



AWARE Calls for Collective Action to Protect Whistler's Vulnerable Natural Spaces

Whistler, BC (December 20, 2024) – In a powerful speech delivered at an awareness event on December 17, AWARE's Executive Director, Pegah Pourkarimi, called for collective action to protect Whistler's vulnerable natural spaces, in this instance, the riparian zones in front of the waterfront properties around Green Lake, a critical habitat for wildlife and biodiversity in the Sea-to-Sky region. The event, which dovetailed the efforts of the Whistler Naturalists and RMOW to protect these riparian zones, brought together AWARE members, the Whistler Naturalists, local community members, and MLA Jeremy Valeriot. A banner was raised facing the residences along the Valley Trail Green Lake foreshore, stating: "Protect Priority Habitats, Preserve Our Future."

AWARE's long history of advocating for wetlands and habitat protection is now more critical than ever. "These habitats are essential for our ecosystems, wildlife, and community well-being. The destruction of these areas threatens Whistler's unique biodiversity," said Pourkarimi. "If we don't protect them, we risk losing species, degrading water quality, and diminishing our resilience to climate change."

The Green Lake riparian zone is a key wildlife corridor, filtering water, preventing soil erosion, and supporting hundreds of species. Losing these habitats would have lasting effects on the region's environmental health.

Recent Priority Habitat GIS mapping prepared by Snowline Ecological Research for the RMOW Web Map shows areas ranked as Very High or High Priority, emphasizing the importance of habitats like those around Green Lake. These areas support Whistler's biodiversity, including many species of fish, wildlife, and plants, though much of it has already been lost.

John Rasmussen, AWARE's Vice President, emphasized: "Protection of sensitive landscape and wildlife habitat is critical to a thriving environment and even more so in Whistler. We are all here because we love nature. That comes with a deep responsibility that we share as a community to protect what we have from harm and degradation. AWARE continues to speak for the environment and needs your support."

Pourkarimi highlighted that protecting these habitats isn't something any single organization can do alone. It requires collaboration between local governments, residents, businesses and community organizations and urged residents and visitors to take steps to protect these ecosystems: "We all have a role to play. Whether you live here, visit, or run a business, we can all reduce our impact on these habitats."

AWARE encourages the community to support sustainable development, participate in stewardship events, and learn about habitat conservation. By working together, Whistler can ensure a sustainable future for both people and wildlife, and ultimately our future.



Association of
Whistler Area Residents
for the Environment

Association of Whistler Area Resident for the Environment

PO Box 1370 Whistler, BC, V0N 1B0

info@awarewhistler.org

About AWARE

The Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment (AWARE) has worked with the community for three decades to deliver bold, inspiring evidence-based solutions to the environmental issues that affect Whistler. AWARE is driven by a vision that community members are knowledgeable, engaged and empowered to preserve and enhance the natural environment on which we depend.

Media Contact: Natalie Griffiths | Communications Coordinator |
ngriffiths@awarewhistler.org | www.awarewhistler.org