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Abegweit First Nation Celebrates Launch of Fish Friends School Program

Scotchfort, Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island) — Abegweit First Nation is proud to celebrate the launch of its annual Fish Friends School Program, *Salmon Are Our Friends*. The program helps students learn about caring for the environment and the connection to Mi'kmaq culture.

A community gathering took place at the Abegweit Connects Building in Scotchfort, beginning with an opening prayer and drumming circle. Speakers included Chief Junior Gould, representatives of program sponsors Cavendish Farms and North Lake Fisheries, and students from Mt. Stewart Consolidated School. Youth participated in an interactive learning activity led by program coordinator Katie Jordan, while guests enjoyed a guided tour of the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery led by Brezlyn Knockwood.

“Abegweit First Nation is proud to continue offering this hands-on learning experience to Island schools, teaching students the importance of conservation and connection to land and water,” said Chief Junior Gould of Abegweit First Nation. “We are grateful to our program sponsors, Cavendish Farms and North Lake Fisheries, whose support will have a lasting impact on schools across the Island.”

The program gives students the opportunity to observe the life cycle of Atlantic salmon by raising them from eggs to fish in classroom aquariums before releasing them into local rivers. Each year, the program reaches approximately 22 schools and more than 550 students directly, with an even broader impact as entire school communities often engage with classroom tanks and fish releases.

The program is supported through a new multi-year partnership, with Cavendish Farms and North Lake Fisheries contributing each \$25,000 annually over four years. This funding will help expand the program to more schools and provide all the equipment and supplies needed.

“For Cavendish Farms, Salmon Are Our Friends is more than an educational program, it’s about building meaningful relationships. This initiative brings students, communities, and conservation together in a hands-on way that creates lasting impact,” said Mark Cormier, Vice President of Government and Community Relations, Cavendish Farms. “We’re proud to support a program that invests in young people, honours Indigenous culture, and protects our waterways right here on Prince Edward Island.”

To learn more about Abegweit First Nation’s programs and initiatives, visit www.abegweit.ca.

About Abegweit First Nation:

Abegweit First Nation is a proud Mi'kmaq Band that traces its roots to Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), dating back 10,000 years according to oral tradition and archaeological evidence. The official creation of the Abegweit First Nation occurred on March 7th, 1972. Originally, all Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk were a part of one band, the Lennox Island First Nation. The formation of a new Band was proposed as a means of better serving the needs of community members in Eastern PEI, a fair distance from the Lennox Island reserve in Western PEI. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of forming a new Band and Abegweit First Nation was formed. It is comprised of the Morell, Rocky Point, and Scotchfort reserves.

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