

**For immediate release
May 6, 2016**

GATES LAKE PARK ENHANCEMENT PROJECT RECEIVES \$9,767.82 GRANT:

Spring landscaping to get underway at Gates Lake, thanks to CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up funding success

Pemberton, BC – Birken residents can get their picnic blankets ready with the announcement that CN will contribute \$9,767.82 towards community tree-planting and landscaping at Gates Lake Community Park.

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) was one of thirty-one communities in Canada chosen from 92 applications to receive grants from the 2016 CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up program.

The funding for the Gates Lake Community Park Enhancement Project will be matched by the SLRD to provide a screen from the newly-constructed parking lot which will aid in erosion control and enhance the site as well as top soiling of the grassy areas.

21 Douglas maple trees will be planted to provide screening, shade and erosion control. An additional 243 shrubs and ground covers will be planted, including serviceberry, redbud, dogwood, thimbleberry, snowberry, red huckleberry and Wood's rose. The adjacent lawn, a popular community gathering space, will be aerated, fertilized and top-dressed, to ensure it withstands the growing user demand.

Gates Lake Community Park is a 1.27 hectare (approximately 3 acre) public space on the north shore of Gates Lake, and is the first public facility of its kind in Birken, providing a greenspace for families and a location for community events, including a Farmers' Market.

"The SLRD is committed to doing its part to support each resident's efforts to achieve the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle," says Russell Mack, SLRD Director for Area C.

"Beautifying the park will make it an even more valuable gathering place and recreational area for residents. It's heartening to see the way the space has been adopted by the community. The Birken Recreation and Culture Society deserves recognition for rolling up their sleeves every spring and organizing the park's annual Clean-up Day and we welcome all community volunteers who want to come out and contribute to this planting initiative."

The objective of the CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up program is to promote community sustainability, through the greening of municipal and community properties across Canada. CN and its partners Tree Canada and Communities in Bloom help Canadian municipalities and community groups establish tree planting and green space enhancement initiatives in a sustainable, environmentally responsible manner. The program aims to enhance environmental and social health of communities.

"CN is committed to making a positive impact on the communities along our network, and we are proud to be part of a program that helps to make these communities better places to live, work and play," said Claude Mongeau, President and Chief Executive Officer of CN. "Since we started this program, more than 50,000 trees and shrubs have been planted in 120 communities across Canada, which not only add beauty, but is another way we positively contribute to a sustainable future one community at a time, as planting trees improve air quality and offset carbon emissions."

Successful candidates were chosen on the basis of rigorous selection criteria developed and overseen by CN's program partners, Tree Canada and Communities in Bloom. The program partners rated each application on those criteria and presented a ranked list of programs from which final candidates were selected. Communities in Bloom and Tree Canada will provide guidance in the development of the chosen projects.

"Tree Canada is thrilled to continue to work with CN and Communities in Bloom bringing CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up to deserving communities across Canada," says Michael Rosen, President of Tree Canada. "This program not only provides funding, but much needed awareness to the value of trees and green spaces to our health and wellbeing as well as the environment. I have personally witnessed the impact this program has had and can honestly say that CN has created a lasting legacy of sustainability for present and future generations."

"Communities in Bloom is proud to partner with CN and Tree Canada in delivering the CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up program. The enhancement of green spaces and tree planting provide economic, social and environmental stewardship benefits to the communities for generations to come" said Raymond Carriere, Founding President of Communities in Bloom. "The projects are a demonstration of civic pride, sense of community and feeling of accomplishment through community engagement."

Civic support for the tree-planting program has been strong since CN initiated it in 2012, with over 700 communities applying for funds. This year's recipients bring the total to 170 communities across Canada and the United States that have benefited from funding through the CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up program. Details on the program are available at www.cnfromthegroundup.ca.

- 30 -

The Pemberton and District Recreation Service is operated and funded by Area C of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the Village of Pemberton. It operates and programs the Pemberton & District Community Centre, the REC (Youth and Senior Centre), Pemberton Meadows and Signal Hill fields, as well as the Gates Lake Community Park. The Pemberton Valley Utilities and Services Committee (PVUS) is a committee of the SLRD Board convened to discuss recreation and other shared services between SLRD Electoral Area C and the Village of Pemberton.

For more information, please contact:

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