

Sustaining wild salmon front, centre at symposium



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On Fishing

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If you'd like to help wild salmon survive, put Campbell River, Aug. 14-17 on your calendar. Locals and Simon Fraser University have mounted a serious look for answers to improve numbers and move forward, not lament the past. You can attend the many meetings, ask questions and give your ideas. So it's a cool thing about the fish we love the most.

Most readers know Roderick Haig-Brown, 1908-1976. He is B.C.'s most well-known conservationist — long before it became trendy. *A River Never Sleeps*, is perhaps his best known book after the fishermen seasons series, among the more than 25 he published. Born in Lancing Sussex England he emigrated to the west and the images of the B.C. coast provided him material for numerous books when he returned to England. But the fish and Vancouver Island had a hold on his imagination and he returned to live and marry. Reputed to have landed the first large buck coho on an artificial fly on Vancouver Island, he had other pursuits of almost the same high esteem: he was a magistrate for 30 years in Campbell River and he won a Governor General's award, Canada's highest award for literature.

Haig-Brown has been well remembered and you can check out the events on the SFU website at: www.sfu.ca/cstudies/science/resources/salmon/HaigBrown_pg_draft_jl14.pdf.

The nifty things include snorkelling with salmon in the Campbell, paddling the Island's greatest river, the Nimpkish, and attending aboriginal cultural events in Alert Bay, Aug. 14 and 15. Speakers include well-known salmon writer, Terry Glavin, and the smartest lady ever to go into politics, Iona Campagnolo. The fun things are free but please donate a little cash, too.

Moving from Words To Action, Aug. 16-17, addresses challenges in implementing the Wild Salmon

Policy. Some questions are: What are the threats to wild salmon? What are we doing to honour Haig-Brown's conservation legacy? What solutions and tools are available to sustain wild salmon? What is the role for communities in implementing the Wild Salmon Policy? What will it take to move forward?

Alas, I cannot attend I am afraid to say — I have a date with remote wild salmon and they want me to be there. But here are a few solutions you may want to clip and take as your own: cryobanks for sperm and eggs for the 9,652 strains of salmon, just as is done presently and very cheaply for human eggs and sperm. In less than 20 years science will be able to mix and match chunks of DNA to build different genetic profiles and reestablish any that become extinct.

In this time of global warming it is just a matter of time before fish move north into Canada's arctic. But an obvious solution for fish close by is to develop temperature resistant strains, particularly for sockeye the most sensitive. The obvious Chinook strain is from the Sacramento in warm California, or from interior B.C. Let's make major increases in chum release because they are cheap large carcasses that feed 37 forest and water species. I agree with the Sierra Club that there is no such thing as too many fish on the spawnin beds.

We need to: put salmon higher on the list for available freshwater; build head-water dams for releases for fry and spawners; start netpens in saltwater with clipped Chinook to improve numbers of our 1 month a year fish and so we can take them apart from wild springs. This also tends to prevent river strays and let's use diploid sterile chinook too; let's put salmon farms on lands create structure at river mouth for fry, particularly, Chinook, for example, off the Vancouver airport run way; let's get our aboriginal friends to do a serious cull of sea lions during out and in migration; introduce a tax for fish encroachment; convert logging slash to energy, funds directed to habitat restoration; eliminate commercial fishing for coho and Chinook by generously retiring licences and gear; and develop estuarial hatcheries, for temperature, non-competition reasons using a general non-breeding clone we use in mar places — because it makes it easy to distinguish wild fish. Oh, and we need more money for timely DNA testing.