

Why Haig-Brown Matters More than Ever

Andrew Nikiforuk



The Seventh Haig-Brown
Memorial Lecture

*Campbell River Community Arts Council
Haig-Brown Institute
Museum at Campbell River
Pacific Wild*

Campbell River, British Columbia
2016

In 1965 the man that Life magazine once lionized “as the most eloquent of modern-day fishing prose writers” gave a barnburner of a speech in Victoria. Roderick Haig-Brown told the Canadian Authors Association at Victoria’s Empress Hotel that he hated the present Socred government. He described British Columbia as a profligate province and listed what he hated most. And what he hated most was “the shoddy, uncaring development of our natural resources, the chamber of commerce mentality which favors short-term material gain over all other consideration, the utter contempt for human values of every kind.” He went on. He accused the province’s shallow and greedy politicians of possessing a “trivial provincial mentality” that sought “petty advantage at cost to the common weal.” Perhaps the most unnerving thing about his “I hate what BC stands for” speech remains its outstanding relevance. Thanks to the looming threat of oil tankers, bitumen pipelines and LNG terminals, the content of the talk and its emotion remains as timely as

they were more than 50 years ago. For Haig-Brown, as he often did, highlighted an enduring cultural defect that still plagues our political affairs. And that's just one reason why "Roddy" as his friends called him, is more important than ever.

By any measure Haig-Brown was a unique and prophetic voice in a nation that has never been terribly impressed with the idea of conservation. As rural dweller and social critic, he wrote with the urgency of Wallace Stegner and the moral authority of Wendell Berry. He listened to what the rivers and forests had to say and was never afraid to write about the wonder of existence. He believed in truth and accuracy and recognized there were limits to the human adventure. Much of his writing was philosophical -- an occupation Canadians have about as much interest in as proctology. Haig-Brown was really never sure whether his work as conservationist ever did him or anyone else any good, but he believed that he never had any alternative. As such he forged a path for future environmental crusaders including Vicky Husband, David Suzuki, Alex Morton and Elizabeth May. His life and words not only made a conservation

movement possible, but also proved its necessity.

Ultimately what the salmon and other fish told him was to love and care for this finite planet: “Man must make himself small and humble to live within it rather than a ruthless giant to conquer it.”

So just who the hell was this hinterland writer, and why do his words resonate so truthfully today? Born in Sussex, England in 1908, Haig-Brown was the grandson of a distinguished Victorian educator. When Roddy was but ten years old, German machine gun bullets killed his father during the Great War. A grandfather, game keeper and an uncle then taught the boy how to bag a pigeon and snare a pike and focus on the job at hand. He fought his first environmental battle at the age of 16 when he wrote about the impact of pollutants from road tar spilling into fish-bearing waters. It is noteworthy that his grandfather befriended the novelist Thomas Hardy. He even took the young man to have tea with the great writer. Haig-Brown didn't remember much about the day except getting a bit bored hanging out with the old guys. But Haig-Brown would later do what Hardy

famously did: infuse his writing with the rhythms and associations of the natural world that shape rural life.

His family thought that Haig-Brown should become another member of England's managerial class and sent him off to Charterhouse School, an oppressive Victorian institution. There the young man rejected authority and spent a lot of time carousing in London. After a few warnings the school expelled him. The point here is that one of Canada's finest non-fiction writers never showed any interest in university. And that probably explains why Haig-Brown's prose became as effortlessly clear and direct as a mountain river. Academics and academic thinking never contaminated the man.

After the Charterhouse fiasco the 18-year-old took up an invitation to work in the New World's lumber camps. His family thought the experience might drive the teenager into the security of Colonial Civil Service. But the New World had other plans. The young immigrant started out as a scaler in the Cascade Mountains in Washington State and was really reborn there. He later recalled standing in the mountains on

one sunny and bright day where he had to measure a whole side of newly felled trees. “The smell of things was something out of this world. And I almost feel that was the day I was born.” Faced with an expiring US visa, he then wandered up to Nimpkish River on Vancouver Island where he worked as a surveyor. That job demanded that he walk through dense rain forest and map out unspoiled stands of Douglas fir before the felling crews arrived. The richness of the landscape and the abundance of fish dumbfounded him. On the Nimpkish River the wild frontier became his tutor. The destruction and waste of the clear-cutting appalled him. Even his fellow loggers muttered, “This can’t last.” And so the scars and ravages of profligate logging and fish-killing dams built a radical conservationist, wound by wound.

