



Jill Thompson <jill@cowichanwatershedboard.ca>

249692 COWICHAN WATERSHED BOARD re Fisheries Management for Cowichan River**Sutherland, Craig FLNR:EX** <Craig.Sutherland@gov.bc.ca>

25 July 2019 at 15:26

To: "info@cowichanwatershedboard.ca" <info@cowichanwatershedboard.ca>

Cc: "Minister, FLNR FLNR:EX" <FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca>, "Pendergast, Sean FLNR:EX" <Sean.Pendergast@gov.bc.ca>

Reference: 249692

Chief William Seymour, Cowichan Tribes

Co-Chair, Cowichan Watershed Board
Chair Ian Morrison, Cowichan Valley Regional District
Co-Chair, Cowichan Watershed Board

Dear Chief Seymour and Chair Morrison:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 2019, to Minister Donaldson regarding fisheries management for the Cowichan River. I have been asked to respond.

As you may know, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development implemented new regulations in 2019 aimed at reducing potential impacts to fish populations during periods of low water flows and elevated water temperatures.

The new regulations suspend all angling activity from July 15th to September 1st in all streams within Management Units 1-1 through 1-6, when the stressors of low flow and elevated water temperatures tend to be most acute and consistent. Exclusions to this generalized approach are the Big Qualicum, Puntledge, Oyster, Nitinat, and Quinsam rivers. These named exclusions contain flow-augmentation structures, have consistent thermal regulation, and/or provide sustainable salmon-based fisheries.

These regulations are consistent with provincial direction on drought-based fisheries management. Key steps in developing these regulations included identifying when water flow levels were routinely below 5 percent Mean Annual Discharge and when stream temperatures were routinely greater than 20 degrees Celsius.

As you are likely aware, there are a series of protective angling regulations for most streams on Vancouver Island. For the Cowichan River these protective regulations include:

- Mandatory release of all wild trout and wild steelhead at all times;
- Use of single barbless hook;
- Bait ban;
- No fishing from the weir (dam) at Cowichan Lake's outlet to Greendale trestle, November 15 - April 15;
- No fishing in tributaries above and including Holt Creek;
- Fly fishing only above CNR trestle (Mile 66), August 1 - November 15;
- No fishing downstream of the Mile 66 trestle between August 1 - November 15; and,
- Fly fishing only from signs at Greendale trestle to CNR bridge (Mile 70.2).

The Cowichan River trout populations have been monitored for several decades and these populations appear to be healthy based on observations to date. Additional angling regulations do not appear to be necessary at this time; however, the ministry will continue to monitor seasonal habitat conditions and trout populations to determine effectiveness of current regulations.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Sean Pendergast, Acting Fish and Wildlife Section Head for the West Coast Natural Resource Region, by phone at 250 751-3225 or by email at Sean.Pendergast@gov.bc.ca.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Craig Sutherland
Assistant Deputy Minister

Coast Area

pc: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development
Sean Pendergast, Acting Fish and Wildlife Section Head, West Coast Natural
Resource Region