

\$5.4 Million Granted for Conservation Projects

*Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks 330-30:ELP00/01-109
April 14, 2000*

VICTORIA – The Habitat Conservation Trust Fund is providing \$5.4 million for 151 fish and wildlife conservation projects around the province, Environment, Lands and Parks Minister Joan Sawicki and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister Corky Evans announced today.

"This fund continues to be critical in maintaining the diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife species of which British Columbians are so proud," said Sawicki. "Anglers and hunters who contribute to the fund through license surcharges are supporting valuable projects that protect our biodiversity for the benefit of all British Columbians."

"Habitat Conservation Trust Fund projects have been instrumental in protecting and restoring fish habitat and supporting angling opportunities," said Evans. "On the West Arm of Kootenay Lake, for example, funding for new spawning channels has helped make it possible to reopen a controlled kokanee fishery for the past six years."

This year's funding includes:

- Quesnel Lake fish restoration – \$104,000 for the first year of a three-year study to determine the status of kokanee and rainbow trout and develop a conservation plan.
- Moose conservation – \$70,000 for the first year of a proposed four-year project to collect inventory information in central and northern B.C. and assess harvest strategies.
- Marble Range sheep migration – \$20,544 for continuing work by a local association working with ministry staff to identify migration corridors for this bighorn sheep herd and assess habitat used during migration.
- Grizzly bear conservation – \$159,940 raised from bear hunting licence surcharges to support a range of conservation efforts, including input on land use-planning and development of recovery plans for threatened populations.
- American marten – \$11,453 to begin a two-year university study to identify behavioural activities of the American marten (a member of the weasel family) associated with forest habitats and prey in the Chetwynd area.

- Kootenay Lake burbot restoration – \$50,000 to begin a five-year project in co-operation with First Nations and U.S. agencies for planning and assessment work to restore red-listed burbot in Kootenay Lake.
- Provincial amphibian monitoring – \$24,000 to continue work in establishing a provincewide network of volunteers to collect information on distribution and population of amphibian species.
- Fraser Valley fish passage improvement – \$35,013 for the first year of a two-year project to develop operational guidelines for pump stations and flood boxes that are restricting salmon and trout migration in the lower Fraser Valley.

This year's funding also includes two projects resulting from recent court rulings on successful prosecutions. These court awards paid to the fund are providing \$50,000 to Port Alice, near Port Hardy, for a bear awareness public education program and bear-proof garbage containers, and \$35,000 for fish habitat restoration in the Murray River south-west of Fort St. John.

The Habitat Conservation Trust Fund is supported primarily by surcharges on angling, hunting, trapping and guide-outfitting licence fees. Since 1981, more than \$55 million has been provided to more than 1,700 projects through the trust fund and its predecessor, the Habitat Conservation Fund.

BACKGROUND

Habitat Conservation Trust Fund Projects For 2000-2001

Provincial Projects

Information, Education and Stewardship

Support for Wild BC, which provides educational materials on fish, wildlife and their habitats to teachers, scout/guide leaders, park interpreters and youth.

Coordination of a fish and wildlife viewing network - B.C. Wildlife Watch - through partnerships and cooperative projects.

Production of management guidelines for furbearers in British Columbia.

Support for Naturescape British Columbia through production of regionally specific educational materials.

Establishment of a province-wide network of volunteers to collect distribution and population information on amphibian species.

Production of public information materials on selected wildlife species at risk.

Support for development of a stewardship case studies web site that will focus on key stewardship elements such as partnerships and community involvement.

Support for development of partnerships to establish conservation covenants in four priority conservation areas.

Production of a training-aid video on identification of BC wildlife species.

Development of public information materials on the importance of legislating and regulating alien species.

Compilation of existing grassland information to establish a provincial grassland Geographic Information System and maps.

Projects involving both Fisheries and Wildlife

Partnership between the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Public Conservation Assistance Fund to fund more volunteer conservation projects.

Fisheries

Support for fish conservation efforts through coordinated data collection, educational programs and monitoring angler use on quality rivers mainly in the Cariboo and Skeena.

Support for recovery planning for Fraser River White Sturgeon populations throughout the Fraser watershed.

Development of a coordinated plan for native Cutthroat Trout conservation.