Unlike his fellow loggers, Haig-Brown, a maverick outsider, still read the odes of Horace at night. While others drank themselves into oblivion, Haig-Brown pondered the Roman's lyrical questions, "Why do we struggle so hard in our brief lives for possessions?"

The young man probably got his first lesson in ecology from Cecil Smith, a famed cougar hunter. Smith, a small man and another English immigrant, lived as large as Daniel Boone on the Island. In the early 1900s Smith discovered he had a knack for the tracking the felines as well as guiding pompous European aristocrats on hunting trips and Tyee fishing expeditions. At the time the provincial government categorized wildlife into one of two camps: they were either game or vermin. Cougars, well-evolved generalists and masters of the ambush, ate just about anything and got stuck with the vermin label. They weren't alone. The federal government regarded

sea lions and basking sharks as salmon predators that robbed humans of dinner and therefore machine gunned them. For every “noxious pest” Smith bagged, he earned a government bounty of \$40. During his lifetime Smith and his well-trained dogs probably dispatched as many as 1000 cougars. It is testament to Smith’s deadly skills that he accounted for nearly one tenth of 10,000 cougars killed during the 100-year long bounty period on the Island. In one famous incident Smith nearly tumbled over Elk Falls while grabbing the tail of a dispatched cat; he needed the hide to collect his bounty.

On the Island it became increasingly obvious to Haig-Brown that immigrants had created the so-called cougar problem by unsettling the order of things in the forest. Haig-Brown witnessed the transformation first hand. By mowing down ancient forests, loggers created carpets of grassland for deer, and their populations exploded faster than Norwegian rats. At the same time colonial settlers introduced cows and sheep to graze on stump farms. Cougars took advantage of this Pacific European smorgasbord, and their numbers also exploded.

But Haig-Brown wasn't so much interested in Smith's killing prowess as he was in the man's unparalleled tracking skills and knowledge of the country. In 1931 the 25-year-old paired up with the 58-year-old hunter to improve his woodcraft and knowledge of the land. As the poet Al Purdy relates, the "the physically exuberant, gung-ho cockadoodle-do kid" and "the old bounty hunter roamed the woods companionably together, chasing the big cats." They smoked cigarettes and marched and thought like predators. The experience helped HB collect all the research he needed for his remarkable book *Panther*. It also convinced him of the absurdity of predator control. He later wrote that "sportsmen who elect to assume responsibility for controlling predators seem to be enormously presumptuous. They are saying in effect that the natural world is theirs and all that is in it." Still later he asked how is it that seals, salmon, bears, sea lions and whales all managed to live together for millions of years before humans presumed to save them from themselves. By 1935 he had already given up cougar and deer hunting.

During a brief return to England in the early 1930s Haig-Brown realized that British Columbia was now really his home. The realization hit him as he picked festering thorns of devil's club from his arms and shoulders while finishing his first book on salmon. Canada, he thought, just made him feel alive in more ways than one. When Haig-Brown returned to the coast, he sank his roots in Campbell River. He married Ann Elmore, a Seattle girl with a love of books and Catholic sense of justice and community. Together they built a life and family on a stump farm by the waters that always ran through his life. Almost everything Haig-Brown has written -- and he penned more than 25 books in his lifetime including two novels -- dealt with coming to terms with the revelations of place. Long before Wendell Berry popularized the importance of living locally, Haig-Brown asked the same eternal questions: How do we make an honest living in lands we have abused? How do we find the genius of a place? How do we determine limits? How do we restore what we have destroyed? Like every true conservationist, Haig-Brown expressed deep skepticism about urbanism, technology and our adolescent infatuation with progress. He rejected the sales pitch that what you have is not good

enough and defended the right to live watchfully and carefully the life uniquely granted to him and his family in Campbell River. In the process the salmon lover became one of Canada's best know writers but also one of its sharpest critics of relentless resource extraction. By 1952 he had already sold more than 300,000 books.

