



Sunshine Coast
Conservation
Association

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22 November 2004

The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Re/ Decision not to List the Sakinaw Lake Sockeye Salmon under SARA

Dear Prime Minister:

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association is a regional umbrella organization of 28 conservation and environmental groups with a mandate to pursue the protection of biodiversity for the benefit of humanity and all life. The SCCA is a participant in the Sakinaw Lake Sockeye Salmon Recovery Team. We were surprised and extremely alarmed by the recent federal government decision not to formally list the Sakinaw Lake Sockeye Salmon under the *Species At Risk Act*.

The Sunshine Coast was once home to a vast number and diversity of salmon runs. In the span of less than four decades, all major runs have declined radically and many hundreds of small runs have been lost entirely. The unique Sakinaw Lake Sockeye runs once numbered over 16,000 but are now reduced to less than a hundred individuals. This local decline of abundance and loss of biological diversity has been caused by over exploitation and habitat destruction resulting from past unwillingness to control vested interests in the best interest of the public and the resource.

In reviewing the socio-economic analysis (Gislon Report) for the Sakinaw and Cultus Sockeye listing decision, it is apparent that an antiquated rationale and evasion of the obvious has prevailed over the need for change. The analysis purports to show that listing of the Sakinaw sockeye (and the Cultus sockeye) would precipitate a shut down of the entire Fraser River fishery. Certainly listing of these species would necessitate an adjustment in the timing of the fishery and could also affect the scale, location and type of fisheries practiced. However, these changes are long overdue and not as draconian as the consequences of attempting to maintain the status quo in the short term. As well, the report assumes that other Fraser sockeye stocks are healthy and abundant, which they are not. The best currently available available scientific information shows that the Sakinaw

and Cultus stocks are the most desperately threatened of a family of runs that are *all* coming under severe duress.

A long-term commitment to maintaining the existing diversity of all the Fraser River stocks is urgently needed. Listing of the Sakinaw and Cultus species would serve this purpose and demonstrate leadership that will give cause for hope. As a society, Canadians recognize the urgency of the overall situation and want to proceed, with all possible haste, to effect the necessary changes. We hope that your office will take a leadership role in this regard.

Please re-reconsider the decision not to list the Sakinaw and Cultus Sockeyes populations and act to ensure that they are protected under the Species At Risk Act.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours truly,

Daniel Bouman, Executive Director
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association

cc.

Honourable Stéphane Dion
Honourable Geoff Regan