

Regional District of Central Kootenay Local Conservation Fund Summary, March 2026



RDCK Local Conservation Fund Background

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

- The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) Local Conservation Fund was established in Electoral Areas A, D and E as an RDCK Service in 2014.
- In October 2022, residents of RDCK Electoral Area H voted by referendum to join the fund, expanding the service to the Slocan Valley and in September 2023, the RDCK approved Electoral Area F to join the service after the Alternate Approval Process indicated public support.
- This service provides funding for conservation projects that are not the existing responsibility of federal, provincial, or local governments and that benefit wildlife, habitat, and water, which in turn support healthy communities.
- Landowners pay \$15 per parcel per year towards a dedicated conservation fund.

RDCK Local Conservation Fund Accomplishments

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

- From 2016 to 2025, the RDCK LCF distributed \$866,000, leveraging over \$2.76 million in partner dollars and in-kind contributions, not including two conservation acquisitions, which if included, raises the leveraged funding over \$21 million.
- The fund has supported the securement of two properties for conservation:
 - Next Creek (7,882 ha), adding to Canada's largest private land conservation acquisition within the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Darkwoods Conservation Area; and
 - Cottonwood Lake (49 ha), protecting the upland and dryland zones upslope of Cottonwood Lake from deforestation, erosion, mudslides and avalanche.
- Approved 65 stewardship and securement projects that address community conservation priorities.

RDCK Local Conservation Fund Benefits

Local Conservation Funds are dedicated to conservation and ensure that funding addresses local conservation priorities. Benefits of Local Conservation Fund projects have included:

- Expansion of Darkwoods Conservation Area for long-term conservation
- Citizen-science water quality and quantity monitoring
- Protecting bat colonies that reduce agricultural and forestry pests

- Activities that contribute to the recovery of species at risk such as Coeur d'Alene salamander, western toad, and western painted turtle
- Restoring and enhancing wetland and riparian habitats to aid in improving water retention and water quality, climate resilience, erosion control, and provision of habitat for wildlife
- Creation of wildflower meadows to promote healthy populations of pollinators
- Reduction of human-wildlife conflict and protection of grizzly bears
- Increased awareness of the Shorelines Guidance Document that protects Kootenay Lake
- Mitigation of the negative impacts of invasive plants and improved forage for ungulates
- Removal of derelict fencing to reduce barriers for safe passage of wildlife
- Funds are spent locally, which creates added economic benefits through creating local jobs, the purchase of materials and supplies, and work for local contractors and businesses

RDCK Leadership and Success

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

- RDCK Local Conservation Fund service area Directors and their communities are seen as innovative leaders.
- Based on the success of Local Conservation Funds in the Kootenays, the Regional Districts of Okanagan Similkameen and North Okanagan adopted Local Conservation Funds in 2016 and 2020, respectively, and other areas such in the province are exploring the service.
- RDCK service area Directors commissioned a Guidance Document for the fund to identify strategic priorities for conservation in the region; no other Local Conservation Fund has taken this type of strategic approach.

Supporting Local Land Use Goals

Stewardship and securement projects supported by the RDCK Local Conservation Fund have worked towards many of the values and goals outlined in land use plans for the RDCK including:

- To preserve water quality in Kootenay Lake and other identifiable lakes.
- Protect, restore and enhance natural areas and establish an interconnected ecosystem network of protected conservation areas and corridors.
- Maintain high water quality of groundwater and surface water sources of domestic supply.
- Protect riparian stream corridors and wetlands in support of maintaining and enhancing fish and aquatic habitat.
- Foster an awareness of the values associated with the natural environment and conserve sensitive and significant natural features and values from negative impacts of development.
- Encourage the maintenance of biodiversity, important to the biological functioning and ecological integrity of the area.
- Conserve the natural values in recognition of their importance to the local economy, residents, visitors, as a natural amenity, and for wildlife and ecological functioning.

KCP Contact Information

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