



## **PACIFIC SALMON ENDOWMENT FUND ANNOUNCES TWO MORE RECOVERY PLANS – NIMPKISH AND RIVERS/SMITH INLETS**

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Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund (PSEF) has selected Rivers/Smith Inlets on the Central Coast of BC and the Nimpkish River in North-eastern Vancouver Island as the focus of the next two plans for salmon recovery. The rivers were identified as areas critically in need of initiatives that will reverse the declining trend in salmon stocks.

“Many salmon stocks in both areas are in a conservation crisis,” notes Rich Chapple, Director of Salmon Programs for Pacific Salmon Foundation, Program Managers for Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society. “In the case of Rivers/Smith Inlets, salmon returns have sunk to their lowest levels since the 1900s. Nimpkish River stocks have declined by as much as 95%.”

In describing the process the PSEF Technical Committee undertook to select these two areas, Chapple notes that, in addition to severely depressed stocks, damaged habitat and importance to surrounding rivers and watersheds, both watersheds have strong local community stakeholder groups committed to salmon recovery. “The fact that recovery planning has already begun in both areas by local groups will allow us to speed up the process of providing a holistic plan for the rivers. It also provides us with very important partnerships to carry out the recommendations of the plans.”

Until recently, Rivers/Smith Inlets was a key commercial fishing area in the province. Despite fishing closures, total returns of sockeye still remain well below target levels of recovery. The Rivers/Smith Planning Group (RSPG) – representing all levels of government, First Nations, the forestry industry and commercial and sport fishing organizations – was formed in 2000 and have laid the groundwork for recovery. The RSPG will serve as the Local Advisory Group to the PSEF, adding to the technical advice and guidance of the PSEF Technical Committee.

In the case of the Nimpkish River, the traditional territory of the ‘Namgis First Nation and an important fisheries and forestry area, significant declines in salmon escapement over the last 50 years have resulted in the loss of entire stocks from nursery lakes, the disappearance of an early sockeye run and the closure of once prosperous aboriginal and commercial fisheries. The Nimpkish Resource Management Board (NRMB) is a partnership of stakeholders who released a Watershed-based Fish Sustainability Plan in July 2002. The Plan will become the basis of PSEF recovery initiatives. The NRMB will serve as the Local Advisory Group for the PSEF.

Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund was established in 2001 with a \$30 million contribution from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Three main priority regions in the province were identified for the initial 5-year focus of the program – the Thompson River Basin, Georgia Basin and Rivers/Smith Inlet on the Central Coast – and recovery plans have already been developed for the Englishman River for the Georgia Basin and the Coldwater River in the Thompson River Basin. Recommendations from the Recovery Plans are currently being implemented by local stakeholder groups.

For more information, please visit [www.pacificsalmon.ca](http://www.pacificsalmon.ca) or contact:  
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