

Columbia Basin Trust
Environmental Strategic Plan
2008 - 2011

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THE COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST

SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES:

(CBT mission statement in side box)

Created by the people, for the people, the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) serves the residents of the Canadian portion of the Columbia River Basin (the Basin). Working closely with people who live in the Basin, CBT assists communities in addressing their needs by:

- providing resources and funding;
- focusing on local priorities and issues;
- bringing people together around key issues;
- providing useful, credible, accessible information;
- encouraging collaboration and partnerships; and,
- seeking ongoing input from Basin residents.

Basin residents provide advice to CBT on delivering benefits to the region through three core advisory committees - social, economic, and environmental. The CBT also partners with existing groups across the Basin to deliver a range of funding programs and regional initiatives that benefit Basin residents. Learn more about CBT, its programs and initiatives by calling 1.800.505.8998 or visiting www.cbt.org.

CBT'S ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIC PLAN

The activities of the CBT are guided by the *Columbia Basin Management Plan Charter* and *Strategic Priorities* documents. Nesting within that broader organizational strategic framework, this *Environmental Strategic Plan* details how CBT will take action on one of its identified priorities.

Previous studies of environmental priorities and gaps in environmental action in the Basin as well as recent surveys of Basin residents about environmental values and concerns have informed the development of this strategic plan. Extensive public and partner review and input has served to improve the plan throughout its creation.

CBT will use this strategic plan for guidance, work planning and budgeting over the next three years. It will also serve to articulate CBT's environmental directions to Basin residents and partners.

This plan will continue to evolve and will be revisited and adjusted as time passes. Progress on planned activities will be reviewed by CBT on an ongoing basis and modifications may occur as opportunities arise.

CBT's ENVIRONMENTAL VISION

The CBT will work towards a long-term vision for the future of the Basin, where:

- A healthy environment creates a foundation for well-being.
- There is commitment to long-term and enduring stewardship of the Basin's natural biodiversity and sufficient ability to take action to meet environmental challenges.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Core values and organizational guiding principles direct CBT's overall approach to its work. These guiding principles provide further definition and direction for actions that the CBT will undertake to implement this plan.

- Understand that **functioning ecosystems** are resilient and able to respond to change and that diverse and connected functioning ecosystems create a **healthy environment**.
- Champion **local initiatives** that acknowledge and appreciate the globally unique ecology of the Basin, recognizing the potential for **broad-reaching impacts** within and far beyond this region.
- Support **prompt effective actions** both to protect ecosystems, preventing the need for future restoration, and to improve conditions in ecosystems that have already been altered or degraded.
- Involve and respect individuals and organizations with a **broad range of views** about the condition and value of Basin ecosystems, striving for consensus.
- Appreciate the benefits of an **integrated approach** to holistic well-being, linking and engaging the social, economic and cultural aspects of Basin life.
- Foster **Basin organizations** that are flexible, efficient and working to strengthen self-sufficiency.
- Promote and facilitate **collaborative action** within the Basin and elsewhere, **leading** where there are gaps.
- Use the **best available information** and expertise, but do not use lack of full scientific certainty as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent serious or irreversible environmental damage.
- Encourage **adaptive management** – take action and move ahead while monitoring the effects and adjusting activities when there are unexpected outcomes, especially when the environmental impacts of activities cannot be fully known.
- Realize that a **community** can be defined both by shared geographic location and/or by shared interests.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: 2008 - 2011

The following describes what the CBT hopes to undertake and achieve in the next three years, working towards the stated environmental vision.

