

**For immediate release
October 25, 2016**

SLRD AGRICULTURAL PLAN WINS 2016 BC LAND AWARD:

Real Estate Foundation of BC recognizes Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Electoral Area B, District of Lillooet and St'át'imc Agricultural Plan as leading public sector initiative in sustainable land use planning

Lillooet BC / Northern St'át'imc Territory – The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) recognized the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) as a leader in collaborative agricultural planning at the 2016 BC Land Awards Gala in Vancouver on October 21. One of three finalists in the public sector category, the SLRD took home the award for its work on the *SLRD Area B, District of Lillooet and St'át'imc Agricultural Plan*. In all, nine projects were in the running for 2016 BC Land Awards, with achievements also recognized in private and non-profit categories.

“We are honoured and humbled to be recognized with this award,” says Mickey Macri, SLRD Area B Director. “I’d like to thank the many people who came together to help shape this agricultural plan—we could not have done it without the involvement of the northern St'át'imc, District of Lillooet, and the many folks from across SLRD Area B who shared their time, expertise and passion for agriculture and for the region.”

“We share this achievement with everyone who got involved in the development of this plan,” adds Jack Crompton, Chair of the SLRD Board. “Our staff and the consulting team worked hard to create an inclusive process, and we are grateful that so many people from around SLRD Area B, Lillooet and northern St'át'imc Territory came together to help create the plan. We’re excited to see what the future holds as we continue to learn and find ways to work together.”

The *SLRD Area B, District of Lillooet and St'át'imc Agricultural Plan* was adopted by the SLRD Board in October 2014 following a year-long public dialogue concerning the future of agriculture in the Lillooet region. SLRD planning staff worked closely with a consulting team led by professional agrologist, Ione Smith of Upland Agricultural Consulting Ltd. in association with Kristina Salin of KSalin Land Planning to develop the plan, with extensive input from an Agricultural Plan Working Group as well as from the broader agricultural community.

Funding for the project was provided by the SLRD as well as the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) of B.C. through programs it delivers on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture. To learn more about the IAF, visit: www.iafbc.ca.

The resulting plan identified regionally-appropriate solutions for farmland access, food market viability, sustainable agricultural practices, food security, and co-operation and collaboration

within the agricultural community. To learn more about the agricultural plan, visit: www.slrd.bc.ca/AreaBAgPlan.

“We are very proud of the work done on this agricultural plan, and we’re delighted that it’s been recognized with this award,” says Sam Quinlan, SLRD Area B Agricultural Plan Working Group Chair. “The plan is the road map; now it’s a matter of continuing to support the many talented people who are working hard to strengthen our agricultural economy, increase food security and put SLRD Area B, District of Lillooet and northern St’át’imc Territory on the map as the best agricultural region in BC.”

Following the adoption of the agricultural plan, a not-for-profit organization, the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society (LAFS), was established in November 2015 to coordinate on the ground, community-driven implementation of the plan. To learn more about LAFS, including how to become a member, visit: www.lillooetagricultureandfood.org.

The sixth BC Land Awards Gala celebrated projects that demonstrate leadership in creating more resilient, healthy communities and natural environments. There were two other finalists in the public sector category: the *Indigenous Community Planning Program* at the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, and the *User Network for Insect Biology in Urban Gardening (UNIBUG)* at Douglas College. To learn more about these projects, as well as the other finalists, visit: www.refbc.com/land-awards/finalists-0.

The Real Estate Foundation of BC is a philanthropic organization that helps advance sustainable land use in British Columbia. It provides grants to non-profit organizations working to improve B.C. communities and natural environments through responsible and informed land use, conservation and real estate practices. Its funding programs support research, education, and law and policy reform. Since 1988, the Foundation has approved more than \$75 million in grants. The Foundation also conducts research and special projects to support collaboration and knowledge-sharing around land use. To learn more, visit: www.refbc.com.

- 30 -

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