

## News on sturgeon facility grant

Brian Frenkel, Chair of the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI) Community Working Group says he is disappointed with the decision.

"From my point of view it's disappointing to see money being awarded for another sturgeon facility whose main goal is for food fishery and we're trying to save the species ... it's really disappointing," said Frenkel.

"The federal government has done a great job creating a species at risk act but they have not followed it up with funding to help save those species ... that's the way I feel - I just don't see it anywhere and this is an example of that - it's a blow," he added.

Frenkel says the survival of the endangered Nechako white sturgeon is still reliant on provincial and federal funding for the build-

ing of a permanent conservation facility in Vanderhoof which is estimated will cost approximately \$3 million to build.

"Ultimately ... the federal and provincial government need to make a decision as soon as possible," said Frenkel about the need for funding. The economic downturn has meant many ministries have had their budgets cut making funding problematic.

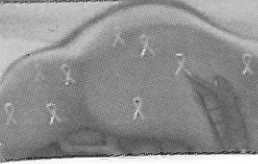
Don Peterson, President of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC confirmed last year that \$1.5 million in funding had been set aside for the conservation facility in Vanderhoof by the Ministry of Environment.

Frenkel says there is still some time to come up with other funding solutions for the conservation facility.

"Did the community get knocked down a bit here this summer? Sure we did - but you know you get back up and you try and find an alternative method of trying to get things funded and that is the resiliency of this community - we will always get back up on our feet and find another way," said Frenkel.

*The number of mature sturgeon of breeding age is currently estimated to be less than 350. Nechako white sturgeon are federally listed as Endangered under Schedule One of the Species at Risk Act due to ongoing recruitment failure, which has led to a extremely low number of juveniles.*

### Women Are Doing It



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# Sturgeon

Hannah Wright  
Omineca Express

Vanderhoof has yet to hear back from the federal government about a grant to help fund the building of a much needed sturgeon conservation facility in town. The application was made nearly a year ago.

But perhaps adding fuel to the fire was the fact that a grant of about the same amount was awarded to Vancouver Island University's new International Centre for Sturgeon Studies.

While this is of course fantastic news for them, it just doesn't seem right to me that a large chunk of money was given to a facility whose key goal is to grow sturgeon for food, when that same grant could have been used to help save an entire species of Sturgeon in the Nechako River. The priorities here seem rather muddled.

There have been so many people putting in a huge amount of effort to try and save the endangered fish in recent years.

Just recently the Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (NWSRI) have helped to facilitate a number of projects to keep sturgeon numbers up.

Just this year during the spring two large gravel beds were placed on the river floor to attempt to restore the spawning habitat, adult sturgeon were released into the river during the late spring, and a number of sturgeon release kits were sent out to area fisher families in August to aid the release of sturgeon accidentally caught while fishing for salmon. That was all just this year.

While all these projects are a great help to the species, a conservation facility is what is ultimately needed to save the sturgeon, and time is running out.

It would be a huge shame if all the hard work from the community to save the Nechako white sturgeon is wasted by the continued delay to make this facility a reality.

Here's hoping someone or something comes forward in the near future with a solution to the funding problem.

