



HABITAT
CONSERVATION TRUST
FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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FOUNDATION PROVIDES OVER \$800K FOR LOCAL FISH & WILDLIFE PROJECTS

Fish and wildlife in the Kootenays will be better off this year, thanks to a contribution of over \$800,000 made by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation for conservation projects in the region.

The environmental granting organization announced on Friday that it will be providing funding for 15 projects exclusive to the Kootenays, and several others with activities taking place within the region.

The largest of the grants went to the East Kootenay Grassland Ecosystem Restoration program, which received close to \$200,000 for its work in using prescribed burns to restore wildlife habitat in areas that have been negatively affected by suppression of the natural fire cycle.

By using controlled, low-intensity burns in areas encroached upon by forest, they can be returned to their natural state, and support a greater diversity of native wildlife.

“Restoring grasslands and open forests enhances biodiversity, increases habitat for species at risk, improves forage and habitat for bighorn sheep and elk, boosts forest health and reduces the risk of severe wildfire,” says Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program Team Leader, Randy Harris.

“Over the past twelve years, HCTF has provided over \$1.5 Million in funding for this program, greatly contributing to its success. It is one of only two funding sources that have always supported our program since we started work in 1998.”

The Foundation is providing another grant for similar work taking place near Grand Forks, Rock Creek and Midway.

Other Kootenay grant recipients include a project monitoring and protecting spawning Gerrard rainbow trout, a study assessing habitat for threatened grizzly bear populations, and a helicopter survey to determine mountain goat populations in areas that provincial biologists currently have little information on.

Most of the money HCTF uses to fund these projects comes from conservation surcharges on fishing and hunting licences.

“The Foundation is a concrete symbol of the user’s investment in the resource,” said HCTF Chair, Harvey Andrusak. “Few people realize how much of the critical conservation work taking place in this Province is funded by anglers, hunters, guide outfitters and trappers. We all benefit - these

projects improve conditions for a tremendous range of species, not just those targeted by contributors.”

You can find a complete list of funded projects on the Foundation’s website at hctf.ca.

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