

For Immediate Release:

## One of the Last Remaining Private Properties in the White Lake Basin Now Protected Against Development

*Thanks to the generosity of donors, The Nature Trust of BC raised the funds needed to purchase ecologically important land for conservation*

**Wednesday, August 10th, Okanagan, BC** - Today, [The Nature Trust of British Columbia](#), one of the province's leading non-profit land conservation organizations, announces that it has purchased one of the last remaining private properties in the White Lake Basin for conservation, thanks to the generosity of its donors.

The conservation area spans 161 acres (65 hectares) and will be integrated into the already conserved 20,317 acres (8,222 hectares) of the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch. Since 1996, The Nature Trust of BC has permanently acquired 13 parcels of private land in the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch, demonstrating its commitment to building large conservation complexes over time.

Contiguous natural grassland and its associated ecosystems support a diverse and thriving community of native plants and animals and are recognized as one of BC's most threatened ecosystems. Grasslands represent less than 1% of the provincial land base, yet support over 30% of BC's known threatened and vulnerable plant and animal species. They also act as carbon sinks, supporting climate regulation due to their sequestration of atmospheric carbon in their deep root systems underground.

The Nature Trust of BC launched a crowdfunding campaign earlier this year to raise the last \$200,000 needed to purchase the property, called Park Rill Creek Infill West. Donor funds combined with government dollars enabled The Nature Trust to purchase this property and protect sensitive ecosystems and native species against development for generations to come. Acquisition of this conservation area will also facilitate a viable domestic cattle ranching operation, while being able to protect the most vulnerable ecosystems from disturbance.

The White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch is one of the leading biodiversity ranches in BC and has been ranked the highest in conservation value in all of The Nature Trust of BC's conservation holdings.

Ninety five per cent of the property contains sensitive ecosystems and rare and diverse species in need of urgent protection. A number of endangered birds utilize the property including the Lewis's Woodpecker, Barn Swallow, Flammulated Owl, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Not only do birds call this conservation area home, many other federally listed animals can be spotted in this important habitat such as the Pallid Bat, American Badger, Western Tiger Salamander, and Great Basin Gophersnake.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change. This project was made possible through the generous support of Val and Dick Bradshaw, Jane MacDonald, and many other donors.

Over the past 50 years, The Nature Trust of BC has acquired and cared for over 180,000 acres of our province's most critical natural habitat for vulnerable wildlife and plants. Support The Nature Trust in purchasing and protecting an upcoming property by donating [here](#).

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#### **QUOTES:**

“As we face rapid biodiversity loss and climate change, nature is our biggest ally. Large scale nature conservation is a strong tool to ensure biodiversity can flourish undisturbed while also helping to mitigate against climate change. We are delighted to be able to preserve connectivity among rare and threatened ecosystems in the White Lake Basin, through the purchase of this property and take steps to support climate regulation through conservation.”

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

#### **FACTS:**

- Park Rill Creek Infill West is an infill property surrounded by the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch, within the traditional territory of the SnPink'tn, Smelqmix, and Syilx People.
- The purchase of this property increases the size of The Nature Trust's White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch to 20,478 acres (8,287 hectares).
- Park Rill Creek Infill West is one of the last private properties remaining in the White Lake Basin that has not been conserved.
- The conservation area consists of diverse and sensitive ecosystems, including low elevation grasslands, which are the most rare type of ecosystem in BC, supporting more than 30% of BC's species at risk.
- At risk and species of concern have habitat within the conservation area including the Lewis's Woodpecker, Barn Swallow, Flammulated Owl, and Grasshopper Sparrow.
- There are not only birds that call this property home, many other federally listed animals utilize this important habitat, such as the Pallid Bat, American Badger, Western Tiger Salamander, and Great Basin Gophersnake.

#### **ABOUT:**

##### **The Nature Trust of BC**

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leading non-profit land conservation organization with over 50 years of success protecting and caring for B.C.'s most critical habitats. Since 1971, The Nature Trust of BC and its partners have acquired more than 73,000 hectares (180,000 acres) of ecologically significant land to save vulnerable wildlife, fish and plants.

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