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NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release
Shuswap Nation Tribal Council

Cohen Inquiry to Look at Aboriginal Rights and the Fraser Sockeye Fishery.

Secwepemc Fisheries Commission part of First Nations coalition to present evidence at the Cohen Inquiry.

"The goal is to find agreement between First Nations and Canada on how to manage a sustainable Fraser Sockeye fishery," said Chief Wayne Christian (Tribal Spokesperson, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council). "This year's run was once-in-a-lifetime. We have to plan for the next 100 years," he added.

"It starts with developing a more conservative approach to forecasting the size of spawning runs and their harvest levels," said Chief Christian. "Years of uncertainty and overestimates must be replaced with better management models. If we don't, we risk overfishing salmon to extinction," he added.

"Conservation has to be a priority, or, we fear that we'll lose even more stocks," said Chief Rick Deneault, Skeetchestn (SNTC Fisheries Portfolio Holder). "There are many different salmon stocks and we need them all to be healthy," he added.

"We have the right to fish and the right to manage our traditional fisheries. The federal government has never fully respected our rights," said Chief Christian. "Our expectation is that the Cohen Inquiry will fully analyze fisheries management and the legal framework and recommend that First Nations must have a more central and influential role in fisheries decisions," he added.

Secwepemc fisheries representatives are working with coalition partners to prepare for the formal hearings that will start later this month. The Cohen Commission will hold a Public Forum in Kamloops on Thursday, October 21st.

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<http://www.shuswapnation.org/departments/fisheries.html>