

# REPORT TO COUNCIL



**Date:** March 13, 2017

**RIM No.** 1228-07

**To:** City Manager

**From:** Community Planning Department (TC)

**Subject:** Species and Ecosystems at Risk Local Government Working Group Award

---

## **1.0 Background**

The Species and Ecosystems at Risk Local Government Working Group is a collection of 160 municipal, regional and provincial governments who are interested in: joining conservation efforts to protect plants and animals and their habitats; facilitating discussions across sectors about species and ecosystem protection; and collaborating on species and ecosystems issues.

Since its formation in 2009, the Working Group has been working together to find ways to protect species and ecosystems at risk on private and local government lands. Membership now includes approximately 90 local governments in British Columbia.

## **2.0 Species and Ecosystems at Risk Local Government Working Group Award**

At a recent symposium held in Victoria on January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps announced the peer-nominated awards for 6 local governments who demonstrated exemplary work on Species and Ecosystems at Risk related projects.

I am pleased to advise Council that the City of Kelowna's involvement with the Mission Creek Restoration Initiative has been recognized with an award.

The Mission Creek Restoration Initiative is a multi-phase, multi-stakeholder partnership formed officially in 2008 to restore natural functions to the lower sections of Mission Creek. The primary goal of the project is to restore fish and wildlife stocks and habitat. Complementary objectives are to conserve and expand biodiversity and species at risk, to improve flood protection, and to inspire and support community stewardship.

Mission Creek's ecological integrity has been degraded due to channelization and diking undertaken since the 1950s to prevent flooding. This has adversely affected fish and wildlife and their breeding, rearing, and overwintering habitats. Annual kokanee stocks, as one example, have since declined dramatically from about one million fish in the 1940s to about 30,000 in 1996 and 16,000 in 2010. Other

species at risk include Western Screech Owls, Grasshopper Sparrows, Painted Turtles, Spotted Bats, Whitethroated Swifts, Black Cottonwood, and Great Blue Heron.

The first phase of the Mission Creek project completed in 2016 has had a significant impact with renaturalizing floodplain function by realigning a 500-metre section of dike on the south side of the creek between Casorso Road and Gordon Drive. Fish and wildlife habitat have also been increased by restoring important habitat features including meanders, pools, and overhead cover by enhancing habitat within the expanded floodplain. These new habitat features will increase rearing areas for kokanee and rainbow trout, and includes areas of refuge from high temperatures during summer low-flow periods and from predators. This includes increased gravel stability within a section of Mission Creek that provides the most valuable kokanee spawning habitat within the entire watershed, as well as improvements to riparian habitat for a wide range of wildlife species.

**Report prepared by:**

Todd Cashin, Suburban & Rural Planning Manager

**Reviewed by:** Ryan Smith, Community Planning Department Manager

**Approved for Inclusion:** Derek Edstrom, A/Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate