



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For immediate release

### **BCTC funding promotes wildlife awareness through Bear Aware initiative**

VANCOUVER – BC Transmission Corporation (BCTC) has donated \$5,000 to the British Columbia Conservation Foundation's Bear Aware Program, which aims to reduce conflict between people and bears in residential neighbourhoods.

The funding will support community awareness programs throughout B.C. to build understanding of the root causes of bear-human conflicts, reduce the frequency of such incidents and ultimately lower the number of bears that have to be put down.

“Environmental sustainability and safety for British Columbians are top priorities for BCTC,” said Jane Peverett, BCTC President and CEO. “Bear Aware combines both these aspects in their awareness program in an innovative and sustainable approach to wildlife conservation and we are pleased to support its efforts.”

“The funding provided by BCTC comes at a crucial time, as the incidences of bear-human conflict are on the rise,” says Jacques Drisdelle, Bear Aware Provincial Program Coordinator. “This donation will enable Bear Aware to extend its public education work and BCTC’s contribution will certainly go a long way in helping to reduce the number of conflicts and in making our communities safer.”

In 1998, the Bear Aware program was introduced by the British Columbia Conservation Foundation. The demand for the program in B.C. communities has grown each year with residents eager to help find solutions to create safer, more sustainable communities.

In the summer months the potential for conflicts between people and bears is the highest when people are enjoying the outdoors and bears are actively searching for food. As well, due to competition for food in the wild, bears are often forced to move into residential areas and are attracted to food sources such as garbage, fruit trees, pet foods, barbeques and livestock feed.

On average, more than one thousand bears are put down each year in B.C. Many of these deaths are preventable. Bear Aware coordinators work closely with the public, Conservation Officers and city officials in B.C. communities to make changes that will discourage bears from entering residential neighbourhoods. This may mean changes to the garbage collection schedule, new bear-proof litter cans and dumpsters and community planning to add wildlife corridors or green spaces.

Bear Aware is a program of the British Columbia Conservation Foundation that operates each year in communities from mid-May to the end of November.

BC Transmission Corporation is the Crown corporation that plans, operates and maintains the province's publicly owned electrical transmission system.

- 30 -

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