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Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor

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| Applying Organization | Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society - CPAWS-BC | Application Date | 5/14/2026 |
| Applying Contact | Lisa Baum | Status | Submitted |
| Record Type | Member Collective | Created By | Lisa Baum, 5/13/2026, 10:34 AM |
| | | Create Account | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Project Overview

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| Project Name | Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor | Requested Amount | \$50,000.00 |
| Project/Campaign Name | Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor | | |
| Type of Project | Designation; Management Planning; Other | Project Multiple Locations | |
| Project Location (State or Territory) | BC | Longitude | 127°33'36.6"W |
| Latitude | 58°56'46.1"N | | |

Organization Details

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|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Organization Name | Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) - BC | Primary address for organization | 227-312 Main Street Vancouver British Columbia V6A 2T2 Canada |
| Contact Name | Lisa Baum | Contact Title | Advisor - Foundation and Corporate Partnerships |
| Contact Email Address | lbaum@cpaws.org | | |
| Annual Operating Budget | \$2,000,000.00 | Tax Status/Organization Type | Canadian Registered Charity |
| Staff Size | 13 | Main Phone | (604) 685-7445 |
| Total Membership | | Organization Website/Social Media Feed | https://cpawsbc.org |
| BIPOC-led | No | C-Suite Staff | |

Grant Details

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Awarded Amount | | Awarded Date | |
| Funding Program | | | |
| Primary Project Type | | Secondary Project Type | |
| Term Start Date | | Term End Date | |

Proposal Questions

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|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| Mission/History Of Organization | The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – British Columbia (CPAWS-BC) | Location Details | The landscape we are working to protect is the Northwest Critical Conservation |
|--|---|-------------------------|--|

is a leading conservation organization dedicated to protecting public lands, freshwater, and oceans across British Columbia. Our mission is to safeguard biodiversity and advance resilient, connected ecosystems through advocacy, partnership, and public engagement. We work collaboratively with Indigenous, provincial, and federal governments to help deliver lasting conservation outcomes.

Founded in 1979, CPAWS-BC is one of the 13 chapters comprising the national CPAWS network. In BC, our work spans landscape-level planning, marine protection, and species at risk recovery, with a focus on practical solutions that support biodiversity, climate resilience, Indigenous-led conservation, and healthy communities.

Corridor (NCCC), a vast region of northwest British Columbia stretching across millions of hectares of subalpine meadows, alpine tundra, glaciers, boreal forest, and wild river ecosystems.

This region is one of the most intact and ecologically significant landscapes remaining in North America. It contains globally important wildlife habitat and movement corridors for species such as grizzly bear, caribou, moose, wolves, wolverine, mountain goat, and salmon, as well as rich birdlife and freshwater biodiversity. Large, connected landscapes allow wide-ranging species to move, adapt, and thrive in the face of climate change.

The area is also home to major headwaters, salmon-bearing rivers, wetlands, and carbon-rich forests that provide essential ecosystem services far beyond the region itself, including clean water, climate regulation, and cultural and economic benefits for communities. Because of its size and connectivity, protecting this landscape would have outsized value for biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

What makes this moment unique is that the region now sits at the intersection of major opportunity and major risk.

The federal government has identified the NCCC as a priority zone for infrastructure and critical minerals development and has not yet defined how conservation priorities will impact decisions. Meanwhile, the provincial government and First Nations are simultaneously leading three large-scale land use planning processes to include permanent protection. Decisions made in the next 12–24 months will determine whether this corridor becomes a globally significant conservation corridor, or a fragmented industrial landscape.

Our work focuses on ensuring that wildlife habitat, ecological connectivity, and Indigenous-led conservation are central to the final vision for the NCCC. If successful, 6.6–7.6 million hectares of land and freshwater ecosystems could be advanced toward durable protection, representing one of the most significant conservation opportunities in North America today.

Final Success

Final success means securing durable protection for 18.8 million acres (7.6 million hectares) of connected land and freshwater ecosystems across northwest British Columbia, including critical wildlife habitat, major salmon-bearing watersheds and headwaters, and landscape-scale ecological corridors through permanent conservation designations.