Goal 1: Strengthen Basin-wide ability to meet environmental challenges.	
Objectives	Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the ability of individuals and organizations to implement successful environment projects. • Support the evolution of networks and partnerships that further this strategy. • Facilitate collaboration and common understanding of current environmental issues and activities in the Basin. • Support the integration of environmental perspectives and action within community and regional-level planning, policy and practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals, community groups, Basin organizations and governments have increased awareness, capability and connection to engage and take action in response to changes that affect the Basin environment. • Successful networks, partnerships and collaborative opportunities to improve environmental conditions have been built and are flourishing. • Increased planning, decisions and actions being taken within communities and the region as a whole that integrate environmental perspectives.
<p>Planned Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Stewardship Advisor positions to assist a variety of audiences at all stages of developing a project, securing funding and implementing project work plans. • Support the East Kootenay Conservation Program and the Columbia Basin Environment Education Network to deliver activities that are complementary to this strategy. • Support the creation and maintenance of an environmental directory for the Basin, which could include organizations, technical specialists and other resources which support environmental actions. • Host periodic forums in the Basin to bring together a variety of representatives and interested citizens to learn, network, celebrate successes, and build momentum for future environmental directions and action. • Broaden relationships with all levels of government and real estate organizations (including residential and tourism development interests) to identify ways to enhance current abilities to plan and act in support of stewardship and conservation of low elevation ecosystems. 	

Goal 2: Encourage education for all generations about Basin ecosystems and associated human interactions.	
Objectives	Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to environmental information. • Provide resources to environmental education projects, programs and collaborative efforts, promoting effective educational approaches. • Generate a better understanding of Basin well-being and current environmental conditions needing action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad-based education about Basin ecosystems and human interactions with the systems is growing. • Awareness of particular environmental conditions needing attention is increasing. • Mechanisms are in place to improve access to environmental information and support effective educational efforts in the Basin.
Planned Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for environmental education projects through the Environmental Initiatives Program. • Support the Stewardship Advisor positions to enhance environmental awareness and understanding of community groups, individuals and governments and disseminate information that will assist them in action. • Support the Columbia Basin Environment Education Network and the Education in the Wild Program and explore options to further support environmental educators in the Basin. • Collaborate to explore and promote effective environmental education approaches, particularly adult-focused. • Ensure broad communication and understanding of environmental conditions needing attention, as identified through research, other activities, programs or initiatives. 	
Goal 3: Support positive environmental action within the Basin, leading where appropriate.	
Objectives	Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support for community environmental actions. • Provide resources to community projects which address ecological priorities. • Implement priority conservation efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically sound local and regional community projects are being supported. • An increasing area of Basin ecosystems which are at risk are managed for conservation values. • Actions are expanding to address the spectrum of ecological priorities.
Planned Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for the Environmental Initiatives Program and the Land Conservation Initiative, ensuring programs target ecological priorities. • Support the Stewardship Advisor positions to provide technical assistance to groups undertaking environmental projects. 	

- Collaborate to complete assessments which will identify ecological priorities in the Basin and highlight priorities that are not currently being addressed.
- Develop and implement initiatives or programs, collaboratively or independently, to prompt action on ecological priorities that are not currently being addressed.

Goal 4: Promote corporate functions (office and employee business activities) which reduce environmental impacts in the Basin.

Objectives	Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the understanding of environmental impacts of corporate functions and awareness of feasible alternative practices. • Be a model for implementing cost-effective alternative practices for corporate functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations throughout the Basin are more aware of the potential implications of their corporate functions and are familiar with ways to reduce their environmental impacts. • CBT is seen as a model in the Basin in implementing innovative, practical, environmentally-sound corporate functions.

- Planned Activities**
- Collaborate to explore environmental impacts of corporate functions, identifying cost-effective alternatives to reduce impacts and ways to encourage implementation of alternatives.
 - Implement feasible alternative practices to improve CBT's corporate functions as resources allow.
 - Broadly share information about impacts and promote the use of alternatives.

CBT'S COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The importance of the environment to Basin residents was expressed to CBT early in its formation. Since 1998, the Environment Advisory Committee has been providing advice and recommendations to the CBT to help guide its directions. The CBT is currently implementing several programs and initiatives based on this input from residents.

Environment Focused Programs – The following long-standing and current program areas are delivered in partnership with Basin organizations having similar environmental goals or interests. Regular monitoring and scheduled evaluations are necessary to ensure they remain relevant and consistent with this strategic plan.

