

Draft Sockeye Recovery Strategy Now Available

Sakinaw Lake, located 75 kilometres northwest of Vancouver on BC's Sunshine Coast, is home to a unique race of endangered sockeye salmon. While the Sakinaw sockeye population is, unfortunately, not listed under SARA, Canada's Species at Risk Act, it is the focus of a far-reaching Fisheries and Oceans Canada action plan.

A recovery team—with biologists from the provincial and federal governments, Sakinaw Lake landowners and representatives from local First Nations and conservation organizations—was formed in 2002 and is hard at work. The team has devised a draft strategy (see over) to stabilize and preserve the health of the lake's sockeye and enhance its chances for survival. A period of public consultation is now taking place.

Community support is vital for the success of the Sakinaw sockeye recovery process. If local residents are well informed about recovery planning, involved in stewardship initiatives and supportive of watershed conservation, the imperilled sockeye can only benefit.

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association and the Pacific Salmon Foundation have joined forces to help boost recovery efforts. Our goal is to keep the public—local residents and Sakinaw Lake landowners, in particular—up to date on stewardship opportunities. This newsletter will look at ways to conserve private land, reduce pollution and prevent habitat damage. We'll also help publicize recovery team progress and events.



Sakinaw Lake, facing west from the summit of Mt Hallowell in the Caren Range on the Sechelt Peninsula.
John Field photo

The bigger goal, of course, is to keep the Sakinaw sockeye returning to its birthplace long into the future.

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, founded in 1997, is an umbrella organization, with 28 member groups, dedicated to preserving biodiversity in the Sunshine Coast region. The Pacific Salmon Foundation, based in Vancouver, has been a major supporter of salmon habitat restoration, stewardship and educational efforts throughout BC since 1987.

Public Open Houses

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has organized a series of community meetings in BC in October and November 2004. Several important initiatives are up for discussion: the work of three federal salmon recovery teams, a new list of proposed SARA species and the rockfish conservation plan.

In each area, an evening information open house will be held, along with two days of talks with First Nations and stakeholder groups. At the open houses, interested members of the public are encouraged to view displays and material,

talk to knowledgeable FOC staff and recovery team members, and provide input and feedback on proposals.

Here is the schedule for the public open houses:

PRINCE RUPERT, October 6, 6-8 pm.

KAMLOOPS, October 12, 6-8 pm.

VICTORIA, October 18, 6-8 pm.

NANAIMO, October 21, 6-8 pm.

PORT HARDY, October 25, 6-8 pm.

CAMPBELL RIVER, October 28, 6-8 pm.

VANCOUVER, November 1, 6-8 pm.

CHILLIWACK, November 4, 6-8 pm.

SUNSHINE COAST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE NOVEMBER 8, 2004, 6 to 8 pm PENDER HARBOUR COMMUNITY CENTRE (DOWNTOWN MADEIRA PARK)

First Nation Information Exchanges will also take place on the Sunshine Coast, at Sechelt (Nov 8, 10 am to 4 pm) and Sliammon (Nov 8, 9 am to 4 pm). A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue will be held at Pender Harbour (Nov 9, 9 am to 4 pm). Registration is required for these sessions, but **not** for the open house (see over).

Stewardship Initiatives to Focus on the Bigger Picture

Sakinaw Lake is at the heart of a large, complex watershed on the north Sechelt Peninsula. As can be seen from the accompanying map, nine other lakes are connected to Sakinaw, as well as dozens of streams and smaller bodies of water. Many aquatic and terrestrial species make their homes in the watershed besides the Sakinaw sockeye. A population of coho salmon, for instance, enters Mixal Lake through Sakinaw and spawns in adjacent creeks. Several lakes have unique characteristics, including Ambrose, a pristine example of a coastal bog lake, protected as an ecological reserve.

