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BCFDF

BRITISH COLUMBIA
FEDERATION
of DRIFT
FISHERS

The Voice of the River Angler



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Honourable Doug Donaldson,
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development Stikine:
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27 Aug. 2018

Tim Sheldon
Deputy Minister, Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development
(250) 952-6500

Mr. Ted White,
Director and Controller, Water Rights
Deputy Minister, Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development

Allan Johnsrude
Regional Executive Director, South Coast Region
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Regional Operations and Rural Development

Re: Herring Island application to construct bridges and associated Serious Harm to fish habitat

Dear Minister Donaldson and Sirs:

It has come to the attention of the BC Federation of Drift Fishers (BCFDF) that there is currently an application to build a bridge to Herring Island of the lower Fraser River at Agassiz for the purposes of expanding the development of agriculture and infrastructure on to this property.

We are writing this letter in strong objection to the approval of the construction of this bridge. Such a structure, if built, will facilitate the continuing development and destruction of this sensitive and critical salmon and sturgeon habitat on and around Herring Island.

The BCFDF is a non profit organization that works with all levels of government and other user groups representing recreational angler interests. BCFDF represents recreational anglers on the following committees including Fraser River Peacemakers, Sport Fish Advisory Board (main Board, South & North Coast committees), Local Sport Fish Advisory committees (province wide), the Provincial Angling Advisory Team, and Regional Angling Advisory Teams (province wide). We also advocate the wise and careful use of our aquatic resources.

Respect The Resource - Respect Other Anglers

Herrling Island comprises one of the most critical White Sturgeon spawning habitats in British Columbia, particularly in the southern channel that defines the inner perimeter of the island. The internal portions of this island, flooded during spring freshet (see photos attached), also comprise key rearing habitats during the Fraser River spring flood for interior Chinook and river rearing sockeye. BCIT Fish Wildlife and Recreation has studied this issue for almost a decade and has clearly demonstrated the habitat use by these species and stocks. These upper Fraser Chinook are forage fish for the Georgia Strait Orcas that have received so much publicity recently. Outside of the Stave, Salmon and Coquitlam rivers downstream of Mission, every single juvenile salmon migrating down the Fraser River comes in contact with Herrling and other similar large islands within the Heart of the Fraser in their marine outmigration.

Recently, Herrling Island was sold to private interests. The new owners are very clear that they want to develop this island into intensive agriculture. To date, large-scale removal of riparian area and wetland-floodland habitats have occurred of which we have grave concerns in respect to Serious Harm under the habitat provisions of the Canada Fisheries Act. This extra-ordinary damage has also occurred via agricultural clearing at two other Heart of the Fraser Islands, Strawberry and Carey.

This Chinook Salmon and White Sturgeon ecosystem cannot withstand this sort of damage and remain intact.

Because of the current and declined state of Fraser River salmon runs means that all development impacting the river should proceed only with the greatest of caution for the protection of fish and their habitat. Authorizing this bridge would be a devastating action by FLNRORD to these stocks of salmon and White Sturgeon.

Stewardship groups and the public are so opposed to the development of this bridge proposal that a petition, Defend the Heart of the Fraser is now up and running on the internet.

<http://www.defendtheheartofthefraser.com/>

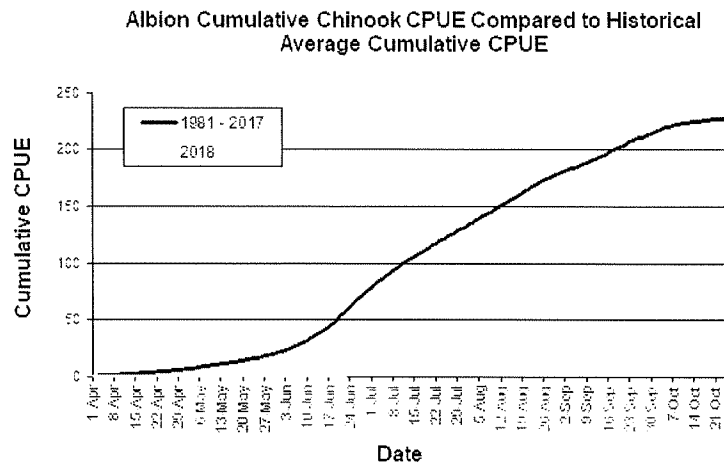
The BC Federation of Drift Fishers sincerely hopes that you do not approve this bridge application.

Yours truly,

Rod Clapton
President
British Columbia Federation of Drift Fishers

Honourable George Heyman; BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Honourable Lana Popham; BC Minister of Agriculture
Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson; Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Alan Johnsrude, Executive Director, FLNRORD

Sandra Jensen, Authorizations Specialist, Water Authorization, FLNRORD
 Ms. Catherine McKenna, Environment Canada
 Cheryl Webb, RDG Habitat, DFO
 FRSCS Board of Directors
 Mr. Rick Hansen, FRSCS Honourary Chair
 Mr. Ken Malloway, Co-Executive Director, Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance
 Mr. Murray Ned, Co-Executive Director, Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance
 Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance, Board of Directors
 Fraser Valley Angling Guides Association
 Mr. Harvey Andrusak, President, BC Wildlife Federation
 Mr. Cornelius Visser, BC Nature, Federation of BC Naturalists
 Dr. Mark Angelo, Rivers Chair, Outdoor Recreational Council
 Mr. Stephen Cornish, CEO David Suzuki Foundation
 Ms. Karen C. Wristen, Executive Director, Living Oceans
 Ms. Lina Azeez, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
 Ian Stephen, The WaterWealth Project
 Dr. Brian Riddell, Pacific Salmon Foundation



Note: In 2018, the Albion test fishery did not begin until April 22. The historical average CPUE data have not been calibrated to remove catch from the April 1 to April 21 period.

Figure 1 Graphic example of the current collapse of interior juvenile Chinook salmon in the Fraser River.