



@NewsroomGC tweet (maximum of 255 characters):

The Government of Canada invests \$2M for protection and restoration of species at risk habitat in British Columbia

## Government of Canada protecting species at risk habitat in British Columbia

From: [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)

### News release

**August 4, 2020 – Vancouver, British Columbia**

Protecting nature is an essential part of addressing biodiversity loss and fighting climate change. Here in Canada, and around the world, we need transformative action to protect natural ecosystems now and into the future.

Today, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, announced that the Government of Canada has invested \$2 million over four years in Kootenay Connect — a program to help protect and restore species at risk habitat and ecological connectivity in four biodiversity hotspots in the Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia.

This funding, provided through the Nature Legacy's Canada Nature Fund, enables partners to advance the protection of habitat vital to the survival of iconic Canadian species.

Kootenay Connect focuses on the Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor, Creston Valley, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, and the Columbia Valley Wetlands and will help to conserve important habitat for 28 species at risk including: grizzly bears, northern leopard frogs, western screech-owls, American badgers, Lewis's woodpeckers, little brown myotis bats, and many other important species.

### Quotes

“Conserving habitat for 28 species at risk – including grizzly bears and American badgers – is a necessary step to support the survival of these iconic animals, while protecting nature and fighting climate change. This on-the-ground work led by the Kootenay Conservation Program showcases what can be achieved for Canada's biodiversity through collaboration. By working together with local communities, we are working towards Canada's goal of protecting a quarter of our lands and a quarter of our oceans by 2025.”

– The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

“We appreciate the ‘community-nominated’ aspect of Canada Nature Fund that relied upon our local scientific assessments of what is important for landscape-level conservation in our region to improve the conservation status of suites of federally-listed species at risk and their habitats. This multi-year funding for Kootenay Connect has enabled the Kootenay Conservation Program to build a regional team of 25 partners such as conservation land trusts, stewardship groups, independent biologists and First Nations who have collaboratively developed a package of over 50 inter-related subprojects that target real-world conservation issues with on-the ground restoration and enhancement actions.



– Marcy Mahr, Kootenay Connect Project Manager, Kootenay Conservation Program

## Quick facts

- The project focuses on four areas in the Kootenay region of British Columbia that contain important wetland and riparian habitat and are hotspots for biodiversity, totalling approximately 1 million hectares.
- Based on leading-edge science, Kootenay Connect will identify, restore, improve, and steward a variety of habitats at key locations to support numerous species at risk and improve ecological connectivity across the landscape in order to allow species to respond to climate change and other large disturbances by migrating to new suitable habitat and/or shifting their range.
- Because habitat connectivity is so important to the survival of species at risk, Kootenay Connect works across multiple jurisdictions to encompass an entire landscape.
- Wetland habitat restored in the Creston Valley in the first year of the project is already being used by breeding Northern Leopard Frogs, an endangered species.
- Through Budget 2018, the Government announced \$1.35 billion for the Nature Legacy initiative. This amount represents the largest investment in nature conservation in Canadian history.
- Canada Nature Fund's Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk is a \$15.6 million, 4-year funding initiative administered by ECCC to support community-led projects that protect and conserve species at risk.

## Associated links

- Kootenay Connect project:  
<https://kootenayconservation.ca/kootenay-connect/>
- Video on habitat restoration work for the Northern Leopard Frog:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmzo9tPyaW0>
- Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/wildlife-plants-species/species-risk/pan-canadian-approach.html>

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