

Basin-Boundary Employment Lands Inventory Project

OVERVIEW

An issue facing many communities in British Columbia is access to land to accommodate existing business expansion and future investment and economic growth. The Basin-Boundary region does not have a comprehensive employment lands¹ inventory in place and as a result does not have the information needed to support informed decision-making related to land use planning. The Basin-Boundary Employment Lands Inventory Project will inventory and provide an analysis of employment lands for the East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, Kootenay Boundary and North Columbia (Golden, Revelstoke, Valemount) areas. With an improved understanding of the availability and type of employment lands, the region will be in a better position to retain and attract businesses and investment. It is anticipated an improved understanding of 'Basin-Boundary' employment lands will also support collaboration and informed decision making at a regional level.

This project includes the development of an employment lands online inventory, an analysis of available employment lands, and consultations with decision makers and economic development practitioners from across the region. Research, development and consultations will take place between April 2012 - March 2013. A small regional advisory group will be formed in order to provide feedback on implementation over the course of the project. A literature review of relevant economic development research and interviews with key economic development stakeholders will be conducted between April-June. Data layers are expected to be finalized by late-May. Data query tools will be developed and the construction of the online geospatial inventory will take place between June-November. Data sharing agreements are expected to be finalized by late September and the online geospatial portal is expected to launch in January. Discussion forums with key economic development stakeholders from across the region will take place between October-January. The final project report will be released in March 2013.

Community Futures of East Kootenay is the project lead organization. Supporting partner organizations include Kootenay Association for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (JTI) and the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Selkirk College. The project is funded by the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition, Community Futures East Kootenay, and the Columbia Basin Trust. The Selkirk College Geospatial Research Centre will develop a comprehensive online employment lands geospatial inventory. Employment lands data and layers will align with JTI geospatial mapping tools under development to ensure integrated compatibility. The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) will provide research support, including an analysis of available employment lands. The analysis is expected to explore how the region's existing employment lands are being utilized, what types of employment lands are in demand, what factors, if any, are constraining the availability and effective use of employment lands, and how First Nations communities, local government, and economic development organizations can most effectively work together to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. To ensure the online inventory remains a useful decision-making and investment attraction tool in future years, the SGRC and the RDI will also provide ongoing data housing and data updates.

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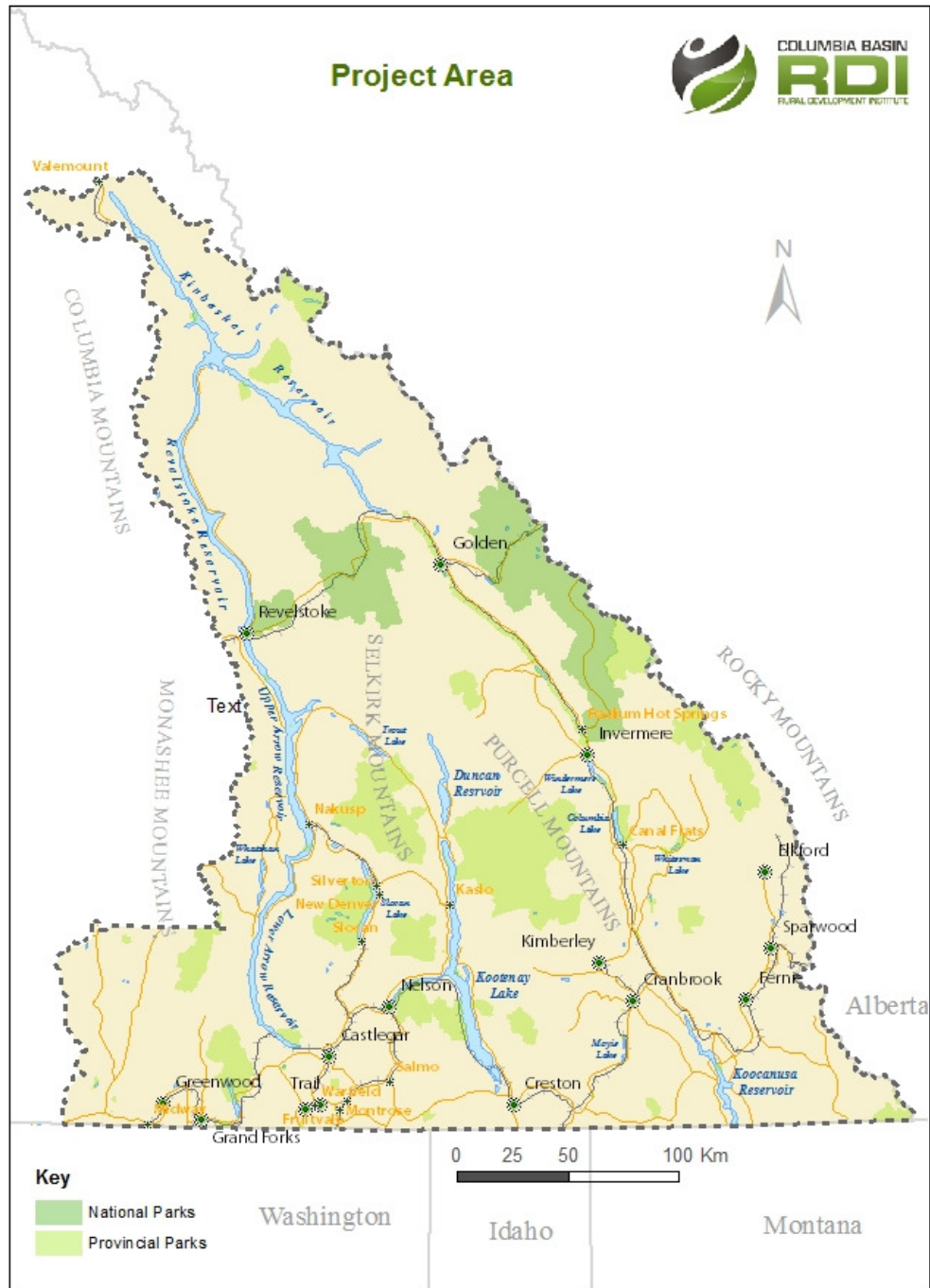
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¹Employment lands refer to lands that generate economic wealth. For this project, included are agricultural lands, lands zoned or designated for heavy industry, light industry and commercial (non-retail); First Nations designated employment lands; brown and greyfield sites; and Crown lands available for development.

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Map created by Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre