

# Wilderness Tourism Association



BRITISH COLUMBIA | CANADA

---

PO Box 423 • Cumberland, BC • V0R 1S0 • (250) 336-2862 • [www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca](http://www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca)

West Coast Land Referrals  
C/o Front Counter BC  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

File: #1413555

To whom it may concern,

## **Re: Objection to proposed new fish farm at Plover Point in Clayoquot Sound**

I am writing on behalf of the BC Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA), and our members who operate businesses in and around the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We are very concerned with the recent proposal by Mainstream Canada to locate another fish farm in this area at Plover Point.

Currently, there are already nine fish farms in the Clayoquot Sound area and independent research indicates that these farms are associated with severely depleted numbers of wild salmon in Clayoquot Sound. Sampling of wild juvenile salmon undertaken by the Wild Fish Conservancy in the Sound shows a clear correlation between an increase in the prevalence of sea lice on the wild juvenile salmon, and the number of salmon farms these out-migrating wild salmon must pass. High levels of sea lice have been observed to have a devastating effect on the survival rate of wild fish. In addition to elevated populations of sea lice, suspected viral outbreaks and other environmental problems have been discussed around fish farms in numerous other locations in BC where wild salmon numbers are also collapsing.

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, which is located at the mouth of the Bedwell River in close proximity to the proposed new farm site, is reporting a huge loss in wild fish in the waters surrounding their business, despite their personal efforts and hundreds of thousands of dollars to restore wild salmon habitat in the area.

The WTA is very concerned that locating another fish farm in Clayoquot Sound will provide yet another obstacle for wild salmon to pass on their migratory routes, which have been made perilous enough already. Salmon are a keystone species on the BC coast. If they fail, we risk losing the health of our coastal ecosystem including whales, bears, wolves and the rainforest. And all this is happening in an area, which has been recognized under UNESCO as a place “to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science”.

Reduced wild fish populations are already directly affecting sport fishing operators in Tofino who have to go further and further offshore and end up catching US hatchery fish. If wild salmon numbers are allowed to continue to fall, whale and bear-watchers, kayakers, sailors, and all nature-based tourists will be impacted as well.

The survival of our wild fish is already seriously threatened, and with it the survival of our nature-based tourism businesses and the larger coastal communities that are supported by visitors. We believe the bigger picture, of what is really at stake to lose, is much more compelling than the salmon farm industry's promise of creating 87 total combined jobs in Tofino.

We ask that you consider the interests of nature based tourism and its contribution to the economy of the Clayoquot Sound area, and that you reject the application for a new fish farm in Clayoquot Sound.

Yours truly,

Brian Gunn,  
President  
Wilderness Tourism Association