

May 28th, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

## **RE: Growing the Economy and Building a Climate Resilient, Water Secure Future**

Dear Prime Minister:

All across Canada, community organizations, Indigenous communities and local governments are ready to implement hundreds of freshwater projects. Our Living Waters\*, in partnership with multiple organizations, has compiled a Canada-wide list of over 300 shovel worthy projects. These projects span the country, from Lower Kootenay Band Reserve, BC and Mountain View County, AB to Collingwood, ON and Bedford, QC. The projects have a combined budget of \$225 million and the potential to support approximately 3,638 jobs and 1,381,815 job hours, helping to grow our economy while ensuring lasting benefits for water security, climate resilience and the overall quality of life for all Canadians (see appendix for more details).

These local, mostly rural, on-the-ground projects generally fall through the cracks of federal funding programs. Infrastructure Canada offers support for natural infrastructure and climate resiliency projects, but existing funding streams^ are targeted towards large-scale projects while often excluding smaller-scale, locally led projects. Environment and Climate Change Canada provides some support for small-scale water projects, but existing funding streams∞ are limited to specific regions and/or are not adequately resourced to meet demand.

There is a gap of available funds to support smaller community-level projects with budgets between \$10,000 to \$500,000. These projects support Canada's water security in many ways, including habitat restoration, natural infrastructure, data collection, and public education, as well as advancing planning, partnership building and reconciliation.

### **Adding a Shade of Blue to Green Recovery**

We applaud the government's intention to ensure that green priorities are a key plank of its post-pandemic recovery efforts. Investments in a resilient, sustainable future are essential to safeguard the long-term economic and social security of all Canadians. We also recognize that green recovery is multifaceted and will include investments across a range of priorities, including renewable energy production, building retrofits and electrification of the transportation sector.

Water security must be a key component of a green recovery. Water-focused projects, like those on our list, help safeguard the inherent benefits that healthy water provides, including a resilient economy, carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation, renewable energy and public health. Adding 'a shade of blue' to green recovery supports five pillars important to Canadians:

- 1. Building a low carbon, climate resilient future** by investing in projects that mitigate or sequester carbon, help adapt to the effects of climate change and build resilience to extreme weather such as droughts and floods.
- 2. Protecting ecosystems and enhancing biodiversity** by supporting data-informed and well-planned habitat restoration, conservation and natural infrastructure projects that build a network of functioning and robust aquatic ecosystems.
- 3. Advancing reconciliation** by supporting Indigenous capacity, water rights, self-determination and decision-making in a manner consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.
- 4. Growing the economy** by equitably and efficiently making watershed-level investments that create good local jobs, support community investments and generate spin-off benefits.
- 5. Ensuring strong, healthy communities** by investing in the capacity of local communities and Indigenous governments to develop and implement watershed plans and build collaborative networks to ensure access to clean drinking water, effectively manage wastewater, mitigate pollutants and enhance recreational opportunities.

The appendix highlights specific projects on our list that fit into these broader pillars.

\* Our Living Waters is a Canada-wide network with over 100 community and organizational members working together to achieve the ambitious goal of all Canada's waters in good health by 2030.

^ Examples include funding streams under the Investing in Canada Plan and the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund.

∞ Examples include the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program, Great Lakes Protection Initiative, and EcoAction Community Funding Program.

## **The Opportunity: Right-Sizing Freshwater Investments**

As our list demonstrates, Canada has a wealth of community organizations, Indigenous communities and local governments with water-focused, shovel-worthy projects that are ready to implement. But additional investment is needed to support these projects, and this investment must be delivered at the right size to support community-level projects. Specifically, the 300 projects on our list highlight the need for a federal funding program that supports water-focused projects with budgets under \$500,000.

A new federal funding program should also establish specific targets to reach all community sizes, prioritizing rural and Indigenous communities. Through our network, Our Living Waters can help guide these new investments and ensure that federal funding has the greatest possible impact at the local level.

A green recovery strategy needs to focus on immediate needs while signalling priorities for sustained support. While our project list provides hundreds of shovel-ready and shovel-worthy projects, this list was created through just three weeks of conversations with Canada's freshwater community. This initial scan provides a glimpse into the thousands of community projects and opportunities across the country that can be mobilized to support local jobs, strong communities and a climate resilient future. Sustained federal investment will help achieve these benefits over the long-term.

