



February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Southern Interior Local Government Association**

PO Box 27017 Cityview PO  
Kamloops, BC V2E 0B2

File No.: 0390.20 -  
SILGA

**Re: SILGA Community Excellence Awards  
Environmental Sustainability – Regional District  
Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen  
South Okanagan Conservation Fund**

**South Okanagan Conservation Fund Background**

The South Okanagan Similkameen is biologically a unique area of Canada. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has the highest number of species at risk and the highest proportion of sensitive ecosystem in BC.

Natural lands in both rural and urban areas filter our water, supply open spaces for wildlife and people, and provide quality of life to communities. Unfortunately, these systems are under stress and it is important that this generation take actions now to ensure a healthy physical environment for future generations.

The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) is a partnership of 50 non-profit, government, and First Nations organizations working together to conserve the nature of the South Okanagan Similkameen communities. Bryn White of the SOSCP has been working with RDOS staff and Board since 2014.

In December of 2016, the Board of Directors adopted the bylaw to establish a sub-regional Conservation Fund with the SOSCP. The Funds participating members include: Penticton, Summerland, Oliver, Electoral Area 'A', Electoral Area 'C', Electoral Area 'D', Electoral Area 'E' and Electoral Area 'F'. The investment decisions for the fund are to be made based on the recommendation of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

**Fund Purpose**

The Fund provides local financial support for projects that will contribute to the conservation of our valuable natural areas', one step towards restoring and preserving a healthy environment. The intent is to provide funding for conservation projects that are not the existing responsibility of the federal, provincial or local governments.

This fund is one of only three conservation funds of its type in BC and is the largest at up to \$450,000 per year.



### **RDOS & SOSCP Responsibilities**

The RDOS Board retains the responsibility for final approval of all matters related to the Fund including:

- Final approval of all projects, grant payments, and financial audits of the Fund; and
- Appointment of a Technical Review Committee based on recommendations from the SOSCP

The SOSCP will be responsible for all aspects of Fund management including:

- Drafting the Fund design documents, preparing and advertising the call for proposals, responding to enquiries, vetting Technical Review Committee applicants and projects, project evaluation and overall program evaluation.

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

The RDOS appointed a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to provide expertise in the review and selection of projects or recipients of funds. TAC consists of seven members, all of which have extensive backgrounds in:

- Management, restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, including sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems;
- Native fish and wildlife conservation including species at risk;
- Land and natural resource management, environmental studies, environmental science, hydrology, hydrobiology, ecology or conservation biology.

### **2018 Projects**

The theme for the Conservation Fund's projects were consistent with top public environmental concerns including:

- Conservation of water resources (quality and quantity, aquatic ecosystems, surface and groundwater); and
- Protection (including acquisitions), enhancement and restoration of sensitive ecosystems and species, habitat for native fish and wildlife.

Each TAC member fully reviewed, researched and provided extensive technical comments on all fifteen submissions in advance of the committee meeting and followed that up with a full-day meeting to arrive at the 2018 project recommendations:

- Locatee Lands Project Securement of CP 40-4, En'owkin Centre/Penticton Indian Band - \$57,755
- Fish Spawning Areas/Reconnection of Floodplain in Penticton Creek, Okanagan Nations Alliance/Penticton Indian Band - \$40,260
- Fish Passage at Ellis Creek sediment basin, Okanagan Nations Alliance/Penticton Indian Band - \$50,000

## RDOS

### SILGA Community Excellence Awards

- Habitat Stewardship and Enhancement in the South Okanagan, Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society - \$38,000
- White Lake Basin Park Rill Creek East Property Securement, Nature Trust of BC - \$200,000
- Invasive-Free Certificate Program, OASISS - \$6,415
- OSCA Eco-management Project, Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance/Okanagan Community Bat Program - \$7,841.68

If these projects are successful, the RDOS fund will generate over \$2,250,000 over 5-years and leverage an anticipated minimum of 2:1.

### **RDOS Core Values**

The Conservation Fund aligns directly with the RDOS's five core values, which make up the foundation of our vision and mission and are essential to the way we do business. The RDOS core values are:

1. Honesty, Integrity, Ethical and Respectful Behaviour
2. Accountability
3. Leadership/Transparency
4. Consistent Focus on Customer Experience
5. Environmental Responsibility

### **In Summary**

The Conservation Fund has been a partnership that exemplifies the environmental sustainability efforts within the Okanagan Similkameen area. The RDOS and its participating members believe that a healthy environment promotes healthy living in our communities. We envision the RDOS as a steward of our environment, sustaining a diverse and livable region that offers a high quality of life for its inhabitants. It is integral for us to consider the environmental impacts in our decision-making process. Through good governance, we can ensure our unique environment can be enjoyed now and by our future generations to come.