

For Immediate Release:

The Nature Trust of British Columbia partners with Fairmont Hot Springs Resort to expand wetland protection

Purchase will support and protect important habitat for migratory birds and climate change mitigation

January 19, Vancouver, BC - Today, [The Nature Trust of British Columbia](#), one of the province's leading non-profit land conservation organizations, together with [Fairmont Hot Springs Resort](#), a year-round destination resort located in the Columbia Valley, announce that 143 acres of ecologically important land located near Fairmont Hot Springs Resort has now been protected from development and will be conserved as a natural wetland.

The property known as The Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands, is adjacent to The Nature Trust's Hoodoos Conservation Complex, and a portion of the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area. The purchase of this property from Fairmont Hot Springs Resort by The Nature Trust of BC, adds to a continuous area, over 11,000 acres of relatively undisturbed wetlands, riparian, and grassland habitat.

Wetlands, considered one of the most productive ecosystems in the world, are a natural and effective tool in combating climate change through their ability to act as a sponge, and reduce flooding during heavy rainfall. With the recent and detrimental floods across BC, it is important now more than ever, to conserve and protect such land. Additionally, they provide food and habitat for many species, including insects, reptiles, fish, birds and mammals.

In addition, part of the property consists of open and native grassland, which covers less than 1 per cent of BC's land base and provides habitat for more than 30 per cent of BC's species at risk. Grasslands support more threatened and endangered plants and animals than any other habitat type in the province. With the East Kootenay irreversibly losing native grasslands due to urbanization and agriculture, it is crucial we protect the undisturbed grasslands that remain.

The Columbia Wetlands, including the Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands property, are a wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site) and an area of continental significance to waterfowl under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Numerous species of migratory waterfowl and waterbirds are known to use the Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands, including the Blue-listed Great Blue Heron and Tundra Swan, and the SARA Special Concern Horned Grebe, along with American Wigeon, Blue-winged, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, Northern Pintail and Trumpeter Swan.

The rare wetlands and grasslands of Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands provide a home to many at-risk and endangered species across the province. Some being the American Badger, Long-billed Curlew, Bank Swallow, and the Vivid Dancer.

Each of these species has a role to play in ensuring the persistence of biodiversity and a healthy planet. Large, protected areas are the best way to ensure biodiversity can flourish undisturbed in perpetuity.

Financial support for the conservation of this property has been provided by the Government of Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solution Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program and the East Kootenay Wildlife Association. This project has also been made possible by Pan American Silver, Grayross Foundation, Canal Flats Wilderness Club, the Lightburn Family, and many other donors.

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— **Vivek Sharma, CEO, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort**

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort was pleased to enter this valuable partnership with The Nature Trust of BC. Protecting the wetlands preserves the natural habitat of our community, which we are dedicated to supporting now and in the future.

— **Jasper Lament, CEO, The Nature Trust of BC**

From mitigating floods and purifying water, to serving as an essential stopping point for food and shelter of migratory birds on their long journeys, The Hoodoos - Columbia Wetlands are of extreme ecological value. It is because of this, The Nature Trust of BC has made it a top priority to protect these wetlands and those that call it home. We are extremely grateful to Fairmont Hot Springs Resort and all the funders who made the purchase of this property possible.

— **Chris Bosman, Kootenay Conservation Land Manager**

Wetlands are considered one of the most productive ecosystems in the world and as you stand along the west bank of the mighty Columbia River looking downstream (north), you can see why this property is worth protecting. The expansive riparian floodplain and wetlands of the property stretch out in front of you and are filled with the sound of songbirds and waterfowl. We are delighted to be working with Fairmont Hot Springs Resort to conserve this biodiversity hotspot for future generations.

FACTS:

- Wetlands provide food and habitat for many species, including insects, reptiles, fish, birds and mammals and are a natural and effective tool in combating climate change through acting as a sponge, and reducing flooding during heavy rainfall.
- Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands is of continental significance to migratory birds and water birds such as the Great Blue Heron, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, American Wigeon, Blue-winged, Green-winged, and Cinnamon Teal, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, Northern Pintail, and Horned Grebe, the endangered Lewis's Woodpecker, along with many more.

- The new Hoodoos – Columbia Wetlands will become part of a protected network of more than 11,110 acres of conserved land.
- The Columbia Wetlands are a Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Site)- one of 37 in Canada and three in BC.
- Grasslands cover less than 1 per cent of BC's land base and provide habitat for more than 30 per cent of BC's species at risk. Grasslands support more threatened and endangered plants and animals than any other habitat type in the province.

ABOUT

The Fairmont Hot Springs Resort

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, home to Canada's largest natural mineral hot springs, is a year-round destination nestled in the heart of the British Columbia Rocky Mountains and the stunning Columbia Valley. Guests and day visitors can enjoy everything one of Canada's most all-encompassing experiences has to offer including the legendary natural mineral hot springs pools, 45 holes of golf across three courses, a stunning RV resort and a campground, the Natural Springs Spa, our family-friendly ski area, and a variety of outdoor experiences and activities.

Our full-service destination resort promises to create memories and to connect people through the wonder of nature.

www.fairmonthotsprings.com

The Nature Trust of BC

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leading non-profit land conservation organization with a 50 year history of successfully protecting and caring for B.C.'s most critical habitats. Since 1971, The Nature Trust of BC and its partners have acquired more than 72,000 hectares (178,000 acres) of ecologically significant land to save vulnerable wildlife, fish and plants.

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VIDEO AND IMAGES: <to be inserted>

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