Backgrounder

Fundy Salmon Recovery

A revolutionary partnership - Fundy Salmon Recovery - in association with academic, First Nations, government and private industry, is working together to raise and release over 800 wild endangered inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon in hopes that these adult salmon will spawn naturally in their native rivers. This project is based on research that Atlantic salmon have a better chance of survival when they are exposed to a wild environment at a young age, and the best chance if they are hatched in the wild.

Fundy Salmon Recovery is made up of six partners: Parks Canada, Cooke Aquaculture, the Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association (ACFFA), the University of New Brunswick, the Province of New Brunswick, and Fort Folly First Nation. These organizations are united and inspired to work together for a common goal – to restore the historic wild Atlantic salmon populations to the inner Bay of Fundy for generations to come.

The Live Gene Bank, based out of the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Mactaquac Biodiversity Facility, protects the unique families of the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon population by collecting juveniles from the wild, growing them to maturity, and spawning them in captivity. The fry produced from these spawnings are released back to the wild.

Once the fry grow to be young salmon (smolts), Fort Folly Habitat Recovery, the University of New Brunswick and Parks Canada work to retrieve a portion of the smolts from Fundy National Park rivers and the Petitcodiac watershed.

Fundy Salmon Recovery has established the World's First Wild Salmon Conservation Marine Farm on Grand Manan Island to achieve their desired outcome- a self-sustaining salmon run. Young salmon smolts collected from the rivers are transported to the conservation farm to be grown until maturity. While in the conservation farm, these salmon are cared for by staff from Cooke Aquaculture, the Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association and the Province of New Brunswick. Fundy Salmon Recovery is the first project in the world to collect juvenile fish after they have spent the critical early life stages in the wild, then transport those fish to be cared for in an ocean environment at a dedicated marine farm site. The site is equipped with custom designed conservation aquaculture net pens – the first of its kind in the world. The fish are fed specialized diets developed by biologists and aquaculture nutrition experts.

Once the salmon are mature, they are released back into Fundy National Park rivers and the Petitcodiac watershed where the survival of their offspring, from egg to young salmon, will continue the cycle.

Back in the rivers, salmon are continuously monitored by University of New Brunswick scientists. Using advanced technology, scientists are able to detect the number of project salmon that enter and depart the project rivers. They are also monitoring wild returning salmon genetics, river nutrient levels and ecosystem health.

Fort Folly First Nation and Fort Folly Habitat Recovery

Fort Folly First Nation first developed a habitat recovery program in 1993, with a primary focus on restoration projects surrounding local environmental issues. The program began expanding in 1998, when the first meeting for the inner Bay of Fundy (iBoF) Atlantic Salmon Recovery Team was held in conjunction with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. During this time, the Live Gene Bank, based out of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Mactaquac Biodiversity Facility, was established to prevent extinction of the species. In 1999, Fort Folly First Nation began developing partnerships with both Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada Agency to aid in Atlantic salmon monitoring efforts and recovery actions on numerous inner Bay of Fundy rivers. The program eventually evolved and was rebuilt as Fort Folly Habitat Recovery in 2004.

The partnerships developed during the inception of Fort Folly Habitat Recovery remained strong as years passed, eventually evolving and expanding into Fundy Salmon Recovery.

Fort Folly First Nation has solidified its position as a global conservation leader, recently earning the honor of presenting before the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the leading international policy group for Atlantic salmon.