



Ministry of
Transportation
and Infrastructure

Environmental Enhancement Fund

The Environmental Enhancement Fund (EEF) established by MOTI Executive in 2003, invests \$2 million annually to restore, protect and enhance environmental resources with direct benefits to the provincial highway infrastructure, projects, safety, maintenance, and operations.

The EEF program supports four general types of projects:

- Fish and wildlife passage improvements and restoration at stream and animal crossings at MOTI roads, including culvert retrofits and replacements to restore pacific salmon and trout access to underutilized habitat and installation of wildlife tunnels.
- Acquisition and protection of adjacent ecologically sensitive and endangered habitats and ecosystems directly related to a highway project.
- Fish, wildlife and ecosystem habitat restoration and enhancement including construction of salmon and trout rearing habitat and spawning channels, water storage to create wetlands or aquatic habitat and to augment low (summer) streamflows, habitat complexing, restoration of highway footprint impacts and estuary and riparian planting enhancements
- Other fish and wildlife conservation measures such as fishway installations, transplants to restore native fish and game populations, large wildlife relocation and installation of ungulate exclusion fencing and small wildlife crossing structures.

Program eligibility is based on the following criteria:

- Environmental benefits to fish, wildlife, air and water quality and ecosystem function and health. Tangible biophysical enhancements that provide an on-the-ground environmental return.
- A linkage to MOTI highway infrastructure. Preference is given to linkages to active or planned highway projects.
- Projects linked to a provincial roadway but not part of an active or planned highway development will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Existing infrastructure may have historical environmental impacts and may have originally been done without adherence to modern environmental practices and standards, but now has environmental enhancement opportunities.
- Works are above and beyond legal obligations and regulatory requirements.
- Technical feasibility. Projects with reasonable and realistic chances of success, low risk, and that are likely to be functional in providing long-term environmental benefits.
- Cost-effectiveness. At the minimum, competitive or fair market costs or preferably obtaining leverage or partnership in-kind contributions from others to maximize capital returns at minimal cost.
- Potential good news stories and communications. Opportunity to promote positive environmental stewardship information via internal and external media.
- Goodwill considerations. Forging and strengthening working relationships between partners, including with environmental agencies and community groups.



- Partnering with environmental agencies, environmental stewardship groups, First Nations and others where all partners provide a meaningful contribution to delivery of the project, including in-kind contributions of financial labour, administrative and technical resources.
- Past performance and track record of project delivery partners. Partners with good successes for delivering projects that fit EEF criteria are valued.

Partnering is a common theme of the EEF with diverse groups working together and making meaningful contributions to do more, larger and better projects. Key partners include First Nations, the sector businesses, all three levels of government, the public, landowners and local, provincial and national non-profit environmental stewardship groups. This model enables many more EEF projects to be delivered with many diverse groups working together toward mutual environmental restoration and enhancement objectives. Partnership projects may be led by MOTI or by other partners with MOTI contributions.

Highlights of the first 10 years of the EEF include:

- Over 200 projects have been completed since 2003 across all areas of B.C.
- More than 1,000 diverse partnerships created with all levels of government, First Nations, landowners, the public, funding organizations, private sector, provincial, national and local community and environmental stewardship groups to achieve monetary and in-kind leverage in many projects exceeding EEF contributions and valued at more than \$20 million since program inception.
- Over 50 MOTI stream crossings improved and restored for fish passage and habitat, often with MOTI's Culvert Retrofit Program, to enable species like Pacific salmon and trout to regain access to habitat upstream of culvert crossings that previously blocked fish passage.
- Over 600 hectares of environmentally valuable wetland, riparian, estuary, grassland and aquatic habitat areas along provincial roads secured and protected in-perpetuity.
- Restoration of habitats for provincially red-listed, blue-listed and federally endangered and threatened species and ecosystems like Roosevelt elk, Nooksack dace and Red-legged frogs and Lotus pinnatus (bog bird's foot trefoil) meadows.
- Developing, implementing and reporting innovative techniques, methods, works and best practices along MOTI roads in and around sensitive habitats.
- Restoration, protection and conservation of over 1,000 ha of sensitive ecosystems, including riparian areas, wetlands and fish and wildlife habitats.
- Wildlife mortality mitigation through trapping and relocation of Roosevelt Elk and Bighorn Sheep from along highway corridors to more remote areas to re-establish historical populations, installation of ungulate exclusion fencing, amphibian directive fencing and wildlife tunnels.
- Habitat enhancements along over 20 km of fish bearing watercourses and newly restored fish and wildlife habitats of over 200 ha.
- Ancillary benefits like mentoring, training and employment opportunities for partners such as First Nations and community groups, educational, recreational use and stewardship of environmental sites, enhanced working relationships with all levels of government and the public and private sectors.

Since 2003, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Environmental Enhancement Fund has delivered on-the-ground environmentally driven projects that demonstrate environmental commitment, leadership and sustainability while directly enhancing, restoring and conserving British Columbia's wild natural resources.