The case for investing in our natural assets has never been stronger. Supporting local, on-the-ground projects that build water security, enhance climate resilience, and grow the economy should be a key part of this broader investment. To provide this support, we recommend the government:

- Allocate \$100 million in this fiscal year as part of the short-term green recovery stimulus package to support the shovel-ready and shovel-worthy projects on our list.\*
- Commit an additional \$100 million annually for five-years, beginning in 2021, to ensure long-term recovery and support the five pillars outlined above.

Moving forward, Our Living Waters will continue to serve as a conduit for this groundswell of water-focused projects and offer our capacity to support Canada's green recovery. We look forward to future conversations to explore how we can work together to build strong and resilient communities.

Yours sincerely,

[signature on original]

Andrew Stegemann, Director  
Our Living Waters Network

cc: Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage

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\* The Greenbelt Foundation and 13 Conservation Authorities in Southern Ontario have developed a regional program of 100 natural infrastructure projects across Southern Ontario's Greenbelt. These projects are included in our list but not in this funding ask, since they have been advancing their own funding proposal.

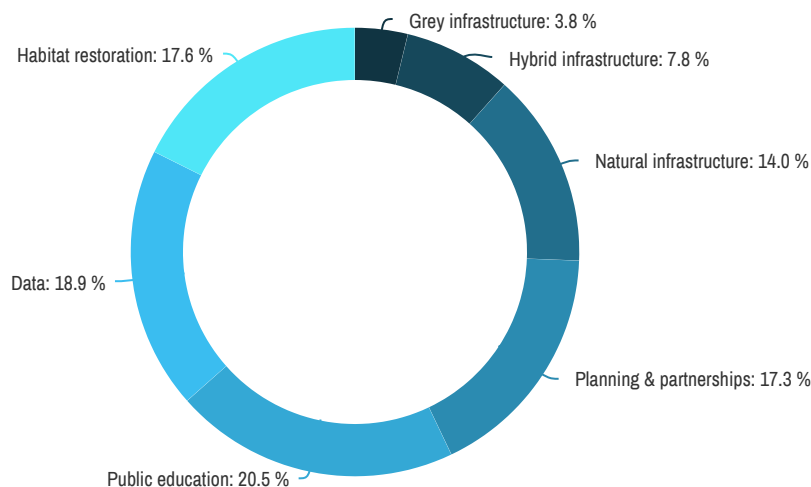
# Adding a Shade of Blue to Green Recovery