Impact on Climate and Biodiversity

If successful, this project will secure permanent protection for up to 7.6 million hectares of intact land and freshwater ecosystems in northwest British Columbia, generating significant benefits for climate resiliency, biodiversity, and landscape connectivity.

Northwest BC contains some of the largest intact landscapes remaining in North America, whose protection can have an outsized impact on climate resilience. Its forests, wetlands, alpine landscapes, and freshwater systems store substantial carbon, regulate water

flows, reduce flood and wildfire risk, and provide refugia where species can adapt as temperatures change. Protecting these landscapes is one of the most cost-effective ways to maintain natural climate defenses while avoiding the biodiversity loss associated with habitat destruction and industrial disturbance. The region also supports exceptional biodiversity, including habitat for grizzly bears, caribou, moose, wolves, wolverine, mountain goat, migratory birds, and globally important salmon-bearing watersheds. Large, connected habitats are essential for species that require broad ranges, seasonal migration routes, or healthy predator-prey systems. By embedding biodiversity priorities into land use plans now underway, this project can help prevent fragmentation before it occurs.

Connectivity is at the heart of the NCCC opportunity. The corridor sits between existing and proposed protected areas, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, conservancies, parks, and undeveloped Crown lands across BC, Yukon, and Alaska. Protecting priority areas within the NCCC would strengthen movement corridors between these landscapes, allowing wildlife to move across elevations and jurisdictions in response to climate change, access breeding and feeding grounds, and maintain genetic diversity.

Our project specifically uses spatial analysis and conservation planning to identify the highest-value habitat linkages and intact core areas, then works to have those priorities reflected in provincial land use plans and federal corridor decisions. This means the outcome is not only more protected acreage, but a more functional conservation network.

In practical terms, success would help transform a potentially fragmented industrial corridor into one of North America's most important connected landscapes for wildlife movement, climate adaptation, and long-term biodiversity recovery.

Our strategy is to ensure that the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor (NCCC) is defined by durable conservation outcomes, not solely by industrial development. Over the next 12 months, CPAWS-BC will play a convening, technical, and advocacy role to help embed wildlife habitat protection, ecological connectivity, and Indigenous-led conservation priorities into three concurrent land use planning (LUP) processes now underway across 16 million hectares of northwest British Columbia.

Phase 1: Foundation Building (Months 1–3)

We will begin by deepening collaboration

Expected Economic & Recreational Impact

The landscapes involved include some of the most spectacular and intact ecosystems in North America: major mountain ranges, wild rivers, salmon-bearing watersheds, vast forests, and culturally significant Indigenous territories. Northwest BC is known as the birthplace of BC's guide outfitting industry, with family-owned businesses dating back to the late 1800s still operating today in partnership with local First Nations. Securing durable protection for priority areas could support sustainable economic activity tied to hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, paddling, angling, hunting, camping, backcountry skiing, mountaineering, and

Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

guided tourism. These sectors create local jobs in accommodation, transportation, food services, outfitting, equipment retail, and Indigenous tourism enterprises.

The project is also expected to improve long-term investment certainty for communities and industries by helping clarify where conservation and recreation values should be prioritized, reducing conflict and uncertainty in future land-use decisions. Strong conservation planning can coexist with development while ensuring that the highest-value ecological and recreational areas remain intact.

In terms of public access and connection to nature, success could help secure or improve access across millions of hectares of public lands and freshwater landscapes within the broader 7.6 million hectare conservation vision identified through the project. Of significant note are the public commitments made by the Kaska and Taku River Tlingit First Nations to ensure their Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas will remain open to public access, outdoor recreation, and tourism industries that work in partnership to respect the land. These commitments point to the significance of the outdoor recreation economy in the area and the important relationships that have been built over a hundred years.

with First Nations partners, with whom we've been working for many years, whose territories and priorities are central to the future of the NCCC, including the Tahltan, Taku River Tlingit, and Kaska Dena Nations. Our approach is to first support and help advance conservation priorities already being identified through Indigenous-led planning processes, including IPCAs, habitat stewardship objectives, cultural land use priorities, and long-term guardianship goals.

