



MEDIA RELEASE

Nelson, BC

January 31, 2020

11:45 a.m. PT

Cross-regional composting program to go ahead in the West Kootenay

The regional districts of Central Kootenay (RDCK) and Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) are now partners in a cross-regional composting program, the only one of its kind in the BC Interior.

The RDCK has received a \$1,536,585 Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund – Organics Infrastructure Program grant with the RDCK to contribute the remaining \$791,580 in project costs. Project planning, design and construction will take place over the next three years.

The new composting program will divert thousands of kilograms of kitchen and food waste from landfills in the RDCK and the RDKB to a new regional composting facility at the RDCK Central Landfill site near Salmo.

An initial composting pilot project will be completed by fall 2021 with the Central composting facility expected to be fully operating by spring 2022. The new program will help conserve landfill space, reduce leachate and greenhouse gas emissions, and produce a useful product in the form of compost.

“Great things happen when we collaborate, and our new regional composting program is a perfect example of that,” said Aimee Watson, Chair of the RDCK Board. “Both our regional districts have declared climate action imperatives, and it makes complete sense to combine forces across the West Kootenay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from organic waste. This program will result in environmental benefits across a large swath of our two regional districts. On behalf of our Board, I would like to thank the provincial and federal governments for funding this important program and to thank our municipalities and the RDKB for partnering with us.”

The joint RDCK-RDKB program will initially target the processing of organic waste from municipal curbside collection in the cities of Castlegar and Nelson in the RDCK, regional curbside collection in the RDKB including from Electoral Areas ‘A’, ‘B’/Lower-Columbia/Old Glory, and the municipalities of Rossland, Warfield, Trail, Montrose and Fruitvale. It will also include organic waste from the commercial sectors in both regional districts.

The RDCK also received a separate \$961,776 Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund – Organics Infrastructure Program grant toward a new, \$1.5 million composting facility in Creston. In addition, the RDKB received a separate \$2,364,012 grant to expand its existing composting program at the Grand Forks Regional Landfill. Once all these organics infrastructure projects are completed, curbside collection will capture almost half the food waste produced in the RDCK, and the majority of food waste produced in the RDKB.

“This partnership with the RDCK and our municipalities in both regions allows us to expand our own composting program so we can divert the maximum amount of organics from our landfills to central composting facilities. This is direct climate action. It also opens the door to more discussions about other possible ways our two regional districts can cooperate on projects to address climate change and move our two local governments closer to becoming carbon neutral,” said Diane Langman, RDKB Board Chair.

The regional organics program is part of the RDCK Organic Waste Diversion Strategy (OWDS) and the RDKB Solid Waste Management Plan. The Central Landfill facility will supplement backyard composting by processing organic waste that can't go in backyard composters, such as meat, breads, fats, and food-soiled paper. About 30 per cent of waste currently disposed of in landfills is compostable.

The Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund – Organics Infrastructure Program combines \$10 million in federal funding from the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, \$10 million from the Province and \$10 million in matching funds from local government applicants and their partners.

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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, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

The RDKB serves more than 31,000 residents in eight incorporated municipalities and five unincorporated electoral areas. The RDKB stretches across 8,200 square kilometres from Champion Lakes in the east all the way to Big White in the west. Our services include recreation and culture, planning, building inspection, environmental programs, economic development and public safety services for fire and other emergencies.

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| For more information: | Aimee Watson, RDCK Board Chair 250-304-5842 awatson@rdck.bc.ca | Diane Langman, RDKB Board Chair 250-368-6836 dlangman@rdkb.com | Frances Maika, RDKB Corporate Communications Officer 250-368-0233 or 250-231-3172 (cell) fmaika@rdkb.com |
| Technical information about the project in each region: | Uli Wolf, RDCK GM of Environmental Services 250-352-8163 uwolf@rdck.bc.ca | Janine Dougall, RDKB GM of Environmental Services 250-368-0232 esmanager@rdkb.com | |

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada

Ce projet est financé en partie par le gouvernement du Canada

The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag to the right.