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KOOTENAY REGION TEAM RECEIVES NATIONAL CANCER SOCIETY AWARD

by Contributor on 08 Oct 2011



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s national Circle of Distinction Award on behalf of the Kootenay Region Prevention Team are Marion Stotts (left) Canadian Cancer Society Columbia Valley Unit and Patti Moore (right) Health Promotion Coordinator with the Kootenay Region. The award was presented by Canadian Cancer Society BC and Yukon Board Chair, Lorraine Grant (centre).

A team of diverse partners in the Kootenay region taking action to reduce the cosmetic use of pesticides has been recognized with a prestigious national award from the Canadian Cancer Society. The award, called the Circle of Distinction, recognizes team effort between Canadian Cancer Society volunteers and staff and their partners in contributing to the goals and mission of the Society.

The local team, who together formed the Pesticide Free Columbia Basin network is comprised of Canadian Cancer Society volunteers and staff, local government stakeholders, physicians, community coalitions and partners including Wildsight, Prevent Cancer Now, and Kootenay Citizens for Alternatives Pesticides.

For the past five years, this team has effectively advanced the effort to create strong cosmetic pesticide legislation in BC. Last year, the network launched an educational website at www.pesticidefreecolumbiabasin.com (<http://www.pesticidefreecolumbiabasin.com/>) <<http://www.pesticidefreecolumbiabasin.com/> (<http://www.pesticidefreecolumbiabasin.com/>)> to raise awareness about the potential risks of pesticides and healthier lawn and garden practices. In the region, five municipalities including the District of Invermere, the City of Nelson, the City of Kimberley, the City of Fernie and the Town of Golden, have adopted by-laws restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides. More communities are considering taking action and this momentum has contributed to the groundswell of support for a provincial cosmetic pesticide ban. Recently, the Regional District of East Kootenay passed a motion in support of provincial legislation.

According to the Society's Public Issues Manager Kathryn Seely, "The award recognizes the outstanding leadership, dedication and contribution demonstrated by the team. By working together in this unique way, the Kootenay network has assisted the Canadian Cancer Society greatly in carrying out its mission to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life for people living with cancer."

Local physician and community partner Dr. Ilona Hale adds, "Pesticides have been linked to a multitude of illnesses including both adult and childhood cancers. For our region to be recognized on this important issue at a time when our provincial government is exploring provincial legislation is both timely and exciting."

"This is an incredible honour," says Marion Stotts, Volunteer Advocacy Leader for the Canadian Cancer Society Columbia Valley Unit. "It's inspiring to work with countless parents, doctors, teachers, sport coaches and so many others who are concerned about unnecessary pesticide use in our communities. It means a lot to know that our collective efforts are not only having a local impact, but are also provincially and nationally making a difference."

In addition to the risks to human health, there are also environmental impacts from the cosmetic use of pesticides. "Reducing pesticide exposure is critical to prevent the unnecessary contamination of our air, water, fish, wildlife, and the many beneficial insects, like bees, that we depend upon," says Wildsight Program Manager, Robyn Duncan. "It is a privilege to be part of this coalition and an honour to be recognized nationally for this work in the Columbia Basin."