

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FVRD Receives Grant to Jump Start Tourism Economy

Chilliwack, BC – The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) has received a \$282,000 grant from the Government of Canada’s Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund for the development of tourism and outdoor recreation in the region. The funds will be used to help build a strategic, data-driven tourism economy with a broad range of stakeholders, including First Nations, local governments, tourism organizations, and user groups throughout the Fraser Valley.

While it may seem obvious that outdoor recreation could be an economic driver for the Fraser Valley, it is actually a relatively new emerging tourism sector with very little data available.

“You can’t grow what you don’t know,” said FVRD Board Chair Jason Lum. “We know that our region has tremendous assets for outdoor recreation, but we need a comprehensive inventory and framework to grow this sector. Working collaboratively with our partners, we plan to build a strategic, data-driven tourism economy that is sustainable across the region.”

The multi-year project will include a region-wide impact analysis and an asset management plan. The impact analysis will answer key questions such as who is coming to the Fraser Valley, how frequently they visit, what they do, and how much money they spend. The asset management plan will identify the natural, cultural or heritage resources that could be further developed, as well as potential risks and opportunities.

Lum said, “Many of the outdoor recreation opportunities in the Fraser Valley are located in our rural areas, many of which have faced difficult economic conditions due to shrinking natural resource sectors. A comprehensive outdoor recreation management plan will contribute to the region’s economy as a whole.”

The federal Strategic Priorities Fund is an application based program available to local governments and other recipients outside of the Greater Vancouver Regional District to support infrastructure and capacity building projects that are either large in scale, regional in impact or innovative, and align with the program objectives of productivity and economic growth, a clean environment and strong cities and communities. The 2017 intake provided up to 100 percent funding for eligible capital and capacity building projects to a maximum contribution of \$6 million per project. To see all projects funded through this intake, visit <https://news.gov.bc.ca/16553>.

“Improvements to local infrastructure are so important. They make our communities even better places to live,” said Selina Robinson, B.C. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “We are pleased to partner with local governments and the federal government to improve the daily lives of British Columbians.”

Wendy Booth, president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities said, “Communities across BC are looking for funding to replace, upgrade and expand local infrastructure. The federal Gas Tax Fund is accelerating the pace of infrastructure renewal through the transfer of close to \$3 billion since 2005 for projects in our province. I appreciate the Government of Canada’s long-term commitment to fund priorities identified by BC local governments.”

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