

Anglers and the Sport Fishing Industry

Ensuring Salmon for the Future > *By Sonora Morin, Pacific Salmon Foundation*

AS THE 2011 RECREATIONAL fishing season comes to a close, I am reminded of the wonderful stories that anglers have shared with me over this past year. An estimated 17.5 million pinks returned to the Fraser River, a 70.8-pound Chinook was caught near Hippa Island in June, and another 84-pounder was hooked in Haida Gwaii in August. The recreational fishing industry in British Columbia depends on Pacific salmon, so the Pacific Salmon Foundation's work in sustaining, regenerating and enhancing wild Pacific salmon stocks and habitat hits close to home for the sport fishing industry. During the last two years, the Foundation has made a strategic priority of strengthening our connections to anglers and the recreational fishing community. Our efforts to sustain Pacific salmon are critical to the future success of this industry. Economically, seafood processing as well as commercial and recreational fishing brings in almost \$2 billion a year in provincial revenue and \$500 million in GDP.

Not only are Pacific salmon financially important, they are a "keystone species" in British Columbia. More than 130 species depend on salmon abundance for survival. The combination of economic benefits and environmental requirements inspired many recreational lodges and guides to become "ambassadors" for the Foundation by



Gary Foreman, owner of Haggard Cove Resort, with Bob Cole of the PSF's board of directors.

participating in the Recreational Fishing Program.

One of the ways lodges have supported the Foundation is through our public art easel displays. Lithographs of prints donated by local artists and winners of the Foundation's Salmon Conservation Stamp competition are displayed at 26 lodges across the province. Brochures on these displays bring attention to the Foundation's mission to restore and regenerate vital habitat for wild Pacific salmon, while introducing the public to the beauty of one of British Columbia's most iconic creatures. In this past season alone easels at the lodges generated \$30,000 in support for the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

Gary Filizetti, lodge owner and outdoor enthusiast, put up easels at both of his lodges: the Lodge at Gold River and Steep Island Lodge. Filizetti, who made two very generous easel bids himself, says

that he couldn't imagine not supporting the Foundation in every way possible. For another six lodges the art easel program wasn't their only advocacy on behalf of the Foundation. Haggard Cove, Moutcha Bay, Nootka Sound, Naden Harbour, Shearwater and West Coast Resorts added an optional angler conservation fee to individual invoices.

Gary Foreman, of Haggard Cove, who entertains around 100 visitors at his lodge in the Alberni Inlet each year, decided to contribute \$25 per guest. He said, "As anglers, we are enjoying this great salmon resource in one of the best fishing locations in the world. It's only right that we give back financially to help preserve salmon for the future." This is the second year Foreman has collected donations, and his guests respond very enthusiastically.

In some cases, anglers themselves are leading the charge. Seventeen anglers, led by Chris Donaldson and his father-in-law Robert Gayton, both of Vancouver, put together a fishing trip to Kyuquot Sound on the west side of Vancouver Island. Each angler donated \$800 and, after a little friendly fish wagering, a total of \$14,000 was raised for the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

Foundation President and CEO Dr. Brian Riddell says, "I am proud to see great progress in our outreach to restore Pacific salmon. But with shrinking government funding, everyone who benefits from Pacific salmon will need to step up to ensure that Pacific salmon conservation, restoration, education and enhancement continues."

As the Pacific Salmon Foundation enters its 25th year in 2012, it is committed to supporting community salmon projects and local networks of volunteers who bring tremendous knowledge and experience to their work in aquatic habitat and salmon enhancement.

If you would like to help ensure Pacific salmon for the future, please make a tax-deductible contribution, at www.psf.ca or by phoning (604) 664-7664, extension 108. If you are a recreational fishing business and would like to get involved with the Recreational Fishing Program, please email me at support@psf.ca. ■



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