



MEDIA RELEASE

Greater Vancouver Regional District

4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, British Columbia V5H 4G8 • Tel: 604-432-6200 • Fax: 604-432-6399 • Website: www.gvrd.bc.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 15, 2007

PARTNERSHIP SAVES WEST CREEK WETLANDS

LANGLEY, BC – The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the Township of Langley, the BC Trust for Public Lands and *TLC* The Land Conservancy have joined forces to purchase and secure one of the most significant areas of wildlife habitat in the municipality, known as the West Creek Wetlands.

The West Creek Wetlands acquisition is significant because it is home to 170 different animals, including up to 18 threatened or endangered species. Running through the property is also the main channel of West Creek, one of BC's 14 designated "sensitive" streams, with healthy stocks of Coho and Chum Salmon. Wildlife rich, Wood Duck Lake in the northern part of the property is maintained by the dam-building activities of a beaver population.

As a result of this partnership, the purchase deal closed at the end of December for \$2.5 million. The GVRD contributed \$1.4 million, the Township \$700,000, the BC Trust for Public Lands \$300,000, and *TLC* \$150,000. In addition, the former owner generously agreed to reduce the purchase price by donating \$1.1 million to *TLC*'s fundraising campaign. The 163-acre property was appraised at \$3.6 million.

West Creek Wetlands was first brought to the partners' attention by the local community groups Glen Valley Watersheds Society and Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) in 2004. To date over 200 people from across British Columbia have donated to the campaign. Rhys Krannitz, a local boy even took it upon himself to challenge other students in the Lower Mainland to donate to the cause raising \$300 dollars.

"The acquisition of this parcel is important to the Township of Langley," says Mayor Kurt Alberts. "The unique partnership that was formed to acquire this property has enabled us to preserve this land for future generations and helps maintain some of the natural features in the Township."

Lois Jackson, Chair of the GVRD says, "West Creek Wetlands is a significant addition to the GVRD parks and greenways system. I want to recognize the contributions of the partners, especially *TLC* whose negotiating skills and tireless perseverance made this acquisition possible."

"The former owner was extremely generous and had a wish to see the site preserved in its natural state. I'm proud to say we accomplished this goal with the help of concerned citizens, naturalist and heritage groups, local businesses, and governments," says *TLC* Executive Director Bill Turner.



Located in northern Langley, West Creek Wetlands will become regional parkland associated with Glen Valley Regional Park. The property is environmentally sensitive and there are no facilities currently available to the public. With input from the various partners and the public, a management plan will be developed by GVRD with facilities constructed over the next couple of years. Tours of the site may be arranged by contacting *TLC* or the Glen Valley Watersheds Society.

For further information:

Bill Turner, *TLC* Executive Director: (250) 213-1090, bturner@conservancy.bc.ca

Heather Skydt, *TLC* Communications Officer: (604) 733-2313, heather@conservancy.bc.ca

Wendy Dadalt, GVRD Parks, East Area Manager (604) 530-4983, wendy.dadalt@gvrd.bc.ca

Al Neufeld, Township of Langley, Manager, Parks Design & Development: (604) 533-6085, aneufeld@tol.bc.ca

Sian Krannitz, Glen Valley Watersheds Society: (604) 856-8806, sian_krannitz@hotmail.com