Now, there are probably several reasons why this "wilderness father" has largely been forgotten by most Canadians let alone Islanders. For starters he wrote about fish and rivers in the west and such earthy concerns have always struck the nation's elites as provincial if not regional twaddle. Haig-Brown also celebrated the importance of rural life and its capacity for resilience, but that's not where the nation's urban literary establishment then lived or ever wanted to live.

Furthermore his publishers were based in the United States and England and not in Toronto, still the self-appointed seat of all Canadian culture. In sum Haig-Brown was easy to ignore because he happily lived on the margins of Canadian society -- on a salmon river, no less, miles from nowhere.

But there is an additional reason for his undeserved obscurity: Canadians don't much like visionaries and especially great ones that question the materialistic nature of their mining culture. Haig-Brown committed that sin repeatedly. Even during Canada's centennial celebrations he had the cheek to call British Columbia a profligate province: "In British Columbia there has always been a gallantry about the job and a shoddiness about the end result."

When politicians trumpeted, "We can't stand in the way of progress," Haig-Brown heard a "tricky little catch phrase" in service of ruin. His bold and evolving critique of progress still makes him frighteningly relevant in country violently addicted to resource extraction. Like Wallace Stegner he rightly divided the North Americans into two kinds of citizens: "boomers" and "stickers." Boomers, wrote Stegner were "those who pillage and

run,” and want “to make a killing and end up on Easy Street.” In contrast stickers sought to “settle, and love the life they have made and the place they have made it in.” Haig-Brown had lived the whole story. As an emigrant and logger he had been both fascinated and repelled by its wanton waste and destruction. When he became a sticker, Haig-Brown dared to ask the rude kinds of questions that Canadian politicians still don’t like: How do you care for a place once you have exterminated the wildlife, plundered the forest, excavated the minerals and fished all the waters? What do you do, for example, when you’ve sold your most fertile land to developers? To Haig-Brown the nation’s boom and bust economic culture represented nothing more than “large scale opportunism” that was adolescent. He couldn’t wait for the country to sober up.

Haig-Brown also made a few impolite observations about resource booms. Every smash and grab for exportable staples turned Canadians and British Columbians, from polite Jekylls into murderous Hydes. During booms we became “avaricious, conservative in politics, pragmatic and destructive and careless of resource management.”

Here, in half a sentence, Haig-Brown has already described two economic circuses he didn't live to see: the nation's ruinous bitumen frenzy and BC's fraudulent LNG scam. Furthermore, Haig-Brown observed, as countless sociologists have since documented from the coalfields of Wyoming to the fracked farms of North Dakota, resource booms do not make people happy. In *The Living Land*, a sort of snapshot of the province's resources written in 1961, he cited the dismal statistics on drug addiction, divorces and mental health in logging towns to prove his point. He also wrote, "No people have the right to act against its knowledge and damage and destroy the face of the earth for short-term gain." It is instructive that the government of the day refused to buy the book, let alone read it.

In every respect Haig-Brown was ahead of his time. In 1938, for example, he sounded the alarm about the pace and scale of clear-cutting on the Island when 80 percent of the trees being felled were Douglas fir. In a somewhat heated meeting he asked the Courtenay Board of Trade just when and how reforestation was going to take place and just who the hell was going to deal with

the unemployment, lack of revenue, disorder and environmental ruin when there were no more tall trees to fell. The problem, he added, was the cowardice of government. It was unwilling “to make citizens uncomfortable for their future as comfortable citizens do not generally elect those who have made them uncomfortable.”