Support for testing and developing progeny from alkaline brood fish in alkaline lakes in the Thompson/Nicola, East Kootenay and Cariboo regions.

DNA assessment of the relationships and status of various populations of lampreys in BC.

Wildlife

Ongoing planning, coordination and implementation of a strategy to protect grizzly bears and their habitat.

Support for collection of inventory information on the population status of moose to reassess conservation status and current harvest strategies.

Support for a study on dragonflies of conservation concern in northern British Columbia.

Support for a volunteer-based, province-wide survey of nocturnal owls to monitor population distribution trends and provide data for habitat preference analyses.

Continued support for the development of an inventory of arthropods in hot and warm springs of British Columbia.

Development of a trial program to identify potential areas of conflict where diseases and parasites could be spread between domestic and wild animal species.

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Information, Education and Stewardship

Stewardship project to provide landowners in the Comox Valley with information on their properties and how to protect the habitat values of the property.

Support for a project that will organize community and wildlife habitat mapping on the islands in the Strait of Georgia

Support for a stewardship project in the Cowichan Valley Regional District that will identify landowners whose property is adjacent to sensitive habitats, implement a landowner contact program, publish information promoting land stewardship and develop partnerships with local community groups, business and government.

Support for linking more than 30 Vancouver Island wildlife reserves and properties through wildlife viewing and education tours to support sustainable land management programs.

Stewardship project that will encourage community stewardship in the south and west areas of Saltspring Island through public education, landholder outreach and stewardship pledges.

Projects involving both Fisheries and Wildlife

Development and implementation of management, protection and enhancement plans for more than 25 critical wetlands along coastal Vancouver Island.

Integration of data and development of decision support products on sensitive habitats for use by local governments on Vancouver Island.

Support for implementing the protection action plan and landowner contact program in the Millard-Piercy Watershed near Courtenay.

Development of an action plan to restore Woodhus Slough northwest of Courtenay.

Development of a restoration plan to enhance key estuarine habitat on Craig Creek in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area.

Fisheries

Operation of the Keogh River fish fence that collects critical Steelhead information on population dynamics.

Continuation of Steelhead stock monitoring on 31 watersheds on the east coast of Vancouver Island to determine conservation requirements, sport fishing catch limits, habitat restoration priorities, and hatchery program response.

Installation of large woody debris and boulder riffle structures in the Big Qualicum river to improve winter Steelhead and Coho rearing habitat.

Restoration of instream channel complexity, enhancing fish access and replanting riparian vegetation on Whiskey Creek.

Support for a feasibility study on developing tools for Cutthroat Trout, Steelhead, Dolly Varden Char and Coho production planning and risk assessment.

Rebuilding a weir on Prospect Lake / Tod Creek in Saanich to increase summer flows and to remove historic barrier to fish passage into the upper watershed.

Removing a culvert barrier to provide access for fish and smaller mammals to upstream habitats on Grandon Creek near Qualicum Beach.

Increasing habitat productivity of the Adam River near Sayward through stream fertilization.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Continued support to determine winter habitat use of Mountain Goats in coastal forests 80 km north of Campbell River on Loughborough Inlet on the mainland.

Monitoring of the distribution of Bullfrogs on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands and expansion of the education program to curtail further colonization of this introduced species.

Assessment and control of introduced Virginia opossums on Hornby Island and continued public education.

Support for determining causes of Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorant breeding population declines in the Strait of Georgia, monitoring breeding and roosting sites and formulating a management strategy.

Support for Purple Martin recovery by replacing and supplementing boxes in existing colonies, establishing new nestbox colonies and developing stewardship agreements for each colony.

Development of a temperature model for Vancouver Island bat hibernacula to be used for management recommendations to conserve 4 Myotis species.

Study to document potential benefits to wildlife and feasibility of operational broadcast burns in coastal forests of Vancouver Island.

Determination of distribution and habitat use of Townsend's Big-eared Bat on islands off Vancouver Island.

Support for a partnership to identify, catalogue and implement protective strategies for critical Great Blue Heron habitats in the Georgia Basin.

Survey along the coastline of Vancouver Island to count active peregrine falcon aeries for the 2000 nesting season.

Support for colour banding urban-nesting Cooper's Hawks in the Greater Victoria area.

