

**MEDIA RELEASE --- For Immediate Release**

***Wild salmon are as culturally important to the people of British Columbia  
as the French language is to the people of Quebec***

*British Columbians do not support "tradeoffs" that put commercial interests ahead of  
local salmon runs.*

VANCOUVER April 26, 2011 – An overwhelming majority of British Columbians say small salmon runs should not be traded off to favour the commercial fishing industry and economic development should not come at the expense of salmon habitat, a new poll shows.

"This poll clearly shows that Ottawa and the big fishing companies are totally out of step with British Columbian values," Dr. Craig Orr, Executive Director of Watershed Watch, said today. "British Columbians are clearly against putting commercial interests before local salmon runs, and we want laws to protect salmon habitat more strictly enforced."

The poll results are important because Ottawa is under pressure from industry leaders to "trade off" small runs to allow mixed-stock commercial fisheries that threaten small runs with extinction.

"The results clearly demonstrate how culturally important salmon are on Canada's west coast," said Greg Knox, Executive Director of SkeenaWild Conservation Trust. "People care so much about wild salmon in this province that half of us would pay higher taxes to protect their habitat."

When asked whether wild salmon are as culturally important to British Columbians as the French language is to Quebecers, 70 per cent of respondents agreed.

"This isn't a wake-up call for British Columbians. It is a wake-up call for politicians from all the political parties," said Vicky Husband, senior advisor to Watershed Watch.

The province-wide poll, commissioned by the Watershed Watch Salmon Society and SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, was conducted last week by Angus Reid Public Opinion. From a sample size of more than 800 respondents, the results are considered accurate within 3.5 percentage points.

Survey results show a high level of environmental concern for a variety of issues, including "depletion of fish stocks" at 66% and "pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs" at 72% (highest concern).

On the subject of salmon habitat protection, 86% of British Columbians agreed with the statement “Economic growth and development should not come at the expense of wild salmon habitat”; 52 per cent said they “would pay higher taxes if that was what was necessary to protect wild salmon habitat”; and 89 per cent said “laws meant to protect salmon habitat should be more strictly enforced.”

- 30 -

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