

For Immediate Release

## **BC Wilderness Tourism Association calls for meaningful Aquaculture Regulations**

(August 20, 2010; Campbell River, BC) The BC Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA) is calling on the Federal government to implement meaningful aquaculture regulations to protect BC's wild salmon.

In a letter sent to Federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea today, the WTA have indicated that draft Pacific Aquaculture Regulations, as currently written, offer the public of Canada no commitment to ensure that the fish farms demonstrate that they are not harming the wild salmon by the transmission of sea lice, or the various other parasites, viruses and bacteria such as IHN. "The finfish aquaculture regulations are woefully inadequate to protect wild salmon", said Brian Gunn, President of the WTA. "They do not address the impacts that open net cage salmon farms have on the wild salmon stocks. For example, there are no requirements in the current proposed regulations for the salmon farming industry to monitor the health of juvenile wild salmon for impacts due to disease and sea lice around farms during their out migration. In fact there is little in the proposed regulations to protect wild salmon. DFO seem to have forgotten what should be their primary mandate, which is to protect our wild fisheries."

"Wild salmon are a vital part of maintaining the natural ecosystem on the West Coast, and we know that losing our wild salmon would have devastating consequences for our environment, the wildlife and therefore our businesses," said Gunn. "Yet independent, peer-reviewed science has recorded disastrous declines in the number of wild salmon in the presence of open-net cage fish farms worldwide. Our members have witnessed first hand the dramatic decline in wild salmon numbers over recent years and their businesses are being detrimentally impacted as a result."

"It is imperative that we act now to develop and enforce regulations that protect wild salmon whilst we still have some wild salmon returning to our coast, rather than waiting until the fish are gone, taking our livelihoods with them" said Gunn.

The WTA acts on behalf of the 2200 nature-based tourism operators whose business relies on the preservation of BC's unique, unspoiled wilderness. Direct annual revenue in the industry is approximately \$1.5 billion with the vast potential for growth.

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For more information or a copy of the original letter contact:

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