



*Media Release  
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## **HSBC FRASER RIVER STURGEON EDUCATION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED**

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### **Executive Director**

Mr Troy Nelson  
3299 137 A Street  
Crescent Beach, BC V4P 2B5  
Tel 604-535-1768  
Fax 604-535-1769  
Email: [tnelson@lqi.com](mailto:tnelson@lqi.com)

### **Executive Assistant**

Ms Jane Mclvor

### **Administrative Correspondence**

Jane Mclvor  
2000 - 1066 W. Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E 3X2  
Tel 604-893-8800  
Fax 604-893-8808  
Email: [jane@mcivor-communications.com](mailto:jane@mcivor-communications.com)

**Vancouver, BC** – HSBC Bank Canada will donate a total of \$100,000 over two years to support an innovative environmental education program, aimed primarily at Lower Mainland youth and First Nations communities, that will focus on the Fraser River and its ancient resident, white sturgeon.

These funds will be used to develop program elements and pilot initial program delivery over a two-year period. The HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program will be delivered through a partnership agreement between the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society and The Nature Trust of BC.

This program will use white sturgeon, a culturally and ecologically significant species, to teach and illustrate the rationale for environmental responsibility and ecological conservation in the lower Fraser River.

“The white sturgeon ignites the interest and imagination of people of all ages. Its future depends on today’s youth to be aware, to care, and to be encouraged to get involved and make a difference because their full recovery will take up to 30 years,” said Rick Hansen, who volunteers his time as Chair of the Society.

Lindsay Gordon, President and Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bank Canada, said “At HSBC, we believe that supporting educational and environmental projects will lead to a better future and benefit the entire community, so we are very pleased to help establish the HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program.”

“This program is an outstanding example of good stewardship for such an important species which has such historical importance in our province,” stated Doug Walker, Executive Director of The Nature Trust of BC.

“The Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society has an impressive track record of delivering environmental research and awareness, and uses a stewardship-based approach to achieve these successes. HSBC has been a longtime supporter of community projects that promote education, and is a leader, both locally and internationally, in investing in activities that encourage environmental responsibility,” Walker concluded.

Troy Nelson, Executive Director for the Sturgeon Society, has overseen the organization’s environmental and stewardship programs since 1999.

“Informing and involving tomorrow’s decision makers and leaders today will provide a better chance for the Fraser River ecosystem tomorrow, which is why the program will target educational materials toward youth and First Nations,” Nelson said.

“First Nations communities adjacent to the lower Fraser River and estuary have strong cultural, social, and economic ties to the fisheries and other natural resources sustained by a healthy aquatic ecosystem. The delivery of credible and balanced educational materials will provide the foundation and opportunity to make informed decisions regarding this heritage environment,” Nelson continued.

According to Nelson, white sturgeon are the largest and longest-lived species of freshwater fish in North America. A survivor from the age of the dinosaurs, white sturgeon can attain lengths in excess of 6 meters, weights of over 600 kilograms, and can live for over 150 years. The ancient fish is at the top of the Fraser River food web, and one of the few year-round resident species of fish in the lower Fraser River.

“They depend on virtually all available habitat types and several key prey items, including salmon and eulachon,” Nelson said. “Thus, the status of white sturgeon can be used as a measure of environmental health; if the population of white sturgeon is strong and robust, then numerous other species and habitats must be doing well also.”

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Photos available.

Media Contacts:

Jane McIvor  
Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society  
Tel 604-893-8800

Doug Walker  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
Tel 604-924-9771

Ernest Yee  
HSBC Bank Canada  
Tel 604-641-2973