



Action call for wild salmon November 15 2006

The Wilderness Tourism Association of B.C. (WTA) today called for immediate government action to address the precipitous decline of wild pink and chum salmon in the Broughton Archipelago.

BC's wilderness tourism sector generated \$900 million in direct revenues in 2001,¹ The 100 member association is insisting that the Provincial government act now to protect their sustainable industry from the impacts of open net-cage salmon farming on the BC coast.

“The returns of pink salmon on the coast are dismal and in the Broughton desperate,” said Dean Wyatt, Director of WTA and owner of Knight Inlet Lodge. “Our nature-based industry relies on healthy wild salmon. If the Provincial and Federal governments fail to protect these already struggling stocks from the looming devastation of spring sea-lice infestations they are making a choice. They are choosing to sacrifice our jobs, our families and our BC-owned businesses in order to ensure a profit for foreign fish farm corporations.”

The WTA is calling on the provincial and federal governments to:

- Create safe migration corridors in the Broughton Archipelago for juvenile wild fish by fallowing farms from the junction of Knight Inlet and Tribune Channel throughout the Tribune/Fife migratory route, Wells Passage and Knight Inlet from Tribune thru to and including Bennett Point.
- Conduct collaborative research between all parties on the effect of a second fallow year. The Fife Tribune safe migration passage was studied in 2003 during the Pink Salmon Action Plan.
- Stop any further expansion of the farms, all increases in production and any new licenses on the coast of BC until the industry is able to clearly demonstrate it will have no adverse impact on wild salmon stocks and marine ecosystems.
- Assist in the development and demonstration of closed, contained facilities for salmon aquaculture.
- Invest in the rehabilitation and restoration of wild salmon runs.

¹ Tourism is British Columbia's largest land-based employer, (117,500 British Columbians full time direct jobs and gross annual direct revenues of \$9.5 billion). . With spin offs and revenue generated in getting to and from nature based operations economic benefit to BC were \$ 2 billion and 21,000 full-time jobs.

Pink salmon returns throughout BC and southern SE Alaska have been extremely poor this year. The causes of the decline are unclear, however the low returns combined with record low water levels, high in-river temperatures and recent intense rainfall washing away redds (egg nests) are expected to result in very low spawning success. The added pressure this coming spring from sea lice infestations originating on the salmon farms and infecting out-migrating juveniles could decimate what is left of the Broughton wild pink salmon. The recent peer reviewed science published in the prestigious American journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Krkosek et al) shows that up to 91% of juvenile salmon swimming past the farms do not survive the lice infestations.

“It’s past time to end the squabbling over whose science says what, accept the astonishing weight of peer-reviewed evidence and act to save the salmon and the future of our industry,” said the WTA’s Dean Wyatt. “We are also calling on the Council of Tourism Associations, Sports Fishermen, Commercial Fishermen, First Nations, environmental groups and all others who care about the our wild salmon stock to support our call for action.”

For further information contact:
Dean Wyatt at 250 203 0353

A scientific perspective on this issue can be obtained from:
Dr. Lawrence M. Dill FRSC, Dept. of Biological Sciences,
Simon Fraser University at 604-291-3664