

## GUIDANCE FOR 2026 LOCAL CONSERVATION FUND APPLICANTS

### General Instructions

This application guide was developed to assist applicants with preparing and submitting a project application to the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF). The guide provides information on project eligibility and requirements and an overview of the application cycle and evaluation process. All questions related to the application process should be directed to Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) at [info@kootenayconservation.ca](mailto:info@kootenayconservation.ca). New project applicants are strongly encouraged to contact KCP to discuss their project idea prior to applying.

**Applications must be submitted via email to Kootenay Conservation Program by the deadline posted on the KCP website at: <https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley/>.**

### What is the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund?

In 2008, the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) adopted a bylaw through public referendum to establish a service for the purpose of creating a Local Conservation Fund in the Columbia Valley. Participating areas include Electoral Areas F and G, Village of Radium Hot Springs, District of Invermere, and Village of Canal Flats. Up to \$20 per parcel is collected annually. The RDEK is responsible for maintaining the fund, final project approvals, grant payments and financial audits of the fund. KCP works in partnership with the RDEK to co-deliver the Local Conservation Fund service. Under a formal written agreement with the RDEK, KCP manages fund inquiries, applications, the technical review process, and project evaluations.

The CVLCF supports projects that reflect local priorities, which are: conservation of wildlife and habitat, grasslands, water, and aquatic ecosystems. Local government elected officials in the Local Conservation Fund service area decide which projects to support according to criteria in the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#), recommendations from the CVLCF Technical Review Committee, and their own local priorities.

More information on the CVLCF can be found on the KCP website at:  
<https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley/>.

### Who can apply?

Eligible applicants must be a registered non-profit organization, First Nation, or local government. Any private sector proposal must be sponsored by an eligible organization.

### What types of projects are eligible for funding?

Funding may not be used to relieve any level of government of its legal or financial obligations. CVLCF funding is available for conservation projects that result in the reduction of a known threat to biodiversity. Projects that are technically sound and effective and provide value for money through partnerships with other funders are given priority. In general, projects that are focused on research, planning, and education/outreach are not considered for funding, although these activities may be considered if they are a component of an on-the-ground conservation project. The focus is on private land within the service area, but projects on public (e.g., Crown) land may also be considered.

The list of mandatory project requirements can be found in Section B of the Project Application form. Appendix 1 (page 9) of the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) contains a list of ineligible projects, and examples of past CVLCF projects can be found on the KCP website at: <https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley-local-conservation-fund-projects/>.

### **What are the CVLCF key dates?**

The CVLCF runs on the following general annual timeline:

- End of August – Call for proposals opens
- End of October – Applications due (see KCP website for specific date and time each year)
- November/December – Technical Review Committee reviews proposals and provides recommendations to the RDEK
- January – RDEK Columbia Valley Directors review proposals and Technical Review Committee recommendations
- February – RDEK Board of Directors completes final approvals for projects
- March – Proponents are notified via email
- April/May – Funding agreement documents are finalized and mailed to proponents

Reporting deadlines: Interim and final reports are typically due on or around October 1 and January 31, respectively. Reporting templates are provided by KCP on the [CVLCF webpage](#).

Note: Land acquisition or covenant proposals may be submitted at any time during the year provided there is sufficient time for the Technical Review Committee and the RDEK to review proposals.

### **How are proposals evaluated?**

All CVLCF proposals are reviewed by a Technical Review Committee to ensure they receive a sound technical review based on a fair assessment of proposal merit and project effectiveness. Proposal ranking guidelines and Technical Evaluation Criteria can be found in Appendix 2 of the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#). The Technical Review Committee makes recommendations to the RDEK based on these criteria for their consideration in final funding approval. The Technical Review Committee may request additional information or clarification from the project proponent prior to making their final recommendation to the RDEK.

### **Other frequently asked questions:**

#### **1. Can we apply for more than one project?**

Yes, an organization can submit more than one proposal per funding year. KCP strongly encourages proponents writing a new project proposal to contact KCP to discuss their idea.

#### **2. How much of our project will the CVLCF fund?**

The CVLCF does not have a minimum requirement for matched funding. However, Technical Evaluation Criteria (provided in Appendix 2 of the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#)) includes points for cost effectiveness and cost sharing.

