

August 16, 2007

Mr. Paul Sprout  
Regional Director General  
Fisheries & Oceans, Pacific Region  
200-401 Burrard St.  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6C 3S5

Dear Mr. Sprout:

Re: The Lower Fraser River Sport Fishery

The First Nations of the Fraser River are facing hardship because of the collapse of this summer's sockeye runs. While sockeye have been caught along the Lower Fraser River, not enough sockeye has been taken to meet our food, social and ceremonial needs.

It's also my impression that the First Nation community up-stream of us is fearful they may not be able to catch the sockeye they need to feed their elders and families this coming winter either.

Frankly, I have not seen a summer such as this in more than 40 years.

You must keep in mind the order of priority of access to the fishery. The courts have repeatedly said the spawning beds have first claim on the salmon, followed by the aboriginal fishery and, any claims to the salmon by either sport or commercial fishermen come third in the hierarchy of access. It is clear to me that DFO is intent on turning the order of access on its head by leaving anglers out on the Lower Fraser River. Already a heated debate has broken out among the anglers over the illegal practice of flossing or snagging. The practice is wide spread and, consequently, sport fishermen are taking untold numbers of sockeye in this way.

Our fishery comes first after sufficient numbers of salmon have been permitted to escape to their spawning beds. Aboriginal communities along the entire length of the Fraser River are facing privation for lack of sockeye. Putting salmon on the spawning beds and honouring the Aboriginal priority is your legal duty. Stopping illegal fishing practices by anglers is also your legal duty. DFO has allowed the sport fishery on the Fraser River to become a macabre and destructive force.

I now call upon you to close down the sport fishery on the Fraser River, immediately.

I await your prompt reply.

Grand Chief Ron John  
Sto:lo Tribal Council

