

# Thompson Steelhead Working Group

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Thompson Steelhead Working Group seeks public feedback on proposed Steelhead recovery plan

Thompson River Steelhead are in serious decline, and action is needed if populations are to rebound. That was the word last Friday from a multi-governmental Thompson Steelhead Working Group as it released a draft Thompson Steelhead Recovery and Management Plan for public comment.

The plan was presented at the annual Thompson Steelhead Assembly in Kamloops for review by representatives of First Nations governments, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the provincial government, local government, sport fishing and conservation groups, commercial fishermen, the forestry and agriculture sectors, and small business and community groups from the Spence's Bridge area.

Thompson Steelhead are of "extreme conservation concern," and their numbers are affected by such factors as health of the freshwater habitat, global and regional climate cycles, and mortality rates when Steelhead are taken as by-catch in the course of other salmon fisheries.

"The number of Thompson Steelhead vary year to year, but populations have declined overall since the 1990s," said Mike Simpson, a senior regional manager with the non-profit Fraser Basin Council, secretariat for the working group. "In 2015 we saw a record low, with just 440 fish returning to spawn, and experts expect that to drop to 380 fish in 2016."

The **Thompson Steelhead Working Group** is a multi-governmental collaborative initiative formed in 2014 to bring together representatives of the Nlaka'pamux and Secwepemc First Nations, the Province of BC and the Government of Canada (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) to develop a recovery and management plan for Thompson Steelhead.

The draft Thompson Steelhead Recovery and Management Plan can be downloaded from [www.thompsonsteelhead.ca](http://www.thompsonsteelhead.ca) and there is a link to an online survey for the public to provide feedback. The online survey is open until December 16, 2016.

#### Contact:

**Thompson Steelhead Working Group**  
c/o Mike Simpson, Senior Regional Manager  
Fraser Basin Council

T: 250 314-9660  
C: 250-299-1202  
E: [msimpson@fraserbasin.bc.ca](mailto:msimpson@fraserbasin.bc.ca)

**Chief David Walkem**  
Cook's Ferry Indian Band

T: 250-458-2224  
C: 250-315-8508  
E: [david.walkem@cooksferry.ca](mailto:david.walkem@cooksferry.ca)

[www.thompsonsteelhead.ca](http://www.thompsonsteelhead.ca)