NEWS RELEASE
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$5 Million Grant Announced to Support U.S.-Canadian Salmon Research
Historic Grant to Study Marine Survival of Pacific Salmon and Steelhead in the Salish Sea

Vancouver, British Columbia -- The Southern Fund Committee and the Pacific Salmon Commission announced a commitment of $5 million dollars (U.S.) during the next five years to support the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project, a collaborative U.S. and Canadian scientific effort to improve understanding of the causes of salmon and steelhead mortality in the Salish Sea, the body of water that includes the Strait of Georgia, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Puget Sound. The announcement was made on October 18 in Seattle, Washington.

“This is the largest grant ever made to a bilateral research effort focused squarely on determining the influences on early marine survival of salmon and steelhead,” said Larry Rutter, the U.S. federal commissioner to the Pacific Salmon Commission and one of the six members of the Southern Fund Committee. “We believe that this joint project will ultimately lead to healthier salmon and steelhead stocks in both U.S. and Canadian waters.”

The money will be provided by the Southern Fund Committee in equal amounts to the two non-profit organizations coordinating the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project: Long Live the Kings, based in Seattle, and the Pacific Salmon Foundation, based in Vancouver, British Columbia. To jump-start the project's research phase, which officially launched in August 2013, $1.8 million will be provided in early 2014 followed by $800,000 per year in each of the succeeding four years.

The Pacific Salmon Commission is the international body formed by the United States and Canada in 1985 to oversee implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Southern Fund Committee, comprised of three U.S. and three Canadian members, was established separately in 1999 by the two countries to administer the Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund, one of two endowment funds created to support the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The fund has supported projects to advance the science of salmon management; improve understanding of Pacific salmon stocks; restore and conserve habitat; and support natural stock enhancement.

Since 2004, the Southern Fund Committee has provided more than $29 million for salmon-related projects in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. To date, the majority of these funds have been used to improve management of fisheries and address factors affecting the freshwater phase of the Pacific salmon's life-cycle. Comparatively little has been dedicated to understand and improve Pacific salmon survival in saltwater.

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“Supporting the important research collaboration established by Long Live the Kings and the Pacific Salmon Foundation is a logical extension of our investments in freshwater systems and our collective efforts to enhance stewardship of Pacific salmon,” said John Field, executive secretary for the Pacific Salmon Commission. “The marine waters of the Salish Sea are critically important to the survival of many stocks that are of great significance to U.S. and Canadian commercial, recreational, and Tribal fisheries.”

Scientists believe changes in the Salish Sea have significantly affected the abundance of Pacific salmon. Recent catches of coho, Chinook and steelhead in the Salish Sea have been at historic lows of less than one-tenth of past peak levels. These losses have been well acknowledged in communities surrounding the Salish Sea, yet understanding the causes of the declines have remained a mystery. Paradoxically, other Pacific salmon species like sockeye have had huge variability in returns. For example, during the past five years, Fraser River sockeye have returned at the lowest (2009) and highest (2010) levels in a century. Pink salmon, on the other hand, have consistently returned at historically high levels in the North Pacific in recent years.

“The funding commitment announced today recognizes the need for this work right now,” said Dr. Brian Riddell, president and CEO of the Pacific Salmon Foundation. "The importance of the Salish Sea in determining salmon production has been over-looked for far too long and we welcome the leadership of the Southern Fund Committee members in making this commitment. This initial investment will also catalyze our efforts to raise the additional funds needed to complete the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project, which will have a projected budget of $20 million during the next five years.”

Riddell said the project has developed with the support of a multidisciplinary group consisting of 20 federal and state agencies, tribes, academia and nonprofit organizations on both sides of the U.S. and Canadian border. Through the development of a comprehensive, ecosystem-based research framework; coordinated data collection and standardization; and improved information sharing, the project will improve knowledge about the critical relationship between Pacific salmon and marine waters.

"The Salish Sea Marine Survival Project leverages human and financial resources from two countries to improve the evaluation of survival of juvenile salmon and steelhead in our shared marine waters," said Jacques White, executive director of Long Live the Kings. "It is the largest-scale and most important research effort of its kind in the shared waters; promising to fundamentally change the ways we manage salmon and steelhead and steward Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin."

White said outcomes from the international effort will be instrumental in informing and prioritizing hatchery, harvest, habitat and ecosystem management decisions in Puget Sound to increase sustainable fishing opportunities and advance the recovery of Endangered Species Act-listed salmon, steelhead and southern resident killer whales.

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**About the Pacific Salmon Commission**

The Pacific Salmon Commission is the bilateral organization created by the 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty between the United States and Canada. Its purpose is to oversee implementation of the Treaty and to propose changes from time to time in the fishery management regimes specified in the Treaty. The Commission is comprised of four Commissioners and four Alternate Commissioners appointed by each country. They represent the federal, state, provincial and tribal/First Nations governments and the commercial and recreational fisheries. The Commission is advised by four regional panels and several scientific and technical committees. The Commission’s Secretariat is located in Vancouver, B.C. psc.org

**About the Southern Fund Committee**

The Southern Fund Committee is a legally separate but closely-related entity that shares support staff with the Pacific Salmon Commission based in Vancouver. The Southern Fund Committee focuses on improving stocks and fisheries in southern British Columbia and the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Comprised of three U.S. and three Canadian members, the Committee was established by the United States and Canada to administer the Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund, one of two endowment funds created as part of the 1999 Agreement Between the United States and Canada Concerning the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Southern Endowment Fund was capitalized with $65 million by the United States in partial settlement of disputed issues relating to the fishing arrangements that were originally specified under the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The fund committees are allowed only to spend earnings from investments to support projects; they may not spend the contributed capital.

**About Long Live the Kings**

Long Live the Kings (LLTK) is a public 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to restoring wild salmon and steelhead to the waters of the Pacific Northwest. LLTK helps those who make decisions about salmon to be successful. We pursue projects and partnerships that compel coordinated, scientifically-credible, and transparent changes to harvest, hatchery, and habitat management to protect and restore wild salmon. We bring innovative tools, proven processes, and a track record of success to each of our projects. With our non-government partners, we build new and necessary constituencies and support for change. lltk.org

**About the Pacific Salmon Foundation**

The Pacific Salmon Foundation was created in 1987 as an independent, non-governmental, charitable organization to protect, conserve and rebuild Pacific Salmon populations in British Columbia and the Yukon. The Foundation’s mission is to be the trusted voice for conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and their ecosystems and works to bring salmon back stream by stream through the strategic use of resources and local communities. psf.ca