#### **3. What is the maximum amount of funding we can apply for?**

There is no maximum amount of funding that an organization can apply for. However, “typical” amounts of funding provided for past CVLCF projects can be reviewed on the KCP website at <https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley/>.

#### 4. Are letters of support required?

Letters of support are not required, but including up to three letters of support is strongly encouraged. Letters should indicate what the supporting organization is contributing to the project (e.g., providing in-kind services, supplies, outreach or planning support, matched funding, etc.).

#### 5. How is the funding administered?

The RDEK will prepare funding agreements between the successful proponent and the RDEK. Upon receipt of the signed agreement, the first payment of 75% of the approved funding will be released. The final 25% payment will be issued upon receipt and approval of the final project report.

### Completing the Application

All applicants should review the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) before applying. Applicants must ensure they have the most up-to-date versions of CVLCF application forms, which are available on the KCP website when the funding application period is open: <https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley/>.

#### All applications must include:

1. Completed *CVLCF-Project-Application-Form* (fillable PDF available on KCP website)
2. Completed *CVLCF-Project-Application-Form-Section-C* or *CVLCF-SECUREMENT-Project-Application-Form-Section-C* (Word templates available on KCP website)
3. Completed *CVLCF-Section-D-Budget-Template* (Excel template available on KCP website)
4. Letters of Support (three maximum)

Note that documents may be submitted singly or combined as a single PDF application. **However, please ensure the budget template is submitted in Excel format separately.**

#### Reminders:

- All projects must meet the mandatory requirements provided in the Project Application Form.
- Project Outline (Section C) **must not exceed** the maximum page limit.
- The Total Budget and Total CVLCF Portion in the budget template must match the Total Funding Requested and Total Project Budget provided in Section A of the Project Application Form.
- KCP strongly encourages proponents writing a new project proposal to contact KCP to discuss their idea.
- Applications must be submitted to Kootenay Conservation Program prior to the application deadline. Email applications to [info@kootenayconservation.ca](mailto:info@kootenayconservation.ca).

## PART 1: Project Application (PDF Form)

### SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

All questions must be answered.

1. **Application Date:** Enter the date on which the application is submitted. Applications must be received before 4:30 pm MT on the date of deadline (see the [CVLCF website](#) for specific date and time each year).
2. **Project Title:** Select a title that concisely identifies the project – try for 5 words or less. If this is a multi-year project, please use the same title as the previous year.
3. **Proponent:** Identify the legal name of the eligible proponent that will enter into a legal funding agreement with the RDEK (must be a registered non-profit organization, First Nation, or local government). Include who will lead this project and be the main contact. The proponent email address is where all correspondence, including notification of approval status, agreement information and other project details will be sent. Include Organization Registration Number.
4. **Partner:** If there is a partner organization involved in delivering the project, identify them here. Partner organizations are not required to be a registered non-profit organization, First Nation, or local government, but include Organization Registration Number if applicable. The partner contact will receive copies of emails regarding project approval and reporting.
5. **Total Funding Requested:** Indicate the total cash amount that you are requesting from the CVLCF for the current funding year.
6. **Total Project Budget:** Identify the total cost estimated for the completion of the project including cash and in-kind contributions from all project partners for the current funding year.
7. **Will this project proceed without CVLCF funding?** Select Yes or No.
8. **Multi-Year Projects:** Multi-year projects up to a maximum of three years may be recommended for funding. Although successful proponents are not required to apply for funding each year, subsequent funding is contingent on submission and approval of an annual interim report and available RDEK funding. Proponents will be required to enter into an agreement with the RDEK each year the project is active. Indicate on the form if you are applying for multi-year funding (select Yes or No) and the amount of CVLCF funding requested for each subsequent project year.

### SECTION B – MANDATORY CRITERIA

All projects must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding under this program. All questions must be answered. If the answer is “no” to any question, the project will not be considered for funding.