During this phase, CPAWS-BC will continue to provide technical capacity requested by partners, including communications planning and supporting, spatial analysis, GIS mapping, connectivity modelling, and synthesis of ecological data that can strengthen Nation-led proposals in current land use planning tables. We will work to identify how individual priorities across territories connect into a broader corridor-scale conservation vision while respecting each Nation's leadership, decision-making authority, and distinct objectives.

Our First Nations partners have made our role as supportive allies in these planning processes very clear: beyond advocating for the advancement of their ICPAs, we must demonstrate the importance of additional protected and connected areas, including those between and beyond planning area boundaries. We will work to help translate Indigenous priorities and Western science into clear, evidence-based conservation opportunities that work alongside the provincial and federal ambitions for critical mineral development. The NCCC becomes a realistic framework that governments can act on, ensuring that the future of northwest BC reflects our collective aspirations for healthy lands, waters, wildlife, and community wellbeing rather than being defined solely through external industrial planning.

Phase 2: Influence Planning Processes (Months 3–9)

We will engage directly in the three LUP processes through submissions, technical recommendations, meetings with provincial staff, and collaboration with First Nations and regional allies. Our objective is to ensure that conservation priorities are incorporated into draft land use scenarios, interim protection, and future designation pathways. The timelines for these land use planning outcomes continue to shift as provincial government and First Nations capacities are extremely limited. We anticipate significant work will be required to build NCCC conservation outcome support from the provincial and federal governments, ENGOs, and cross-sector businesses (e.g., BC Wildlife Federation)

throughout this time period.
Phase 3: Secure Commitments and Build Public Momentum (Months 9–12)
As decisions emerge, we will focus on securing explicit commitments from provincial and federal decision-makers to recognize the NCCC conservation vision. This work will include advocacy for protected area designations, support for IPCAs, and safeguards for priority habitat outside current planning boundaries. Once land use planning processes have been approved by the provincial government, there will continue to be conversations and deliberations on how conservation outcomes are implemented on the ground. The NCCC vision will likely require iterations that reflect the changing realities of implementation, including the major critical mineral projects that begin to take shape. Our goal is to be able to use the NCCC as a tool for navigating this formative and influential period in the aftermath of land use plan approvals.

Potential Challenges and Barriers
The main risks are compressed government timelines, competing industrial pressures, and fragmented planning processes across the three LUP tables. A further significant challenge is the current political climate, where governments are strongly focused on economic growth, infrastructure acceleration, and critical minerals development. In that context, conservation can be framed as a constraint rather than as a driver of long-term prosperity, resilience, and community benefit. There is also a risk that conservation commitments remain vague or symbolic. CPAWS-BC can mitigate these risks through credible policy engagement, strong relationships, public support, and practical mapping that shows how conservation and responsible development can coexist. We can also leverage our partnerships with ENGOs and cross-sector alliances to uplift the NCCC vision, demonstrating support for this framework from British Columbians across the political spectrum.

Key Decision Makers

The key decision-makers in this campaign are the Government of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, and the Indigenous Nations co-leading land use planning across the corridor region. Provincially, this includes the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, the Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals, and Cabinet decision-makers responsible for approvals and implementation. Federally, key actors include Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations, and Ministers responsible for Canada's

Working With Business Community

Yes. Business engagement can help demonstrate that conservation and economic prosperity are mutually reinforcing. Support from outdoor industry companies, tourism operators, recreation brands, and businesses with nature or climate commitments would broaden the coalition calling for a strong conservation outcome in the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor. Businesses can contribute through public statements supporting durable conservation, participation in sign-on letters, amplification through customer and employee channels, sponsorship of

Critical Minerals Strategy and 30x30 conservation commitments. Indigenous governments, including the Tahltan, Taku River Tlingit, and Kaska Dena Nations, are essential rights-holders whose priorities will shape outcomes across their territories.

