

Sal the Salmon: International Festival Star

This past weekend, Sal became an international celebrity. With the return of his brethren the pink salmon, Sal decided to make the journey northward to celebrate their home coming, at the Pink Salmon Festival on August 28th in Vancouver BC. There were a number of obstacles to the journey, namely getting a large salmon 180 miles north and back in a weekend, but Sal performed admirably, after some curious looks from border patrol and questions about why a fish would migrate so far, Sal was able to make his way to Hadden Park for the event.

Along the journey, Sal marveled at the beauty of Vancouver and understood why so many Pink salmon would want to pass through the city on their way to spawn. Located at the mouth of False Creek, opening on to English Bay and the Salish Sea, Hadden Park was a stunning spot surrounded by light flecked water that created a strong maritime atmosphere, coupled with the accompanying museum and large submarine backing the stage.

Sal's meanderings throughout the day were a welcome diversion from the record lines that the festival and it's chefs experienced. Estimates by festival organizers put the number of people attending at three times that of the previous festival in 2009, which had around 2000 attendees. At points, the lines were more than a city block long, stretching around the length of the path and out in the parking lot! The long lines were unsurprising in many ways, for the promise of salmon prepared by some of British Columbia's top chefs, along with activities and information, was enough to draw both foodies and festival enthusiasts. Luckily, Sal was able to take people's minds off the wait, posing for pictures, scaring dogs (an unforeseen circumstance of a salmon out of water), and promoting the Salmon-Safe label. When Sal wasn't on duty, he was hanging out at the Salmon-Safe tent educating people about what the Salmon-Safe label represents and means, generating interest and excitement for its launch in Vancouver in October.

After the event wound down, Sal graciously thanked his wonderful hosts, the Pacific Salmon Foundation, and headed out east for some Canadian camping at Golden Ears provincial park on Alouette Lake. It was a lovely end to a wonderful weekend, and after making it safely back to his home in Seattle, Sal is excited for more fun adventures with Pacific Salmon Foundation, Stewardship Partners, and Salmon-Safe!