



For Immediate Release
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Half a million more farmed salmon being placed in the path of migrating Fraser River sockeye

VANCOUVER – Marine Harvest Canada (MHC) is in the process of adding 500,000 additional farmed salmon to one of BC's most sensitive wild salmon migration routes. Located along the Wild Salmon Narrows, MHC's Conville Bay farm (a site that hasn't been used in three and a half years) has been reactivated. The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) is dismayed by MHC's decision as it will put the survival of the 2009 collapsed Fraser River sockeye offspring and other out-migrating juvenile wild salmon at increased risk.

"By adding another half million farmed fish to a sensitive migration route, Marine Harvest is sending a signal to British Columbians that they are not concerned about the impact their fish farms are having on wild salmon," says Michelle Young of the Georgia Strait Alliance and CAAR. "Marine Harvest Canada's only concern is their bottom line, even if it means harming the marine environment and the businesses on our coast that rely on wild salmon."

While all species of wild salmon use this migratory corridor, of significant concern are the offspring of the collapsed 2009 Fraser River sockeye run, expected to start their migration through this area at the end of spring. A think tank of scientists gathered at Simon Fraser University in late 2009 to discuss potential causes of the 2009 collapse and recommended immediate measures to experimentally remove salmon farms from critical sockeye migration routes such as the Wild Salmon Narrows area to protect out-migrating Fraser sockeye salmon. This recommendation has been ignored to date.

The Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Fraser sockeye salmon recently ruled that the salmon farming industry must provide site-by-site fish health, disease, stocking and mortality data for 120 farms, dating back 10 years. Although the data will not be public, the commission will have access to important information not previously released.

"The industry has been able to get away with operating irresponsibly in BC's marine environment for years because the details of their operations were hidden," says Stan Proboszcz of Watershed Watch Salmon Society and CAAR. "The last thing that should be allowed is an expansion of their operations along a sockeye migration corridor in the wake of calls for farm removals and especially before the sockeye inquiry examines the role fish farms may have played in their collapse."

53 conservation organizations as well as thousands of citizens from across BC support removal of all salmon farms along the Wild Salmon Narrows migration route, as an emergency measure, while transitioning salmon aquaculture to closed containment technology.

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