



MAKE PACIFIC SALMON OFFICIAL BC SYMBOL, GROUPS SAY

Minister Lake welcomes report by Pacific Salmon Foundation,
Fraser Basin Council and Living Rivers - Georgia Basin / Vancouver Island

VANCOUVER, BC (September 14, 2011) – At the height of the salmon fishing season, with pink, sockeye, Chinook and coho salmon entering the Lower Fraser, the Province is being urged to recognize wild Pacific salmon as BC's official fish. The recommendation comes from the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF), Fraser Basin Council (FBC) and Living Rivers - Georgia Basin / Vancouver Island (LRGBVI) in a report released today that confirms strong public support for making Pacific salmon an official emblem of British Columbia.

In their report, "*Do We Make it Official? Recognizing Pacific Salmon as a BC Emblem*," the organizations recommend that all seven Pacific salmon species (chinook, sockeye, coho, chum and pink salmon, as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout) be recognized collectively under the *Provincial Symbols and Honours Act*. They see the designation as an acknowledgement of wild Pacific salmon's role in BC and a reminder of the need to commit to the future of our salmon. Copies of the report have been delivered to Premier Christy Clark, and ministers Terry Lake (Environment), Steve Thomson (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations), and Don McRae (Agriculture).

The report shows that public support for a Pacific salmon emblem is overwhelmingly positive. A Mustel Group poll conducted in October 2010 showed 85% public approval for the proposal, and 93% named Pacific salmon BC's most iconic fish. A number of British Columbians also made comments on the proposal on the ThinkSalmon.com website. Strong voices of support have come from the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, as well as from numerous municipalities and regional districts.

BC now has an official flower (Dogwood), tree (Western Red Cedar), mammal (Kermode bear), bird (Steller's Jay), mineral (Jade) and a BC tartan, but as yet no provincial fish.

"Pacific salmon have long been connected to cultural traditions and well-being of First Nations, to lives of those in the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, and to all British Columbians as a true icon," said Brian Riddell, President & CEO of Pacific Salmon Foundation. "We believe the designation of Pacific Salmon as BC's provincial fish is a great way to raise awareness of their value to British Columbians."

David Marshall, Executive Director of Fraser Basin Council, said the official designation will help increase public understanding of the environmental, social and economic role of Pacific salmon and watersheds. "It's important to invest in the health of BC's rivers and watersheds, for the good of all British Columbians and the future of Pacific salmon," said Marshall. "We want to inspire British Columbians and leaders across sectors to work together to ensure salmon are here for future generations."

The next step in the process would be an amendment to the *Provincial Symbols and Honours Act* declaring the Pacific salmon an official symbol. The proponents see the designation as non-partisan and deserving of support from both sides of the Legislature.

“On behalf of the Provincial government, I’m pleased to accept this report by the Pacific Salmon Foundation, Fraser Basin Council and Living Rivers Georgia Basin / Vancouver Island,” said BC Environment Minister Terry Lake. “We recognize the important role Pacific salmon play in the daily lives of British Columbians as well as in our provincial economy.”

About the Pacific Salmon Foundation:

The Pacific Salmon Foundation was created in 1987 as an independent, non-governmental, charitable organization to protect, conserve and rebuild Pacific Salmon populations in British Columbia and the Yukon. The Foundation’s mission is to be the trusted voice for conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and their ecosystems and works to bring salmon back stream by stream through the strategic use of resources and local communities. www.psf.ca

About the Fraser Basin Council:

The Fraser Basin Council is a non-profit, charitable society formed in 1997 that brings people together to find solutions to longstanding issues and conflicts, and to take advantage of opportunities to advance sustainability in the Fraser River Basin and beyond. Key areas of focus for the Council are healthy watersheds and water resources, climate change and air quality, and sustainable, resilient regions and communities. www.fraserbasin.bc.ca

About Living Rivers-Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island:

Living Rivers-Georgia Basin/Vancouver Island is dedicated to the vision of “Healthy watersheds and sustainable fish populations through shared responsibility, stewardship and wise use of water.” Starting in 2006, the organization has acted as a catalyst to engage a wide range of partners throughout BC’s south coast to restore rivers and lay the groundwork for greater salmon resilience in the face of climate change. www.livingrivers.ca/gbvi

To access the “Do We Make it Official?” report, visit ThinkSalmon.com

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