

Watershed Watch Salmon Society

2008 Annual Report



Watershed Watch Salmon Society's mission is to catalyze efforts to protect and restore BC's precious wild salmon. Through scientific expertise, strategic alliances, outreach programs, and innovative projects, Watershed Watch is at the forefront in sounding the alarm on threats to salmon, and in prompting action to help them.

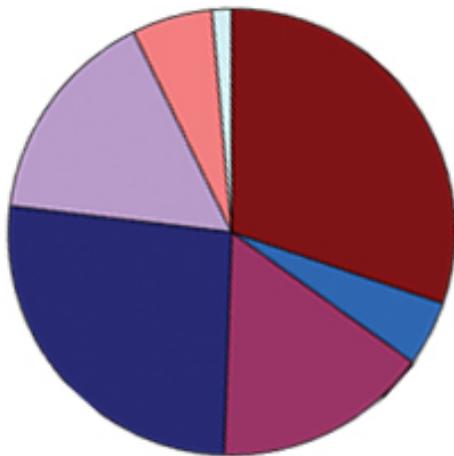
Introduction

Watershed Watch Salmon Society has been working towards our mission for over a decade. During this time, true to our name and mission, we have tackled a number of related issues that affect the health and very future of wild salmon. Watershed Watch believes that increased understanding is an important first step towards conservation. We provide an important bridge between scientific and technical information and the general public to help people more fully understand a wide range of habitat, harvest, and management issues.

Unfortunately, BC's wild salmon are facing more threats than ever before. Pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, and unsustainable aquaculture practices mean that wild salmon desperately need help. Make your voice count by joining with Watershed Watch to protect wild salmon.

Please visit our website at www.watershed-watch.org to be added to our contact list and receive our e-newsletter by email.

Financial Summary



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|----------------------------|------------|
| Wild Salmon | \$ 226,663 |
| Sturgeon | \$ 34,740 |
| Independent Hydropower | \$ 115,217 |
| Aquaculture | \$ 196,624 |
| Water | \$ 116,980 |
| Marine Conservation Caucus | \$ 44,089 |
| General | \$ 9,370 |
| Total | \$ 743,683 |

New Staff

Watershed Watch welcomed Stina Hanson to the team in 2008 as our new Administrative Coordinator. Stina is excited to be back in BC after spending time in California and Nova Scotia respectively. She brings to Watershed Watch skills in project management and project coordination having worked as an administrator on both coasts. Stina has a Master of Fine Arts in composition and a major focus of her work while she was in California was on water conservation and groundwater extraction.

Our Work, Our Supporters

Our accomplishments would be impossible with the support of many individuals and major supporters. Our work in 2008 was funded mainly by the following foundations and agencies:

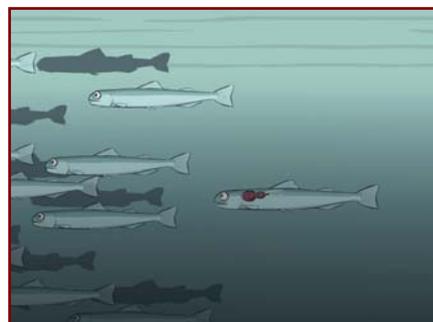
- Bob Meiser
- Bullitt Foundation
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Liber Ero Foundation
- Luna Trust
- McLean Foundation
- Metro Vancouver
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Patrick Hodgson Family Foundation
- RBC Employee Volunteer Grant Program
- Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation

Protecting Wild Salmon from Aquaculture Threats

Watershed Watch has devoted a great deal of its 10-year history to battling unsustainable aquaculture practices. Watershed Watch was busy again in 2008 catalyzing action on this threat, engaging in major education and outreach programs, and directly negotiating with industry and government to reduce sea lice impacts. As a founding member of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, Watershed Watch also assists various First Nations to understand and minimize salmon farming impacts.

Wild Salmon in Trouble

As a science outreach and advocacy organization, Watershed Watch is always searching for new ways to describe critical and often complex ecological threats. Hoping that good visual resources might help people understand the connection between salmon farms, sea lice and wild salmon, we created the animation *Wild Salmon in Trouble*. This animation, which can be viewed online at www.watershed-watch.org/sealice.html, helps answer questions we hear on this topic, while providing an overview of the salmon life cycle. It is also a call to action.



