



2011 Annual Report



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About Watershed Watch

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 promoting their protection and restoration.

Founded in 1998, Watershed Watch has spent more than a decade “watching out for BC’s wild salmon.” We’ve been prominent in drawing public attention to many key issues that affect salmon, and in providing a bridge between science and the public.

Watershed Watch Staff

Craig Orr, Executive Director

Stan Proboszcz, Fisheries Biologist

Aaron Hill, Ecologist

Trish Hall, Communications Coordinator

Jace Harrison, Administrative Coordinator



Introduction

People love wild salmon for many reasons—their iconic nature, epic journeys, beauty, sport, nutrition, or sometimes, just simply because wild salmon are seen as “Awesome!” For all these reasons, Watershed Watch works hard to protect wild salmon and the ecosystems that rely on and support them. Through education, outreach, and work in the ‘trenches’ we believe our efforts are helping to move society toward real and lasting differences in how we conserve salmon locally and throughout our province. True to our name, we tackle an array of issues affecting salmon, such as over-fishing, over-extraction of water, unsustainable river diversion projects, current salmon farming practices, insufficient enforcement of environmental laws, and emerging climate issues. We strive to highlight and reduce the problems of the current model of salmon farming through published science, working with industry to reduce impacts, outreach with Simon Fraser University, and by sitting on thesis committees, serving as expert witnesses, and attending hundreds of hours of testimony at the federal Cohen Inquiry. Watershed Watch raises concerns about water through public outreach, publications, meetings with government and industry, and collaborative relationships with NGOs and First Nations.

Watershed Watch also actively supports progressive government policy, particularly Canada's Wild Salmon Policy, especially around harvest reform and habitat and ecosystem monitoring. We help to improve salmon fisheries by engaging in eco-certification processes, working with agencies and stakeholders on province-wide fishing plans, participating in multi-party catch monitoring programs, promoting selective fishing, and by raising public awareness about how salmon fisheries can become more sustainable. In 2011 we also played a central role in restoration projects, including once extirpated Coquitlam sockeye, and the use of mitigation funding to restore other salmon in the Lower Mainland.

The following report details our work in 2011. We also made it easier for you to keep up with Watershed Watch's activities through the launch of our new website in February 2011, and through [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Please follow us through social media and sign up for our e-newsletter at www.watershed-watch.org for the latest info. None of this work is possible without support from people like you. To donate to Watershed Watch, and add your support to helping BC's wild salmon, please visit our [Donations](#) page.



Fisheries & Wild Salmon Policy

Conserving wild salmon remains the cornerstone of all Watershed Watch's activities. We take tough conservation stands on difficult harvest decisions, and increase awareness on how fisheries management decisions affect salmon conservation. We put in time at consultation tables such as the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee to improve how fisheries are managed, and to ensure that the Wild Salmon Policy is fully implemented to provide salmon the best possible protection. The Cohen Inquiry was a major focus for Watershed Watch in 2011.

Cohen Inquiry

Hearings for the [Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River](#) ran throughout 2011 and examined a wide range of issues relating to the state of Fraser sockeye. As a member of the Conservation Coalition, Watershed Watch worked with our lawyers at Ecojustice to review materials, and to provide advice and context for appropriate questions for the hearings. Watershed Watch Executive Director Craig Orr testified twice (once on sea lice and once on water and hydropower issues) and contractor, Ken Wilson, testified on harvest management. In total, the Inquiry held 128 days of hearings and saw over 2,000 exhibits entered. The final report by Justice Cohen is expected later in 2012.

Marine Conservation Caucus

Watershed Watch remains Chair and Secretariat of the Marine Conservation Caucus. With nine core environmental groups, the MCC is an officially recognized stakeholder in consultations with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. For more information on the MCC, see www.mccpacific.org.





Wild Salmon Policy

Ensuring that [Canada's Policy for Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon](#) is fully enabled is a core focus of our work at Watershed Watch. We pushed for implementation of the *Policy* throughout 2011 at the Cohen Inquiry hearings, at the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee, in community meetings, and in ongoing work to reform salmon enhancement practices. The progressive Wild Salmon Policy (WSP) offers many potential benefits to wild salmon, but is currently constrained by a lack of funding, resources, and commitment. Evidence revealed at the Cohen Inquiry clearly showed that there is still much to be done to meaningfully bring this policy into operation. A fully functioning and supported WSP is a key goal for Watershed Watch.