Environmental Initiatives Program (EIP) – supporting community environmental efforts

- **EIP Granting** – Funding community projects in the Basin that address or aim to reduce the impacts humans have on ecosystems in the Basin, through education, stewardship, conservation and/or restoration.
- **Stewardship Advisors** – Support personnel who assist and encourage communities by offering technical assistance during project development and implementation, sharing information and best practices to promote stewardship and fostering collaboration between groups, communities and regulatory agencies.

Basin-Wide Environmental Education – supporting major environmental education efforts that span the CBT region

- **Education in the Wild Program** – CBT is a founding and continual supporter of a school-based, ecosystem awareness program that supports teachers in delivering lessons through hands-on, outdoor learning opportunities for students.
- **Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network** – CBT initially facilitated the evolution of this umbrella network which fosters environmental education initiatives, stewardship and sustainability in the Basin through a diverse membership of individuals and organizations. CBT continues to support their ongoing activities.

Land Conservation Strategy – supporting land conservation activities which are compatible with priorities of Basin communities

- **Land Conservation Initiative** – Providing funding towards land conservation efforts which will assist in maintaining a range of community values on lands in the Basin.
- **East Kootenay Conservation Program** – CBT supports this partnership to promote habitat and ecosystem management for private land, while balancing social and economic needs.

Other Areas of Involvement – Many other areas of the CBT also incorporate environmental considerations and support positive environmental actions. More information is available at www.cbt.org.

Water Initiatives Strategy – outlining how the CBT will work with Basin residents to improve their understanding and involvement in water

Youth Action Strategic Plan – committing to working with Basin youth to ensure they are actively engaged in addressing issues in the region

State of the Basin Initiative – developing a prototype model to access credible data to describe trends in the Basin and support the use of this information in communities

Community Initiatives Program – allocating funding to ‘affected areas’ (the areas of the Basin most affected by dam construction under the Columbia River Treaty) and throughout the Basin to support activities deemed important by the community

Community Development Program – responding to project ideas and facilitating action that builds capacity within the Basin

Investments – generating a predictable, sustainable, and appreciating income stream to fund CBT’s current and future Delivery of Benefits and corporate operating expenses.

The 2007 *Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures* acknowledges the importance of high ethical and environmental standards of potential investment partners.

A major portion of CBT’s investments are in joint energy projects with Columbia Power Corporation (CPC). CBT and CPC work closely with all agencies to adhere to guidelines assuring indigenous fish habitats are not adversely affected and seek habitat improvement.

THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN – AN ENVIRONMENTAL TREASURE

The Columbia River begins its 2,000 kilometer journey at Columbia Lake near Canal Flats, B.C and continues until it reaches the Pacific Ocean at Astoria, Oregon. As the sixth largest river basin in North America, the entire Columbia Basin covers 671,000 square kilometers within Canada and the United States.

Fifteen percent of the Columbia Basin lies within Canada. Four mountain ranges deeply dissect the Canadian Basin, creating an incredible range of ecosystems – including grasslands, wetlands, dry pine forests, interior rainforests, alpine meadows and glaciers. The Basin is home to over 700 species of birds, mammals, fish and reptiles as well as many large and small human communities. The wetlands, streams, rivers and lakes are the lifeblood of the Columbia River system – providing habitat for a rich diversity of species and bringing water to its human inhabitants.

(Basin map in side box)

Humans have long been a part of Columbia Basin ecosystems. Archaeology tells us that First Nations have inhabited the Basin for more than 10,000 years. The fur trade brought David Thompson, the famous cartographer, to the Columbia in 1807. Significant settlement began in the mid and late 1800s with mining booms and construction of the Canadian Pacific and other railways. Through time, Basin natural resources have been the foundation for significant economic development through forestry, hydroelectric power generation, mining, tourism and agriculture. The Basin environment also supports quality of life by providing clean water, clean air, spectacular landscapes, a range of outdoor recreation opportunities and connections with nature and wilderness.

Recognition of the importance of the unique natural biodiversity of the Columbia Basin is essential. Humans are a part of Basin ecosystems, both dependent upon and influencing them. As the intensity and extent of human activity expands within the Basin, ecosystems and natural elements are suffering. Globally the condition of the environment is becoming more of a concern. Now and in the future, the Basin deserves a collective stewardship responsibility to conserve nature.