

For Immediate Release

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HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program to reach more than 11,500 students by 2012 with support from HSBC Bank Canada

VANCOUVER, BC - The Fraser River Sturgeon Conservation Society (FRSCS) is delighted to announce that HSBC Bank Canada has renewed support and expanded its commitment to the FRSCS' *HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program* with a \$150,000 donation.

The program, delivered to elementary and secondary students and First Nations' communities, uses the iconic white sturgeon to teach and illustrate the rationale for environmental and ecological conservation in Canada as well as leadership and resource management. The additional support from HSBC Bank Canada will allow FRSCS to continue to grow the program in BC, and expand into several classrooms in the Greater Toronto Area.

"Youth play a huge role in conservation and the sustainability of our earth," said Rick Hansen, Honorary Chair of the Society. "Providing them with knowledge and skills ensures that students have the opportunity to learn about this amazing species and help find solutions for its survival. It is with the support of organizations like HSBC Bank Canada that make the HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program possible."

The \$150,000 donation will be made over a two-year period starting in 2011, bringing HSBC's total donation to the FRSCS to more than \$350,000 since 2007.

Lindsay Gordon, President and 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."

In five year history, the *HSBC Fraser River Sturgeon Education Program* has been taught by over 200 teachers from 180 different schools to over 7,000 students in Grades 4 through 7. The program will expand to 385 classrooms and approximately 11,550 students in the 2011-2012 school year, and 490 classrooms and approximately 14,700 students in 2012-2013. Twenty copies of the award-winning book, "Tale of a Great White Fish," are provided to each classroom that teaches the program.

The program lessons are linked to science, social studies, art and language arts curriculum content and they are designed to raise the level of understanding regarding this threatened species in Canada. The program is intended to promote future interest in conservation and protection of wild Fraser River white sturgeon and its aquatic ecosystem. It also encourages participants in the program to become involved in environmental stewardship activities within their own communities.

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, is the leading international bank in Canada. With around 7,500 offices in over 80 countries and territories and assets of US\$2,691 billion at 30 June 2011, the HSBC Group is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organizations.

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Photo caption:

"FRSCS Honourary Chair Rick Hansen and HSBC Bank Canada, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Michael Webb joined students on the banks of the Fraser River in Richmond, BC for the occasion." **Credit: Robert Leon**

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