Eco-certification of BC salmon fisheries

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

certifications are meant to “promote the best environmental choice in seafood”; however, this powerful market incentive for sustainable fishing works only if eco-

certifications are based on the best information available. Watershed Watch and colleagues at Raincoast Conservation Foundation, David Suzuki Foundation and SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, collaborated in 2011 to ensure that strong conditions for improvement were placed on BC's pink salmon fisheries as a result of MSC eco-certification, and that conditions were being met in BC's already-certified sockeye fisheries. We also raised concerns about the re-certification of Alaskan salmon fisheries, where large numbers of BC-bound salmon from at-risk stocks are intercepted in commercial fisheries. And during the summer of 2011 Watershed Watch called attention to the urgent need for protection of depleted populations of chum salmon on the north coast that were being caught in large numbers as by-catch and then discarded from the “sustainable” pink salmon fishery.

Supporting the Kwikwetlem First Nation

Watershed Watch provides science support to the Kwikwetlem First Nation in their efforts to restore the Coquitlam River. Kwikwetlem literally means “Red Fish Up the River,” and the reintroduction of sockeye salmon to the Coquitlam River has been a long-time dream of Kwikwetlem Elders. Watershed Watch works with Kwikwetlem to increase our understanding of Fraser River sturgeon and eulachon, and Coquitlam River sockeye, and also to plan and undertake fisheries mitigation projects associated with [Gateway Program](#) construction.

Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable

The efforts of the [Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable](#) enhance our efforts with the Kwikwetlem First Nation to foster stewardship of the Coquitlam River. This collaborative project of

government, non-government organizations, and private sector members helps to improve the sustainability of the Coquitlam Watershed.

Restoring Coquitlam Sockeye

Ensuring enough juvenile salmon can safely pass the dam in the spring remains a challenge to efforts to reintroduce a viable population of sockeye salmon to Coquitlam Lake. Watershed Watch has long worked with the Kwikwetlem Salmon Restoration Program Committee (KSRP) to explore better ways to release enough sockeye smolts. The KSRP includes 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.



Hydropower

Watershed Watch believes British Columbians deserve a democratic, transparent, ecosystem-based approach to planning energy development to ensure proposed hydro projects meet the need for clean electricity generation without threatening salmon or salmon habitat. We educate the public on the benefits and risks of hydropower development (especially river-diversion hydro), and increase public awareness of inappropriate hydropower impacts.

Assessing Impacts

Watershed Watch helps inform the public about hydropower developments in BC through the website HydroWatchBC.ca. We aim to facilitate collaboration on public comment periods, provide a forum for discussions relating to hydropower, and provide timely and relevant news and information around this issue. In 2011, Watershed Watch also teamed up with SFU conservation scientists to develop a conservation-based cumulative effects planning tool for assessing power projects. Through much of 2011 we worked on a comprehensive report

titled *Tamed Rivers: A Guide to River Diversion Hydropower in British Columbia*, and expect to release this authoritative review in summer 2012.

Clean Energy BC

Watershed Watch and other concerned NGOs have been meeting with the industry association Clean Energy BC to explore ways that clean energy development might be better planned, regulated and undertaken with fewer impacts to fish and wildlife.



