
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment

FUNDING HELPS PRESERVE GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED WETLANDS

VICTORIA – The Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partnership will receive a \$40,000 grant to help preserve the ecological diversity of one of the longest wetlands systems in North America, announced Environment Minister Barry Penner.

“We are more than happy to support the outstanding work undertaken by the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partnership – work that is critical for animal, bird and plant life, and also for the health of our province,” said Penner. “Wetland areas help remove and store greenhouse gases, regulate temperature and provide a home for thousands of bird, insect, mammal and plant species.”

The Columbia wetlands area comprises provincial, federal and private lands, First Nations reserves and local government managed land. This area was designated as a wildlife management area in 1996 under the BC Wildlife Act, and is one of the last intact wetland systems in North America. The wetlands encompass 16 different habitats and 216 species of birds and mammals, including endangered species such as the badger, bull trout and peregrine falcon. The area also acts as a filtration system for the headwaters of the Columbia River and the Columbia water system, the primary source of fresh water to over 15 million people in the Pacific Northwest.

“The B.C. government has shown real leadership in supporting the formation of this stewardship group,” said Brisco area director Paul Galbraith, Columbia River Greenways Alliance. “Through this initiative, federal, provincial and regional governments are co-operating with the private land owners, non-profit groups, and others to formulate enduring solutions to resolve long-standing ecological and social issues for the Columbia River wetlands.”

The Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partnership was established in 2007 to help preserve and maintain the integrity of the area. The partnership includes representatives from the federal, provincial and local governments, environmental groups, First Nations, Columbia Basin Trust, industry, business and academia. To date, the B.C. government has provided the group with a total of \$90,000 for preservation activities, which include monitoring of fish spawning areas and water quality. This year’s funding will be used to develop a compliance and enforcement action plan to ensure activity in the area is meeting the requirements of the B.C. Wildlife Act.

In 2005, the Columbia wetlands area became an internationally recognized Ramsar site under the Convention on Wetlands. Signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, the Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for international co-operation for the conservation of wetlands and their resources.

Find out more about government's environmental stewardship activities to protect, preserve and maintain B.C.'s natural habitats and species at www.env.gov.bc.ca/esd/.

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