

July 17, 2008

FIRST SOCKEYE RETURNS TO THE COQUITLAM LAKE RESERVOIR

Kwikwetlem First Nation, Metro Vancouver and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have confirmed the successful capture of a single adult sockeye in the purpose-built fish pen just below the Coquitlam Dam.

On Friday July 18th, 2008, the returning sockeye will be removed from the pen, placed in a fish tank and transported for release into the Coquitlam Lake Reservoir. Members of the Kwikwetlem First Nation will lead a small group of members of the Kwikwetlem Salmon Restoration Program Committee in celebrating this first release.

Membership on the Kwikwetlem Salmon Restoration Program Committee includes: BC Hydro, Metro Vancouver, Kwikwetlem First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC's Ministry of Environment, Cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, and environmental groups including Watershed Watch Salmon Society, North Fraser Assistance Program and the Maple Creek Streamkeepers.

Kwikwetlem First Nation, which takes its name from the sockeye salmon, is celebrating the news of the latest return. "This is something that Kwikwetlem has been working on for so many years", said Band Councillor George Chaffee. "Now we need to show and tell all our communities of the positive outcome that our work towards a common goal has been able to achieve. I would like to give special thanks to Chehalis First Nation Elder Albert Philips, former Kwikwetlem Chief Marvin Joe, and John Pritchard."

Metro Vancouver's Water Commissioner and CAO Johnny Carline echoed Councillor Chaffee's comments: "This is exciting. It is only one fish, so far, but is hopefully the sign of good things to come. We are delighted for all concerned, but particularly for our friends the Kwikwetlem, for whom the sockeye is so meaningful."

Glen Joe, Kwikwetlem Fisheries Resource Manager, said: "Dreams do come true."

This joint approach demonstrates the interests of all parties towards ensuring the conservation of salmon species, restoration of a culturally important fish, maintenance of clean, safe drinking water, as well as maintaining the reservoir's function as part of a hydro-electric system.

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