



For Immediate Release

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More than 100 nests counted, and Turtle Day ahead

CRANBROOK Spring has been cool but already a few Western Painted Turtle hatchlings have emerged from their nests at Elizabeth Lake, and Turtle Day is the occasion to take in all the action. This year looks to be a promising one for the local population of this Blue-listed (vulnerable) species: 108 nests were counted in summer 2017, up 20 per cent from the previous year and more than double since 2015, when there was only 52.

Turtle Day is hosted by the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) together with the Rocky Mountain Naturalists. The free, family event runs from 3.00 pm to 5.00 p.m. on April 24 at the Visitor's Centre at Elizabeth Lake.

The event provides a great opportunity to learn about the turtle's life-cycle, and see some hatchlings just hours out of their nests!

The nesting area at Elizabeth Lake is maintained and monitored by the Rocky Mountain Naturalists working with biologists with the Province of B.C., with funding from the FWCP.

"Restoring and creating wetlands has been one of the priorities for our local Board these last few years," says FWCP Columbia Region Manager Crystal Klym. "So, funding conservation and habitat restoration work that supports Western Painted Turtles and other wildlife species is a natural fit for us and aligns with our Riparian and Wetlands Action Plan."

Turtle Day provides a unique opportunity for local students and the community to not only appreciate nature, but also to engage with the Western Painted Turtle. And the Rocky Mountain Naturalists have a long history of fostering awareness and understanding of our natural environment.

"People will get an opportunity to learn about the turtle's life cycle, see the restored nesting beds and experience the joy of engaging with new life as the baby turtles emerge after a long winter under the sand." said Greg Ross with the Rocky Mountain Naturalists who is responsible for monitoring the nesting area.

The FWCP is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and the Public Stakeholders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

Turtle Day is also made possible with the support of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC Hydro, and the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network.

For more information about Turtle Day and the projects funded by FWCP, visit fwcp.ca or call 250-352-1300.

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