



---

September 27, 2018

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, MP  
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson,

We are a science and solutions-based coalition of conservation organizations that focus on resource sustainability. We are writing today regarding a serious threat to habitats of the Fraser River critical to Pacific salmon, white sturgeon, eulachon, and associated species including Orcas. The 'Heart of the Fraser' is the last-remaining un-diked floodplain of the lower Fraser River between Mission and Hope. The region is amongst the most productive freshwater fisheries habitats in Canada. Unfortunately, agricultural development of two natural islands, Herrling and Carey, now threatens the stability and preservation of this river reach and associated fish production.

To stem the damage to the Heart of the Fraser, we have taken the unprecedented action of engaging with the landowners for the purchase of a number of these floodplain islands. As a start, the procurement of Herrling and Carey Islands is critical, and we believe there is an opportunity to move forward over the next few months. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans could greatly assist in protecting this critical habitat through designation as "ecologically significant areas (ESA)" under the revised Fisheries Act, and a financial contribution to the purchase of these islands.

Acquisition and protection of these islands will be much less expensive than restoration, if restoration is even possible should we lose these habitats. Once purchased, the islands can be restored and managed as protected areas possibly in cooperation with First Nations. We have initiated conversations with the local First Nations and intend to bring the discussion to up-river First Nations also.

The serious harm and loss of these two islands by actions of the present owners have severe implications to initiatives to protect the Southern Resident Killer whales. Chinook and chum salmon that use these environments will ultimately contribute to critical foods for these whales. Moreover, we believe that strong habitat protection complements the current management approach that divides diminishing salmon resources. In the short term, your department had little option but to share existing salmon production between the Orcas and human uses; but the latter also has direct impacts on our coastal communities and resource sectors. Sustained and increased salmon production must also be considered for long-term success.



This coalition in collaboration with governments can take a highly positive action that British Columbians and Canadians will support. We ask that you take action to protect these key habitats and related fish production. The property owners are presently seeking permits to develop the islands further, so our time to respond is limited. We would be immediately available to meet with you and your staff to discuss this proposal.

Please contact us at the BC Wildlife Federation office 604-882-9988 or toll-free 1-888-881-2293 and ask for our executive assistant Michelle Galang at extension 224 to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvey Andrusak".

Harvey Andrusak  
President  
BC Wildlife Federation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Hansen".

Rick Hansen  
Founder & CEO  
Rick Hansen Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Angelo".

Mark Angelo  
Chair Emeritus  
BCIT Rivers Institute

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Riddell".

Brian Riddell  
President & CEO  
Pacific Salmon Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Alcock".

Robert Alcock  
President  
Sport Fishing Institute of BC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Allard".

Tony Allard  
Chairman  
Wild Salmon Forever