You should know that Haig-Brown, who was an elegant and civil man, once had a meeting with the American timber baron J.H.Bloedel. “I hear you’re the worst troublemaker on Vancouver Island,” began Bloedel. The moment passed and Bloedel showed the conservationist his valuable collection of knick knacks. (All tycoons appeared to be collectors of one thing or another, Haig-Brown later told Al Purdy.) At the end of the evening Bloedel asked Haig-Brown if he was interested in doing some writing for the company. Haig-Brown replied: “I don’t want to be collected.”

In many ways Haig-Brown was always cutting trail. In 1959, three years before Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, Haig-Brown wrote about the disastrous effects of

DDT on fish bearing streams in *Fisherman's Summer*. In a chapter called "The Great Destroyers" he even detailed how DDT spraying for budworm near the Miramichi River had wiped out fingerling salmon. He called it "an outrageously evil practice" and castigated the professionals who carelessly employed the technology. "I have never yet met a forester who professed to know precisely what he was doing when broadcasting his pet poison over a great area of forest. Generally he expected to 'control' the specific pest that was bothering him; how thoroughly or for how long, he did not know; what else might be killed, he did not know; what would be the effect of wiping out natural controls, such as birds and bees, he did not know; how often the treatment would have to be repeated to compensate for such destruction; he did not know; how long its evil effects might persist, he did not know. Yet someone had given permission to go ahead and do the damage." You could take that passage, replace forester with shale gas driller and DDT with the hydraulic fracking and not miss a beat.

Another technology that Haig-Brown wrote prophetically about was fish hatcheries. Every year the province

releases nearly 300 million hatched fish into the ocean while other Pacific nations such as Japan, Korea and the United States pour about 5.2 billion fish into the ocean. Politicians have always liked the technology because it allowed them to avoid the real problem: the destruction of streams and spawning grounds by machines, logging and dams. Moreover, hatcheries promised to boost lost salmon production with little effort and therefore became a wildlife recovery fashion in the 1970s. But hatcheries, of course, are artificial environments. By crowding 50,000 fish in a concrete pool and feeding them pellets, humans inadvertently waded into the subtleties of fish evolution and changed the fish altogether.

Not surprisingly Haig-Brown was one of the first to express limitations about this miraculous technological fix. He feared that hatcheries would produce, over time, highly specialized breeds and would deplete the natural versatility of the stock. As an angler he could see the results in rivers he frequented. Well-grown hatchery smolts often out competed smaller wild stock in the streams for food. Once hooked on a fishing line, some

hatchery fish fought as well as stock fish, but others behaved as limply as Dolly Vardens, wrote Haig-Brown. They just didn't have any fight in them. Moreover, he suspected that hatchery stocks would degrade wild stocks with inter-breeding and thereby reduce the range and variability of wild fish.

The angler conceded that there might be a role for some hatcheries, especially in grossly damaged watersheds, and that provincial trout hatcheries served a useful purpose. But he ultimately feared that government's growing dependence on salmon hatcheries -- a \$15 billion habit in the United States since 1978 -- reduced the will to attack the real problems. "The best way of restoring salmon and steelhead runs to their full glory is the hard way," argued Haig-Brown. It was the "close protection and management of existing stocks, stream rehabilitation and improvement and greatly improved land management." In 1969 he confessed to one correspondent, "I am almost tempted to say: Take care of the rivers and streams and the rest will take care of itself."

The science, of course, has confirmed Haig-Brown's worst suspicions. Hatchery fish are not only much genetically different than wild fish but a lot less hardy. Studies at Oregon State University show that genetic differences between hatchery and wild fish are large in scale and fully heritable. After years of genetic studies on thousands of steelhead trout, researchers concluded "that fish born in the wild to two hatchery-raised steelhead have only 37 percent the reproductive fitness of a fish born to two wild steelhead." They found that "a fish born to one wild and one hatchery-raised fish has only 87 percent the reproductive fitness." Scientists could measure the differences for a full generation in the wild. The evidence now suggests that the technology has overpopulated the North Pacific Ocean with hatchery fish and these inferior fish are having real impacts on the abundance of wild salmon. Haig-Brown was right: hatcheries have never been and can never be a substitute for stream protection.

