



Salmon Nations Pulling Together for Wild Salmon

(Mission, August 17, 2010) – Inspired by Salmon Are Sacred, skippers and experienced paddlers are pulling together to ‘Paddle for Wild Salmon’ down the Fraser River in October. Support amongst First Nations is building with Alexandra Morton paddling with Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Grand Chief Saul Terry, Grand Chief Clarence Pennier, Chief Bob Chamberlin, Chief Marilyn Baptiste, Chief Andy Phillips, June Quipp, Ernie Crey and other leaders. Paddlers from the Stó:lō Nation, Squamish Nation, Cowichan Tribes and Musgamagw-Tsawataineuk Tribal Council have already committed themselves to the journey from Hope to Vancouver (20th to 25th October).

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, said:

“I am deeply honored to support such a vital effort to protect and defend our wild salmon stocks. First Nations have long depended and continue to depend on the many runs of salmon of the Fraser River, Somass River, Skeena River and the many rivers along the BC coast. We call on all First Nations to join us on the Paddle for Wild Salmon. We all need to pull together to explicitly demonstrate to Government, industry and the Cohen Commission that wild salmon comes first.”

Grand Chief Clarence Pennier, President of the Stó:lō Tribal Council, said:

“We are at a crossroads when it comes to wild salmon in BC. We need to take the right fork in the road. Hopefully the paddle will bring more awareness to the plight of the wild salmon. The paddle will also demonstrate that there are lots of people who want to see wild salmon protected by switching to land-based fish farms.”

Elena Edwards, one of the organizers of the Paddle for Wild Salmon, said:

“The Paddle for Wild Salmon is about recognizing the need to join together as one strong voice to deliver the message to government, and to all people, that we will not stand idly by while wild salmon go the way of the buffalo. That we now consider 12 million to be a good run implies we’ve forgotten that historical runs along the Fraser River were up to 92 million. What happened to the other 80 million? We need to do whatever it takes to give wild salmon a chance to recover to a healthy population. First Nations, fishermen and communities up and down the Fraser River and along the BC coast are all in the same boat, whatever our differences, pulling together for wild salmon. Taking a stand for wild salmon cannot be put off any longer.”

Dr Alexandra Morton, who was recently awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Simon Fraser University, said:

“Five thousand people delivered the message to the Parliament in Victoria last May - get salmon feedlots out of our ocean to protect wild salmon, but the federal government is taking us backwards with their plans to deregulate the industry. So we need to try and communicate again and the Get Out Migration moves on to the Fraser River. On the walk down Vancouver Island First Nations communities came together to swell our numbers and guide us in ceremony. Migrating down the Fraser River in October will be a challenge, but experienced paddlers are dedicated to this including many from Tribal Journeys. This year’s sockeye run tells us these fish are worth standing up for.”

Darren Blaney of the Homalco First Nation will also lead a canoe team across the Salish Sea to join the paddlers in Vancouver on 25th October with other canoes considering making the journey from Nanaimo, Victoria, Cowichan Valley, the Sunshine Coast and Washington. Kayakers from the Pipedreams Project will leave Kitimat on 1st September and plan to join the Paddle for Wild Salmon in October.

At the end of the paddle the ‘Stand Up for Wild Salmon’ walk will start from Vanier Park in Vancouver on 25th October with a flotilla gathering in Vancouver Harbor. The procession will walk across Burrard Bridge to the DFO office and then on to the Law Courts to visit the opening day of the Cohen Commission’s evidential hearings. A rally will then take place at the Art Gallery.

Salmon Are Sacred will be in Lillooet tomorrow (18 August) for the Cohen Commission’s public forum – and in Campbell River next week (25 August).

For more details of ‘The Paddle for Wild Salmon’ including a poster by Carl Chaplin and photos please visit: <http://www.salmonaresacred.org/paddle-wild-salmon>

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