

New Brunswick Salmon Council
P.O. Box 533, Fredericton, NB E3B 5A6



Conseil du Saumon Nouveau Brunswick
C.P 533, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A6

September 30, 2019

Federal Candidates Seeking Election in New Brunswick

Dear Candidates or Party Representatives:

RE: Request for Answers to Inform Voters of Your Party's Views on Wild Atlantic Salmon Management in New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Salmon Council is an umbrella organization representing 24 conservation organizations in NB and one in the State of Maine, organizations with an interest in conserving, protecting and enhancing NB's wild sea-run Atlantic salmon resource. In 2019, the Year of the Salmon, the Atlantic salmon resource in NB is in trouble. We are watching an iconic species, one which is prominently displayed on the NB Coat-of-Arms, disappear from our rivers. On the greater Miramichi watershed, a whole way-of-life and culture that is based on the sport fishery for Atlantic salmon system is vanishing.

Within the province, the salmon resource is owned by the Province of NB, which licenses the salmon sport fishery, but is managed by the federal government through its Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). We think that the federal government can do more to ensure the conservation of Atlantic salmon and maximizing the societal benefits of this iconic species. As such we are seeking input from candidates in the upcoming federal election on their views and stances on several issues which we feel need to be addressed to ensure the long-term conservation of Atlantic salmon in New Brunswick. These issues are as follows:

1. The deleterious impact of striped bass predation on migrating Atlantic salmon juveniles in the Miramichi River.
2. The continued harvest of large salmon (mainly female) on rivers where Atlantic salmon numbers are insufficient to sustain the species' long-term conservation. To their credit, DFO has developed a system to mitigate this. It is termed the "Precautionary Approach" (PA) but DFO has been slow to implement it. We suspect the reason for this is that this would involve curtailing the MSW harvest in First Nations' fisheries, although the harvest of small, mainly male salmon (grilse) would continue. After salmon stocks rebound, FN's harvest of MSWs would resume, although the numbers harvested would be regulated by the PA.
3. The inequity of angling regulations controlling the salmon harvest in the sport fishery on the Restigouche River system's New Brunswick/Quebec boundary waters where Quebec permits the retention of grilse (small, largely male salmon) but New Brunswick does not.



4. The Collaboration for Atlantic Salmon Tomorrow's (CAST) experimental smolt-to-adult (SAS) program has been designed and supported by science to increase/supplement the number of adult salmon spawning to the NW Miramichi. (The SAS program is intended to mitigate points 1 and 2 above.) Despite large expenditures and initial support at both federal and provincial levels, permission to release the salmon produced over the past three years has not been granted. Consequently, the sustainable future of Atlantic salmon on the Northwest Miramichi River remains a significant concern. Your position on supporting the stocking of these SAS fish would be appreciated.
5. The timing and progress of the federal government in terms of its meetings its goal of moving away from a "one-size-fits-all" management of NB rivers and adopting a river-by-river management regime.
6. The federal government's responsibility to control and eradicate invasive, non-native smallmouth bass, which were originally illegally introduced into a headwater lake of the Miramichi system over a decade ago and have subsequently been found in the Miramichi River's headwaters.
7. The provision of downstream fish passage at dams operated by NB Power and Algonquin Energy on the St. John River.
8. Published literature has documented the deleterious effects of salmon farmed in open net pens on wild salmon. The Liberal party has vowed to "transition from open-pen salmon farms to closed-containment ones on the West Coast by 2025". We support this action and strongly believe it should be applied to all areas in Canada including in NB. Do you?

As a federal MP, you will have the power to provide input into solving the problems that these situations present. Members of our affiliate organizations want to hear from you on the above-noted issues and your general stance on the importance of Atlantic salmon conservation. We request that you respond in writing by October 12 to johnbagnall@rogers.com.

We look forward to your response.
Sincerely,

John Pugh

President, NB Salmon Council