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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment

### **VALHALLA MILE PROPERTY TO BE ADDED TO PROVINCIAL PARK**

VICTORIA – The B.C. government, with the help of a number of partners, has acquired the Valhalla Mile property consisting of 63 hectares of land and 1.7 kilometres of shoreline along the western shore of Slocan Lake, Environment Minister Barry Penner announced today.

“I’m pleased that the B.C. government has been able to acquire the Valhalla Mile property to add to Valhalla Provincial Park, enhancing the park for visitors, and the local community,” said Penner. “I commend the Valhalla Foundation and The Land Conservancy of BC for their leadership in bringing together hundreds of citizens and a number of organizations to financially support the acquisition, appraised at \$1.625 million.”

The partnership, coordinated by The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC), consisted of \$700,000 from the B.C. government, a \$325,000 Ecogift from the vendor, Burkhard Franz, under the Ecological Gifts Program of Environment Canada, and \$600,000 raised by the land conservancy and the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology and Social Justice.

"We have been working with the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology and Social Justice since the summer of 2008, and the fact our goal to protect Valhalla Mile has been reached is a huge accomplishment," said TLC deputy director Kathleen Sheppard. "We would like to thank all the concerned citizens, community groups, businesses, foundations and the provincial government for helping to protect this land for its environmental and recreational values. This campaign is a good example of how important partnerships are when it comes protecting B.C.'s special places."

This property is a key addition to Valhalla Provincial Park, which encompasses almost 50,000 hectares and protects an entire mountain ecosystem from lakeshore to high alpine. Besides protecting undeveloped shoreline and intact upland forest, this property provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species including grizzly and black bears, cougars, wolverines, mule deer and great blue herons.

“To protect the Valhalla Mile and have it added to the park was one of the dreams of my sister and environmental colleague Colleen McCrory, who passed away two years ago, so this acquisition gives us great joy,” said Wayne McCrory, a director of the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology and Social Justice. “We would particularly like to thank members of the public for the huge groundswell of support. Special thanks goes to people in the Slocan Valley, Vancouver and Victoria who gave generously, organized fund-raising events and contributed lots of hard work to making this acquisition happen.”

Other partners were the Columbia Basin Trust, BC Hydro Fish and Wildlife Compensation Fund, the BC Trust for Public Lands, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, the Toronto-Dominion Friends of the Environment Foundation, support from environmental, naturalist and outdoor recreation organizations, and personal donations from hundreds of members of the public.

Since 2001, the provincial government has established 57 new parks, 143 conservancies, one ecological reserve and eight protected areas, and expanded more than 50 parks and six ecological reserves, protecting more than 1.9 million hectares. Today, 14.26 per cent (or more than 13.5 million hectares) of British Columbia is protected – more than any other province in Canada.

To make the BC Parks system even better, the B.C. government has invested approximately \$107 million over the past five years to improve park infrastructure and acquire additional parkland.

For more information about B.C.'s provincial parks, please visit: [www.bcparks.ca](http://www.bcparks.ca).

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