Regional District North Okanagan ($20,000)

Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping of Priority Creeks within Rural Vernon OCP Area

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Ecoscape Ltd., 2008

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) provides community planning services for the five electoral areas of the district as well as for the member municipalities of Enderby, Armstrong, Spallumcheen and Lumby. The RDNO serves a total population of 78,000 people. Electoral Areas B and C surround the City of Vernon and the District of Coldstream. This area comprises what is known as Greater Vernon, which has a population of approximately 53,000.

Over the years, many of the watercourses in the Greater Vernon area have been impacted by development and are now in poor condition. This project compiled Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping (SHIM) of tributary creeks of BX Creek and built upon the SHIM of BX Creek that was completed in 2007.

The project mapped creeks within the Electoral Areas 'B' and 'C' (Rural Vernon) Official Community Plan (OCP) Area. As the Rural Vernon OCP is scheduled for a review within the next two years, Development Services would like to have SHIM within this area completed to incorporate into the new OCP.

This project focused on accurately mapping the centerline of a number of creeks and their tributaries within the BX Creek watershed and the Vernon Creek watershed. Many creeks researched are main tributaries to BX Creek. This information will provide accuracy when dealing with property owners and development applications with respect to the properties that lie adjacent to these creeks.

Ecoscape Environmental Consultants were hired to undertake Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping (SHIM) of specified creeks for this purpose. The information collected will be used to update RDNO mapping systems to show an accurate location of creeks with respect to property lines. It will also provide a snapshot in time of the state of the creeks so that areas which require restoration works

can be identified and any future problems can be noted as occurring after the SHIM work was completed. The SHIM project involves a field inventory component which will include collection of GPS data on stream centerline location, field notes on areas of erosion, type of fish habitat, culverts and obstructions, state of riparian vegetation, and photographs of items noted. It also involves a mapping component where all of the information collected will be mapped and added to the RDNO GIS databases.

As of December 2008, the field inventory component is complete and raw data has been entered into a database. Approximately 1000 photographs were taken during the completion of field work. The data assessment and mapping component is expected to be completed by the end of December 2008.

A few property owners refused to allow access to across their lands over the course of field work; however air photo interpretation will be used in these instances to complete the mapping. Ecoscape fell behind predicted timelines and did not have the data analysis completed by the middle of November as originally planned. Due to funding constraints, not all creeks were mapped. Creeks were ranked in a priority order to ensure that grant monies were spent as efficiently as possible.