

A fish story that really bites

Mill Lake stocked with trout to offer fishing experience at home

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Cast a line into Abbotsford's Mill Lake and a healthy trout is bound to bite.

The Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery released nearly 700 healthy rainbow trout into Mill Lake Tuesday as part of its Urban Stocking Program to support recreational fishing.

As the fish poured in to the lake from a tube at the back of a tanker truck, many gathered along the shoreline to watch the lake become rich with life.

Releasing some of the fish from a net so spectators could get a closer look, Mike Gass, with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B. C., said the pan-fry- sized trout, each weighing around 2.2 pounds, are put into the lake "purely for sport."

"We specifically raise these trout to a size where they can be caught right away," he said.

"Our stocking program aims to provide access to those who don't have the ability to travel far for a relaxing day of fishing," said Steve Arnold, assistant manager with the FVTH.

Mill Lake, which is unable to support fish stock on its own, is among 900 lakes in B.C. that is stocked annually with trout, said Arnold.

The FVTH stocks Mill Lake with around 3,000 trout per year.

Stocking fish for freshwater fishing is an important recreational and



CREDIT: Marcia Downham/ Times

Mike Gass with the Fisheries Society of British Columbia ease some young trout out of net into Abbotsford's Mill Lake on Tuesday, as part of a lake trout stocking program. He released about 700 rainbow trout, raised at the Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery in the city.

economic activity, said Arnold.

Approximately 400,000 licensed anglers spend \$400 to \$500 million on freshwater fishing in B.C. each year, and recent surveys show that about one-half of the angler effort in fresh water takes place on lakes stocked by Freshwater society hatcheries, according to the society's website.

Other than its stocking program, the society also helps to educate and teach the public about fish and how to fish through a variety of programs.

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