1. **In which geographic areas will your project occur?**  
The project must occur within one or more of the listed geographical areas. Select all geographical areas in which the project occurs. CVLCF funding cannot be spent outside of this geographic area. If

in doubt, check the map provided on the KCP website: [https://kootenayconservation.ca/wp-content/uploads/CVLocalConservationFundSA\\_v2.pdf](https://kootenayconservation.ca/wp-content/uploads/CVLocalConservationFundSA_v2.pdf)

- Village of Radium Hot Springs
- District of Invermere
- Village of Canal Flats
- RDEK Electoral Area F
- RDEK Electoral Area G

**2. Project addresses International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) threats to biodiversity targets, specifically at least one of the following:**

Ensure your project addresses at least one of the listed threats and **select all** that apply. See page 4 of the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) and the [IUCN Threats Classification Scheme Version 3.2](#) for more information.

- a) Residential and commercial development;
- b) Climate change;
- c) Invasive and/or other problematic species;
- d) Transportation and service corridors;
- e) Fire and fire suppression; and/or
- f) Human intrusions and disturbance (recreational activities).

**3. Project meets the basic requirements for an eligible activity.**

Select Yes or No. See Appendix 1 (page 9) of the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) for a list of ineligible projects. Projects that can demonstrate a reduction of a known threat to a biodiversity target will be given priority. The focus is on private land, but projects on public (e.g., Crown) land will also be considered.

**4. Proponent is a registered non-profit organization, First Nation, or local government.**

Select Yes or No. The funding agreement will be between the RDEK and the eligible legal entity, although a partner organization or individual can apply and undertake a project if they partner with an eligible organization.

**5. Proponent or partner is prepared to make a presentation on the outcomes of their work and submit a written report on an annual basis.**

Select Yes or No. Interim and final reporting templates will be provided by KCP. Successful proponents will be required to report on project activities and results (including measurable outcomes), how the project reduces known threats to biodiversity targets, and project effectiveness. KCP and/or local governments occasionally host events where CVLCF projects are featured and may provide opportunities for presentations.

**6. Proponent or partner is willing to make a short (1-2 minute) "selfie" video about their project using a smart phone or other device OR has already submitted a project video in a previous year.**

Select Yes or No. Fund applicants that have previously submitted a video are not required to submit a new video for the same project but are welcomed to do so if they have the time and capacity. Example videos can be found featured on the [KCP YouTube Channel](#) in the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund playlist.

## PART B: Project Outline (Word Template)

### SECTION C – PROJECT OUTLINE

Please download and complete the Word template provided on the CVLCF webpage on the Kootenay Conservation Program website: <https://kootenayconservation.ca/columbia-valley/>. All questions must be answered.

**Total Page Limit:** Section C must be kept to **8 pages or less**, using the Word template provided and size 11 font. Note that if Section C is longer, additional pages will not be included in the Technical Review Committee proposal review. Word counts for each question are provided as a suggestion. Letters of support, maps, photographs, and budget are not included in the page count.

**For Securement proposals only:** Please use the securement-specific project application form, which includes questions on site background and direction for future use and management of the proposed acquisition.

**1. Project description and rationale: Why is this project important for conservation and how will it benefit the upper Columbia Valley? (~ 500 words)**

Clearly and concisely describe why this project is important for conservation and how it will benefit the CVLCF service area. Please include if the project builds on conservation measures from relevant Official Community Plans or other government initiatives. The framework for the Technical Evaluation Criteria is based on the IUCN classification of direct threats that may be past, ongoing, and/or likely to occur in the future. The criteria include if there is a clearly demonstrated ability for the results of the project to reduce an identified threat to a biodiversity target. Facts, statistics, and/or references to other related projects that support the need for the project can be included and referenced where appropriate. See the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) and the [IUCN Threats Classification Scheme Version 3.2](#) for more information.

**2. Describe the primary goal of your project. List its objectives and expected outcomes, including how you will measure project success and know that you've met its goal/objectives. Please include expected measurable outcomes, such as hectares of habitat restored, number of roost sites identified, hectares of land secured, etc. (~ 1,500 words)**

Clearly describe the project goal (ultimate impact or outcome), objectives (precise, concrete, and measurable steps required to achieve the goal), and outcomes (intended results or deliverables). Using bullets or organizing this information into a numbered list can be a helpful way to clearly outline these items. Include information on project methods and how benefits to conservation and project success will be measured and achieved. Technical Evaluation Criteria includes whether there is an evaluation of project benefit or other measurables or indicators identified in the proposal. Include on-the-ground measurable outcomes where possible such as hectares of habitat restored, number of roost sites identified, hectares of land secured, etc.

