

MEDIA RELEASE

Fraser Headwaters Alliance
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RAUSH RIVER EXPEDITION A "GRAND SUCCESS"

A team of 21 people completed a once-in-a-lifetime adventure this week with their successful first descent of the Raush River, one of the last remaining wild tributaries in the headwaters of the Fraser River. The expedition was led by Fraser River champion and endurance swimmer Fin Donnelly, world-renowned kayaker and guide instructor Robert Beaudry, white water raft company owner Terry Cinnamon, and Fraser Headwaters Alliance coordinator Roy Howard.

Located between Wells Gray Provincial Park and the Rocky Mountain Trench near McBride, the Raush flows through the largest unprotected, undeveloped watershed in southern BC. "This expedition demonstrates that the wilderness recreation potential of the Raush valley far outweighs its relatively low timber values," said Howard. "We continue to urge the BC government to immediately protect the entire 100,000 hectare watershed, rather than the two tiny areas currently protected."

To begin the 87 km. trip, a team of four kayakers and their gear were flown to a lake at the toe of David Glacier in the heart of the Premier Range of the Cariboo Mountains. For two days they paddled the most extreme and remote section of the river, encountering everything from calm meanders to very technical class 4 and 5 white water. In this river rating system, class 1 is fairly calm and class 6 is impossible. Beaudry described this section as a "superb first descent with very challenging white water and amazing scenery." Another kayaker said he felt it contained world class water.

After travelling nearly 40 km., the kayakers rendezvoused with the rest of the expedition to complete the expedition. This second group also arrived by helicopter and included two open canoes, two 16-foot commercial-type rafts, and swimmer Fin Donnelly. The river was considerably more subdued below this point, but still had occasional class 2-3 rapids - sufficient to swamp and capsize the two canoes and temporarily lose some expensive camera gear.

"It was an adventure and a grand success. Everything was eventually recovered and a great time was had by all," said Howard. "Participants were treated to some of the best scenery in the province and gained insights into the ecology and wildlife of the Raush Valley." White water raft owner Terry Cinnamon said "there is excellent potential for various forms of wilderness recreation in this valley where people can enjoy the natural pristine beauty of the area."

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Horn musician Keith Berg met the expedition at the take-out point on the Fraser with his twelve-foot alp horn and an impromptu serenade to the Raush ensued. The expedition then joined community members at the Dunster Community Hall for a celebration dinner including live local music and a video viewing of the trip.

Photos and video clips are available.

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