

## **McGregor Announces \$61,000 for Habitat Conservation Projects**

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NANAIMO - Three conservation groups will receive \$61,000 in Habitat Conservation Trust Fund project money, Environment, Lands and Parks Minister Cathy McGregor announced today at the British Columbia Wildlife Federation annual general meeting. McGregor, trustee of the fund, made the presentation while addressing federation members in Nanaimo.

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the funding in person to three of the 159 projects funded through the trust fund this year," said McGregor.

A cheque for \$51,000 was given to the East Kootenay Wildlife Association to help in their continuing study of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat and population in the Kootenay Trench area. The association wants to understand the reasons for the population's recent decline in order to recommend a strategy to reverse this trend.

A total of \$5,000 was provided to Wilderness Watch, a co-operative program of the B.C. Wildlife Federation that enables public volunteers to report wildlife infractions to reduce poaching, theft and vandalism.

The B.C. Wildlife Federation received a further \$5,000 to seed Conservation Kids, a new public education program designed to educate children about the wise use of fish, wildlife and habitats and how they can contribute to conservation efforts during their lifetimes.

"These groups are an example of the growing number of public organizations taking a leadership role and requesting funding proposals for well organized and worthy conservation projects," said McGregor.

The funding for the programs is part of \$5 million that will be spent this year on 159 projects aimed at protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife populations and habitats throughout British Columbia.

The Habitat Conservation Trust Fund is supported primarily by surcharges on angling, hunting, trapping and guide-outfitting licence fees. Since 1981, over \$43 million has been provided to more than 1,600 projects through the trust fund and its predecessor, the Habitat Conservation Fund.

"I highly commend all of the volunteers involved in Habitat Conservation Trust Fund projects for their public spirit, leadership and far-sightedness. By donating their time and hard work, they are helping to preserve our natural heritage for future generations to enjoy," McGregor said.