

MAY 5, 2009

BCTC AquaVan Drives Education for BC kids Vancouver Aquarium offers aquatic education on the move and connects students with our natural world

VANCOUVER, BC – Today at Suncrest Elementary School in Burnaby, students joined the Vancouver Aquarium for the launch of the brand-new **BCTC AquaVan**, bringing marine education to schools and communities throughout BC and Alberta.

Suncrest students, along with Aquarium president Dr. John Nightingale, BC Transmission Corporation president Janet Woodruff and Burnaby's Mayor Derek Corrigan, took part in a fun kelp-cutting ceremony to launch the new vehicle containing a mobile classroom.

"One of the best ways we can help inspire kids to conserve aquatic life is by working directly with the school system," said Dr. Nightingale. "Many BC kids don't have the opportunity to visit the Aquarium, so the BCTC Aquavan lets us bring a bit of the ocean to many parts of the province. When you actually get to see and touch a sea star, for example, you can better understand the connections between aquatic life and us."

Since it first took to BC highways 15 years ago, the BCTC AquaVan has facilitated nearly 400,000 participants, visited hundreds of schools, and traveled over 170,000 kilometers.

Today's launch event set the stage for the new BCTC AquaVan to hit the road and travel another 1600km from its home base at the Aquarium and visit many more communities this school year including 108 Mile Ranch, Prince George, McBride, Kitimat, Terrace, Burns Lake, Francois Lake, Fort St John, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Tomslake and Fort Nelson. And while schoolchildren in northern BC may live a distance from the coast, the BCTC AquaVan lets them experience a vital aspect of coastal life.

"BC Transmission Corporation is committed to protecting B.C.'s beautiful coastline," says Janet Woodruff. "We are proud to present the BCTC AquaVan because we believe that educating BC's young people today is the key to continued stewardship of our waters for years to come."

The brand new BCTC AquaVan features state-of-the-art technology with its newly upgraded mobile animal care systems.

About the BCTC AquaVan

The BCTC AquaVan is one of the Vancouver Aquarium's many educational outreach initiatives helping people connect with our natural world and inspiring them toward conservation action. The award-winning BCTC AquaVan is 32-feet of aquatic education on the move! The program provides schoolchildren across BC and Alberta with the chance to get up close and personal with live animals and to experience aquatic life regardless of where they live. Fun, interactive aquatic education programs complement the BC Ministry of Education's curriculum guidelines for grades K-12.

About BCTC

BC Transmission Corporation is the Crown corporation that plans, builds, operates and maintains our province's publicly-owned electrical transmission system.

About the Vancouver Aquarium

The Vancouver Aquarium is a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, conservation practices, education, research, and direct action. Learn more at www.vanaqua.org

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Media Contact:

Public Relations Coordinator
publicrelations@vanaqua.org
604.659.3752