Supporting Aquaculture Research

Sound science is a vital underpinning of informed resource management. Watershed Watch continued to support sound science in 2008 through its role on the thesis committee of Simon Fraser University Ph.D. candidate Brendan Connors. The media release [Research shows sea lice can 'jump ship' and spread among wild salmon](#) was released in June to announce a new and troubling route for the transmission of sea lice among salmon after a portion of this research was published in the peer-reviewed science journal *Biology Letters*. Additional research into sea lice on predatory salmonids was carried out thanks to support from a MEC Community Involvement grant.

Working Toward Solutions

As a member of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, Watershed Watch continued to work with Marine Harvest Canada to try and find ways for the industry to operate more sustainably. Part of 2008 was spent negotiating a fallow corridor for wild salmon in the Broughton Archipelago—expected to be implemented before the outmigration of wild juvenile salmon in 2009.

Aquaculture Media and Outreach

- [Salmon Forum loses credibility as it mires itself in wrangling](#) (Vancouver Sun, January 7, 2008)
- [Minister's call for more chemicals to combat sea lice defies logic, science and public interest](#) (Watershed Watch media release, March 4, 2008)
- [A Review of "Science and Sea Lice: What do we know?"](#) BC Pacific Salmon Forum (PSF) Report prepared by Brian Harvey, February 2008 (Orr, C. Watershed Watch, March 2008)
- [Research shows sea lice can 'jump ship' and spread among wild salmon](#) (Watershed Watch media release, June 24, 2008)
- [Sea lice jump from prey to predator](#) (Prince Rupert Daily News, July 7, 2008)
- [Curtail fish farms infested with lice or say goodbye to wild salmon](#) (Vancouver Sun, Letter to the Editor, July 14, 2008)
- [A Brief Response to the January 2008 report. "Overview of Sea Lice Issues and Risks for Farmed and Wild Salmon in British Columbia"](#) Proboszcz, S. and C. Orr, Watershed Watch Salmon Society, July 2008

Science Support for Kwikwetlem First Nation

The Kwikwetlem First Nation is a neighbour of Watershed Watch's and we have developed a close working relationship through our shared concerns of the health of the Coquitlam and Fraser Rivers that run through their territory. Kwikwetlem literally means "Red Fish Up the River" (upriver migrating sockeye have long been known as red fish, or red salmon—in recognition of their prespawning colour). Watershed Watch continues to help direct a \$2 million BC Hydro initiative aimed at restoring extirpated sockeye salmon to the Coquitlam River, and continues to work with First Nations on water flow and other environmental issues. Watershed Watch and the Kwikwetlem First Nation have also been involved in environmental impact assessment projects associated with Gateway construction on the Fraser and Pitt Rivers.

Salmon Return to Coquitlam Lake

We have far too few opportunities to share good news in the salmon conservation business, so it is especially exciting to announce that for the first time in more than a century, salmon returned to Coquitlam Lake. The sockeye were trapped downstream of the damn and then transferred to Coquitlam Lake. In total, more than 13 returning salmon were released into the lake thanks to the vision of the Kwikwetlem First Nation and efforts of the Kwikwetlem Salmon Restoration Program Committee that includes representatives from BC Hydro, Metro Vancouver, Kwikwetlem First Nation, Fisheries and



Oceans Canada, BC's Ministry of Environment, cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, and environmental groups including Watershed Watch Salmon Society, North Fraser Assistance Program and the Maple Creek Streamkeepers.

Sturgeon Telemetry

Although Watershed Watch primarily works with salmon, healthy sturgeon populations are also a Watershed Watch focus. The health of Lower Fraser sturgeon is directly related to the health of the river as a whole. To learn more about local sturgeon Watershed Watch worked with the Kwikwetlem First Nation, LGL Consulting Ltd. and the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society on a sturgeon tagging and telemetry project to determine sturgeon movement near the proposed Gateway construction sites for the new Port Mann and Pitt River bridges.



