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For Immediate Release

Provincial Grant Provides Ecosystem Restoration Jobs

The provincial government has awarded another Job Opportunities Program grant to the Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society.

The Trench Society will use the \$400,000 to employ 12 forestry workers on ecosystem restoration projects through the fall and winter.

“With Canfor’s Radium sawmill on indefinite closure, we are targeting their laid-off employees as well as local loggers affected by the shutdown,” said Society Coordinator Dan Murphy. “We hope to have a crew hired by late September.”

The Trench Society is a coalition of nine hunting, ranching, environmental and wildlife organizations dedicated to restoration and conservation of grassland and open forest ecosystems in the East Kootenay and Columbia Valley. It is also a founding member of the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program.

“With this latest funding, we’ll have three crews working until March 2010,” Murphy said. “That’s good news for the restoration program and for people who need work.”

The Society hired a 12-person crew based out of Cranbrook last February. A second crew of 12 was hired in the Canal Flats-Invermere area in April. The new crew will also be based in the Columbia Valley.

The Trench Society has received a total of \$2 million in grants from the provincial Job Opportunities Program, which assists workers affected by the ongoing downturn in BC’s forest industry, and from the Community Adjustment Fund, which is part of the federal government’s effort to offset impacts of the global economic recession.

Galloway Lumber, Tembec, S&D Hunt Logging and Purcell Resources have also received grants over the past 12 months to hire laid-off loggers, mill workers and forest technicians to work on ecosystem restoration projects.

Murphy said the grants support East Kootenay forest workers, their families and the local economy while contributing to valuable restoration work.

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“Restoring the dry forests and grasslands of the Trench provides better forage for wild ungulates and domestic cattle, improves habitat for species at risk, makes forests less vulnerable to insects and disease, and reduces the risk of wildfires,” he said.

So far, the combined crews have thinned dense stands of juvenile trees on restoration sites totalling about 2,000 hectares. Another 1,500 hectares are scheduled for treatment over the next six months.

Murphy recognized the contribution of Rocky Mountain Forest District staff who have prepared the site plans and prescriptions required before work on the ground can go ahead. “Forest District staff have been working with crew members who are qualified to do site preparation. It’s really been a cooperative effort all around.”

If you are interested in a temporary job with the Trench Society, contact Dan Murphy at dgmurphy@telus.net.

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CONTACT:

Dan Murphy, Coordinator
Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society
Home office: (250) 489-4049
Cell: (250) 421-9320
Email: dgmurphy@telus.net

Trench Society Member Organizations, Directors & Alternates

- Cranbrook Archery Club / Marty Cloarec, Cranbrook
- East Kootenay Wildlife Association / Andy Pezderic, Golden / Glynn Killins, Kimberley
- Kootenay Livestock Association / Don Lancaster, Mayook / Jordy Thibeault, Cranbrook
- Rocky Mountain Naturalists / Peter Davidson, Cranbrook / Jim Duncan, Kimberley
- Southern Guides & Outfitters Assn / Bill DuBois, Windermere / Doug Goodwin, Edgewater
- The Land Conservancy of BC (Kootenay Region) / Kathleen Sheppard (pro tem)
- Waldo Stockbreeders Association / Gordon Edwards, Jaffray / Bob Bjorn, Wycliffe
- Wildsight / Dave Quinn, Kimberley / John Bergenske, Skookumchuck
- Windermere District Farmers Institute / Bill Coy, Dutch Creek

Photo follows ...



The Trench Society's Columbia Valley ecosystem restoration crew has been hand slashing trees on Fir Mountain near Canal Flats. Pictured are Curtis Dodds of Radium, at left, and crew supervisor Geordie Driscoll of Kimberley.