



TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION
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NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP

Tsawwassen First Nation takes leading role in protecting the Fraser River Chinook.

Today Laura Cassidy the Renewable Resource Manager, Flavian Harry TFN's Fisheries Enforcement Officer, Mike Baird and Tanya Corbet attended a rally at the Musqueam reserve to put forward a position that DFO must protect the early run Fraser Chinook by closing sporting, commercial salmon fisheries for the period April to June 2010.

Tsawwassen First Nation has been meeting with other First Nation's along the Fraser for months trying to have DFO take responsibility for managing the Fishery. To date, they have refused to do this and for that reason a rally is being held today to bring attention to this crucial failure of DFO.

For further information please see the attached news release and or contact Laura Cassidy Renewable Resources Manager of TFN (604) 948-5211 or lcassidy@tsawwassenfirstnation.com.



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NEWS RELEASE

**FRASER RIVER FIRST NATIONS CALL FOR THE RESIGNATION OF
MINISTER OF FISHERIES & OCEANS DUE TO POOR MANAGEMENT OF
FRASER RIVER CHINOOK**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 4, 2010

First Nations on British Columbia's Fraser River, from the Interior to the Coast, are demanding the resignation of the Minister of Fisheries & Oceans, Gail Shea, over her department's abject failure to effectively manage Fraser River Chinook.

The demand for Minister's resignation comes after repeated attempts by the First Nations to get Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) to close both saltwater based sport and commercial salmon fisheries in the period April to June in order to protect endangered Early Run Fraser Chinook. Spring Chinook numbers have plummeted over the past few years to the point where some of these stocks of fish face certain extirpation if firm measures are not taken immediately to protect them.

The First Nations have held a series of meetings to discuss the status of Chinook runs and they have decided not to fish Chinook in the period of April to June, the time frame that Chinook are migrating through their traditional homelands. The DFO gave a presentation on "Fraser Chinook Status and Proposed Planning Approach" in which they admitted that Escapements are at critical conservation levels for interior Fraser Spring 4(2) Chinook. Nicola escapement was less 500 and 4(2) aggregate escapement averaged only 27% of brood and only 9% of spawners at Maximum Sustainable Yield." While the DFO has belatedly agreed to a series of spot closures to protect Chinook, these closures are considered by First Nations to be wholly inadequate. The First Nations want and expect the DFO to shut down all marine sport and commercial fisheries that could impact Early Chinook destined for the Fraser River. Regrettably, DFO has steadfastly refused to adopt the sweeping and necessary measures demanded by the First Nations. By allowing marine based sport fisheries to continue, the DFO is thumbing its nose at the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. vs. Sparrow* which accords the aboriginal fishery a priority second only to conservation and ahead of both the sport and commercial fisheries. And the continued refusal by DFO to put the brakes on marine based sport fisheries for Early Chinook will only serve to drive these fish closer to extinction.

Chief Fred Sampson of the Nicola Tribal Association asked all First Nations to support his community's efforts to protect and restore Chinook by refraining from fishing. With respect to three tributaries in his people's territory, Chief Sampson stated in an April 14, 2010 letter that in "2009, for these endangered stocks, we had spawning counts of 138, 26 and 461 fish respectively. This is a recipe for extirpation. We are extremely grateful for all those First Nations who have managed to refrain from harvesting these early-timed Chinook. We know how much these first Chinook of the year mean to you – they mean the same to us. We know that the DFO continues to allow sport fisheries to occur on these stocks right now."

In a joint statement, Fraser River First Nations declared that “the call for the Minister’s resignation is warranted given that these extremely low runs are the product of years of mismanagement of the Chinook fishery by DFO. The department’s refusal to close the fisheries that could impact early-timed Fraser Chinook is unconscionable. At this rate, our early Chinook will soon be extinct, and all of us will lose a key part of our culture and our livelihood. A second inquiry will soon be required with respect to Chinook, as they are disappearing as surely as the Sockeye stocks, the topic of the current Cohen Inquiry. Minister Shea must be held accountable. Her refusal to answer our letters, which ask the department to take action to save these Fraser Chinook stocks, is irresponsible and unacceptable in light of the very serious conservation concerns,” said Chief Sampson.

There are 94 First Nations between the mouth of the Fraser River and its upper tributaries. More than one half of the province’s 130,000 First Nations citizens make their home of the Fraser River.

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For more information, please contact:

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For media inquiries respecting the upper-Fraser Valley area, please contact
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For media inquiries respecting the BC Interior, please contact
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