**3. Does this project build on an existing project? If yes, please explain and briefly include relevant project accomplishments to date. (~ 300 words)**

Briefly describe if the proposed project builds on an existing project and explain relevant accomplishments to date.

**4. Who will be primarily responsible for delivering the project and what are their qualifications? (~ 300 words; List in bullet form)**

Include the experience and credentials of the primary project contact and key team members. Technical Evaluation Criteria includes whether applicants have the capacity to deliver the project.

- 5. Who will you be partnering with on this project and what are their roles (including partners that are providing funding)? Note that these organizations may be contacted to confirm their role in the project. (~ 300 words; List in bullet form)**

Technical Evaluation Criteria includes ranking the project on its potential to involve other agencies and leverage funds from other sources.

- 6. Using the table below, provide an outline (Project Workplan) detailing the activities and deliverables through to completion of the final report. Include dates where possible and add more rows if required. NOTE: If this application is for multi-year funding, please include information for future years (to a maximum of 3 years) in chronological order.** Clearly and concisely outline the activities required for successful project delivery. Each step should be detailed on its own row, and include the activity, associated deliverables, and anticipated date of completion. Successful proponents will be required to report on the project activities related to this outline. If the project is for multi-year funding, include activities that will take place in all project years in chronological order.

See below for example tables for single year and multi-year projects.

Project Workplan for a **single year** riparian restoration project:

| Activity                               | Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Timeline   |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Project planning                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire project coordinator</li> <li>Develop annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    | April 2026 |
| Site selection                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop site selection criteria and site candidate list for restoration with Steering Committee</li> </ul>                                                                               | May 2026   |
| Landowner outreach                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage riparian area landowners to discuss restoration activities and confirm access and participation with 3 landowners</li> </ul>                                                      | May 2026   |
| Site assessment and restoration design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire qualified consultant</li> <li>Delineate riparian zones and restoration areas</li> <li>Design restoration prescriptions for 3 sites</li> </ul>                                       | May 2026   |
| Plant selection / procurement          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create site-specific plant list</li> <li>Order plants from nursery</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | May 2026   |
| Invasive plant removal                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for invasive plant removal</li> <li>Schedule and conduct invasive plant removal at 3 sites, manually treating 0.25 ha of invasive plants</li> </ul> | June 2026  |
| Prescription construction              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete restoration construction at 3 riparian areas (1 ha total)</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | June 2026  |
| Riparian vegetation planting           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for planting at riparian sites</li> <li>Plant at least 100 live stakes</li> </ul>                                                                              | July 2026  |
| Bird habitat enhancement               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build and install 4 duck nesting boxes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        | July 2026  |

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                               |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Education event                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver at least 1 education event on importance of riparian areas</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | July 2026                     |
| Site monitoring                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and collect data on success of invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery at 3 sites</li> <li>• Target: 80% success for invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery</li> </ul> | August 2026                   |
| Project evaluation and reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate final restoration status based on monitoring data</li> <li>• Write and submit final report to project partners and KCP</li> </ul>                                                    | September 2026 – January 2027 |

Project Workplan for **multi-year** riparian restoration project:

| Activity                               | Milestone/Task                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Date        |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Project planning                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire project coordinator</li> <li>• Develop annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       | April 2026  |
| Site selection                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop site selection criteria and site candidate list for restoration with Steering Committee</li> </ul>                                                                                    | May 2026    |
| Landowner outreach                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage riparian area landowners to discuss restoration activities and confirm access and participation with 3 landowners</li> </ul>                                                           | May 2026    |
| Site assessment and restoration design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire qualified consultant</li> <li>• Delineate riparian zones and restoration areas</li> <li>• Design restoration prescriptions for 3 sites</li> </ul>                                        | May 2026    |
| Plant selection / procurement          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create site-specific plant list</li> <li>• Order plants from nursery</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | May 2026    |
| Invasive plant removal                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for invasive plant removal</li> <li>• Schedule and conduct invasive plant removal at 3 sites, manually treating 0.25 ha of invasive plants</li> </ul>    | June 2026   |
| Prescription construction              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete restoration construction at 3 riparian areas (1 ha total)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | June 2026   |
| Riparian Vegetation planting           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for planting at riparian sites</li> <li>• Plant at least 100 live stakes</li> </ul>                                                                                 | July 2026   |
| Bird habitat enhancement               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and install 4 duck nesting boxes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                             | July 2026   |
| Education event                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver at least 1 education event on importance of riparian areas</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 | July 2026   |
| Site monitoring                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and collect data on success of invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery at 3 sites</li> <li>• Target: 80% success for invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery</li> </ul> | August 2026 |
| Project planning                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire project coordinator</li> <li>• Develop annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       | April 2027  |

