



**For Release Immediately  
December 16, 2016**

File: 1470

**Merritt Now Offers the Rod Loan Program**  
*Available now at the Baillie House Information Booth*

**Merritt —December 16, 2016—** Tourism Merritt is pleased to partner with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC and is now able to offer the Rod Loan Program. These are available at the Baillie House Information Booth starting December 2016. The Rod Loan Program gives the opportunity to those looking to fish, but may not have their own equipment, the chance to fish. The special focus of this program is aimed towards families to encourage an interest in fishing with a new generation.

This program is currently available in larger centers such as Kamloops, Kelowna and Chilliwack. Recently there has also been an interest within the Gold Country Tourism region, with communities such as Cache Creek being involved in the Rod Loan Program. Cache Creek offered the program for the first time in 2016 and experienced interest from the public to borrow the rods. There are currently 4 ice fishing rods, an auger and tackle equipment available for those to borrow at the Baillie House. Merritt will be provided with spring fishing gear in the new year to keep the loan program available throughout summer 2017.

“By providing ice fishing rods, augers and basic tackle at no cost, the Rod Loan Program reduces barriers for people who want to give fishing a try,” said Tanya Laird, Outreach Coordinator for the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. “We are very excited to partner with Tourism Merritt and offer this program in time for the hard water season!”





The Rod Loan Program is supported by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, and Rapala. In addition to the Rod Loan Program, the Learn to Fish Program is also available at selected lakes during summer 2017. This half day basic course teaches beginners the essentials of fishing. Event dates and locations in the Nicola Valley will be announced in 2017 and made available on the Merritt Community Calendar at: (<http://tourismmerritt.com/events>).

Tourism Merritt is excited to focus on fishing tourism in the Nicola Valley as one of the pillars of tourism. Programs such as the Rod Loan Program, Learn to Fish Program and online promotions all assist in boosting the fishing tourism product in the area. In Merritt's Tourism Plan, fishing is identified as one of the main theme elements under "Identifying the iconic themes in the Nicola Valley" during community workshops. In the Tourism Plan it also outlines in 7.5 - Outdoor Recreation the need to "build more market-ready visitor experiences. Such as prioritized outdoor adventures, including fishing, hiking, horseback riding and cycling tours".

- Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC [www.gofishbc.com](http://www.gofishbc.com)
- Merritt and the Nicola Valley's Tourism Plan 2013/2014 [www.merritt.ca/sites/default/files/files/merritt\\_nicola\\_valley\\_2013-14\\_tourism\\_plan\\_final.pdf](http://www.merritt.ca/sites/default/files/files/merritt_nicola_valley_2013-14_tourism_plan_final.pdf)
- Tourism Merritt [www.tourismmerritt.com](http://www.tourismmerritt.com)

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