**3,638**  
Jobs Supported

**1,381,815**  
Job Hours

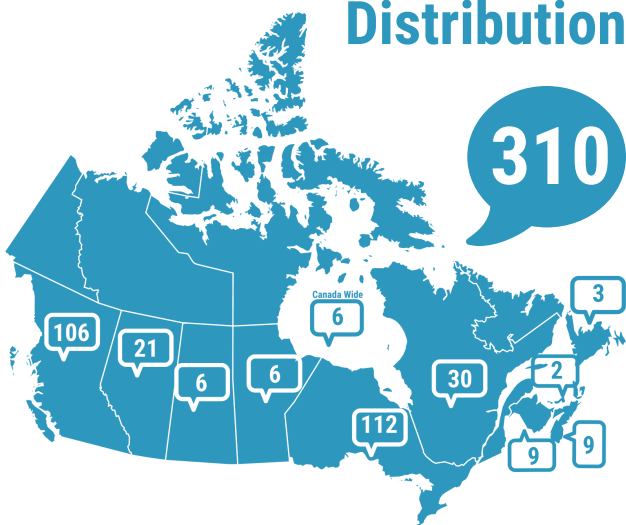
## Project Types



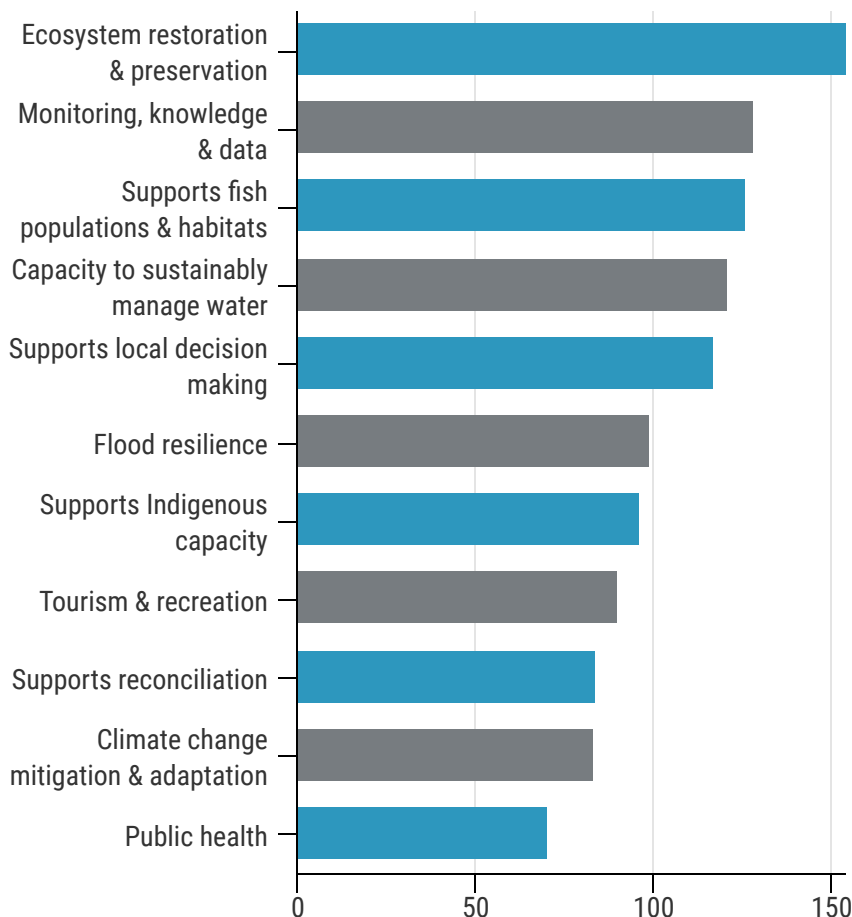
**Total Budget**  
**\$225 million**



## Blue Stimulus Project Distribution



## Project Benefits





# Featured Project:

**Building a low carbon, climate resilient future.**

## **Building climate change resilient shorelines with green infrastructure**

**Watersheds Canada**

*Cataraqui River Watershed, Quinte River Watershed & Mississippi River Watershed (Between Ottawa and Kingston/Belleville, Ontario)*

Total budget: \$95,000

Funding required: \$75,000

Jobs: 2

Job Hours: 1,500

Over 30 landowners have committed to restoring their shorelines using green infrastructure. Watersheds Canada will visit sites and create 30 Shoreline Restoration Plans, plant 5000 native plants on shorelines currently without vegetation and experiencing erosion/lack of habitat/poor water quality, and lead an education campaign.





# Featured Project:

Protecting ecosystems and enhancing biodiversity.

## **Campagne de caractérisation et intervention sur les espèces exotiques envahissantes végétales en rives**

Stratégies Saint-Laurent

*Saint-Laurent fluvial et estuaire 24 Villes riveraines du Saint-Laurent*

Total budget: \$325,000

Funding required: \$285,000

Jobs: 13

Job Hours: 4,600

De nombreuses municipalités riveraines sont au prise avec des problématiques d'EEE végétales en rive (par exemple, la phragmite et la Renouée du Japon). Ces dernières ne savent pas nécessairement comment les éradiquer et surtout en prévenir l'invasion. SSL et ses partenaires régionaux développeront une trousse d'intervention mais surtout des ateliers régionaux et des démonstrations «in situ» d'éradication de ces EEE.

