



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION



MUSQUEAM FIRST NATION

NEWS RELEASE

This weekend's aboriginal fishery is legal but the Fishery Survival Coalition "protest" amounts to poaching

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VANCOUVER – Members of the Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations are prepared to take part in a legal aboriginal fishery at the mouth of the Fraser River this weekend. The fishery is a legally constituted fishery based on historic aboriginal rights to fish and on fisheries agreements with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. This fishery falls within the conservation limits set by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Tsawwassen Chief Kim Baird stated, "First Nations have gone through the courts and other processes to legitimize our fishery and are carrying on our business since the inception of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy in 1992."

In recent days, representatives from the Fisheries Survival Coalition have threatened to carry out an illegal fishery this weekend. A court injunction from 1998, still in effect today, bans the Coalition from fishing while the aboriginal fishery is taking place. This ban has to be enforced. They will be fishing illegally, as they have no authorization to fish.

Musqueam Councillor, Wayne Sparrow said, "DFO has been doing proper management on the early summer stocks. We fully support the department's conservation measures and have been civil and respectful of other commercial fisheries and we expect the same from them. If the Fisheries Survival Coalition go out, they will be catching into the conservation fish."

First Nations are calling on officials to uphold the ban to ensure that aboriginal rights are respected and that the aboriginal fishery is allowed to proceed safely and without threats and intimidation tactics.

"The aboriginal fishery has been declared by the courts to be legal. The federal government's AFS provides for an aboriginal sales fishery. The time has come for the Fisheries Survival Coalition and MP John Cummins to abandon their racially-motivated campaign and respect the courts and the laws of the land," said Grand Chief Edward John.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in the treaty negotiation process in British Columbia. Background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

Musqueam First Nation website may be found at www.musqueam.bc.ca.

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