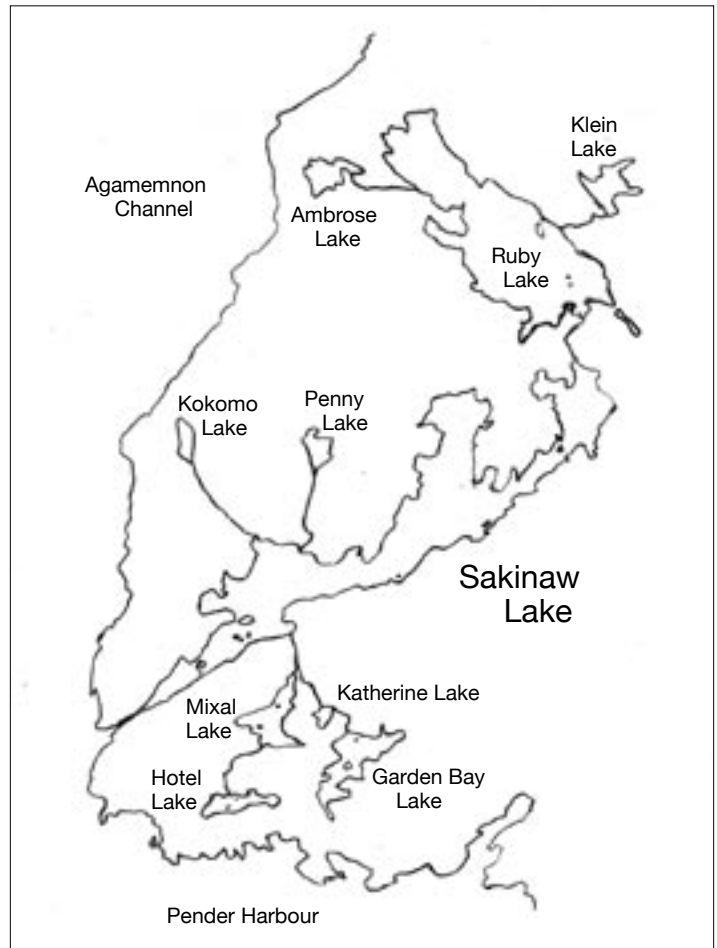
A host of uses are made of the region's lakes. They are vital sources of wildlife habitat and community drinking water. Much human recreational activity occurs there, especially swimming, fishing and boating. Summer cottages line many portions of lakeshore. Logging and road-building also take place in the watershed. Sometimes these land and water uses have a potential for conflict.

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (SCCA) and the Pacific Salmon Foundation wish to promote practices that will help minimize human impacts on the entire watershed, and on Sakinaw Lake in particular. To this end, future issues of the *Sakinaw Sockeye Stewardship Newsletter* will focus on:

- **Private land conservation.** The SCCA is authorized to hold conservation covenants and receive ecological gifts. We'll describe in detail various options to help landowners develop conservation plans that will suit their particular needs and help protect the salmon.

- **Reducing pollution and preventing habitat damage.** We'll cover "best practices" for lakeside living, both residential and recreational, including useful tips on gardening and lawn care, boating, construction, waste disposal, household contaminants and wise water usage.

- **Education and communication.** We want to raise public



Sakinaw Lake, the largest body of fresh water in the region, is part of a fragile, intricate ecosystem.

awareness of the continuing recovery strategy and alert residents to future stewardship opportunities, such as habitat protection and rehabilitation projects, the formation of a local advisory group, and any related events, meetings and workshops.

Sources & Contacts

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

The draft recovery strategy for the Sakinaw Lake sockeye salmon is available at: http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/consultation2004/main_e.htm.

This website also has a detailed community meeting schedule, registration information for the First Nation and stakeholder dialogue sessions, and other important background documents. Phone: Grant McBain, FOC Community Advisor, 604-883-2613.

Pacific Salmon Foundation

The website, www.psf.ca, describes the valuable programs that PSF operates or manages, including the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund, the Community Salmon

Program and recovery plans for several critical BC salmon and steelhead areas. There's plenty of general information about salmon research and conservation. PSF even has a kids' fun page on their site. Phone: 604-664-7664.

Sunshine Coast Conservation Association

At the SCCA website, www.thesc.ca, check out the many local initiatives that this active non-profit group is sponsoring in the local region. The SCCA is involved with private land conservation, drinking water protection, the preservation of wildlife habitat and much else. The association's informative newsletter is also available from the site. Address: Box 1969, Sechelt, V0N 3A0.

Living by Water Project

This website, www.livingbywater.ca, has

a wealth of advice about working toward healthier human and wildlife habitats along fresh and saltwater shorelines. There is comprehensive information about septic systems, docks, boating, co-existing with wildlife, preventing erosion, gardening with native plants, maintaining water quality, home purchasing and construction. Email: shorelines@jetstream.net.

Land Trust Alliance of BC

www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca is another useful website. You'll find descriptions here of various voluntary conservation options for private landowners, with detailed downloadable files about covenants, preserving natural and cultural features, ecogifts, and tax implications and benefits. LTA also offers numerous seminars, workshops and research papers. Phone: 250-538-0112.