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Caribou, Moose, Birds and Bull Trout to Benefit from Funding

Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Approves Funding for 2015 Projects

PEACE REGION – Local caribou, bats, bears, beavers, Arctic grayling, bull trout and fisher are among the many species that will benefit from 22 projects announced today by the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) in the Peace Region.

Several projects will support species and habitat enhancement, including maternity penning for caribou, identifying stream crossings that are blocking fish passage, and working with forestry workers to help protect fisher habitat. Other projects announced are research or education-based and the results will improve the science and understanding that is key to making informed species management decisions in the future that can lead to conservation or enhancement.

“Regardless of the project type or size,” says Dan Bouillon, FWCP-Peace Region Program Manager, “All FWCP projects are in alignment with the priorities identified in our Basin and Action Plans, and are guided by decisions made by our diverse, local Board.”

“It’s critical that we preserve our province’s ecological diversity of fish and wildlife species,” Peace River South MLA, Mike Bernier said. “The Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program will help increase awareness and understanding to help conserve and improve wildlife habitat in the future.”

“Our government is committed to practicing sustainable resource development and this project, a collaborative effort among various partners, will help our government and industry move forward in continuing to protect our wildlife,” Peace River North MLA, Pat Pimm said.

The Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program is a partnership between public stakeholders, First Nations, BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The partners work through the FWCP to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by existing BC Hydro dams.

Forty-nine funding applications were received and reviewed by a technical committee, the First Nations Working Group and finally by the 16-member Board, which approved funding for more than \$550,000 in fish and wildlife grants.

In addition to funding projects via grants, the Board continues to support other priority projects through requests for proposals including Arctic Grayling, mercury investigations and moose. The Arctic Grayling project will identify gaps in understanding and propose data collection options for the Williston and Dinosaur Basins. A discussion on mercury has been initiated to engage local First Nations and interested parties and the final report will identify potential partners and next steps leading to an improved understanding of mercury levels in fish. The Board has also approved funding to investigate factors limiting moose survival in the Parsnip and Peace Regions. The Board may direct funds towards other regional priorities later this year.

For the fiscal year starting April 1, 2015, the FWCP-Peace Region is funding habitat-based, research, educational and information-gathering projects for a combined investment in fish and wildlife projects in the Peace Region of approximately \$785,000. See fwcp.ca for a complete list of 2015 fish and wildlife projects funded in the FWCP's Peace Region.

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For more information contact

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Suggested caption: Arctic Grayling will be the focus of a research project approved by the Fish and Wildlife Compensation (FWCP) in the Peace Region. It's one of 22 local fish and wildlife conservation projects announced today by the FWCP. (fwcp.ca)

Photo Credit: S. Roooke

FWCP BACKGROUNDER

FWCP Overview

- The Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and Public Stakeholders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by BC Hydro dams.
- The Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) funds conservation and enhancement projects in its Coastal, Columbia and Peace regions.
- The FWCP's Regional Boards approved 124 fish and wildlife projects for 2015-16 with a combined value of approximately \$8.9 million.
- FWCP funds are provided by BC Hydro and managed in a partnership with the Province of British Columbia, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and the public.

FWCP Fish and Wildlife Projects

- Projects that receive funding from the FWCP: align with the FWCP's strategic action plans; and are assessed based on technical merit, linkages to watershed-specific priorities, cost-effectiveness, level of partnership, and overall benefit to the FWCP's mandate and vision.
- Eleven First Nations are directly involved in the delivery of FWCP-funded projects including:

- **FWCP-Coastal** approved applications were received from the following: Pacheedaht First Nation; Katzi First Nation; K'omoks First Nation; Splatsin First Nation; Split Rock Environmental (St'at'imc First Nation); and the Lillooet Tribal Council.
 - **FWCP-Peace** approved applications were received from the following: Kwadacha First Nation; Doig River First Nation; and the Tsay Keh Dene Nation (with several other First Nations involved in delivery of other projects where they will support the lead proponent in project implementation).
 - **FWCP-Columbia** approved applications received from the following: Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA); and the Ktunaxa Nation Council.
- The FWCP often works with partners; it may be one of many funders supporting important fish and wildlife conservation efforts or it may be the sole funder.
 - For a summary of the 2015-16 fish and wildlife projects funded by the FWCP across the province, and information on how you can apply for a FWCP grant next year, visit fwcp.ca.