Water

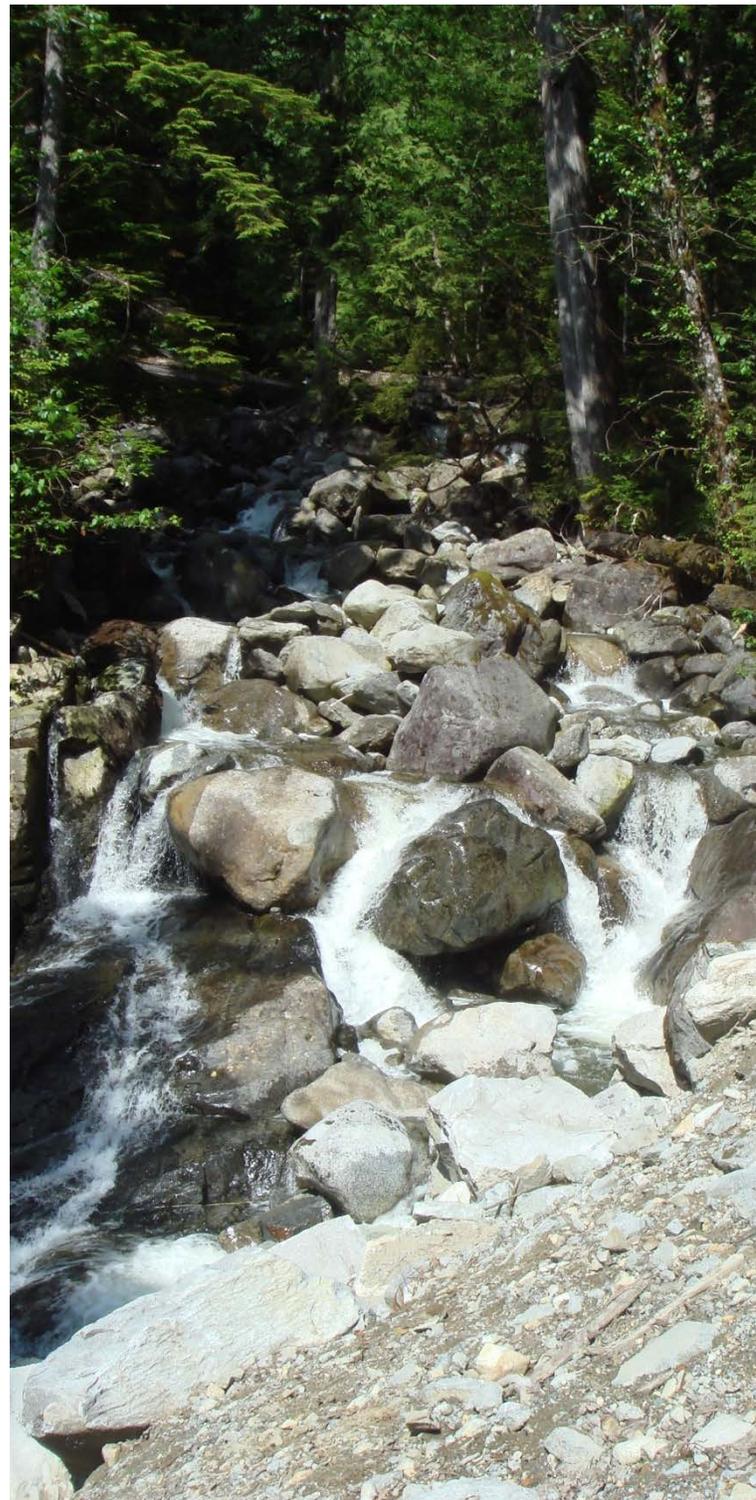
Outdated thinking around water protection threatens both salmon and their habitat. Groundwater is especially crucial to salmon health and its use is currently largely unregulated in BC. Although the pace was slow for Living Water Smart's Water Act Modernization process in 2011, Watershed Watch continued to provide input to increase public awareness of the importance of water and the need for more effective water management. We also continued to emphasize the need for consideration of wild salmon in water policy, and to raise public awareness of the importance of groundwater.

Water Act Modernization

Following consultations in December 2010 for the Water Act Modernization (WAM) process, Watershed Watch continued to highlight the need to reform the *Water Act* by authoring [Policy Proposal on British Columbia's New Water Sustainability Act](#). Executive Director, Craig Orr, also met with St'at'imc Chiefs Council in Lillooet and gave a presentation on WAM. The Council subsequently sent a letter to Environment Minister Terry Lake urging for more effective stakeholder collaboration during WAM, and a strong *Water Act*.

Making Connections

By connecting and working with other groups, Watershed Watch further increases awareness. In 2011, Watershed Watch participated in a BC Ministry of Environment and World Wildlife Fund meeting on environmental flows, a Water workshop in Victoria, and a First Nations Fisheries Council gathering in Penticton. Watershed Watch also joined 35 other scientists in a letter to Premier Christy Clark warning how the BC mining rush would harm Alaska and BC salmon and clean water. Expanding the network of groups and individuals concerned about water management improves the chances of protecting water and salmon.



Aquaculture

Watershed Watch maintained a strong focus in 2011 on protecting wild salmon from impacts of unsustainable salmon farming practices. A key program area for Watershed Watch for more than a decade, we continued to increase scientific understanding of aquaculture practices, and maintained a lead role in the Conservation Coalition for the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River. Watershed Watch once again sponsored research on sea lice and impacts on wild salmon, conducted education and outreach, and provided science support to groups with similar goals.



Aquaculture a Key Topic in Cohen Inquiry

Salmon farming trumped all topics at the Cohen Inquiry in generating intense public and media attention. Watershed Watch partnered with SOS Marine Conservation Foundation throughout the aquaculture hearings to offer the [Cohen Aquaculture Daily](#) as a means of highlighting key testimony and exhibits. As a member of the Conservation Coalition, Watershed Watch helped to successfully gain access to previously confidential detailed data on pathogens and sea lice from salmon farms. Watershed Watch's Executive Director testified at the Inquiry on a panel examining sea lice impacts, and we worked with Ecojustice to provide detailed affidavits to allow the Inquiry to fully investigate the role salmon farms may play in the decline of Fraser sockeye.

