

News Release



British Columbia First Nations Fisheries Council urges Fisheries and Oceans Canada to move quickly to accommodate First Nations' access to fisheries

For Immediate Release

November 5, 2009

The First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia congratulates the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations on the outcome of their recent court case, which has recognized their right to fish for food and economic purposes, and the Council urges Canada to move swiftly to implement new management approaches collaboratively with First Nations peoples.

“This court case represents an opportunity,” stated Michelle Corfield, a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and a sitting member of the First Nations Fisheries Council. “Canada and British Columbia First Nations have clear direction from the courts to move forward to negotiate solutions that will address the fundamental issues that First Nations have been raising with Fisheries and Oceans Canada over many years,” she said.

Chief Allan Claxton of the Tsawout First Nation, one of the First Nations Fisheries Council Co-Chairs, said: “This decision is clear in the recognition of an aboriginal right and the acknowledgement that the current management regime does not address this right. First Nations and the federal government need to respect of each other’s authorities, roles and responsibilities, and only through a collaborative approach will we ensure our mutual co-existence and cooperation to the benefit of the resources.”

The *Ahousaht* decision is timely as it closely follows the 2009 Fisheries Assembly which took place October 28 – 30 in Chehalis, B.C., on the issue of “Protecting Access to our Fisheries Resources.” B.C. First Nations came together at the Assembly and re-confirmed their commitment to work collaboratively on fisheries issues through mechanisms like the First Nations Fisheries Council.

“We are standing together,” said Chief Claxton. “B.C. First Nations are ready to move forward in cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to implement this important court decision.”

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The First Nations Fisheries Council is an organization supported by B.C. First Nations which works to: protect First Nations' rights and title, develop capacity in First Nations communities to participate in fisheries management, and facilitate discussions among B.C. First Nations with respect to fisheries management.

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