One of the great environmental battles that defined Haig-Brown -- as well as the Island -- was the war over Buttle Lake. The story is a familiar one: Buttle Lake lies at the entrance to Strathcona Park, the oldest park in the province. In 1911 government set aside the area, shaped in a triangle, to show off the Island's "scenic delights." Government officials almost immediately regretted the decision as loggers and miners lobbied for access and complained about the "sterilization" of valuable minerals and trees. Haig-Brown knew the area intimately and had fished there many times. In one poetic passage written prior to the project he described the park as "several hundred square miles of fierce and ragged island mountains, gouged and furrowed by creeks and streams, hiding a hundred lakes." To HB, the friendly beaches and sheltered bays of narrow Buttle Lake represented a fertility and abundance not yet bled by the vampire of progress. The place brought him much happiness.

But the British Columbia Power Commission had other plans. Its engineers, who had little knowledge of parks or the value of unfettered water for that matter, proposed to dam first Buttle Lake and then Upper Campbell Lake.

In both scenarios Buttle Lake lost its shoreline as well as its big timber. With the help of wealthy California oilman, Haig-Brown went to war. The campaign included letter writing, speeches and articles. A public uproar forced probably the first public hearings ever in the province over a dam. Between 1951 and 1955 the controversy galvanized the province and generated more than 800 articles in four different papers. Haig-Brown even wrote a four-part series for the Daily Colonist.

“Either we can set aside parks, build up a parks system and respect it, or we should quit fooling ourselves that we are anything but mercenary vandals in the present against the interests of the future.”

But the prevailing government sentiment wasn't that much different than that of today. Politicians responded that “we can't stand in the way of progress” and that all of BC was a grand park and that the province could never run out of scenery. But due to the political uproar, the

Power Commission eventually revised the project, building a lower dam that flooded a smaller area. Still, it raised the shoreline around Buttle Lake by 15 feet. Haig-Brown called the decision one of the biggest mistakes in the history of province and could never bear to go back to the place. Like graffiti on an unkept home, other industrial depredations soon followed, including a mine. It was just fined \$185,000 for spilling untreated acid into Myra Creek. The creek feeds Buttle Lake.

The battle for Strathcona Park taught Haig-Brown several lessons. He realized there was “no end to rabbit brained development schemes sanctioned by government to support lame duck politicians” -- and that’s a direct quote. The corporate mindset of government meant that conservation work was never done. The second was that even if the people don’t win, they still have to fight these battles to prevent even greater and irreparable losses for their children. It became clear to Haig-Brown as it later did to the social critic Wendell Berry that much protest is naive; “it expects quick, visible improvement and despairs and gives up when such improvement does not come.

Protesters who hold out for longer have perhaps understood that success is not the proper goal. If protest depended on success, there would be little protest of any durability or significance. History simply affords too little evidence that anyone's individual protest is of any use. Protest that endures, I think, is moved by a hope far more modest than that of public success: namely, the hope of preserving qualities in one's own heart and spirit that would be destroyed by acquiescence.”

In many ways the battle over Strathcona Park is now being played out again with the highly controversial Site C Dam on an even greater scale. The \$9-billion project will flood some of the province's best and last remaining agricultural land in the Peace River Valley. The government blatantly excused the mega-project from a proper needs review and public hearings. Yet ecologists, farmers, First Nations, economists and even a joint provincial and federal panel of experts have demonstrated the project doesn't make any economic sense; that there are cheaper alternatives and that the Peace River Valley remains the province's best agricultural insurance against climate change and

drought. Haig-Brown probably said it best back in 1955. All we have to do is replace the word Strathcona Park with Peace River Valley. “We may be a materialist people, living in a materialist age, caring little for anything beyond our own time. But surely we can afford this one tiny gesture to the future, and leave the Peace River Valley untouched.”

