



Slocan Lake Stewardship Society

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November 3, 2019

SLSS Awarded Funding for Bonanza Wetlands Remediation

The Slocan Lake Stewardship Society (SLSS) has just received funding for a 3-year project to remediate and restore three wetland complexes in the Bonanza corridor between Slocan and Summit Lakes.

The wetlands and riparian areas in the Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor (BBC) are sensitive ecosystems with high biodiversity values. These wetlands support a wide range of critical aquatic and terrestrial habits that contribute significantly to the hydrologic functioning of the Slocan Watershed. The historic Canadian Pacific Railway berm that runs the length of the BBC's valley bottom acts as linear dam and over time has negatively impacted the dynamic wetland-riparian- floodplain system of Bonanza Creek and its tributaries.

Over the years, SLSS has supported and obtained grant funding for a wide range of science-based research, assessments and studies within the Slocan Watershed. Wetland assessments completed between 2013 and 2016 by the Slocan Wetlands Assessment & Monitoring Project (SWAMP) provided a clear understanding of the ecologically rich and unique nature of the BBC. Complementing this SWAMP work, numerous fish counts, habitat and environmental assessments have been performed over the years building a solid knowledge base about the complex ecosystems within the corridor.

Equally important is the significance of the BBC as a major wildlife corridor between Valhalla and Goat Range provincial parks. In 2017, SLSS partnered

with the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) to host a science and conservation action forum in order to fully understand key conservation priorities for the Slocan Watershed. Thirteen research scientists and ecologists, along with representatives from government, conservation and resource management organizations participated in the forum. Restoration and protection of the BBC emerged as a vital aspect of the ongoing ecological health of the Slocan Watershed and has been identified as a priority for action.

In 2018, SLSS established the BBC Working Group to develop specific conservation actions to preserve the BBC's unique ecosystems. This group recommended and assisted in preparing the initial project proposal for three priority areas requiring remediation to restore hydrologic connectivity, improve habitat and native vegetation in the riparian zone. Under the Columbia Basin Trust Ecosystem Enhancement Program (CBT-EEP), SLSS has been awarded funding for this 3-year project. Partnering with KCP through the Kootenay Connect conservation initiative, additional funding is being provided under Environment & Climate Change Canada's Fund for Nature. Other SLSS partners in the project include the Okanagan Nation Alliance, SWAMP and the North Slocan Trails Society.