

Gone fishing?



By Goldstream News Gazette

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There is a reason people who love fishing get so sentimental about their pastime.

It is an art – both simple yet infinitely complex – that teaches profound lessons about how we relate to the planet and to ourselves.

Those rose-coloured memories and the desire to share them with others are driving a new provincial program designed to make it easy for anyone to give fishing a try.

On the West Shore, two fishing supply stores have stepped up to take part in the rod loan program organized by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C.

“There was no reason why we wouldn’t take part,” said Coltan Whitman, an employee at West Shore Fishing Centre on Hoffman Avenue.

The 22-year-old has been an avid angler for much of his life and served on a halibut boat off the northern B.C. coast.

“Personally, (sharing his love of fishing) is a huge part for me,” Whitman said, explaining that anyone who wants to try fishing can come in and borrow a rod and tackle box for one week. A credit card or small deposit is all that’s needed.

At Wise-Buys Fishing Supplies, which opened eight-weeks ago on the Island Highway, the ideal of the rod loan program fits neatly with the focus of the family owned business.

“My take on fishing, I think it’s a lifeskill,” said Kimberley Milligan, program coordinator for Wise-Buys.

Milligan, who admits her brother Bill Zaalberg is the fishing expert in the family, said the store wants to attract customers who are trying fishing for the first time.

They don’t want anyone to feel intimidated about asking basic questions about getting started.

They haven’t yet loaned out any fishing gear but Milligan said she has had a few nibbles. One woman she spoke to was recently widowed with two young sons. She had been into fishing as a child and was taking tentative steps to get back into it for the sake of her boys.

The rod loan program offered her the chance to do it without committing to spending a lot of money.

Of course, both fishing suppliers also know that encouraging people to try fishing is the best way to hook a potential new customer.

At the Hoffman Avenue store, Whitman recalls two boys who borrowed a rod and tackle box because they weren’t sure if they afford the gear. After angling at area lakes for a week, Whitman said the boys found the money to buy their own rods so they could keep fishing all summer.

For more information on the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C.’s Rod Loan program, go to GofishBC.com.

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West Shore Rod Loan locations

- Wise-Buys Fishing Supplies

102 -1740 Island Hwy, Colwood

- West Shore Sport Fishing Centre

693 Hoffman Ave., Langford

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