



Restoring Nature's Balance.

## News Release

April 7, 2011  
For Immediate Release

### **Local Restoration Project Wins BC Award**

An ecosystem restoration project on the west side of Columbia Lake has earned kudos for the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration (ER) Program and its partners.

The Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia has awarded its first Outstanding Land Program prize to the Trench ER Program; Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program; Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; Nature Conservancy of Canada; The Nature Trust of British Columbia; and Thunderhill Ranch for their joint Dutch-Findlay project.

The Columbia Basin Trust, Community Adjustment Fund, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Job Opportunities Program and Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society also supported the project.

“The Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program is an outstanding example of how conservation groups, government and private land owners can find common ground and work together in the preservation of our province,” Paul McNair, executive director of the Land Trust Alliance, said at the April 1 awards ceremony in Victoria.

McNair said the Alliance, an umbrella organization representing BC's 34 private land trusts, is recognizing the Trench Restoration Program for excellence in land management.

“The work of these multiple partners has already resulted in the restoration of over 560 hectares of open forest and grasslands, the creation of 93 wildlife trees and the investment of over \$900,000 in public and private funds on the Dutch-Findlay project.”

The project site encompasses a total of 45 square kilometres of largely undeveloped

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land between Dutch Creek and Canal Flats. The site includes Crown land, Nature Conservancy of Canada and Nature Trust of BC conservation properties, and Thunderhill Ranch, a working cattle ranch.

The award nomination was made by the East Kootenay Conservation Program.

“As a broad-based partnership ourselves, we are extremely supportive of this collaborative approach,” said EKCP manager Wayne Stetski. “The combined efforts of the ER Program and its partners are achieving superior conservation results on a landscape level, rather than on a property by property basis. This is the best way to deliver conservation in an efficient and effective manner.”

The Dutch-Findlay area is a significant nesting location for the Lewis’s woodpecker, a rare bird that in Canada is found only in a few valleys in BC’s southern Interior.

Much of the project’s work is focused on long-term habitat improvements for this at-risk species, but restoration treatments will also enhance habitat for the endangered American badger and improve grazing for domestic cattle, elk and deer.

“Grassland restoration is critical to a healthy environment in the East Kootenay,” Stetski said. “We need to ensure that the excellent work that has been done in the past is recognized, and that restoration work continues to be a priority for funding in the future.”

A guided field tour of the Dutch-Findlay project is one of the opening events at this year’s annual Wings Over the Rockies birding festival.

To register for the May 2 event, called Ecosystem Restoration IS for the Birds, visit [www.wingsovertherockies.org](http://www.wingsovertherockies.org) or call 1-855-342-2473 (toll free) or 250-342-2473 (local).

For more information on the Trench ER Program, visit [www.trench-er.com](http://www.trench-er.com).

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## Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program

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### **BACKGROUND**

- The Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program (Trench ER Program) has operated as a successful partnership of government, industry and the public since 1998.
- The long-term goal is to restore East Kootenay/Upper Columbia Valley grasslands and open forests to their former fire-maintained condition.
- Restoration – in the form of treatments such as logging, thinning and controlled burning – is taking place on Crown land, provincial and national parks, private conservation properties and First Nations reserves from Radium Hot Springs to the US border.
- Restoring grasslands and open forests enhances biodiversity; restores habitat for species at risk; improves natural grazing for domestic cattle, elk, deer and bighorn sheep; improves forest health; and reduces the risk of severe wildfire.
- Visit [www.trench-er.com](http://www.trench-er.com) for more information.

### **PARTNERS**

- BC Ministry of Agriculture
- BC Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
- BC Parks
- BC Timber Sales
- East Kootenay Wildlife Association
- Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (Columbia Basin)
- Galloway Lumber Co. Ltd.
- Kinbasket Development Corporation
- Kootenay Livestock Association
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Nupqu Development Corporation
- Parks Canada
- Range Advisory Group, Rocky Mountain Resource District
- Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society (Trench Society)  
representing: Cranbrook Archery Club, East Kootenay Wildlife Association,  
Kootenay Livestock Association, Rocky Mountain Naturalists, Southern Guides &  
Outfitters Association, The Land Conservancy of BC – Kootenay Region, Waldo  
Stockbreeders Association, Wildsight, Windermere District Farmers Institute
- Tembec
- The Nature Trust of British Columbia