



# Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

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Resolution No. 2015-002

May 27, 2015

## **Resolution Supporting International Joint Commission (IJC) Involvement in the Southeast Alaska/British Columbia Transboundary Region**

The impact on wild salmon watersheds that cross the Canadian and US borders from an increase of new large-scale development and industrialization activities will pollute numerous river systems. The elimination of pollution on river systems will maintain and protect a healthy wild salmon population.

Whereas the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's mission is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources;

Whereas the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's purpose, in part, is to protect, preserve and conserve the wise use of tribal fish, wildlife, and recreation resources; and to assist in the facilitation and coordination of intertribal communication in regards to fish and wildlife matters; and to improve the general welfare of tribal people through educational, charitable, as well as fish and wildlife enhancement activities;

Whereas the transboundary rivers of the Northwest British Columbia and Southeast Alaska region, including the Taku, Stikine and Unuk, are of tremendous and unique ecological, subsistence, cultural and recreational value, and the clean water and intact habitat of these river systems are some of the most productive wild salmon rivers on the entire west coast of North America;

Whereas the transboundary rivers and their tributaries are facing a significant increase in new large-scale development and industrialization that will transform the area and impact wild salmon watersheds that cross the Canada and U.S. border;

Whereas this large-scale mining district with several open-pit mine projects in known acid-generating ore bodies, along with associated waste rock storage facilities and tailings dams, roads and other infrastructure, will threaten the productivity and health of watersheds and fish and wildlife habitat through cumulative impacts and contamination or possible catastrophic failures;

Whereas the Alaska Native Tribes, B.C. First Nations, fishermen, traditional and customary users, recreational users, local communities and conservation groups on both sides of the Canadian and U.S. border have all raised concerns about the pace and scope of the proposed industrial development in British Columbia and the potential for harm to water quality, fish and wildlife, cultural practices and local economy;

Whereas the B.C. provincial government has articulated support for rapidly expanding mining, and related development;

Whereas the Canadian federal and B.C. provincial environmental laws and regulations have been weakened recently;

Whereas the members of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society agree to share information and seek opportunities for collaboration to address these issues, promote methods to protect these vital rivers from harm, and seek to facilitate and promote meaningful dialogue and engagement at the local, state, federal, provincial, and Tribal levels to assure protection of this resource on both sides of the border;

Whereas the maintenance and protection of healthy wild salmon populations throughout these river systems is the priority concerns of local communities, individuals, Alaska Native Tribes, B.C. First Nations, and user groups downstream from these projects must be addressed in all transboundary watershed development decision-making;

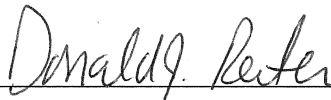
Whereas the Canadian and B.C. permitting processes offer limited opportunities for voices to be heard;

Whereas the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 states in Article IV, "It is further agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other"; and

Whereas the Boundary Waters Treaty created the International Joint Commission to address and make recommendations to ensure furtherance of the Treaty provisions, including water quality and habitat protection; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved* the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society hereby calls for the Secretary of the United States Department of State and the Canadian Federal Government to refer to the International Joint Commission for thorough review the potential impacts to water quality and habitat, and associated potential salmon impacts in particular, that may be caused by the numerous major mining projects proposed and permitted and in watersheds of several transboundary rivers shared by British Columbia and Southeast Alaska, and to request from the Commission a set of recommendations to safeguard the water quality and habitat of these watersheds to ensure compliance with the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

*The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2015 NAFWS National Conference and Annual Business Meeting, held at Juneau, AK, on May 20, 2015, by a vote of 48 for, 0 opposed, and no abstentions.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald J. Reiter". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Donald J. Reiter,  
Secretary/Treasurer