

Salmon and People: a Story of the Cheakamus & Squamish Riversheds



Image by artist Bruce Muir

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Introduction

The goal of this project has been to prepare background information for the development of a book titled: Salmon and People: a Story of the Cheakamus & Squamish Rivershed.

The outcome of this first stage of the project will be to:

- Develop a budget for the development of the book
- Create a list of contacts and stakeholders
- Produce a story outline
- Gain a sense of the photographs, artwork and other images available for the project

Salmon & People is a book project designed to tell the inspirational story of both the creative and destructive forces that have acted upon the Squamish Rivershed and the species that live there. The Cheakamus Rivershed will be used as a focus recognizing that it is part of the bigger whole and the ripple that affects everything else.

While most people view rivers as benign and stable, the story of the Cheakamus will reveal that rivers often go through large, and even catastrophic events, and yet are reborn and survive. For example, almost 200 years ago, a rock slide swept through the valley destroying much of what was in its path. Other events have included logging, settlement and railway accidents – and yet the Cheakamus has survived it all. The story will also talk about salmon and the many species that depend upon salmon as well as all the people and groups that have been involved in rivershed and salmon restoration on the Cheakamus.

The template will be a conceptual compilation focusing on salmon and their connection with people through their biology, ecology, conservation, restorative stewardship and cultural significance to First Nations, historical and present day culture. It will also be a vehicle for watershed salmon groups to solicit direct volunteer and general community support and make funding appeals while telling their own unique salmon interaction and recovery stories.

The net proceeds from sales of the book will be shared by various contributing groups based on their participation.

Story Outline

Overview

The book will be modeled on the “Eye Witness” book series for children and the Book of Eagles commissioned by Nature Conservancy of Canada. The final product will be a high-end book with a lot of graphics and illustrations.

Writing a book involves finding out what the stories are and deciding how best to tell them. We want to tell an inspirational story of the history of creative and destructive forces on the Cheakamus – a story that inspires hope because it recognizes that there are both periods of destruction and rebirth. The goal in writing the story will be to inspire a variety of perspectives in looking at the river and surrounding ecosystems:

Streams are powerful elements on the land. We think of mountains as permanent, yet each stream that flows down a mountain is slowly, yet relentlessly wearing it down. The average mountain stream carries away about 1,000 cubic feet of mountain particles each year – about the amount a dump truck could hold. That may not seem like much – it would take 500 million years for a stream to level a mountain the size of Mt. Washington. But then, most mountains have many streams. And so, the landscape is constantly on the move, continually ever so slowly being reborn.

Salmon & People Outline

The template will include four major components:

(1) Salmon Biology and Ecology

Salmon biology and functional physiology

- Life cycle
- Pacific Salmon Species
- Why do salmon go to the ocean?



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