye tested at an average of 1.8 lice per smelt in 2008 compared to 7-9 lice per smelt in 2007 and 2009. The majority of sockeye that returned this year migrated out past those farms in 2008, when sea lice numbers were low and today we see an incredible run. If the predictions are correct, the run next year could be another catastrophe. Unfortunately, this commission won't have the opportunity to see what happens.

I would like to conclude with a small cross section of comments that have come to us from Wild Salmon Circle members. We have received so many emails and other correspondence through our website. These come from people that are speaking from the heart that have great hope that we can come together and be the protectors of these wild salmon that we need to be. These and other comments are viewable on www.wildsalmoncircle.com.

Anissa Reed writes "My daughter is a 5th generation resident of the BC Coast. Her great great grandfather came from Newfoundland to work on the water here and was captain on numerous boats that made a living from the richness this coast offers up... I believe salmon farming practices are extremely detrimental to wild salmon populations specifically due to measurable sea lice

infestations and possibly disease spreading. Wild Salmon have always been a part of our lives and we have fished every summer. My business is also based in celebrating nature on this coast and I am keenly aware of what the wild salmon mean. The Fraser sockeye run is integral to the health of so much on this coast and ultimately impacts us all... Please do a complete and thorough job. Without wild salmon our future will be seriously altered beyond present comprehension."

Becky Campbell writes: "We have a duty to protect our natural resources for our posterity. We must demand that people who use the resources in common (ie the salmon farmers) do so in a manner that does not destroy the common trust. Salmon farming can be done in ways that do not destroy the natural world, it is just a good practice and should be an accepted cost."

Miranda writes: "I live in a very isolated community where people depend on the salmon runs every year. As the years have gone by it seems that not as much salmon are being harvested for the village and it is our right as a province and communities to speak up and speak out about depleting Salmon runs. We need to come together as a whole and demand a change."

Angel Koch writes: "I've heard dozens of locals speak about their experiences since the fish farms have moved into their area and the rapidly declining stocks they are all witness to.....one gentleman from Tofino area said 5 years ago they counted approximately 66,000 salmon coming to spawn up one river...then the fish farms went in.....and last year only 18 fish coming up that same river"

Andy Vine writes: "This is a defining issue for BC. If we fail to protect wild salmon stocks we are effectively telling future generations we don't care about this amazing natural resource."

My final thought tonight comes from Roderick Haig-Brown, for which a park is named after on the banks of the Adam's River, where every October one of nature's miracles unfolds as it has for thousands of years as countless sockeye have always returned to spawn.

"The salmon runs are a visible symbol of life, death and regeneration, plain for all to see and share... The salmon are a test of a healthy environment, a lesson in environmental needs. Their abundant presence on the spawning beds is a lesson of hope, of deep importance for the future of man. If there is ever a time when the salmon no longer return, man will know he has failed again."

Please protect our wild salmon. Please obey the precautionary principle and issue a recommendation to move the salmon farming industry to closed containment.