Research Into Salmon Farming and Sockeye

Watershed Watch continued to build on the scientific understanding of interactions between salmon farming and sea lice and their impact on wild salmon by co-authoring peer reviewed papers, and supporting other independent research projects. Our co-authored peer-reviewed paper [Sea Louse Infection of Juvenile Sockeye Salmon in Relation to Marine Salmon Farms on Canada's West Coast](#), published in PLoS ONE

in February 2011, is the first study to demonstrate a potential role of salmon farms in sea lice and disease transmission to juvenile sockeye salmon during their critical early marine migration. Moreover, it demonstrates a major migration corridor past farms for sockeye that originated in the Fraser River, a complex of populations that are the subject of conservation concern.

SFU Think Tank on Diseases & Pathogens

Sharing research with other scientists is another key way to further our understanding of potential impacts to wild salmon. On November 30 and December 1, 2011, Watershed Watch helped organize and support the Simon Fraser University Think Tank [Managing for Uncertainty: Pathogens and Diseases in Pacific Salmon](#). Think Tank participants concluded that there is an urgent need to integrate multiple scientific approaches in order to tackle the current concerns over disease in wild salmon. Progress has been hindered by a lack of open dialogue (and data), as has the lack of integration among complementary scientific approaches.

Broughton Area Monitoring Plan

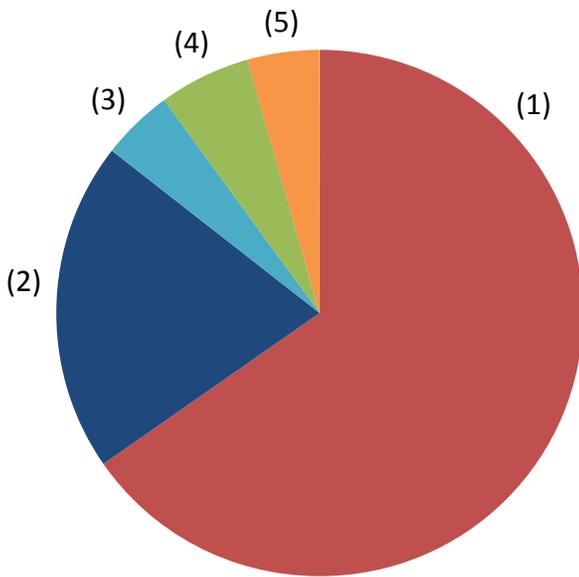
Research alone is insufficient to protect wild salmon. As a member group of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), Watershed Watch worked for more than a decade to improve the sustainability of the salmon farming industry. We continued this work as a representative in the Broughton Area Monitoring Plan (BAMP) working with CAAR and Marine Harvest Canada to make history in monitoring sea lice and pursuing science in a collaborative manner. However, frustration over the pace of progress and ongoing communication challenges that

prevented us from answering questions and speaking publicly about important outcomes of this work, prompted Watershed Watch to step away from BAMP and CAAR in 2011. Watershed Watch continues, however, to push for better protection of wild salmon from salmon farming impacts, and as always, is keeping an eye on broader salmon conservation issues.





Financial Summary



Fisheries & WSP (1)	\$ 236,514
Water & Hydropower (2)	\$ 73,420
Aquaculture (3)	\$ 15,912
Marine Conservation Caucus (4)	\$ 20,380
General (5)	\$ 15,991
Total Revenue	\$ 362,217

Thank You to Our Supporters!

Watershed Watch's efforts to protect BC's wild salmon are only possible thanks to our generous supporters. Our 2011 conservation campaigns were funded mainly thanks to the following:

Art Lingren	Kwikwetlem First Nation
Blue Planet Links Foundation	Libre Ero Foundation
Bob Meiser	Luna Trust
Bullitt Foundation	Metro Vancouver
Candice Canuel	Michael Akerly
Charles Brumwell	Neil Frazer
Cigar Connoisseurs Inc.	One Percent for the Planet
City of Coquitlam	Orange County Community Foundation
David Fraser	Pamela Kane
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Patricia Gallagher
Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program	Patrick Hodgson Family Foundation
G.B. and E.V. Drewery	Resources Legacy Fund - Sustainable Fisheries Fund
Generation Maintenance	Richard Ronyecz
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Ronald Grantham
Greg Gordon	SOS Marine Conservation Foundation
Horne Coupar Law Firm	Sherry Loof and Peter Broomhall
James Kilburn	Terry Slack
Jamie Hall	Vancouver Foundation
Jayeson Shaffer	Victoria Foundation
Kenneth Walsh	
Kingfishers Rod and Gun Club	

