



# WATERSHED TALK NEWSLETTER

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## Fish Sampling by First Nations

By: *Walter Quinlan, FRAFS Communications*

Has this year's run of Fraser salmon been contaminated by the deluge of water and sediment that breached from the Mount Polley tailings pond? First Nations are taking a direct role in testing to find out.

This week saw some good news. Water samples taken by the province from Quesnel River and Quesnel Lake met BC Aquatic Life Guidelines. In addition, Interior Health's Medical Health Officer deemed consumption of fish to be safe.

Still, First Nations want to see early results independently verified. In response, the **First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)** has started a salmon tissue sampling program.

FNHA is working with Fraser First Nations to collect salmon from their fishers. The sample salmon are sent to a FNHA-contracted lab for analysis for heavy metals - like those found in the sediments from the tailings pond - in the flesh of the fish.

“On Wednesday, I was at the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council, helping Patty Joyce (Environmental Health Officer, FNHA) prepare fish samples for shipment to the lab,” said Pete Nicklin (FRAFS Fisheries Biologist).

“We shipped six fish today,” Pete continued. “Three sockeye and a Chinook from this season and two sockeye from last year.” He explained that the 2013 fish are a “baseline” to compare this year’s fish with.

“The 2014 sockeye came from Rudy Johnson’s bridge on the main stem Fraser,” Pete said. “We’re also getting samples from the Chilcotin system.”

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**PEACEMAKERS**

**Harmony on the Fraser**  
**Saturday, August 16, 1 – 4 p.m.**  
**Island 22, Chilliwack**

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**FRASER RIVER ABORIGINAL FISHERIES SECRETARIAT**

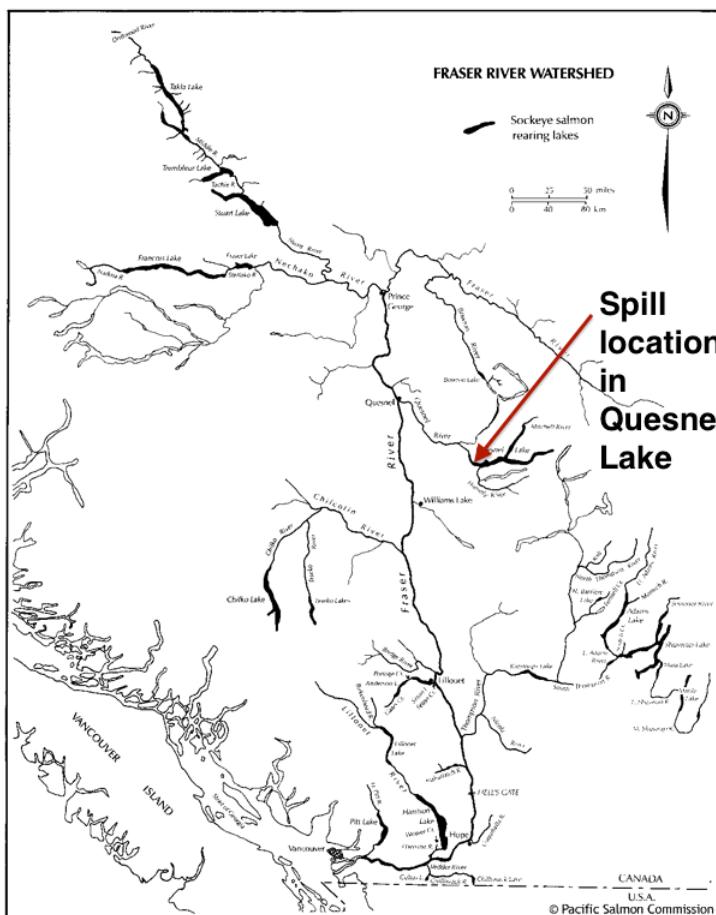
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## Fish Sampling *(continued)*

It'll take one to two weeks to see the results for fish tissue samples. FNHA will bring in an independent risk assessor to work directly with First Nations to interpret the results. For more details and updates, click this link: [FNHA Communiques](#).

Looking ahead, people are waiting to hear the results of the MOE's sediment sampling, as well as their plans for working with First Nations and others on a sampling program. And for years to come, monitoring for bio-accumulation throughout the entire ecosystem.



*Original map sourced from PSC website.*

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