

**Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC**  
**Merritt and Nicola Valley Fishing Infrastructure Project**

**BACKGROUNDER**

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC) is embarking on a collaborative, multifaceted initiative to enhance and develop infrastructure to access the world class recreational fishing that exists within a one-hour drive of Merritt and the Nicola Valley. The area has many wild fisheries, as well as 35 small lakes stocked by FFSBC to provide recreational fishing opportunities.

An uptrend in angling activity, particularly non-resident anglers as a result of improved infrastructure and facilities will help revitalize the local rural economy. Results from the 2010 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada estimate that non-resident anglers each spend approximately \$188 per day on direct expenditures related to fishing in BC. This is also an opportunity to invest in infrastructure to help accommodate the recent increased interest in fishing amongst BC residents, particularly new young adult anglers as a result of COVID-19. BC resident freshwater licence sales are up 16% overall year to date and up 61% for 16-24 year-olds.

Working with local governments and stakeholder groups it has been identified that many of the world class fisheries in this area have either poor or no facilities and access constraints including dysfunctional boat launches, no shore fishing opportunities, and limited overnight accommodation. Poor or limited access has been shown to have a direct negative impact on angling activity. According to the 2010 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada; 17% of BC anglers did not fish as much as they would like due to poor shore fishing or boat access

Building off the success of a similar project being implemented by FFSBC on the Highway 24 corridor between Little Fort and Lone Butte, this project will include investments in new boat launches, fishing docks, and campsite facilities on recreational fisheries in the Merritt area. Proposed projects have been identified in consultation with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, and various local stakeholder groups:

- Campsite expansion, site grading, facilities, boat launch improvements and various other improvements on up to 44 Rec Sites on stocked lakes and wild fisheries
- Stump Lake boat launch Development
- Dardanelles Lake Rec Site Expansion including boat launch and day use area
- Courtney Lake Rec Site Development
- Hamilton Lake Access Improvements
- Fishing docks on Hook and Davis Lake

It is estimated these investments will cost \$500,000 over the next 2 years (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023) A key driver for this project will be a successful funding application through the Province of BCs Community Economic Recovery Program. Submission deadline Thur, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

More Information on funding program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/cerip>

***To support FFSBC's proposal to the Community Economic Recovery Program, we are requesting a letter of support from your organization.***

#### About the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is a private non-profit organization. Our mandate is to enhance and conserve BC's freshwater fisheries for public benefit. Working in partnership with government, industry and anglers, our goal is to make fishing in BC even better through the enhancement and conservation of BC's freshwater fish resources.

Freshwater sport fishing is an important cultural, recreational, and economic contributor to the province. Each year, more than 300,000 licensed anglers spend about \$500 million in BC, with much of the economic activity taking place in rural areas. About 50% of all angling activity takes place on the over 800 lakes and streams FFSBC stocks. The Society also plays a key role in delivering a wide range of conservation services needed to protect and in some cases restore wild fish populations that include the endangered white sturgeon.

#### Contact

If you have any additional questions, please contact Mike Gass Manager, Sport Fishing Development with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC Ph: 604 302 6235 Email: [Mike.Gass@gofishbc.com](mailto:Mike.Gass@gofishbc.com)