

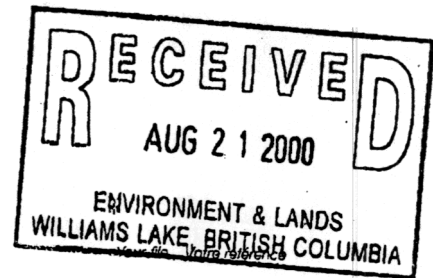


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August 16, 2000

**SUBJECT: NO NET LOSS OF FISH HABITAT: AN AUDIT OF FOREST
ROAD CROSSINGS OF FISH-BEARING STREAMS IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1996-1999**

In 1997 the Auditor General of Canada produced a report entitled Pacific Salmon: Sustainability of the Resource Base (Chapter 28, Auditor General of Canada, 1997). The report made several recommendations to improve delivery of the fish habitat management program in the Pacific Region. One recommendation was the following:

"In implementing the referral process, Fisheries and Oceans should devote more time and effort to compliance monitoring and follow-up in order to assess the effects of its habitat management decisions and its performance toward the achievement of 'no net loss' of habitat."

To address this issue and ensure that adaptive management occurs, DFO has increased its monitoring and follow-up activities and is conducting routine reviews to evaluate its performance in achieving No Net Loss of fish habitat. DFO's technical staff identified stream crossings as a priority for monitoring and evaluation. Subsequently, an audit of forest road crossings in interior and coastal British Columbia was conducted. The enclosed report summarizes the findings of this evaluation.

The results of this audit demonstrate that corrugated metal pipes (CMPs) installed on fish-bearing streams result in a harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat (HADD). Based on the results of this audit and similar findings in other areas, DFO recommends the installation of clear-spanning, bottomless structures on all fish-bearing streams. This approach is consistent with the hierarchy of preferences contained in DFO's *Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat* (1986) which outlines the steps the Department follows to avoid a HADD. Authorization of a HADD under subsection 35(2) of the *Fisheries Act*, with habitat compensation, is only considered as a last resort. Should there be no

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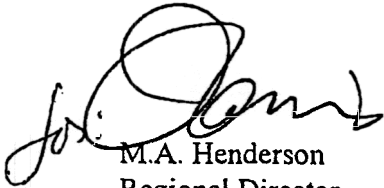


viable alternative to a CMP on a fish-bearing stream, then an Authorization under Subsection 35(2) of the *Fisheries Act* will be required.

The results of the audit also demonstrate that the excessive removal of riparian vegetation from within the right-of-way, adjacent to a stream crossing structure, can result in the loss of fish habitat. The audit provides recommendations on mitigating these impacts.

For further information on this and other related No Net Loss studies, please contact Dave Harper at (604) 666-3512 or Jason Quigley at (604) 666-7918.

Yours sincerely,



M.A. Henderson
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Att.

cc: D. Harper