

Minister of
Fisheries and Oceans



Ministre des
Pêches et des Océans

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

SEP 13 1999

Father Charles Brandt
Tsolum River Restoration Society
Box 60
Merville, British Columbia
V0R 2M0

Dear Father Brandt:

Thank you for your letter of July 4, 1999, addressed to my predecessor, regarding mine site pollution of the Tsolum River and requesting funding assistance from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to conduct water quality monitoring, wetland assessment, and streamflow station maintenance and data collection. DFO staff on Vancouver Island rate the water quality problems associated with the abandoned mine site as a very important regional issue. In addition to DFO involvement, I understand that Environment Canada has representatives on the Tsolum River Task Force, and that you are working with them to address mine reclamation.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has, I believe, played an important facilitative role in bringing Task Force members together to work co-operatively on all components of a restoration plan for the watershed. Funding from our *Habitat Restoration and Salmon Enhancement Program* has helped to address low summer flow problems and co-ordinate water monitoring, and to initiate numerous habitat restoration projects. Equally important, this funding has provided a forum for the various mine-site players to come to a common table to develop a collaborative plan to address acid rock drainage from the site. It was unfortunate that the Tsolum River Restoration Society was unsuccessful in receiving funding from *Habitat Restoration and Salmon Enhancement Program* in 1999, however, I encourage you to re-apply for funding through the program in the coming year.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has consistently expressed a willingness to work collaboratively to restore the Tsolum River and rebuild salmon stocks. We have also been consistent in stating that we will not become directly involved in mine site reclamation, as this is the responsibility of the owner of the mineral rights. In this regard, I encourage you to contact Environment Canada, whose staff may be able to assist with your efforts.

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I agree with you that the priority for action in the Tsolum River at this time should focus on mine site reclamation. I wholly support the mine site workshop planned for this summer.

I wish to extend my congratulations to your Society and to Comox Valley Project Watershed Society for the work already accomplished, and for taking the initiative to search for co-operative solutions to Tsolum River issues.

Thank you again for your concerns with regard to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herb Dhaliwal". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Herb Dhaliwal, P.C., M.P.

c.c: The Honourable David Anderson, P.C., M.P.