



Invasive Species Found in Critical Atlantic Salmon Habitat Concerns NB Salmon Council

For immediate release

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Quispamsis, NB – The New Brunswick Salmon Council (NBSC) is extremely concerned that an invasive fish species has been found in a lake in the Miramichi River watershed. Smallmouth bass, known to be aggressive predators of other fish species, have been located in Miramichi Lake and this has sounded alarm bells within the salmon conservation community throughout the province.

This finding has triggered the immediate formation of a mitigation committee that spans federal and provincial government departments (DFO and DNR, respectively) and NBSC-affiliated conservation organizations including the Miramichi Salmon Association (MSA) and the Miramichi Watershed Management Committee (MWMC). Also participating in the committee are the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF), First Nations communities, the NB Wildlife Federation (NBWF) and UNB's Canadian Rivers Institute. This committee has already begun assessing the situation to determine the extent of the infestation within the Miramichi watershed and to determine appropriate steps for mitigation and subsequent prevention of such introductions in the future.

“The Miramichi River, whose waters are home to the largest population of wild Atlantic salmon in North America, is a world renowned destination for anglers”, said a concerned Tom Benjamin, President of the NB Salmon Council. “The annual economic benefit that recreational angling on the Miramichi brings to New Brunswick is estimated to be in excess of \$20,000,000. As such, there is concern across the board for the potential negative impacts that the introduction of this foreign species could have upon the native salmon and trout populations and upon the significant

economic benefits afforded by these precious wild resources if steps are not taken immediately by all stakeholders.”

“The NB Salmon Council is particularly worried about the unpredictable outcomes that are associated with such introductions, including transfer of disease and parasites or predation on wild fish populations”, Benjamin said. “This is precisely why the initial reports of several year-classes of smallmouth bass being found in this lake (which feeds into the upper reaches of the Main Southwest Miramichi River) evoked such immediate concern.”

“The Council is extremely supportive of the efforts of the committee and will provide any and all assistance as the situation is studied and action plans are developed. We hope that this process can proceed quickly and without delay so that appropriate actions can be taken on the ground to protect the Miramichi’s precious wild Atlantic salmon and trout populations.”

The New Brunswick Salmon Council is a non-profit, volunteer organization that serves as the regional council of the Atlantic Salmon Federation by representing the 26 affiliated organizations in the province of New Brunswick that focus on the conservation and wise management of wild Atlantic salmon. The NBSC actively supports education and scientific research programs, related to salmon conservation, deals with all levels of government on matters pertaining to wild Atlantic salmon in NB and promotes community watershed management and live release angling.

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