



Kootenay  
Conservation  
Program  
KCP

# Local Conservation Funds

## Working with local governments to collectively support regional conservation

**Kootenay Conservation Program** is a broad partnership of over 85 organizations that work together to conserve the biological diversity and naturally-functioning ecosystems of the Kootenay region. One way we accomplish this collective effort is by building financial support for conservation in the region through partnering with local governments to establish and administer Local Conservation Funds.

**A Local Conservation Fund creates dedicated funding for local conservation projects.**

Local Conservation Funds not only foster resilient landscapes and healthy communities, but also provide an innovative way to support the vital role of private lands in regional conservation efforts.

*KCP respectfully acknowledges that this work occurs throughout the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Ktunaxa, Secwépemc, Sinixt, and Syilx Okanagan peoples, whose values and cultures continue to inspire and guide the stewardship of this region.*



**187**

grants approved



**\$3.4 million**

in funding awarded



**\$30.6 million**

in additional funding leveraged



**13,738 hectares**

of land conserved



**292 hectares**

of land restored



**14 years**

of water monitoring

# Local Conservation Funds in the Kootenays

Kootenay Conservation Program works in partnership with local governments to deliver Local Conservation Funds in two areas of the Kootenays: the Regional District of East Kootenay's (RDEK) Columbia Valley and the Regional District of Central Kootenay's (RDCK) Kootenay Lake and Slocan Valley areas.



## Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund

The first Local Conservation Fund created in Canada started right in our backyard, in the Columbia Valley. Kootenay Conservation Program worked with the RDEK to establish the fund, which was approved via referendum in 2008. Property owners in the service area pay a parcel tax of about \$20 per parcel, per year, which generates \$250,000 annually for local projects. The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund has since been used as a model of success for establishing conservation funds in the Central Kootenay, South Okanagan, and North Okanagan, and is currently being explored elsewhere in BC.

## Impact

Over a 15 year period, the RDEK approved 129 grants, investing nearly \$3.1 million in local conservation projects, which leveraged an additional \$27.3 million in grants and in-kind contributions. The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund has supported a wide range of projects, including habitat restoration, species-at-risk stewardship, invasive species management, incentives for farm stewardship, and water quality and quantity monitoring. Additionally, the fund has supported land trusts to purchase five properties, conserving 5,807 hectares of priority wildlife habitat in the East Kootenay.



© Catriona Leven



© Pat Morrow



© Kayla Tillapaugh

© Madeleine Guenette



## RDCK Local Conservation Fund

Building on the experience of establishing the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund, Kootenay Conservation Program supported the RDCK in establishing a similar service in 2014, also via referendum, in Electoral Areas A, D and E around Kootenay Lake. Landowners pay a parcel tax of \$15 per parcel, per year. The service has since been expanded to include Electoral Areas F and H (the remainder of Kootenay Lake and the Slocan Valley), illustrating the local commitment to conserving water, wildlife, and habitat.

## Impact

Over a 9 year period, the RDCK approved 57 grants totalling \$726,000 and leveraging more than \$2.45 million in external grants and in-kind support. When factoring in two conservation land acquisitions, the leveraged funding increases to over \$20 million. The RDCK Local Conservation Fund has supported a diverse range of projects, including pollinator habitat creation, human-wildlife conflict reduction, water quality and quantity monitoring, wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement, and the purchase of two local properties for conservation.



## Benefits of Local Conservation Funds

### Healthy Communities

Local Conservation Funds support projects that address the health of natural ecosystems and wild spaces, which in turn support healthy communities. They are a way for communities to address local conservation issues residents know are important, and are a tangible investment in clean air, safe water and natural areas—ensuring these vital resources remain for future generations to enjoy.

### Economic Benefits

Local Conservation Funds don't just benefit nature—they also strengthen local communities and economies. Every dollar is leveraged by at least 4:1, and up to 9:1, through attracting

additional funding that supports local projects. Funds are spent locally, creating economic benefits through the purchase of materials and supplies while generating work for a wide range of contractors and businesses. Additionally, broader granting programs look more favourably on projects that have local funding contributions.

### Supporting Land Conservation

Land trusts can apply to Local Conservation Funds for support in acquiring land or establishing covenants, ensuring the long-term protection of private lands for conservation. Between 2010 and 2024, seven such applications were approved in the Kootenays, helping to conserve

13,738 hectares of ecologically significant land. These protected areas are managed to safeguard their integrity and other conservation values.

### What is the Role of Kootenay Conservation Program?

KCP works with local governments to assist with delivering each Local Conservation Fund, supporting the administrative responsibilities while remaining independent of funding decisions. Our role is to ease the workload for local governments, serve as a neutral liaison with project proponents, and facilitate the technical review of proposals to ensure informed and effective conservation funding.

# Learn More About Local Conservation Funds

Connect with us to learn more about how Local Conservation Funds benefit conservation in the Kootenays and how you can establish one in your area: [info@kootenayconservation.ca](mailto:info@kootenayconservation.ca)



→ [kootenayconservation.ca/local-conservation-funds](https://kootenayconservation.ca/local-conservation-funds)



Kootenay  
Conservation  
Program  
KCP