

**...helping hands for ancients of the deep”**



**NEWS RELEASE** – for immediate release

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## **Local biologist’s white sturgeon art helps raise awareness of endangered fish**

**CASTLEGAR** – Local fisheries biologist, Bronwen Lewis, Golder Associates Ltd., was recognized by the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative at a recent Community Working Group for her contribution of original white sturgeon artwork for use in projects which promote awareness of the endangered upper Columbia white sturgeon population.

On hand to present the first framed print of a limited edition of 250 prints were BC Hydro’s Maureen DeHaan, Co-Chair of the Community Working Group and Gary Birch, Community and Technical Working Group member.

“When our research crew encountered a dead, near 2-metre long adult sturgeon, I thought the opportunity to take a printing of the fish would be perfect for creating some life-sized art for others to appreciate,” said Lewis. “I had never seen a fish print done in the traditional Gyotaku method of a sturgeon anywhere before, so I figured it was a good idea!” Gyotaku, composed of *Gyo* for fish and *Taku* for impression, is the art and technique of Japanese fish rubbing.

“The original sturgeon print was done using acrylic paint and a long sheet of mulberry paper. The eyes and fins were touched up after,” commented Bronwen. With the financial support of BC Hydro, an Initiative partner, the prints were produced along with some actual life-sized banners of the sturgeon to use at outreach educational events.

“We thought it was a very special gift Bronwen made in donating her original art to further the Initiative’s ongoing outreach and education efforts,” said DeHaan. The limited production of 11” X 24” prints is available for sale at \$40, and a small production of the framed prints is available for \$150. All proceeds go directly towards funding educational initiatives such as juvenile release and Rivers Day events and sturgeon education resource kits. Orders can be made by contacting the BC Hydro Castlegar office at 250-365-2450 or by e-mail to [info@uppercolumbiasturgeon.org](mailto:info@uppercolumbiasturgeon.org).

The Initiative brings together the interests of government, First Nations and American Tribes, industry, environmental groups and others to the challenge of building a healthy future for the white sturgeon in the upper Columbia River in British Columbia and Washington. Available population estimates show that within the Canadian portion of the upper Columbia River basin, including the Arrow Lakes Reservoir, the white sturgeon population is about 1,000 wild fish. From the Canada-U.S. border to the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State, about 3,200 adult wild white sturgeon reside. The causes for decline are not fully understood. However, in the last 125 years, human development, construction of hydroelectric dams, water quality changes from contaminants, changes in flow patterns, as well as the introduction of exotic species and harvesting may have led to its decline. The majority of white sturgeon are more than 30 years old, suggesting a population of aging fish with relatively few young to replace the old. It is hoped that through a commitment to water management, habitat restoration and conservation fish culture, the upper Columbia River white sturgeon will recover to healthy, self-sustaining numbers.

Following more than three years effort, the upper Columbia white sturgeon was listed as Endangered under Canada's federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) in August 2006.

To find out more about the UCWSRI or how you can help, please view the web site at

**[www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org](http://www.uppercolumbiasturgeon.org)**

**Photo Credit** – Colin Spence photo