

For immediate release, August 4, 2022

Unceded Chawathil Stó:lō Territory (Hope, BC)



## **Dead salmon at Trans Mountain worksite on Coquihalla River spurs calls for DFO to intervene**

In what appears to be an early salmon run on the Coquihalla River, dead fish are showing up adjacent to Trans Mountain's in-stream work in the river, about 3 kilometers from its confluence with the Fraser. Local resident Dr. Kate Tairyan photographed the dead salmon beside the Trans Mountain (TM) worksite near her home on August 1-3, 2022. Exploring other parts of the river revealed live salmon swimming upstream, but few seemed able to swim past the TM worksite.



Dead salmon near Trans Mountain worksite (yellow platform on far shore).

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) only gave Trans Mountain a permit under the Fisheries Act to begin work in the river on August 1, 2022. However, TM had been working near the river for the past several months, cutting trees and clearing vegetation, working part of that time with an expired permit.

*"It looks like the salmon are early this year. DFO Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray needs to intervene and order Trans Mountain to suspend its in-stream work until the migrating salmon have made it through",* said Dr. Tim Takaro of Protect the Planet and a professor emeritus at SFU. This part of the Coquihalla River is an important migratory corridor for five species of salmon as well as steelhead trout. *"The water levels are suitable for spawning salmon right now therefore this is the time for DFO to act to protect the salmon run",* said Dr. Takaro.

The [DFO permit](#) issued to TM allows the company to divert the river and to remove 800 square meters of instream spawning habitat.

*"It's very unusual to see so many dead salmon in Coquihalla this early in the spawning season",* said Dr. Tairyan. *"I am appalled that Trans Mountain is granted permissions to carry forward with cutting a trench in the stream in an area so drastically altered by the devastating flooding of Nov 2021",* she continued.

Trans Mountain is working in the area to replace part of its existing pipeline as well as install its new larger pipeline. The new pipeline will cross the Coquihalla River in multiple locations, several of which were washed out last year exposing the old pipe.

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Images and videos for media access:

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