



For Immediate Release

June 28, 2009

It takes a district to raise a healthy lake

Why Invermere and the RDEK create waves in the water stewardship world

Invermere, B.C. — Who knew? The folks at the District of Invermere and Regional District of East Kootenay stand out—and we mean *really* stand out—from other local governments in B.C. when it comes to lake stewardship.

Kalista Pruden, Wildsight’s Lake Windermere program coordinator, has always appreciated how the DOI and RDEK supported the Lake Windermere Project, but it wasn’t until she went to a June forum of lake groups from around the province that the message really hit home.

“I delivered a presentation about the LWP and the programs and partnerships that have come out of it at the B.C. Lake Stewardship Society Community Forum,” Pruden says. “The audience—full of other community water stewardship group representatives—was enthralled. Over lunch I barely had time to eat: so many people wanted to talk about the success of the LWP and how they might apply what we learned here to their own programs.”

Pruden says the strong response highlighted how progressive the DOI is.

“I heard again and again from different people from across B.C. how frustrating and challenging it is for them just to communicate—let alone work—with their local governments on water issues. Our local governments lead the province.”

Pruden says local government has been supportive of the LWP since it began in 2005. “These people are especially effective,” she says. “They work cooperatively with community groups—like the Lake Windermere Project and Lake Windermere Ambassadors—to make good things happen. In this case, that’s a healthier lake with a healthier future.”

As the Lake Windermere Project draws to a close this year and the Lake Windermere Ambassadors take over stewardship duties, Pruden is grateful for all of the inter-governmental cooperation at municipal, provincial and federal levels.

“Good things will continue to happen for Lake Windermere and the people of the Columbia Valley—caring for the lake pays off both ecologically and economically.” The federal government has recognized the Lake Windermere Project as one of the best examples in Canada for citizen based water stewardship.

The Lake Windermere Project is a long-term, comprehensive stewardship program dedicated to safeguarding the health of our lake. The Lake Windermere Project is made possible by generous support from Wildsight, Environment Canada, Columbia Basin Trust, the Real Estate Foundation of B.C. and Lake Windermere Ambassadors.

About Wildsight • www.Wildsight.ca

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and southern Rocky Mountain region.

This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America.

Contact:

Kalista Pruden, Lake Windermere Project Program Coordinator

Kalista@Wildsight.ca • 250-341-6898