Operation and maintenance funding for wildlife areas.

LOWER MAINLAND

Information, Education and Stewardship

Support for preliminary work to develop an environmental stewardship program on Texada Island to prevent the extinction of red-listed stickleback pairs.

Projects involving both Fisheries and Wildlife

Support for inventory of the remaining natural terrestrial ecosystems within the eastern Georgia Basin on the Sunshine Coast.

Seed funding to develop a plan to restore and enhance a wetlands area on Lillies Lake near Pender Harbour.

Fisheries

Continued support for a restoration and management plan for red-listed Salish Sucker and Nooksack Dace.

Continued Wild Steelhead conservation activities: habitat capacity estimates for six key streams in the Lower Mainland and index techniques for annual monitoring programs.

Continued support for developing an approach to gravel mining that protects fish habitat.

Seed funding to assess feasibility of restoring spawning gravel into the Capilano River.

Building on a previous study, support for a study of White Sturgeon in the lower Fraser River to determine distribution and abundance.

Support for an inventory, assessment, mapping and development of management priorities and operational guidelines for pumpstations and floodboxes that are restricting anadromous salmon and trout migration throughout the lower Fraser Valley.

Wildlife

Study of the population persistence of the Pacific Giant Salamander in the streams of the Chilliwack River drainage.

Evaluation of the effects of riparian harvest treatments on amphibian populations near Maple Ridge.

Support for research and inventory needs for recovery of the critically endangered Oregon Spotted Frog in BC.

Population assessment of red-listed Marbled Murrelet on the Sunshine Coast.

Operation and maintenance funding for wildlife areas.

THOMPSON-NICOLA

Fisheries

Monitoring and enumeration of Steelhead escapement through the Bonaparte fishway.

Assessment of spawning Steelhead populations for Nicola and Deadman stocks using estimation of abundance and age structure.

Gathering of baseline information for population and habitat restoration of wild Bull Trout in Adams Lake.

Kokanee spawning and habitat assessments leading to conservation of wild Kokanee stocks in the Thompson-Okanagan region.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Development of conservation strategies for the Thompson-Okanagan Badger.

Support for identifying migration corridors of the Marble Range California Bighorn Sheep herd and assessing types of habitat used by the sheep as they migrate.

Enhancement of an estimated 1300 ha of critical Mule Deer and California Bighorn Sheep habitat through prescribed burning.

Identification of critical habitats of the Western Rattlesnake and Great Basin Gopher Snake in the Thompson-Nicola.

Gating of a Townsend's Big-eared Bat hibernaculum in an abandoned mine near Kamloops.

Support for a monitoring program for Long-billed Curlews in the Southern Interior by using volunteers to collect population data and identify important Curlew areas.

Follow-up study to sample treated riparian areas and document grazing effects by comparing grazed areas to ungrazed exclosures near Quilchena.

KOOTENAY

Information, Education and Stewardship

Support for a program to encourage grassland landowners in the East Kootenay to participate in a voluntary stewardship program.

Fisheries

Building on a previous project and working with First Nations and US agencies to develop and implement plans and assessment studies to restore red-listed Burbot in Kootenay Lake.

Conducting work with Canadian and US partners to develop and implement a recovery plan to restore White Sturgeon in the upper Columbia River.

Support for habitat restoration and population assessment of Slocan River Rainbow Trout.

Identification of critical habitat for two blue-listed sculpin species in streams near Castlegar.

Stock monitoring on the harvest of Kokanee in the west arm of Kootenay Lake.

Determination of critical summer, overwintering and spawning habitats for protection and possible enhancement of Kootenay River Bull Trout.

Operation, maintenance and monitoring of the Gerrard Rainbow Trout spawning run and monitoring of the Gerrard fishery.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Use of prescribed burning to enhance critical winter habitats of ungulates in the East and West Kootenay.

Study of Cougar movements and distribution relative to ungulate habitats in the South Selkirks.

Habitat selection and suitability assessment of East Kootenay Lynx and its relationship to the Snowshoe Hare.

Habitat and population assessments of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep in the East Kootenay Trench to determine habitat preferences, study range conditions and create plans to enhance habitat and populations.

