

Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture

The Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CIJV) is advancing habitat conservation efforts in British Columbia's Intermountain Region. One of the CIJV's priority areas is the Upper Columbia River Valley.

Extending 180 kilometres (112 miles) in length, the Valley is nestled in the Rocky Mountain Trench, between the Rocky and Purcell Mountains. It forms one of the longest contiguous wetland complexes in North America. The wetlands and grasslands that carpet the valley bottom are life-sustaining refuges for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds.

In spite of the apparent natural beauty of the Valley, numerous threats lurk in its midst. The Upper Columbia is the only portion (less than 10 percent) of the Columbia River system not directly impacted by hydroelectric impoundments. A history of fire suppression has generated the encroachment of forests into grasslands, while timber harvesting and urban development have imperilled wetlands and other habitat.

Since much of the Valley is privately owned, landowners are some of the CIJV's most important partners. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, in cooperation with the Province of B.C. Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, the Columbia Basin Trust, and other organizations and individuals, has secured over 2,000 hectares (5,138 acres) through acquisition and covenant of Thunderhill Ranch, Kootenay River Ranch and a private property adjacent to Kootenay River Ranch. These ranches, located near the Columbia River headwaters, are prime wetland and riparian habitat with open upland bench and forested bench habitat. Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine forests, savannah and woodlands with spruce forests in wetter areas, make the landscape ideal for warbler, waterfowl and shorebird species.

Another conservation feat in the Columbia Valley is the acquisition of one of the most coveted pieces of wildlife habitat on private land in British Columbia—the 4,037-hectare (9,976-acre) Hofert/Hoodoos property located near the Fairmont Hot Springs. This property harbours many species including numerous species at risk. It includes 124 hectares (306 acres) of the Columbia River wetlands, extensive grasslands, clay gullies, hoodoos, aspen forest and dense stands of young conifers. The landscape supports vital winter range, migration corridors and staging grounds for a multitude of birds and wildlife.

Background Image:

Great-horned Owl

Larry Halverson, Parks Canada

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The Nature Trust of British Columbia, Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (B.C. Hydro, Province of B.C. and Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, Ducks Unlimited Canada, B.C. Conservation Foundation, Kootenay Wildlife Heritage Fund and local rod and gun clubs partnered to purchase the Hofert/Hoodoos property. It is through their funding and the generous, ongoing

assistance from the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* that the CIJV partners have been able to advance habitat conservation in British Columbia.

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Contributions (\$CN)

	2004	Total (1986-2004)
U.S. Federal	1,342,344	1,978,621
U.S. Non-Federal	3,364,779	3,527,958
Canadian	1,933,998	8,187,146
Total		13,693,725

Accomplishments (Acres)

	2004	Total (1986-2004)
Secured	16,201	283,609
Enhanced	6,864	22,012
Managed	7,566	23,073
Total*	16,201	283,609

* Secured, enhanced and managed acres are not additive. Acres are first secured, may then be enhanced and are subsequently placed under management.



The Upper Columbia Valley is internationally paramount as a staging area for waterfowl on the Pacific flyway. Single day counts in its wetlands have revealed over 15,000 ducks in autumn and more than 1,000 tundra swans in spring.

Larry Halverson, Parks Canada