Coquitlam River Media

- [*Sockeye back in Coquitlam River after a century*](#) (Vancouver Sun, February 5, 2008)
- [*First Sockeye in 100 Years Finally Makes it Home to Coquitlam*](#) (WWSS media release, July 18, 2008)
- [*Sockeye return to Coquitlam Lake*](#) (Coquitlam NOW, July 18, 2008)
- [*Salmon's return spawns community celebration*](#) (Globe and Mail, July 22, 2008)
- [*Ensuring the big one doesn't get away*](#) (Globe and Mail, October 13, 2008)

Groundwater Management

Given our long focus on instream flow needs of fish, it seemed natural that Watershed Watch increased its efforts in 2008 on promoting the conservation of groundwater resources vital to wild salmon. Groundwater is an important and often essential part of wild salmon habitat. Yet, groundwater use is almost entirely unregulated in British Columbia, groundwater management rarely considers wild salmon, and British Columbia's water policy focuses mainly on surface water. The Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation provided support for a number of Watershed Watch efforts in 2007.

Protecting BC's Groundwater Resources

Watershed Watch received funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation for a project to *Elevate Our Efforts to Protect British Columbia's Groundwater and Wild Salmon Resources*. This project includes the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission, Okanagan Nation Alliance Fisheries Department, Northern Shuswap Tribal Council, Nicola Tribal Association and the Program on Water Governance, UBC. The project aims to develop a legal review, a model water budget for a key watershed and a targeted outreach program, including a colour brochure on groundwater and salmon.

Watershed Watch also received funding from the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program for the project *Understanding interactions of climate, riparian cover, groundwater, and wild salmon in the Lower Fraser Valley*. The project partners with Dr. Diana Allen (SFU) to investigate interactions between streamflow and temperature, groundwater and riparian cover in two key Lower Fraser Valley salmon streams.

Groundwater Management Article

Watershed Watch consultant Tanis Douglas authored the article [Groundwater in British Columbia: Management for Fish and People](#) for the FORREX water management bulletin, *Streamline*. The article discusses the need for better management practices to ensure that groundwater quantity and quality is sufficient for the people and ecosystems of British Columbia.

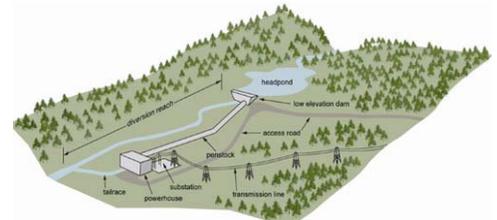
Assessing Impacts of Run-of-River IPPs

'Run-of-river' hydropower is promoted in British Columbia and elsewhere as an environmentally-friendly solution to humanity's ever-increasing energy demands. The rush to implement large-scale run-of-river projects (sometimes called Independent Power Producer, or, IPP projects) has prompted queries and debate about what these projects portend for people and the environment.

Watershed Watch Salmon Society recognized the need to answer some of the many questions being raised on run-of-river hydroelectric development in British Columbia and with funding from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, produced two reports. Both include a "Top 10 List of Considerations" to help concerned citizens assess the sustainability of hydro projects (proposed or built) in their communities. Watershed Watch was also invited to speak on these reports at the annual meeting of the Independent Power Producers Association.

Continued Demand for Reports

As the issue of run-of-river hydropower gained increasing public awareness in 2008. There was a continued demand for Watershed Watch's reports *Run-of-River Hydropower in BC: A Citizen's Guide to Understanding Approvals, Impacts, and Sustainability of Independent Power Projects*, and the more technical "Green" *Hydro Power: Understanding Impacts, Approvals, and Sustainability of Run-of-River Independent Power Projects in British Columbia*.



RoR Media and Outreach

- [Run-of-river power projects concealed by a green curtain](#) (Vancouver Sun, January 3, 2008)
- [Green hydro please, hold the greenwashing](#) (Georgia Straight, April 2008)
- Presentation on run-of-river hydropower to Seton Lake Indian band (Lillooet) (May 2008)
- [Opposition grows to river hydro projects](#) (Terrace Standard, October 2008)
- [Controversial power project ventures into salmon habitat](#) (Vancouver Sun, December 2, 2008)
- [Watershed Watch's letter](#) to Fisheries and Oceans Canada on Sedan Creek project (December 2008)
- [Size of Plutonic project raises alarms](#) (Vancouver Sun, December 6, 2008)

Promoting Salmon Conservation

Salmon have long been threatened by unsustainable harvesting practices. Watershed Watch developed extensive expertise in harvest reform and selective harvest techniques through years of intense and detailed association with First Nations and the federal government. Watershed

Watch currently promotes sustainable salmon harvesting practices as a conservation sector representative on the federal government's South Coast Integrated Harvest Planning Committee and the Fraser River Panel. Watershed Watch has also been a long-time supporter of Simon Fraser University's Speaking for the Salmon series.