Seed funding to investigate problems and solutions for environmental damage caused by recreational vehicles in the East Kootenay Trench.

Support for a study to determine Coeur d'Alene Salamander range, distribution, and status and recommend habitat protection and enhancement measures.

Determination of the distribution and nesting habitat of Flammulated Owl in the Rocky Mountain Trench, the eastern extent of its range in BC.

Support for estimating grizzly bear population size and trend in the Flathead / Wigwam using mark-resight methods to test DNA-based censuses and habitat-based extrapolations.

Operation and maintenance funding for wildlife areas.

CARIBOO

Fisheries

Continued study of the population status of Bella Coola Steelhead and searun Cutthroat Trout.

Determination of the current status of Kokanee and Rainbow Trout in Quesnel Lake and development of a plan for Kokanee stabilization and recovery to ensure Rainbow Trout conservation.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Study of the foraging habits of American White Pelican on 20 lakes near Stum Lake.

Support for replacement of old fencing with improved wildlife-safe fencing that will also control cattle grazing on Knife Creek Wildlife Reserve.

SKEENA

Information, Education and Stewardship

Project at the Laskeek Bay Outreach Station that will increase the public's understanding of the natural environment through biological research, interpretation and education programs.

Fisheries

Operation of weirs at two sites on the Skeena River watershed to enumerate summer run Steelhead.

Assessment of fish passage problems associated with highway culverts along Tea Creek and John Brown Creek to prescribe and implement fish passage provisions.

Non-lethal field identification of individual wild Steelhead and stocks to specific tributaries to permit in-season management and studies.

Wildlife

Monitoring and control of raccoons to ensure they are not accessing breeding colonies of seabirds on the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Recovery of the Telkwa caribou herd through transplants, and monitoring of radio-collared caribou to determine movement, distribution, habitat use, and mortality factors.

Survey along the coastline of the Queen Charlotte archipelago to count active peregrine falcon eryies for the 2000 nesting season.

OMINECA-PEACE

Projects involving both Fisheries and Wildlife

Support to provide needed conservation and management data on an important migratory waterfowl and off-channel fish-rearing area on the Hominka Marsh and upper Parsnip River.

Fisheries

Monitoring of Arctic Grayling population abundance and structure in the Burnt and Sukunka rivers.

Observation of Inconnu seasonal movement patterns to establish spawning, staging and overwintering areas in northeastern BC.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Use of prescribed burning to enhance the winter habitats of ungulates.

Study on roosting behaviour of forest-dwelling bats in naturally disturbed habitats.

Support for preliminary work in the Robson Valley towards developing elk management options.

Study on the response of Marten to alternative forest practices in mixed wood boreal forests northwest of Fort Nelson.

Study on identifying a range of Marten behavioural activities and associating them with specific forest structural characteristics and prey abundance east of Chetwynd.

Seed funding to develop an amphibian deformity study in the Prince George area.

Operation and maintenance funding for wildlife areas.

OKANAGAN

Information, Education and Stewardship

Conservation and enhancement of threatened plant communities and wildlife species on private land in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

Projects involving both Fisheries and Wildlife

Demonstration of the effects of improved livestock control on riparian areas south of Penticton.

Development of a detailed management plan for the proposed Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area near Vernon.

Fisheries

Continued studies and activities to rebuild and maintain Kokanee stocks in Okanagan Lake.

Support for restoration and enhancement of one stretch of Mill Creek in Kelowna using bioengineering, riparian replanting and instream complexing.

Operation and maintenance funding of existing projects.

Wildlife

Use of prescribed burning to enhance the winter habitats of ungulates.

Restoration and habitat renewal of shrub-steppe habitat near Osoyoos.

Continued activities to encourage riparian restoration of oxbows in the south Okanagan.

Continued study on the effects of various land use practices on habitat use and population ecology of Tiger Salamander between Osoyoos and Penticton.

Support for identifying important rare bat habitats in the South Okanagan and options for conservation.

Support for developing a Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory in the Central Okanagan.

Seed funding to develop a study on red-listed shrews in the Okanagan, particularly those that have not previously been known to occur in Canada.

Seed funding to develop an experimental design to determine the most effective method to control noxious weeds in the south Okanagan.

Operation and maintenance funding for wildlife areas.