



May 18, 2011

### **Backgrounder for Media Release**

*New salmon farm proposed in Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve, CAAR calls for moratorium on net-cage tenures*

### **Application Information**

Company: EWOS Canada Ltd (dba Mainstream Canada)

File Number: 1413555

Location: East side of Meares Island in Fortune Channel near Plover Point, within the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Farm Size: Twelve 30 x 30 metre cages; 55.7 hectares

Production: 3,300 metric tonnes of salmon

Breed: Applying to raise either Atlantic salmon or Chinook salmon

### **Tenures & Licences**

On December 18, 2010 as a result of Judge Hinkson's decision in the BC Supreme Court, DFO assumed the management of aquaculture in BC, formerly regulated by the provincial government. Licensing, management plans, waste management and fish health regulations for all aquaculture species other than marine plants now fall to the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. However by law, the Province retains control over **tenures** under the Land Act.

Therefore, the first step for the company to set up this new salmon farming operation is to apply to the BC government for a tenure. If approved, the company would then apply to the Federal Government for an aquaculture license to be issued under the new *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations*.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations notified various parties on its referral list\* of the application. CAAR members are on the referral list and are currently working to respond as well as to notify its supporters of the new farm tenure application.

\* The referral list is a voluntary list of anyone from the public who wishes to receive information on tenure applications.

### **Ecological Impacts**

Habitat assessments found extensive eelgrass beds within the immediate vicinity of the proposed tenure. Seven eelgrass beds were mapped in this area within less than 500 metres of the tenure boundaries, as well as two bull kelp beds, both providing critical habitat for numerous marine species.

Additional farm production would increase the cumulative burden of waste on the seabed in Clayoquot Sound. Grey whales, known to feed in this area, could in turn be negatively impacted. Open net-cages also pose entanglement risks to marine mammals.

David Suzuki Foundation

Georgia Strait Alliance

Living Oceans Society

T. Buck Suzuki  
Environmental Foundation

Watershed Watch  
Salmon Society

A stream survey was conducted in the immediate vicinity of the proposed tenure location, covering an area of only 3 km along the Meares Island shoreline, and only 1.5 km across Fortune Channel on Vancouver Island. Within that very limited area, seven streams were assessed, and four were determined to be fish bearing. Fish identified in the streams were coho salmon, cutthroat trout, prickly sculpin, and unidentified trout fry. The fish found were identified by common name only, and the survey was not adequately conducted as to determine if the cutthroat trout found are either of the two at risk subspecies.

Populations of various wild salmon species in Clayoquot Sound are declining even in some systems where the freshwater habitat remains pristine. Research to better understand the causes for these population declines is ongoing. The first human activities that many wild juvenile salmon encounter on their way from freshwater to the ocean are open net-cage salmon farms. Sampling has been conducted each spring from 2009 to the present to monitor the levels of sea lice on wild juvenile salmon and correlates increases in the levels of sea lice on the wild salmon with the number of active open net-cage Atlantic salmon farms they pass during their outmigration. These results are consistent with the [results \(http://www.livingoceans.org/maps/salmon-farming/sea-lice-juvenile-pink-and-chum-salmon-bc\)](http://www.livingoceans.org/maps/salmon-farming/sea-lice-juvenile-pink-and-chum-salmon-bc) from other Atlantic salmon farming regions of B.C. where sampling for sea lice on wild juvenile salmon has been conducted.

The Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is meant to encourage sustainable ways to work in the natural environment.

### **Next Steps**

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations has stated that an open house will be held this summer to gather public comment on the tenure application. CAAR will post time and location information on the meeting when it becomes available.

Any concerned citizens or businesses are free to submit comments to The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations by **June 18, 2011** at [WestCoast.LandReferrals@gov.bc.ca](mailto:WestCoast.LandReferrals@gov.bc.ca) and cc your MLA. ([Find your MLA here.](#))