



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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\$9.3 Million for Wildlife, Fish and Habitat Including Steelhead in Southern B.C.

Kamloops, BC: For 40 years, the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) has helped fund conservation groups, government branches, Indigenous Nations, and local communities to implement projects that protect B.C.'s wildlife, freshwater fish, and the habitats they need to survive and thrive. This year, HCTF has awarded \$9.3 million in funding for 175 individual conservation projects across British Columbia.

HCTF's CEO Dan Buffett is pleased to report that the 2021/22 grant season represents the Foundation's highest record annual investment and reflects the financial contributions and hard work of many British Columbians that fund and implement these projects. To date, HCTF has funded 3,230 conservation projects and granted over \$195 million in funds across the length and breadth of this ecologically diverse province.

One such project is the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources' Interior Fraser Wild Steelhead Conservation program. The program, which received \$98,677 in funding, monitors the abundance, productivity, and ongoing conservation status of wild steelhead populations, including the Thompson and Chilcotin populations. This freshwater salmonid species is of exceptional importance to First Nations peoples, anglers, local communities, and conservationists. The data collected through the project will help to inform provincial, federal and First Nations fisheries management plans and conservation management.



"Steelhead are highly migratory, like salmon, which creates management challenges involving multiple agencies; challenges that are well-served by understanding the biology of these fish, the status of the populations, and the factors affecting the populations," said project lead Robert Bison. "With HCTF's support, we have been able to provide evidence and insights into factors affecting southern B.C. steelhead populations for which there is conservation concern."

Other HCTF funded projects taking place in the Thompson-Nicola and Cariboo regions include:

- \$135,519 in funds to assist the St'át'imc Government to monitor the critically endangered Stein/Nahatlatch grizzly bear population. Research will help inform species recovery plans for both the Province and Indigenous groups.
- \$45,051 to support invasive plant management and land rehabilitation at Turtle Valley Farm and Toad Hollow near Chase, B.C.
- \$40,250 to monitor Mid-Fraser Sturgeon near Lillooet, B.C. Examining the distribution, population density and health of sturgeon population will inform federal government assessments and the management of the recreational fishery.
- \$112,071 for a Steelhead population assessment along the Dean River which hosts one of the world's most popular steelhead sport fisheries.
- \$22,936 for a study assessing the density and population health of cougar in the Cariboo region. This project will involve a citizen science component and will rely on stakeholders to help estimate cougar populations.

Funding and support for these projects and others across the province come from a wide variety of sources including public groups such as the British Columbia Wildlife Federation (BCWF), partner organizations like the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC), provincial government contributions, court fines, and endowments. A significant source of funding comes from the conservation surcharge paid by B.C.'s anglers, hunters, trappers, and guide outfitters.

"Over 40 years ago, the BC Wildlife Federation lobbied for a surcharge on hunting and fishing licenses to fund wildlife and fish habitat improvement projects throughout the province," said BCWF president Chuck Zuckerman. "The result of this impassioned call from B.C.'s hunters, anglers, trappers and sport shooters formed a new fund in 1981 that subsequently evolved into the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation."

Steve Kozuki, executive director of FESBC, has been pleased to be a partner with HCTF.

"FESBC is proud to partner with HCTF and local experts on the ground throughout British Columbia to improve wildlife habitat," said Kozuki. "HCTF combines wildlife biology expertise with their excellent management of funds to deliver outstanding benefits for wildlife. With all the pressures on the land base, the good work HCTF does is more important than ever."

Each project funded by HCTF goes through a multi-level, objective and technical review process prior to final Board review and decision. HCTF's Board of Directors ensure that species important to B.C. 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 [2021-22 Approved Project List](#) or the HCTF [2021-22 Project Map](#).

For Interviews:

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HCTF Quick Facts

It is the mission of HCTF to improve the conservation outcomes of B.C.'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 B.C.'s natural assets. 2021 marks HCTF's 40th anniversary of helping conservation groups and individuals secure funding for conservation projects and providing education to the general public about B.C.'s important natural assets. Since 1981, HCTF has provided over \$195 million in grants for 3,230 conservation projects across B.C. HCTF began as an initiative by B.C. anglers, hunters, trappers, and guide outfitters.

FESBC Quick Facts

The purposes of FESBC are to advance environmental and resource stewardship of B.C.'s forests by: preventing and mitigating the impact of wildfires; improving damaged or low value forests; improving habitat for wildlife; supporting the use of fibre from damaged and low value forests; and treating forests to improve the management of greenhouse gases. As of March 2021, FESBC has supported 269 projects valued at \$238 million, in partnership with governments of B.C. and Canada.