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                               |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Invasive plant removal           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for invasive plant removal</li> <li>Schedule and conduct invasive plant removal at 3 sites, manually treating 1 ha of invasive plants</li> </ul>       | June 2027                     |
| Additional grass seeding         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct complimentary grass seeding in areas where riparian vegetation was planted and restoration disturbance took place</li> </ul>                                                        | June 2027                     |
| Site monitoring                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and collect data on success of invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery at 3 sites</li> <li>Target 80%: success for invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery</li> </ul> | August 2027                   |
| Project planning                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire project coordinator</li> <li>Develop annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       | April 2028                    |
| Invasive plant removal           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and recruit &gt; 5 volunteers for invasive plant removal</li> <li>Schedule and conduct invasive plant removal at 3 sites, manually treating 1 ha of invasive plants</li> </ul>       | June 2028                     |
| Field tour                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host final field tour for project partners and volunteers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | August 2028                   |
| Site monitoring                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and collect data on success of invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery at 3 sites</li> <li>Target: 80% success for invasive plant removal and vegetation recovery</li> </ul> | August 2028                   |
| Project evaluation and reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate final restoration status based on monitoring data collected during Years 1 – 3</li> <li>Write and submit final report to project partners and KCP</li> </ul>                       | September 2028 – January 2029 |

**7. How will the public be made aware of the project and the CVLCF's contribution? Please include ideas on where you would like to present the outcome of your project. (~ 200 words; List in bullet form)**

The Technical Evaluation Criteria includes whether there is a clearly described extension component of the project (e.g., communicating results to the community, resource managers, workshops, reports, presentations, etc.).

**8. If you have applied to the CVLCF for this project before, explain how you have addressed previous Technical Review Committee comments in this proposal. (~ 300 words)**

Technical Review Committee comments are provided to fund applicants in notification letters. Please address all Technical Review Committee comments (list in bullet form). Contact KCP if you require a copy of Technical Review Committee comments from the previous year.

**9. Please attach up to three letters of support to your application and list the organizations they are from.**

Letters of support are not required but are strongly encouraged. Letters should indicate what the supporting organization is contributing to the project (e.g., providing in-kind services, supplies, outreach or planning support, matching funding, etc.).

**10. If relevant, please attach a project map (including legend) and/or photographs. (~ 1 page)**

If a map or photographs are required to understand the scope of your project, please attach a 1-page area map or photographs.

### **PART 3: Budget (Excel Template)**

#### **Section D – PROJECT BUDGET**

Include a full project budget using the budget template provided on the [CVLCF webpage on the KCP website](#). Please note:

- The Technical Evaluation Criteria in the [CVLCF Terms of Reference](#) includes assessment of value for the funding being requested, cost benefits of the project, if the project budget is realistic, and the value of leveraged funds from other agencies and organizations.
- Successful proponents will be asked to report the percentage of the CVLCF budget that was spent within the Columbia Valley and are encouraged to purchase materials and supplies locally and hire locally where possible.
- Please include hourly or day rates for all staff and contractors, and cost per unit for materials, supplies, lab services, etc.
- Please use current Canada Revenue Agency [reasonable per-kilometre allowance](#) to calculate mileage costs and [standard per diem rates](#).
- The Total Budget and Total CVLCF Portion in the budget template must match the Total Funding Requested and Total Project Budget provided in Section A of the Project Application Form.
- **For multi-year proposals only:** please fill in a budget template for **each year** and indicate by **bolding** the row which components are Variable Activities (activities that are specific to one year) versus Core Activities (regular annual programming). Each year should be on a different tab within the same Excel workbook.
- Do not make changes to the Excel template (e.g., do not delete or add columns) and ensure the budget template is submitted in Excel format.