



## News Release - For Immediate Release

**Kumsheen Rafting Resort, Lytton, British Columbia (September 29, 2009)** – With over sixty-five participants, World Rivers Day Weekend at Kumsheen Rafting Resort was a success. Half of the volunteers were youth from Lytton Elementary School and nearby Skuppah Indian Band. Also in attendance were Brenda Munroe, Lytton First Nations Councilor, and the Honourable Barry Penner, BC's Minister of Environment.

The United Nations-endorsed World Rivers Day happens annually the last Sunday in September, and gets the public actively involved with rivers to ensure the continuing health and awareness of local waterways. Mark Angelo, Rivers Day Chair and founder, and the Chair of the recently formed BCIT Rivers Institute, says "World Rivers Day has its roots right here in British Columbia and is now an international celebration attracting millions of people in close to 30 countries."

On Sunday morning, Kumsheen's World Rivers Day participants boarded the bus for Spences Bridge to start their trip on the Thompson River. Five power rafts with outboard motors attached to the back were almost at full capacity. The additional two power rafts were loaded with gear frames to hold all the "river garbage" that was picked up along the way.

Volunteers were overwhelmed with the amount of river debris they discovered in the morning alone. Big pieces of metal, rusting barrels, plastic, plenty of wiring, and even a mangled outhouse were amongst the collected garbage. It took a little longer than anticipated but a feeling of accomplishment was already shared by lunchtime.

The morning's collection was unloaded at Nicomen, Kumsheen's luncheon site, into a trailer and taken back to the Resort for proper disposal. This arrangement allowed for more collection in the afternoon.

Most of the afternoon was spent enjoying the Devil's Gorge. The guides, who are all thoroughly trained and certified in Swiftwater Rescue navigated through some 12 foot waves and managed to soak almost everyone on the rafts. Warm weather and water made it an enjoyable and exciting experience for the crews.

In British Columbia, with our thousands of rivers, freshwater is sometimes taken for granted. Rivers are important to us physically as a source of drinking water and environmentally as a habitat for fish, birds, and a corridor for plants and animals. Economically the free-flowing, natural and clean river is still a major draw to tourists to come to BC from around the world. Culturally, our own health and well-being ties in directly with the health of our local rivers.

Kumsheen's World Rivers Day Weekend was created to foster a sense of public-connectedness with our rivers, and for some hands-on work to help keep the Thompson River in a healthy state.

Braden Fandrich, organizer of this year's event at Kumsheen says "Caring about what you are trying to protect is probably the most important part of any river-conservation effort. One of our guides started organizing this event about 10 years ago because he hated seeing trash on the side of the river. That year all of the guides volunteered to help clean up their local river. This is

our first year opening it up to the public and doing it in conjunction with World Rivers Day. It also works out great because it's our last weekend of rafting for the season."

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**Contact and Photo Requests:**

Braden Fandrich  
World River's Day Weekend Co-ordinator  
braden@kumsheen.com  
(250) 455-2296

Maya Chang  
Director of Marketing  
maya@kumsheen.com  
(250) 455-2296