

## Speakers at the Press Conference

May 24, 2018

11 am – 12:30 pm

Grandview Calvary Baptist Church, 1803 1st Avenue, Vancouver



**Shane John** is an experienced Stó:lō fisherman from Chawathil First Nation. Shane will express what wild salmon mean to the Stó:lō people, and the reasons why river First Nations have been, and remain in solidarity with Musgamagw, Namgis and Mamalilikulla Nations who have never given their free, prior and informed consent to have fish farms in their territory. Shane will speak about the threat fish farms pose to a salmon fishery from which river First Nations have benefited since time immemorial. The same salmon that swim past the fish farms swim up and down the rivers.



**Kurt Beardslee**, Executive Director of Wild Fish Conservancy, will speak about the testing of farmed Atlantic salmon. The State of Washington tested smolts in a Cooke Aquaculture incubator and found the Atlantic salmon had a strain of Icelandic virus, and subsequently made a decision based on this evidence to deny Cooke Aquaculture permission to move 800,000 fish to an open-water net pen.

Kurt will also speak on the citizens' movement in the USA that helped result in the State of Washington decide to phase out open net pen fish farms on their coast. He will promote the mobilization of international collaboration to make the Pacific coast free of fish farms as an important measure to conserve and restore wild salmon runs in both countries.



**Dr. Claudette Bethune** is a practicing clinical scientist in the USA. Claudette was trained at the University of Washington in Seattle and has a doctorate in drug metabolism and clinical pharmacokinetics and is qualified to characterize the safety of medicine as well as food nutrients and toxins by the US FDA and international regulatory bodies. She has worked for the Norwegian National Institute for Nutrition and Seafood Safety (NIFES) providing health authorities with risk assessments for consuming farmed fish. Dr. Bethune will speak about the health problems of farmed salmon due to the accumulation of toxins such as PCBs from feeds and the promotion of antibiotic resistance by salmon farms. (connect by phone)



**Karen Wristen** is the Executive Director of Living Oceans Society, which engages in scientific, social and economic research to ensure the society's campaigns are grounded in fact and their solutions are science-based. Karen and her team at Living Oceans collaborated with Georgia Straight and the Watershed Watch Salmon Society to launch a Declaration in Defence of Salmon to mobilize widespread public support in asking Premier John Horgan to give our wild salmon a fighting chance by not renewing Atlantic salmon farm tenures come June 20, 2018. In a few weeks, more than 11,000 people from all backgrounds signed the declaration. Peer-reviewed scientific research in Canada supports the Declaration, including research by the Pacific Salmon Foundation that recommended ending open net pen fish farms and promoted land-based aquaculture.



**The Most Revd Melissa Skelton, Archbishop, Anglican Church of Canada**

The Reverend Laurel Dykstra will represent Archbishop Melissa Skelton of the Diocese of New Westminster and Bishop Logan McMenamie of the Diocese of BC to address the need for British Columbians to honour the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. In this context, a statement will be made in solidarity with the human rights of the Musgamagw, Namgis, and Mamalilikulla people who witness mounting evidence that fish farms are doing harm to their traditional food source and have made it clear for some 30 years they want open net pen fish farms removed from their territorial waters.



**Hereditary Chief George Quocksister Jr.** of the Laichwiltach Nation boarded fish farms both in the Broughton Archipelago and in his territory, collecting hard evidence that many farmed Atlantic salmon in fish pens are showing symptoms of diseases, which back up scientific studies revealing that farmed salmon have the contagious Piscine Reovirus of Norwegian origin which causes Heart, Skeletal and Muscle Inflammation (HSMI). George also captured video footage of thousands of baby fish of all sorts in those pens. George will share his experience as a steward of his unceded territory.



**Eddie Gardner** is President of the Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance (WSDA). WSDA is in solidarity with the fish farm occupation, and works to raise public awareness on the threats open net pen fish farms pose to endangered wild salmon, other marine species and their habitat. Eddie will talk about the growing coalition of scientists, politicians, academics, Indigenous governments, environmental groups and health experts who see ocean fish farming a failed experiment. After cumulative evidence over many years that fish farms are doing harm to wild fish, the Environmental Commissioner of Canada more recently reported that the federal government isn't doing enough to manage the risks associated with salmon farming – and is failing to set national standards to prevent fish escapes and regulate how much drugs and pesticides companies can use. This refutes any

claim that Canada has a strict regulatory aquaculture regime.



**Ernest Alfred** is a traditional leader from the Namgis First Nation. Ernest is an eloquent speaker on behalf of the fish farm occupation. Although Ernest Alfred is encouraged by the process taking place between the Indigenous people long opposed to fish farms with both levels of government based on free, prior and informed consent, he has this to say, “There will be no reconciliation in our territory as long as the fish farms are in our waters. Aquaculture operations do not have our permission to operate in our traditional, un-ceded territory.” Ernest is a leader of the Swanson Occupation, and although he and other occupiers were court ordered to leave, Ernest is ever determined to work with everyone and anyone who supports gaining the collaboration of the federal and provincial governments to honour the eviction notices that were served to Marine Harvest and Cermaq. Ernest will share his perspective on this international crisis facing endangered wild salmon from an Indigenous worldview.