Haig-Brown had lots to say about other issues, including fossil fuels. “No intelligent person can doubt that if the present misuse of so-called fossil fuels and assorted broad spectrum poisons” continues, a whole range of irreversible ecological changes will undo the natural world. He made that warning in 1970 and now we are living the emergency. Two years later he gave a speech to small fleet fishermen in English Bay about the Moran Dam then proposed for the Fraser River. That great and long river, he said, determined and sustained the whole abundance and character of Georgia Strait. It must never be damned. Nor should it ever be poisoned by fossil fuels.

The wilderness father then talked about a 2,000-gallon spill of crude oil from BP's Cherry Point refinery that had moved up into Canadian waters. He noted that "the miserably inept company responsible had, in the words of Mayor Vander Zalm of Surrey: 'no experience, no knowledge, no plan' for dealing with even this small spill." Well, that admission sounds distressingly familiar. Fifty years later people said exactly the same things about response to a 220,000 liter fuel spill from a sunken barge near Bella Bella. Even the prime minister declared the spill response "unreasonable." But five decades of ineptness shouldn't surprise anyone. The scientific record shows that marine oil spill response remains a fraudulent and hazardous exercise dogged by bad technology inadequate to the task.

In his speech Haig-Brown had more to say about fossil fuels and their threats to ocean life. He made it clear that people had a choice to make about hydrocarbons:

they could have clean water and salmon or oil tankers but not both. In particular he described the siting of the Cherry Point refinery in Blaine, Washington in 1971 as both an “insult” and “unfriendly act” to Americans and Canadians alike but “typical of the ignorance and single-track ideas of resource developers.” Yes, added HB, Cherry Point is now there, “but that doesn’t mean the barges and tankers and super tankers have to come into it. Let them keep well out at sea and deliver their poisons, if they must, to the outer coast, well down in the US water. They do not belong in Juan De Fuca, in Georgia Strait or in Puget Sound. These waters are your heritage, a significant part of your being.” Given these sentiments, you know exactly where Haig-Brown would stand on the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Many things distinguish Haig-Brown’s writing as prophetic, including his belief in the importance of abundance in nature. Most people get alarmed when they read about species going extinct. But Haig-Brown got upset with the first symptom: the disappearance of abundance. The great salmon runs that fabulously

energized the province's rivers and enriched aboriginal communities best symbolized this wild plentitude.

To the wilderness father this fertile flow of animal energy on the coast represented “one of the last great natural abundances.” It was the sheer numbers of salmon that helped pump marine nutrients into low productivity rivers as well as accelerate the growth of fir and cedar along their banks. It was crowds of salmon that brought the spark of life “into the timber for land dwellers that might not otherwise have found a living.” From his own observations HB knew that at least 100 different species from orcas to bears all depended on the wealth of salmon. These remarkable fish struck an emotional chord in the man. He believed their continued abundance was tied to “the legitimacy of mankind.” To Haig-Brown, preserving abundance was probably the most essential of all human works. He wrote: “If, with the knowledge and understanding we now have, we allow this (salmon) to be destroyed, we ourselves are nothing very important.” And he was right as rain about that.

Yet what do we know about state of wildlife abundance today? Well, the news speaks daily of holocausts, though we never call them that. Salmon runs continue to dramatically shrink as global bird populations from wrens to penguins dwindle. Britain, the home of Haig-Brown's youth, has lost more than half its birds, wildflowers and insects since the 1950s.

The World Wildlife Fund recently captured the scale of the losses in its annual Living Planet report. Every year the group measures biodiversity by gathering population data around the world on animals with backbones. Here's what they found: between 1970 and 2012 the world witnessed a 58 percent decline in population abundance for mammals, birds, fishes, amphibians and reptiles. On average creatures in freshwater systems -- the ones that Haig-Brown wrote about the most -- fared the worst and declined by 81 percent. The report adds that we could lose two thirds of the globe's wildlife by 2020. The "creeping cumulative" culprits remain the same ones that Haig-Brown identified in his writings: land fragmentation; pollution; overexploitation; disease; invasive species and climate change. The simple math says humans, as a

species, are depleting the essence of life faster than it can replenish itself. We are not consuming the renewable resources of one planet but one and a half earths every year. Canadians are even more profligate. If the whole world lived like Canadians, says the WWF, we would need 4.7 earths.

