



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

RDCK to purchase lands around Cottonwood Lake

Nelson, BC: The Board of Directors of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) today approved the purchase of 21.6 hectares (ha) of private land around Cottonwood Lake that had been slated for logging by the private landowner. The purchase price is \$450,000 for the purchase of timber on the property, plus closing costs, and the issuance of a tax receipt for the value of the land (without timber).

The purchase is being partially funded with a \$200,000 grant from Columbia Basin Trust. The remaining funds will come from loan proceeds from a debenture loan with the Municipal Finance Authority. RDCK staff will bring borrowing bylaws for the loan to fund the purchase at the April 2019 Board meeting.

“The Nelson, Salmo, E, F & G Regional Parks Commission and RDCK staff have been negotiating with the landowner for several months, and I am pleased that we have come to a successful agreement,” said Aimee Watson, Chair of the RDCK Board. “I would also like to thank Columbia Basin Trust for supporting this initiative. With their support, we can conserve the land for the enjoyment of future generations and expand Cottonwood Lake Regional Park for enhanced recreational opportunities.”

“Residents in Nelson and the surrounding area demonstrated tremendous support to preserve this popular recreation area,” said Tim Hicks, Senior Manager, Delivery of Benefits at Columbia Basin Trust. “We’re pleased to support this important land acquisition project that will enhance Cottonwood Lake Regional Park over the long term.”

The RDCK currently owns Cottonwood Lake Regional Park (0.8 ha) and operates the Nelson Salmo Great Northern Rail Trail (48 km), which are regional park assets adjacent to the acquisition area. The acquisition will expand Cottonwood Lake Regional Park to 22.4 ha.

“The Commission and my colleagues on the Board have received hundreds of letters, emails and phone calls from residents and visitors who wished to express their concern for this issue,” said Ramona Faust, Chair of the Nelson, Salmo, E, F & G Regional Parks Commission and Director of Electoral Area E. “The response was tremendous, and I would like to thank everyone who took the time to contact us and tell us how you feel. We appreciate your passionate engagement and your commitment to working towards a solution.”

Negotiations to purchase the land began in July 2018, when the RDCK and the landowner, Nelson Land Corporation (NLC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to halt logging and gather information to determine fair market value for the timber and the land. Negotiations were reported *in camera* to the Commission and the Board, since both parties had also signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

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In early 2019, members of the community mobilized to express their concerns about the logging. A public meeting was held on December 19, 2018, which allowed attendees to voice their concerns, hear from experts, and share possible solutions. RDCK and City of Nelson elected officials attended to learn more and talk to members of the public. Supporters formed the Cottonwood Lake Preservation Society, launched a fundraising campaign and encouraged concerned citizens to write letters to their local elected representatives.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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The attached map indicates the area included in the purchase agreement, the existing RDCK regional park/trail and Cottonwood Lake, and the logged area.

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