# Featured Project:

## Advancing reconciliation.

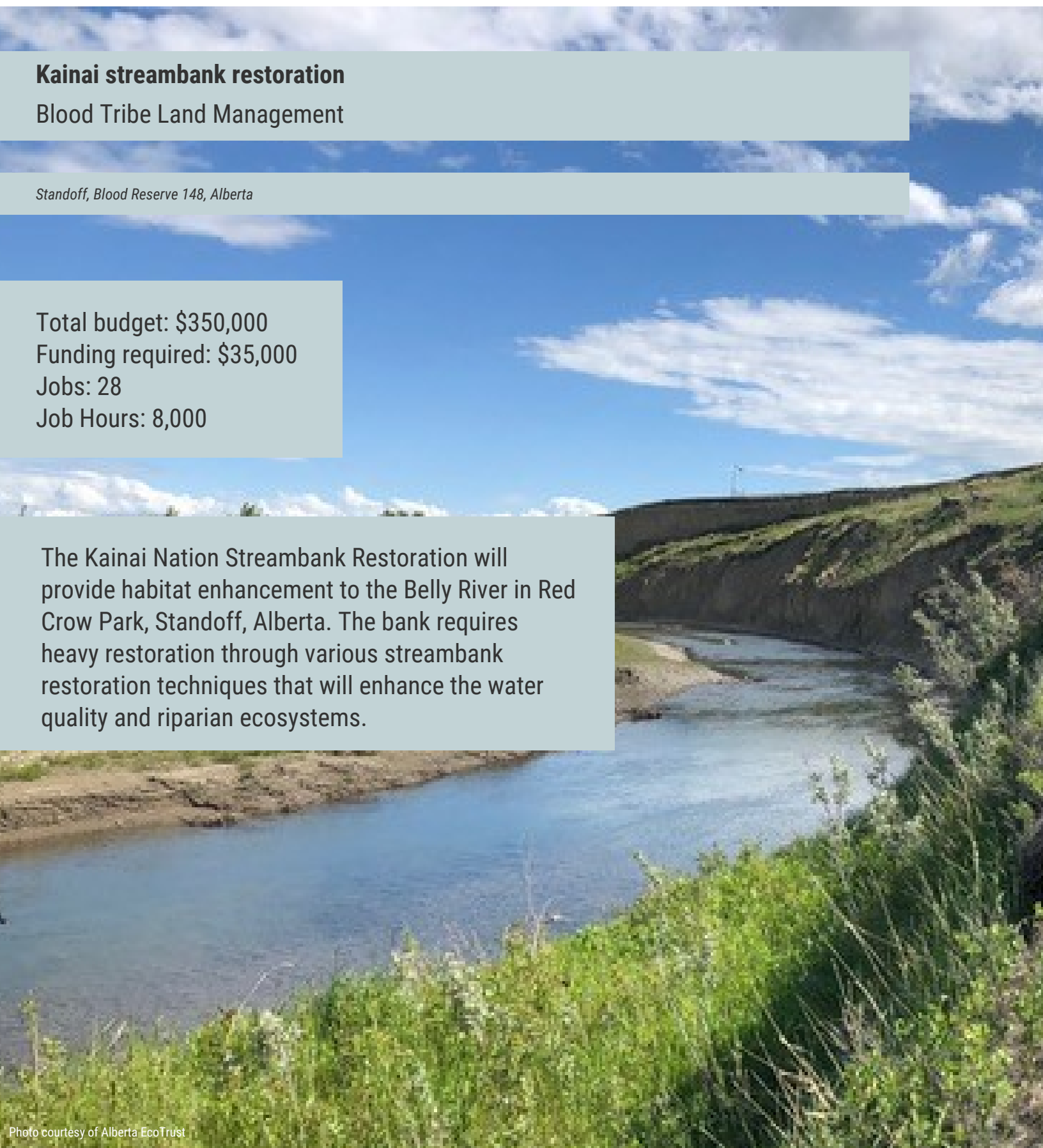
### **Kainai streambank restoration**

Blood Tribe Land Management

*Standoff, Blood Reserve 148, Alberta*

Total budget: \$350,000  
Funding required: \$35,000  
Jobs: 28  
Job Hours: 8,000

The Kainai Nation Streambank Restoration will provide habitat enhancement to the Belly River in Red Crow Park, Standoff, Alberta. The bank requires heavy restoration through various streambank restoration techniques that will enhance the water quality and riparian ecosystems.





