

MEDIA RELEASE

Fraser Headwaters Alliance
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FIN DONNELLY TO SWIM RAUSH RIVER WITH FIRST DESCENT EXPEDITION

On August 15, 1999 a crew of 24 paddlers, biologists, conservationists, photographers and filmmakers will attempt the first descent of the Raush River, a tributary of the Fraser River located between Wells Gray Provincial Park and the Rocky Mountain Trench. Swimming along with the boats will be Fin Donnelly of Vancouver, B.C. who is renowned for his 1,350 kilometer swim of the Fraser River in 1995 - organized to promote sustainable living in healthy watersheds.

The Fraser Headwaters Alliance (FHA), the local conservation group organizing the expedition, hopes that the trip will draw attention to the watershed's incredible wilderness values and help gain support for its protection. The Raush River valley was put forward as a preferred option for protection by several sectors as part of the Robson Valley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), but was not included in the LRMP decision made by cabinet in May of this year. "At 1000 square kilometers, it is the largest undeveloped, unprotected watershed in southern British Columbia and lies in a key region of the Yellowstone-to-Yukon Conservation study area," says Roy Howard, campaign coordinator for FHA.

A group of whitewater kayakers will be flown by helicopter into the top of the Raush at the foot of the David Glacier in the Premier Range of the Cariboo Mountains to complete the most demanding leg of the four-day, 90 kilometer trip. This stretch features a canyon with class IV and V rapids. Led by Robert Beaudry, an expert paddler and instructor in the University College of the Cariboo Adventure Guide Program, the kayakers will include both a professional photographer and filmmaker. Below the canyon, the kayakers will be joined by two whitewater rafts, supplied and guided by Mount Robson Whitewater Rafting, as well as three open canoes and another film crew. The entire flotilla will then paddle the lower Raush to its confluence with the Fraser River and finish the trip with a nine-kilometer stretch on the upper Fraser above McBride.

On August 17, following the expedition, there will be a dinner for participants and a dance for the community with live music at the Dunster Community Hall.

For more information contact:

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