



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Columbia Valley Local Conservation Program Named a Finalist for Land Award**

The Regional District of East Kootenay's Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund has been named as a Finalist for the Real Estate Foundation of BC's fourth annual Land Awards Gala.

"To have the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund recognized on this provincial scale for its innovation and leadership in the area of conservation is truly an honour," says RDEK Columbia Valley Services Committee Chair, Gerry Taft.

The awards pay tribute to companies, non-profits and governments leading innovative land use projects that contribute to sustainable communities. Finalists are selected on their ability to demonstrate innovation, leadership and collaboration in sustainable land use in BC and are chosen in three categories: private sector, public sector and non-profit sector. The RDEK is a finalist in the public sector category.

The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund was set up in 2009 to provide local financial support for important projects that contribute to the conservation of valuable natural areas; one step towards restoring and preserving a healthy physical environment. On an annual basis, about \$230,000 is raised through a \$20 tax on each parcel of land in the Columbia Valley. The Fund is administered by the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) on behalf of the RDEK. A Technical Review Committee, made up of a number of Columbia Valley residents, reviews the funding applications and makes recommendations to the KCP and RDEK.

"Since 2010, over \$1.1 million has been allocated to conservation projects in the Columbia Valley," explains Taft. "Funds approved through the Conservation Fund have been used extensively to leverage funding from other partners. A significant recent example is the purchase of DL 48 on the east shore of Columbia Lake. The \$700,000 committed through the Conservation Fund was used as proof of local support to help raise the balance from other partners such as Teck, Columbia Basin Trust, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the provincial and federal governments, and numerous other groups and individuals. Without the Conservation Fund, this support may not have been possible."

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“The value of the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund cannot be overstated. The RDEK showed true leadership in supporting the establishment of the fund which was unique in Canada, and now so many worthwhile projects benefit as a direct result of that leadership,” says Kootenay Conservation Program Manager, Dave Hillary.

The winner from each of the three categories will be announced at the Land Awards Gala hosted by REFBC on October 25, 2013.

For more information on the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund, please visit [www.kootenayconservation.ca](http://www.kootenayconservation.ca).

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