

Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund

Summary, March 2022

CVLCF Background

- The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF) was established in Electoral Areas F and G as a Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) Service in 2008
- Residents pay \$20 per parcel per year in tax towards conservation
- This fund supports conservation of aquatic systems and water, wildlife and habitat

CVLCF Accomplishments

- \$2.55 million invested from 2008 to 2021; over \$22.6 million in partner dollars leveraged
- Supported securement of four properties:
 - Marion Creek Benchlands (220 ha; 544 acres)
 - Columbia Lake - Lot 48 (127 ha; 315 acres - part of a network of 7,600 ha; 18,500 acres)
 - Windermere West (a.k.a. SRL-K2 Ranch; 4,529 ha; 11,192 acres - property is comprised of 12 parcels)
 - Columbia Wetlands – Edgewater (172 ha; 423 acres)
- Approved 101 grants that have focused on: restoration (grassland, creek and wetland); invasive plant management; species at risk recovery; water quality monitoring; climate conservation action and incentives for landowners

CVLCF Benefits

- Protecting land for long-term conservation
- Citizen-science water quality monitoring
- Reducing negative impacts of invasive plants
- Protecting bat colonies that reduce agricultural and forestry pests
- Recovery of species at risk (Kokanee, northern leopard frogs, bank swallows)
- Completing restoration activities that reduce fuel load and fire hazard
- Supporting functioning wetlands, creeks, and grasslands that improve water quality
- Increasing recreational benefits with new trails, boardwalks and signs
- Creating local economic opportunities for jobs, contracts, materials and supplies

CVLCF Leadership

- Columbia Valley Directors and their communities are seen as innovative leaders

- Local Conservation Funds have been established in the Regional District of Central Kootenay (2014); Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (2016), and Regional District of North Okanagan (2020) based on the CVLCF example

Supporting Goals of OCPs

Projects and acquisitions supported by the CVLCF have worked towards many of the values and goals outlined in the Columbia Valley's Official Community Plans (OCPs) including:

- “Encourage the **protection of natural ecosystems** unique to the plan area.” (Lake Windermere OCP)
- “Maintain **habitat connectivity** through undisturbed open space and wildlife corridors to support the movement of various wildlife species and access to foraging and nesting areas.” (Lake Windermere OCP)
- Retain **critical wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors and ungulate winter range.**” (Toby Benches OCP)
- “Retain designated **wildlife corridors and undisturbed wildlife habitat.**” (Steamboat Jubilee Mountain OCP)
- “... **protecting ecologically sensitive natural areas**, including floodplains, riparian zones and wildlife corridors.” (Fairmont Hot Springs Area OCP)
- “Recognize **environmentally sensitive areas** and the animal and plant species that rely on these ecosystems...” (Toby Benches OCP)
- “Enhance the **wildlife and habitat values** surrounding the plan area by preserving important natural areas and wildlife corridors within the plan area.” (Fairmont Hot Springs Area OCP)
- “Protect the **wildlife and habitat values** surrounding the plan area by supporting conservation efforts in important natural areas and wildlife corridors.” (Steamboat Jubilee OCP)
- “Recognize the importance of containing and **controlling noxious / invasive plants** and preventing their establishment.” (Toby Benches OCP)
- “**Recognize the contribution that the natural environment and wildlife make** to the economy of the plan area.” (Toby Benches OCP)
- “Support **rehabilitation, restoration and enhancement of environmentally sensitive areas** which were subject to negative impact in the past.” (Toby Benches OCP)

Ongoing Benefits

The Directors of the Regional District of East Kootenay voted in November 2016 to remove the date clause from the CVLCF Service Bylaw which continues this Fund indefinitely into the future.

KCP Contact Information

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