This persistent erosion of abundance pained Haig-Brown. As a philosopher he understood that the fates of people and wildlife were forever linked. “Nothing exists by itself, everything is interdependent. The body of a fish, holding a place in a stream, is a reflection of the whole watershed and everything else that lives within in it.” More importantly, Haig-Brown understood that humans sprang from nature and despite all of our silly gadgets, remained a people of the Ice Age. He never thought of Nature as some sort of luxury, accessory or beautiful artifact – because it is an inalienable part of us. A species can’t spend 50,000 generations of its existence hunting and gathering and not have that activity leave a hefty impression on its being and soul. Not even 500 generations of farming and less than 20 generations of working in boxes with machines can erase that

connection to the natural world. And that's why Haig-Brown liked fishing; standing in a river helped him to "think and feel." In the poetry of water he became human as only a hunter and gatherer can. Any engagement with wildlife -- whether listening to the chatter of river otters, hunting grouse or watching a black bear denude an apple tree -- restored human meaning and brought us back to the point of things. There is no end to wonder and joy when you care about a place.

Haig-Brown wrote about this special love of place towards the end of *A River Never Sleeps*. And it is where I would like to end this talk.

"I have written in this book nearly always of rivers -- occasionally of lakes or the salt water, but nearly always of rivers and river fishing. A river is water in its loveliest form; rivers have life and sound and movement and infinity of variation, rivers are veins of the earth through which the life blood returns to the heart...One may love a river as soon as one sets eyes upon it; it may have

certain features that fit instantly with one's conception of beauty, or it may recall the qualities of some other river, well known and deeply loved. One may feel in the same way an instant affinity for a man or a woman and know that here is pleasure and warmth and the foundation of deep friendship."

And herein lies his most hopeful invitation, if not the whole point of conservation. It is really not about saving or fencing off a place but learning how to respect and love where you live, so that place always remains alive and fruitful. "One cannot know intimately all the ways and movements of a river without growing into love of it. And there is no exhaustion to the growth of love through knowledge, whether the love be a person or a river, because the knowledge can never become complete."

And that is why Haig-Brown matters more than ever.

Lecture delivered on November 24, 2016
with introductory presentation
by Ian McAllister, "The Ocean Never Sleeps"
At the Tidemark Theatre
Campbell River, British Columbia

The Wisdom of Haig Brown

“Big pollutions are made up of a lot of little pollutions and each one must be detected and fought individually on its home ground.”

“Conservation means fair and honest dealing with the future, usually at some cost to the immediate present. It is a simple morality, with little to offset the glamour and quick material rewards of the North American deity, ‘Progress.’”

“If we keep our fresh waters fit for salmon, then they’re fit for most every other purpose.”

- *Roderick Haig-Brown*

A Note on the Author

Andrew Nikiforuk has written about the abuse of Canadian resources for more than thirty years. The book, *Slick Water*, was awarded the 2016 Science in Society Book Award from the US National Association of Science Journalists. His books *Tar Sands*, *Energy of Slaves* and *Empire of the Beetle* were national best sellers. He is a contributing editor to the *Tyee* and lives in Campbell River.

Set in Old Face Baskerville
by Heather Hughson.

Copyright 2016 by Andrew Nikiforuk.

Cover:
Roderick Haig-Brown's fly
Coho Blue courtesy of Tony Pinder.

Published September 2016
by the Campbell River Community Arts Council
2131 South Island Highway
Campbell River, BC V9W 1C2
Canada

ISBN: 978-0-9812075-5-1

The first 100 copies are signed and numbered.

This is number