

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 15, 2022

**Five Students Earn Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC Scholarships
for the 2022-23 Academic Year**

Victoria, BC - As environmental priorities increase and demographic trends have created more job openings, there is increasing demand for students from natural resource and aquaculture programs. To facilitate the development of those skills, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is awarding scholarships to five students in 2022. Each will receive a \$1,500 scholarship to support their studies and passionate pursuit of knowledge. Scholarship applications were received from students throughout British Columbia enrolled in recreational fisheries management, fisheries enhancement, conservation and/or research programs.

Jenna Neilson is in her final year at Vancouver Island University, earning her Bachelor of Science majoring in Biology and minoring in Aquaculture. Her studies focused on fish health, including a research project on bacterial diseases in salmonid species to further understand fish biology. After graduation she plans to pursue a career in fish enhancement to restore dependable and sustainable fisheries in British Columbia.

For four consecutive summers Neilson has worked with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Stock Assessment and the Salmonid Enhancement Program, gaining hands on experience in fisheries management, fish culture, and conservation. In the summer of 2022, she worked with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC at the Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery as a Seasonal Junior Fish Culture Technician.

Growing up in Abbotsford, **Jordan Hendriks** always had a close connection with the Fraser River and the organisms within it, especially the White Sturgeon. While attending Lethbridge College in the Natural Resource Compliance Diploma Program, Hendriks took a Fisheries Science class that changed her career path.

Hendriks is now attending Vancouver Island University to study Fisheries and Aquaculture Technology. Her goal is to work on the conservation of the White Sturgeon in B.C. Over the summer she worked as a *Learn to Fish Instructor* at the Clearwater Trout Hatchery where she learned fish culturing basics while sharing her passion for freshwater fisheries with others.

Yvonne Gregory's fascination with fish came from many summers spent camping and fishing with her dad on the Arrow Lakes. That early hands-on experience sparked an interest in finding out more about fish and fish habitat.

Gregory enrolled in the Recreation, Fish and Wildlife program at Selkirk College after graduating from high school and completed the program in 2021. She spent the past two seasons as a Junior Fish Culture Technician at the Clearwater Trout Hatchery and said the information she gained in her post-secondary studies has been both fascinating and practical. The scholarship will support the next stage of her education as she begins her degree in Natural Resource Science at Thompson Rivers University.

An interest in wildlife sparked by spending time outdoors became a career passion for **Megan Vander Wyk**. Growing up in Agassiz, Vander Wyk developed an interest in freshwater fishing through exploration of the outdoors around the Fraser River. An undergraduate of the University

of the Fraser Valley, she is completing her Bachelor of Science with a major in Ecology and Biology of Organisms this year.

Vander Wyk spent the summer working as a Junior Fish Culture Technician with Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, expanding on her fish culture studies. The scholarship will support her continued studies and goal to work in fisheries management and conservation.

Northern BC's rural landscapes were an inspiration for **Alexis Seely** who was awarded a scholarship to continue her biology studies at the University of Northern BC. Growing up in Vanderhoof cultivated a love of the rural outdoors for Seely, who discovered a passion for learning about the environment through a variety of recreational outdoor activities. Now entering her third year, Seely plans to attain a Registered Professional Biologist certification.

Seely said working with endangered sturgeon species for the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC for the past three years cultivated a love for not just sturgeon, but preserving the systems they live in, and has solidified her desire to work in preserving freshwater ecological systems.

Since 2008, the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC has awarded \$79,500 in scholarships to 48 students at various levels of post-secondary study. The scholarships recognize outstanding commitment to academic pursuits in the field of freshwater fisheries.

"Spending time in these amazing ecosystems provides a great incentive for people to pursue studies in freshwater fisheries management, research and conservation. These students are passionate about their studies in part because they have firsthand experience regarding the importance of protecting these spaces," says Tammy Longbottom, Director of Human Resources, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. "We are pleased to support them in the pursuit of their educational goals and look forward to the positive impact their contributions will have."

Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC scholarships are available to students enrolled in fish culture or natural resource management programs within a recognized post-secondary education institution in British Columbia. Applicants must have completed at least their first year of post-secondary studies and plan to continue as a student, with the intent of establishing a career in BC. Students at all levels of post-secondary study were eligible.

Scholarship applicants submitted a written or video essay outlining their experience, interests and chosen educational program, and explained how their interests and chosen studies will support key goals of BC's freshwater fisheries industry such as research and habitat conservation. In addition, with a transcript and resumé were provided.

The **Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC** was created in 2003 as a private, not-for-profit organization, funded mainly through freshwater fishing licence revenues. In partnership with the Province, the Society annually stocks six million trout, char and kokanee in 800 B.C. lakes. It also manages special hatchery programs for endangered species including white sturgeon, conducts fisheries research, education and conservation programs, and works to make angling more accessible for all. To find out more, visit gofishbc.com.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 18, 2022

**Clear Your Gear and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC
Partnership Clears Waterways of Gear
Used Fishing Line Will Be Recycled, Repurposed**

Abbotsford, BC - As more and more people are taking up the sport of angling, there is growing need to protect the waterways to ensure these spaces will stay clean and beautiful for future generations to enjoy. To help keep discarded gear out of streams and lakes, The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC has partnered with Canada's volunteer fishing-line recycling program, Clear Your Gear, to facilitate disposal and recycling of fishing line and promote environmental stewardship by freshwater anglers.

