

For Immediate Release

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HSBC BANK CANADA SUPPORT KEEPS FRASER RIVER STURGEON EDUCATION PROGRAM SWIMMING

HSBC Bank Canada renews support for Province wide education program for environmental and ecological conservation.

VANCOUVER, BC - The Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society (FRSCS) is delighted to announce that HSBC Bank Canada has renewed support for the FRSCS' HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program for another two years. HSBC Bank Canada is providing \$100,000 over two years to the program delivered to elementary and secondary students and First Nations' communities in BC. This unique program uses the culturally and ecologically significant white sturgeon to teach and illustrate the rationale for environmental and ecological conservation.

"The white sturgeon is a fascinating, ancient creature that really captures the imagination of young people," said Society Chair Rick Hansen. "The more they learn about the species, and its role in the history of this province, the keener they become in understanding and participating in habitat protection and environmental responsibility."

"We are grateful for the continued support of HSBC Bank Canada for this education program. Thanks to this contribution, HSBC is helping to inspire, inform and ignite the passion of a whole new generation of sturgeon stewards."

In its four-year history, the HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program has been taught by over 200 teachers from 180 different schools to over 6000 students in Grades 4 through 7. The Program will expand to 240 classrooms and approximately 7200 students in the 2009-2010 school year, and 280 classrooms and approximately 8400 students in 2010-2011. Twenty copies of an award-winning book, "Tale of a Great White Fish," are provided to each classroom that teaches the HSBC-sponsored Program. A secondary pilot program has been developed for the 2009-2010 school year which will reach approximately 600 grade twelve students in its initial year.

Matthew Bosrock, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bank Canada, said "HSBC has a deep commitment to the environment, so we are pleased to continue to support the HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program for children. We hope that elementary and secondary school students and others will gain a deeper appreciation of the importance of the environment through their understanding of the white sturgeon and the Fraser River."

The white sturgeon is 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 six 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. The population of white sturgeon in the lower Fraser River (downstream of Hell's Gate) is a fraction of its historic levels. Full recovery of this threatened species is expected to take a minimum of 30 years.

Founded in 1997, the Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Fraser River white sturgeon. The FRSCS identifies and addresses issues that affect the sturgeon in the Fraser River watershed using critical data collected through its award-winning, volunteer-driven monitoring and assessment program. In addition, the FRSCS conducts public relations and communication initiatives and offers a curriculum based education program Presented by HSBC Bank Canada, to promote community understanding of white sturgeon. www.frasersturgeon.com

About HSBC Bank Canada

HSBC Bank Canada, a subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc, has more than 260 offices, including over 140 bank branches and is the leading international bank in Canada. With around 8,500 offices in 86 countries and territories and assets of US\$2,422 billion at 30 June 2009, the HSBC Group is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organizations.

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Photo cap:

“Future Fraser River Sturgeon Stewards celebrate HSBC Bank Canada's \$100,000 donation to education program. Honourary Chair Rick Hansen and HSBC Bank Canada Deputy CEO Matthew Brosrock joined students at False Creek Elementary school for the occasion.” **Credit: Robert Leon**

Media inquiries:

Don Lintott
Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society
Project Manager
Tel: (604) 241-9971

Ernest Yee
Vice President, Corporate Affairs
HSBC Bank Canada
Tel: (604) 641-2973