Transferable Shares

Watershed Watch helped organize a Speaking for the Salmon workshop on Transferable Shares in May 2008. Participants represented various sectors of the salmon fishery and the meeting focused on a discussion of issues surrounding transferable shares in the British Columbia salmon fishery. For more information, see the convenors' report [*A Think Tank on Transferable Shares in the Salmon Fishery: A Special Seminar of the Speaking for the Salmon Series.*](#)

Salmon and Nutrients

Watershed Watch sponsored the Speaking for the Salmon workshop [*Salmon and Nutrients: A seminar on science and policy*](#) in December 2008. The objectives of the workshop were to: 1) Examine potential influences of salmon nutrients on their ecosystems, and 2) Identify the role of the Wild Salmon Policy in delivering sufficient marine-derived salmon nutrients to freshwater and riparian ecosystems.

Advancing the WSP

Watershed Watch has long supported the development and implementation of the WSP, a progressive federal policy to preserve the all-important genetic diversity of wild salmon. With support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Watershed Watch works to advance the Wild Salmon Policy on several fronts, including sponsoring Simon Fraser University graduate student Doug Braun's investigation on the effects of physical habitat characteristics on sockeye salmon population dynamics.

Marine Conservation Caucus

Watershed Watch continued to serve as both Chair and Secretariat of the Marine Conservation Caucus—an official consultation body of the conservation sector with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In November 2008, the MCC held the workshop *Strengthening Marine and Freshwater Conservation in BC* where a total of 87 people from thirty-five marine and freshwater conservation Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were represented from 29 communities across BC. Participants also included representatives from federal, provincial and municipal governments, and academic institutions and affiliated projects. For more information on the MCC, see www.mccpacific.org.

Monitoring and Compliance

Sound fisheries management requires sound catch estimates. Watershed Watch thus put considerable effort in 2008 into helping shape a multi-sectoral Salmon Fishery Monitoring and Compliance Panel formed through the Integrated Salmon Dialogue Forum process of DFO. The mission of this team is to increase inter-sectoral and public confidence in the fairness, transparency and reliability of monitoring and compliance processes in BC salmon fisheries.



Roderick Haig-Brown Award

The Totem Flyfishers awarded its 2008 Roderick Haig-Brown trophy to Watershed Watch Executive Director, Craig Orr. Past recipients include Alexandra Morton, Jim Culp, Neil Cameron, Peter Broomhall, Rafe Mair, David Anderson, Father Charles Brandt, Eugene Rogers, Mark Hume, Bob Hooton and others. The Totems are BC's oldest fly fishing club.

Conservation Media and Outreach

- [Fraser sockeye fishery threatened](#) (Vancouver Sun, April 12, 2008)
- Outreach display at the Fingerling Festival (May 2008)
- [Watershed Watch Salmon Society supports bold recommendations of the Skeena Independent Science Review Panel, urges government to act](#) (Watershed Watch media release, June 2008)
- Provided support for [Haig-Brown Symposium on Sustaining Wild Salmon: Moving from Words to Action](#) (July 2008)
- [Environmentalists renew calls for opposition to development in Clayoquot Sound](#) (Canadian Press, August 2008)
- Outreach display at BC Rivers Day at Williams Park (September 2008)
- [Eco-battle emerging over fish and multibillion-dollar resort](#) (Vancouver Sun, October 2008)
- [BC sockeye added to red list of threatened species](#) (Watershed Watch and DSF media release, October 2008)
- [Plight of BC sockeye draws global concern](#) (Vancouver Sun, October 7, 2008)
- [Sockeye salmon in Fraser and Skeena Rivers 'critically endangered', report says](#) (Globe and Mail, October 7, 2008)
- [BC salmon placed on threatened species list](#) (24 Hours, October 7, 2008)
- [Sockeye listed as threatened species](#) (The Province, October 8, 2008)
- [Do Salmon Hatcheries Work?](#) (The Tyee, November 2008)