The Society has received thirty fishing line receptacles, which have been placed at hatchery fishing ponds, high-use urban lakes, high-traffic fishing areas, and popular fishing docks. The fishing recycling receptacles are manufactured by Clear Your Gear and their distinctive periscope shape makes them especially recognizable.

Most fishing line is made of monofilament, a synthetic fibre that is non-biodegradable and can remain in the environment for up to 600 years, depending on environment factors. This is longer than Styrofoam cups, plastic bottles and cigarette butts. Fishing line poses a particular risk for birds and animals, as it is often clear, making it hard to see. Birds and animals can easily ingest the line, or become entangled, leading to injury and death. Fishing line is the leading cause of entanglement issues for people, property & wildlife.

"We are very excited to partner with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC and expand this program through their networks and expand awareness of the importance of keeping fishing line out of the environment," says Steve Loney, Community Relations, Clear Your Gear. "When people find out how long fishing line remains in the ecosystem and how much damage it can do, they are often surprised. It motivates them to find in a more environmental solution to used gear."

Anglers are able to dispose of used monofilament and fluorocarbon line in the Clear Your Gear receptacles. Through the Clear Your Gear program, the fishing line is collected from recycling receptacles and cleaned of hooks, leaders, weights, and trash by volunteers. Line is shipped to the Berkley Pure Fishing company in Iowa where it is melted down into raw plastic pellets. The pellets can be made into other plastic products including various components for the automotive and foot wear industries. Fishing line is made of a high density plastic that requires a unique recycling process. It cannot be recycled through household recycling programs.

Fishing line that is braided or contains wire cannot be recycled and should be cut into short lengths and put into the trash.

Anglers can find a line recycling location by searching for receptacles by location or checking the map on the Clear Your Gear [website](#) for the nearest location. The map is updated regularly as new receptacles are installed.

“We have partnered with local organizations, municipalities and governments, utilizing local knowledge to place receptacles where they are the most beneficial to anglers. Maintenance of the receptacles and collection of the used fishing line will be shared by these partners and the Society and we’ve placed them to ensure they are emptied regularly,” says Marleau Brown, Outreach Coordinator, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. “It’s another tool not only for anglers but for anyone who wants to leave our streams and lakes cleaner than they found them.”

The Freshwater Fisheries Society has also partnered with the City of Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Vedder River Clean Up Society with twenty units installed in commonly used areas along the Chilliwack and Vedder River. Locations are posted at:

<http://fraservalleynewsnetwork.com/2021/03/12/chilliwack-vedder-river-cleanup-society-where-to-recycle-fishing-line/>. Locations are also posted on the Clear Your Gear website.ut

About the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - June 7, 2022

Family Fishing Weekend Kicks Off Summer of Freshwater Fishing Events

Abbotsford, BC - As families are able to gather again, many are looking to make great memories with Dad in the outdoors on Father's Day weekend. To kick off the summer fishing season, free Family Fishing Weekend events are being hosted in all regions of the province June 17 – 19. Fishing licence requirements are waived for Canadian citizens that weekend, helping to make it an affordable activity for families.

Family Fishing Weekend events offer hands-on instruction as well as the opportunity to fish in a social setting. Loaner rods, reels and tackle are provided for those who do not have their own gear. The events also offer opportunities to learn about fishing gear, share fishing tips and learn about environmental stewardship and the tradition of recreational fishing.

"It is so exciting to have Family Fishing Weekend and other events return! It's a great time to introduce or reintroduce people to the sport and build the community," says Mike Gass, Manager of Recreational Fishing Development. "We hope the increased youth participation we saw through the pandemic will continue, and families will make freshwater fishing part of their summer for years to come. The return of instructional events will make it even more accessible."

Through the summer, Learn to Fish programs will also resume after a two year pause. An introductory half-day program appropriate for kids 5-15 and their families, Learn to Fish teaches the basics of how, when and where to catch fish in fresh water. Also through the summer the Rod Loan program is available in many communities, offering free loans of spinning rods with reels and a basic box of tackle to individuals and families.

The Summer Fishing challenge is also underway for 2022. Participants 15 years old and younger keep a fishing journal, posting a photo of five fishing trips taken over the summer. Those who complete the challenge are eligible to win fishing gear prizes.

"We have heard how much people missed the in-person events," says Outreach Coordinator of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Marleau Brown. "They create a fun environment to learn in while enjoying time outdoors. By providing gear and instruction at no cost, the events are very accessible to families with children of all ages."

Events are supported by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and organized by BC Wildlife Federation Fish and Game clubs, the Conservation Officer Service, municipalities, community groups, and local businesses. A complete list of participating communities, locations, and event descriptions, along with step-by-step fishing instructions, can be found at www.bcfamilyfishing.com. Freshwater and tidal fishing regulations, including daily catch quotas, always apply; details are posted at www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca or www.fishing.gov.bc.ca.



Family Fishing Weekend was established by the Province of BC to encourage new anglers as well as promote other angling initiatives targeted toward families and young people. 2022 marks the 23rd year of the licence-free fishing weekend.

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