



Funding for Southern Interior Mule Deer Research and 180 Conservation Projects Across BC

For Release July 14, 2020

Kelowna, BC: The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) has announced \$9.2 million in funding for more than 180 individual wildlife, freshwater fish, and habitat conservation projects across British Columbia this year.

“This is no small feat,” said Dan Buffett, CEO of HCTF. “It reflects a diversity of funding from our core contributors [hunters, anglers, trappers and guides], court awards, provincial government contributions and endowments, and our partners such as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC).”

Through cooperation with partners such as the FESBC, HCTF is able to support conservation projects like the Southern Interior Mule Deer Project in studying how mule deer population respond to wildlife and habitat change. Conducting research in the Boundary Region, West Okanagan, and Bonaparte Plateau the project hopes to reveal why mule deer populations are declining in BC’s southern interior and provide recommendation on how to restore their abundance in the area.



“What we have heard from Indigenous communities, ecologists, and resident hunters is that the decline of mule deer matters to them and the status quo is no longer sufficient. It is time we bring more science to bear on issues affecting wildlife in BC,” said Dr. Adam T. Ford, Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia.

A combination of GPS tracking collars, trail cameras and pregnancy checks on wild doe deer are being used by researchers to assess changes in deer populations at the study sites. These research activities are helping to reveal how wildlife along with fire suppression efforts, timber extractions, highways and urban development are changing the movement and size of deer populations in BC’s southern interior. Bringing together conservation organizations, government agencies, and universities in both Canada and the USA, this project combines cutting-edge research on deer ecology with on-the-ground partnerships with First Nations, industry experts and local communities to investigate and develop solutions for mule deer conservation.

Other funded projects taking place in the Okanagan Region include:

- \$28,500 to support the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program to protect fish and wildlife habitat. Co-funded with FESBC.
- \$47,129 for assessing the bull trout population in the Upper Shuswap.
- \$53,080 for habitat restoration of Black Cottonwood ecosystems in the Kettle River Watershed to help conserve species-at-risk such as the Lewis's Woodpecker.



Forest Enhancement
Society of British Columbia



HABITAT CONSERVATION
TRUST FOUNDATION

FESBC's Executive Director Steve Kozuki is "thrilled to partner with the trusted and respected Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation to improve wildlife habitat. With their first-in-class management of funds and projects by talented and professional staff, we know that we are maximizing benefits for wildlife in British Columbia."

Each project funded through HCTF is reviewed by a multi-level, objective technical review process prior to final Board review and decision. HCTF's Board of Directors ensures that species important to BC anglers and hunters are supported but also place a great deal of importance on conserving whole ecosystems, species-at-risk and investing in environmental education across the province.

To see the complete list of HCTF funded projects or explore the conservation work being done near you view the [2020-21 Approved Project List](#) or our [2020-21 Project Map](#).

For Interviews:

Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation

Craig Doucette, Communications Officer

Direct: 250 940 3012 | Toll-free: 1 800 387 9853 ext. 212

Craig.Doucette@hctf.ca

Forest Enhancement Society of BC

Aleece Laird, Communications Liaison

Direct: 250 574 0221

communications@fesbc.ca

HCTF Quick Facts

It is the mission of HCTF to improve the conservation outcomes of BC's fish and wildlife, and the habitats in which they live. We make a difference by funding conservation projects and by educating and engaging the public about BC's natural assets.

- Since 1981, HCTF has provided over \$189 million in grants for almost 3,000 conservation projects across BC.
- HCTF began as an initiative by BC anglers, hunters, trappers, and guide outfitters.

FESBC Quick Facts

In February 2016, the B.C. Government announced the formation of FESBC with initial funding of \$85 million and a five-member Board of Directors to oversee the establishment of the Society and the delivery of its purposes. An additional \$150 million was announced in early 2017.

- The purposes of FESBC are to advance environmental and resource stewardship of BC's forests by: 1) preventing and mitigating the impact of wildfires; 2) improving damaged or low value forests; 3) improving habitat for wildlife; 4) supporting the use of fibre from damaged and low value forests; and 5) treating forests to improve the management of greenhouse gases.
- As of January 30, 2020, FESBC has supported 250 projects valued at \$233 million, in partnership with the Province of BC and the Government of Canada.