

May 29, 2018

Tourism Victoria makes donation for salmon enhancement to mark Tourism Week

VICTORIA, B.C. – Tourism Victoria has announced a \$10,000 donation to the Southern Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition (SVIAC) for the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative. The donation is to help SVIAC's efforts to increase adult Chinook salmon abundance, which is a key food source for the Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) population. The grant coincides with Tourism Week in Canada (May 27 – June 2).

The Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative began in 2017, when SVIAC released the first batch of 210,000 juvenile Chinook salmon into the Sooke Basin. Southern Resident Killer Whales feed primarily on Chinook salmon. The most recent count of this endangered population found 76 individual whales in total, the lowest number in 40 years. It is believed declining prey availability is affecting the Southern Resident Killer Whales' ability to increase their numbers. Following the successful release of 220,000 Chinook salmon smolts on May 11, SVIAC will be releasing another 280,000 at the end of May, totaling 500,000 this year.

"Tourism Victoria is pleased to partner with the SVIAC on this important initiative" said Paul Nursey, President and CEO of Tourism Victoria. "The Southern Resident Killer Whales are an iconic symbol of coastal British Columbia and part of Greater Victoria's identity. The health of the marine ecosystem is of paramount importance and tourism is a growing industry in the region. Tourism Victoria is committed to sustainable tourism growth and this a concrete example of many initiatives we are leading"

"We are grateful for this generous donation from Tourism Victoria" said Christopher Bos, President of South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition. "We share a passion for environmental stewardship and helping Southern Resident Killer Whales. These funds will help build on the 2017 success of the Sooke Chinook Enhancement Initiative. Our plan is to out-plant two million Chinook smolts by 2021."

Tourism Week in Canada is celebrated by the tourism industry across the country. The objective of Tourism Week in Canada is to showcase the economic impact and social benefits of Canada's tourism industry, as well as communicating current public policy issues to decision-makers in an effort to further growth in one of Canada's most important economic industries. In Greater Victoria, tourism employs over 22,000 people and has an economic impact of \$2.3B annually.

Tourism Victoria has been vocal on many public policy issues over the past year, such as lobbying for increased regulation on short-term vacation rentals and committing to sustainable tourism growth. The Impact Sustainable Travel and Tourism Conference hosted by Tourism Victoria in January is an example of Tourism Victoria's leadership in sustainable tourism.

Tourism Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

Southern Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition is an independent, not-for-profit angling advocacy society. SVIAC's efforts and initiatives are dedicated exclusively to ensure there will be abundant fish, healthy productive habitat and thriving public fisheries in our region for generations to come.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Matthew Holme
Manager of Corporate Communications and Destination Management, Tourism Victoria
250 818-7864 or 250 414-6976
matthew.holme@tourismvictoria.com