

City of Kelowna (\$20,000)

Project Title: Wetland Habitat Mapping

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Project Start date: June 2007

The City of Kelowna Environment Division has completed substantial amounts of habitat mapping in recent years, most commonly using the SHIM (Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping) method for watercourses. This mapping is useful for planning purposes and aids in conservation and protection of sensitive habitat areas as they are mapped accurately and ecological features are identified in the mapped area. This current project will extend the mapping to wetland habitats in the City of Kelowna.

The City of Kelowna will be utilizing the SHIM methodology in order to map wetland areas within the City boundaries. The data collection will be expanded for this project and information such as wetland functionality rating, livestock use intensity rating, Wetland Community Type, biodiversity index, vegetation, proximity to other wetlands and ecotone abundance will be included. Over 85% of valley bottom wetlands and other riparian habitats have been lost over the last 100 years through growth and development and many remaining habitats are highly fragmented. For this project 81 known and over 50 unconfirmed wetlands will be inventoried and mapped for the purpose of including them in the City of Kelowna's interactive GIS tool for land use planning and other decision making processes.

Ducks Unlimited Canada has been added as a partner in this project, contributing \$5000.00 to mapping for wetland protection.

A site visit with Kyle Hawes of EcoScape Environmental Consultants on September 27 indicates that the project is approximately halfway through the field work of GPS and inventory data collection. Once all data is collected it will be finalized into the GIS system and a report of findings will be written. Before this field work began, the City of Kelowna held an open house for residents to enquire about more information on the mapping project and provide input on wetland locations to be mapped. This open house was well attended, helping the City and EcoScape Consultants determine approximate locations for a few more of the unconfirmed wetlands and allowing residents to get a better understanding of the rationale for the project.

Wetland mapping is very important for future planning, especially in light of development pressure. Environmental monitoring of these wetlands can be easier when they are accurately mapped and can also make them easier to protect.



A soil core taken at waters edge of a wetland in Kelowna. The upper range of the core shows the organic layer while the remainder is mineral soil.