

Local Conservation Fund for the Slocan Valley: Frequently Asked Questions

September 2022

What is a Local Conservation Fund?

A Local Conservation Fund is a local government service that creates dedicated funding to support local high priority conservation projects.

- The Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund was established in Electoral Areas A, D and E as a Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) Service in 2014.
- This service provides funding for conservation projects that are not the existing responsibility of the federal, provincial, or local governments.
- Local Conservation Funds support high priority projects that benefit wildlife, habitat, and water, which in turn support healthy communities.
- Landowners pay \$15 per parcel per year towards a dedicated conservation fund.

What types of projects are funded?

Local Conservation Funds are dedicated to conservation and ensure that funding addresses local priority issues. Examples of the types of projects funded include:

- Incentives for local farmers to steward their land for habitat as well as food production
- Wetland and creek restoration
- Improvement of fish and wildlife habitat
- Water monitoring to understand the impacts of climate change on water supply
- Creation of native plant pollinator meadows
- Reduced human-wildlife conflict projects like cost-share electric fencing
- Monitoring for early detection of aquatic invasive species
- Land acquisition of ecologically significant properties

Are there economic benefits?

Local Conservation Funds serve as seed funding for projects. Each \$15 paid per parcel turns into \$75 with matching and in-kind support.

- Funds are spent locally, which creates added economic benefit through creating local jobs, the purchase of materials and supplies, and work for contractors and businesses.
- From 2008 to 2021, the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund distributed over \$2.2 million which raised an additional \$22 million towards the projects.
- From 2016 to 2021, the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund distributed \$468,000 which raised an additional \$2.1 million towards the projects.
- Projects that receive Local Conservation Funds have successfully attracted a wide range of other funding partners based on this initial investment including regional funders, federal and provincial governments, utility companies, businesses, foundations, and non-profit societies.

How are projects chosen?

Project proposals are reviewed by an independent, volunteer panel of technical experts before being decided on by local elected officials.

- The Technical Review Committee is made up of local experts (e.g., biologists, professors, foresters, etc.) who review and rank proposals according to pre-determined technical criteria and make recommendations on the perceived effectiveness of proposed projects.
- Based on Technical Review Committee recommendations, elected officials ultimately decide which projects receive funding and for how much in any given year.

Has this service in the Kootenays been successful?

This service has been established in the Kootenays and Okanagan and continues to spread.

- Local Conservation Funds in the Kootenays have supported over 120 local conservation grants.
- The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund was established by the Regional District of East Kootenay in 2008 and Directors unanimously voted to remove the 10-year clause so it would continue after 2018.
- The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen established a Local Conservation Fund in 2016 and the Regional District of North Okanagan established a Local Conservation Fund in 2019.

Is there a Local Conservation Fund in Area H – Slocan Valley?

This service is currently being proposed by the RDCK for Area H (Slocan Valley).

- Residents of the Slocan Valley RDCK Area H will vote by referendum on whether or not they would like a Local Conservation Fund service on October 15, 2022.

How do I vote?

The referendum question asks whether people would be willing to pay \$15 per parcel, per year, into a dedicated conservation fund that would benefit wildlife, habitat, and water.

- Vote on October 15 at Hills Fire Hall, Bosun Hall in New Denver, Silverton Hall, Winlaw Hall or Crescent Valley Hall. Vote early on October 5 and 12 at Bosun Hall in New Denver or Winlaw Hall. If you will be away for all of these dates, you can request a mail-in ballot from elections@rdck.bc.ca (you need to include your name, phone number, email, mailing address, and physical address if different).

For more information:

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- For more information see: <https://kootenayconservation.ca/LCF-Area-H-referendum>