



FORREX joins salmon project



FORREX is pleased to announce its involvement and support of “The River of Salmon Peoples Project,” which is aimed at creating an inclusive and respectful dialogue on approaches to managing salmonids in the Fraser Basin. This exciting endeavour will help FORREX achieve many of its Extension Program goals. The River of Salmon Peoples Project is partially funded by the Pacific Salmon Foundation through the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program.

The vision of “The River of the Salmon Peoples Project” is to revitalize ancient voices written in the land and river through a multi-tiered communication tool that will reach a diverse audience, which includes government, First Nations youth and elders, and the general public. The purpose is to create mutual understanding and facilitate respectful dialogue. The benefits are enormous; in particular, the decision-making process will be more integrated. Other advantages include bridging social divisions, encouraging safe and respectful communication, documenting traditional methodologies, and strengthening and building sustainable communities. With time, the ultimate goal is to improve public, government, and other First Nations understanding of First Nations’ historical, and current, connections with Fraser River salmon.

The project’s innovative communication tool includes a publication, a film-video segment, and an interactive multimedia package. This package will:

- serve as a practical cultural tool for decision makers and organizations that are working toward the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Fraser River Basin, i.e., it will help improve decision making;
- serve as a tool for examining practical and common solutions by documenting Indigenous traditional methodologies and how the Indigenous peoples of the Fraser River system practised them;
- offer an innovative and groundbreaking cultural model that articulates mutual respect and understanding;
- articulate the history of conflict over the diverse landscapes as well as historical and contemporary interaction between cultures and communities; and
- reflect the unique perspectives of the Fraser Basin initiative by documenting the cultural iconic symbols of the Fraser Basin water system.

The thematic focus will encompass five guiding components:

1. The Fraser River as a Unifying Force: It is one system, passing through diverse landscapes and therefore diverse communities.
2. The Fraser River as an Expression of Diversity: The River is an expression of diversity of human responses, landscapes, stories, perspectives, and cultural icons.
3. The Fraser River as a History of Change: Historical and contemporary changes affect different groups in different ways.
4. The Fraser River as a Spiritual and Cultural Relationship: The life of the river and the salmon are related to people, culture, ceremony, songs, stories, and lifestyles.
5. The Fraser River as a Place of Hope and Reconciliation: Many desire to reconcile differences and disagreements to achieve mutual respect, understanding, and co-operation.

FORREX is excited to be involved as a partner as this project integrates FORREX’s core goal to maximize the knowledge gained from long-term research installations in British Columbia. Continued efforts to extend science integration, Indigenous knowledge, and natural resource management are dependent on practices, such as this project, that promote inclusion and communication, ultimately resulting in healthy and sustainable ecosystems. 🌲

A watercolour on paper by Ron Hall depicts the vision of the River of the Salmon Peoples Project.