CPAWS-BC's approach is grounded in constructive engagement. We will provide governments and partners with credible spatial analysis, mapping, socio-economic evidence, and policy recommendations identifying where durable conservation outcomes can be achieved while minimizing conflict with priority development areas. We will participate directly in land use planning processes, support Nation-led conservation proposals, convene aligned civil society organizations, and build public support through communications and outreach. CPAWS-BC's long track record advancing protected areas and stewardship policy in BC has established trusted relationships with governments, communities, and conservation partners that can be mobilized during this time-sensitive opportunity.

Key policy frameworks include Crown-First Nations land use planning, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) pathways, BC's commitment to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030, and the federal commitment to advance a major conservation outcome within the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor. Decisions made over the next 12–24 months will help determine the region's long-term conservation baseline and may establish a replicable model for large-scale, co-led land use planning that better balances conservation, economic development, and Indigenous rights.

Elevate Voices

This project is grounded in the understanding that durable conservation outcomes in northwest British Columbia must be shaped by the Indigenous Nations and communities most directly connected to these lands and waters. Our role is not to speak for Indigenous communities, but to support and help elevate priorities already being advanced by Indigenous governments and local leaders.

A core focus of the project is supporting the conservation and stewardship visions of First Nations whose territories overlap the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor, including the Tahltan, Taku River Tlingit, and Kaska Dena Nations. We have already begun this work through technical submissions to the early stages of Crown-First Nations land use planning processes, where our support for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) is explicit. All three Nations have expressed support

research or public engagement initiatives, and sharing expertise. Business voices can also help counter misinformation that protected areas eliminate recreation opportunities. In many cases, well-designed protected areas safeguard opportunities for hiking, paddling, angling, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other responsible uses while protecting the landscapes that sustain them.

Measurable On-Ground Outcomes

Three Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) secured through a land use planning outcome, paving the way for additional IPCA proposals to advance through negotiated pathways or inclusion in new land use planning projects.

6–8 million hectares of priority land and freshwater ecosystems advanced toward protection through inclusion in draft or final land use plans, IPCA proposals, or interim protection measures. Priority wildlife corridors and habitat areas formally identified and reflected in planning outputs, with connectivity objectives incorporated into the three large land use planning processes.

Formal acknowledgement of the NCCC vision by the provincial, federal, and Indigenous governments and commitments to action on securing protected areas that form important

for our advocacy for additional protected areas that create ecological connectivity between planning regions and have encouraged us to continue advancing these priorities at land use planning tables. The Kaska, in particular, have partnered with us to develop communications and advocacy tools that position their IPCA vision as a cornerstone of the broader NCCC vision. CPAWS-BC provides technical support, mapping capacity, policy analysis, and coordination resources that strengthen Nation-led conservation priorities in government decision-making processes.

We also work closely with organizations representing local recreation users and businesses through our leadership role in the BC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition. Guide outfitters, anglers, commercial bear viewing operators, and outdoor recreation industries are strongly represented within this coalition, helping ensure local economic and recreation perspectives are reflected in conservation discussions. We are actively aligning this coalition around the NCCC vision while continuing to shape the work through member input.

connection corridors outside of the three land use plan boundaries



TCA Funding Plan

TCA's support would arrive at a pivotal moment for CPAWS-BC. This funding will help ensure strong conservation outcomes are advanced while major land use are being made over the next 12 months. Three concurrent Crown-First Nations land use planning processes are underway, Indigenous Nations are advancing IPCAs, and the federal government has committed to major conservation outcomes in the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor. Funding would support specialized GIS and spatial analysis, evidence-based policy submissions, coordination with Indigenous partners and cross-sector allies, public communications to build support, and strategic engagement with decision-makers during key planning milestones. Furthermore, TCA's backing would signal that the outdoor business community sees durable conservation in northwest BC as an environmental and economic priority, reinforcing that protecting world-class landscapes, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities supports long-term prosperity.

Confidential Items

There are some elements of our work with the Kaska nation which remain confidential at this stage. In particular, we are not yet sharing publicly about our work with them to develop communication and advocacy tools that highlight their IPCA as keystone in the NCCC vision.

Other Relevant Application Details