# Featured Project:

**Growing the economy.**

## **Community-based water monitoring and restoration in the Columbia basin**

Living Lakes Canada

*Columbia Basin, BC*

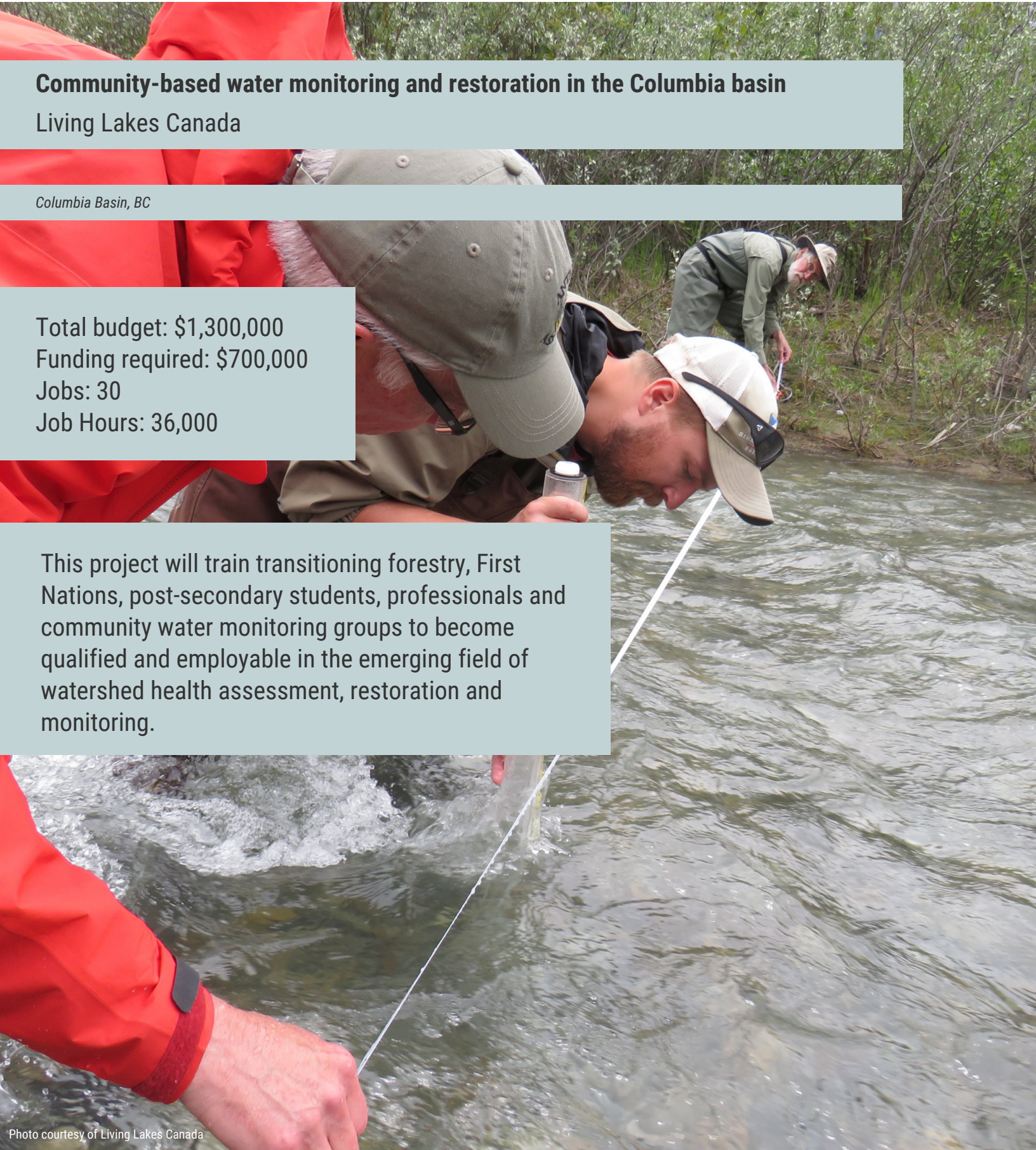
Total budget: \$1,300,000

Funding required: \$700,000

Jobs: 30

Job Hours: 36,000

This project will train transitioning forestry, First Nations, post-secondary students, professionals and community water monitoring groups to become qualified and employable in the emerging field of watershed health assessment, restoration and monitoring.





# Featured Project:

**Ensuring strong, healthy communities.**

## **Adopting green infrastructure to create resilient communities**

Clean Annapolis River Project

*Town of Digby, Nova Scotia*

Total budget: \$14,000  
Funding required: \$14,000  
Jobs: 4  
Job Hours: 210

This project's goal is to work with the Town of Digby to construct a bioswale, designed to convey stormwater runoff while simultaneously removing any debris and pollution from entering an adjacent pond. Signage will be installed to inform the public of the need for low impact development and stormwater management.