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NECHAKO WHITE STURGEON RECOVER SET TO RELEASE 700 STURGEON WITH THE HELP OF LOCAL STUDENTS

 SHANNON WATERS - MAY 11, 2016

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 Photo Courtesy of the Nechako White Sturgeon Recover Initiative (Facebook)



The Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative will be releasing its next batch of young sturgeon into the Nechako River in Vanderhoof this week.

Wayne Salewski, the Initiative's Community Working Group Chair, says the hatchery has raised about 10,000 sturgeon in the last year. About 6,000 of those are already back in the Nechako.

"On Friday, we are going to release around 7 to 800 hundred of them using school kids from around the region. Everybody who's doing something [including homeschooling] will be getting an invite within School District 91."

About 620 students have signed up so far but Salewski says it's not just local school kids who are getting in on the sturgeon release.

"We have a number of other schools and individuals from other communities coming. I know we've got people from outside school district 91 that are attending. We have volunteers from around northern BC from Baker Creek Society in Quesnel through to people in Houston that are really interested."

The event will take place in Riverside Park and is open to parents and interested spectators. Salewski says they're expecting quite a crowd.

"Riverside Park will be full of everything from kids to teachers to politicians to Grandma and Grandpa. One thousand people wouldn't be unlikely. The Mayor and Council are buying hot dogs for those who show up."

There will also be educational activities on site.

"We have a number of stations that talk about the life cycle of the sturgeon so you can get some of the details by travelling through different booths. And then you can watch kids putting the fish into the water and have that photographic opportunity."

And it doesn't end with the release. With the Initiative's tracking technology, the kids will be able to keep up with their sturgeon's life in the Nechako.

"These fish have pit tags in them so we do the release with the kids and then over the next years as we recapture the fish we advise, through our internet site, what's going on. People can see what they look like and we'll tell them how big it is, where we caught it, etc."

Salweski says it's exciting to see people very interested in seeing and learning about sturgeon.

"We have tremendous uptake on it. It's a real opportunity to see a living dinosaur."

For more information on this week's release, you can visit the Facebook event or the Initiative's website.



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