

# This Year You Rewrote History

A BOLD NEW B.C. WATER ACT PROTECTS WATER  
FOR NATURE AND FOR PEOPLE

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## PACIFIC SALMON (ONCORHYNCHUS)

Salmon are a cornerstone of coastal ecosystems in British Columbia. For proof, you don't have to look any further than the annual salmon run. After spending their adult life in the ocean, these determined fish swim hundreds of kilometres to spawn in the stream where they hatched. Each fall, B.C.'s rivers heave with salmon fighting their way upstream past waterfalls, dams, and feasting bears. The province's new Water Sustainability Act will help ensure enough flow in those rivers to support the massive annual migration—and ensure all creatures across the province have the water they need to survive.

## THIS YEAR'S SUCCESSES:

WWF's work in B.C. is part of our national campaign to understand the health of our freshwater wealth and to protect it.

- To date, we've assessed the health of 25 percent of Canada's watersheds. By crunching data on water quality, flow, fish, and bugs, we've established a yardstick to measure freshwater ecosystem health, providing crucial information to shape decisions and guide conservation investments.
- WWF and Loblaw Companies Limited launched the Loblaw Water Fund in 2013 to help communities steward local lakes, rivers, and wetlands. The first round of grants—partial proceeds from Loblaw's charge-for-plastic shopping bag program—supported 10 watershed projects across the country.
- Years of WWF advocacy and public engagement have paid off with Plan 2014: the International Joint Commission strongly supported this new management plan to restore and protect the health of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Now in the hands of Canadian and U.S. federal and provincial/state governments, this plan could bring back more natural flows to waterways and wet meadow habitat.

## LEADER PROFILE:

Ted Hogarth was well aware of the importance of protecting the habitats of species at risk, and so was an annual contributor to WWF for many years. His close friend John McCutcheon, former WWF board member, remembers him fondly: "Ted and I had a number of discussions with WWF's conservation team regarding the vital need to provide a sustained level of fresh water for our wild creatures. Ted passed away two years ago, and in his will left a substantial bequest in support of WWF's freshwater initiative—a timely gift for what is rapidly becoming one of WWF's priority programs."



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*"Ted was possessed of an iron discipline that made him a success at whatever he did. Generous and thoughtful, he left quite a legacy."*

—John McCutcheon

## THE BIG STORY:

Salmon can't survive without fresh, clean water. Nor can grizzly bears, Douglas firs or Pacific tailed frogs. So when the B.C. government decided to overhaul its century-old Water Act, WWF was front-row centre, making sure the new rules took nature's needs into account.

We sat on the Technical Advisory Board for the B.C. Water Act, which advised on the new legislation. We hosted workshops and submitted briefs, put out fact sheets, and transit ads, and published academic papers.

You were right behind us. Our polls showed 94 percent of British Columbians thought the new provincial water rules should protect the needs of nature—especially as climate change and a growing population puts more pressure than ever on freshwater resources.

Thousands of you watched the video featuring our freshwater ambassador, Scott Niedermayer, calling for a strong new water act. More than a hundred came out to our water and salmon event in Vancouver. And across the province, more than 2,900 people submitted their thoughts on the proposed water legislation.

The B.C. government acted. Its new Water Sustainability Act requires for the first time that the quality, quantity, and seasonal timing of water that flows through our watersheds (environmental flows) be protected.

In the coming years, we'll work with the government to develop regulations to accompany the new act, and will hold up B.C. as an example for the rest of Canada to follow.

So raise your glass to B.C.'s precedent-setting new rules: rules that ensure water for crops and kayaking, sockeyes and salamanders, energy to power our communities, and so much more.

### MARCH 1909

B.C. passes the original B.C. Water Act

### JUNE 2008

The B.C. government releases Living Water Smart, a plan for sustainable water stewardship, which includes a promise to update B.C.'s water law

### 2011-2014

WWF sits on an advisory board for the new water act

### MARCH 2011

WWF submits a brief on the proposed new water act, emphasizing the need to protect environmental flow

### NOVEMBER 2011

WWF hosts a workshop on environmental flow in conjunction with the B.C. Ministry of Environment

### JUNE 2012

WWF organizes a presentation by a key official on B.C.'s new water law and how it protects flows at the Canadian Water Resources Association conference

### DECEMBER 2012

More than 100 people come to our water and salmon event, where WWF Freshwater Ambassador Scott Neidermayer launches his YouTube video

### MAY 2014

B.C. passes the new Water Sustainability Act