



The crew that installed the artificial bark roosts poses for a picture in front of one of the two pilot 'bark roosts' installed near Burges James Gadsen Provincial Park on Oct. 23. From left: Cory Schacher, Ron Appleton, Fischer Schacher, Sigi Liebmann, Moritz Kohler, Cori Lausen, Darcie Quamme. Missing: Brian Amies and Joyce deBoer. (Cori Lausen photo)

Artificial old growth trees provide roosts for bats in Golden area

The roosts are located just on the outskirts of town and will appeal to multiple species of bat

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As a part of the Kootenay Community Bat Project and Kootenay Connect, two bat roosts have been erected just outside of Golden in an attempt to collect data on bat species in the area.

The roosts, which are uniquely designed to simulate an old growth tree or snag, appeal to many bat species.

Traditional bat boxes only appeal to two species of bat that exists in the East Kootenays, according to Dr. Cory Lausen, lead bat biologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society's bat conservation program.

"Ultimately the goal is to try to keep these populations of bats healthy and in large numbers," said Lausen.

"We couldn't go looking for them this summer, due to COVID, as bats might be susceptible, so they province asked us not to look at bats until the pandemic is over."

The roosts are designed to last up to 30 years, at which point Lausen says she hopes there will be more natural old growth to help boost populations. Golden is only the second location in B.C. to erect this kind of roost.

The first was a BC Hydro installation just south of Revelstoke last year.

Lausen says bats immediately took to the roosts in the Revelstoke area.

Lausen says these new roosts will appeal to the Northern Myotis, a federally endangered species that only roosts in trees and not bat boxes.

The roosts will hopefully allow for local bats to get a jump-start on gestation come spring, according to Lausen, which will in turn potentially translate to healthier pups and higher numbers of pups to boost the population.

Locally, Lausen worked with bat ambassador Joyce DeBoer to record bat ultrasound in the area, detecting six species of bat, all of whom will benefit from the new roosts.

Lausen says bat conservation is key to the area, as bats are a natural predator of many pests, such as mosquitoes.

“In large numbers they act as a natural pest control and help the problem in certain communities,” said Lausen.

“Without bats, we depend on pesticides which will further dwindle the bat population and make us reliant on these chemicals indefinitely.”

Many Golden locals assisted with this project, including donation of equipment, labour, materials, land and ideas, according to Lausen.

The donors include Sigi Liebmann, Brian Amies, Travis Cochran, Ron Appleton, Brian Jackson (Jackson Contracting & Excavation), Rob Kinsey, Cory Schacher, Fischer Schacher and Moritz Kohler.

Lausen says anyone who wants to participate can and encourages people to report unusual bat behaviour to DeBoer.

This project is part of a larger effort to conserve bats in the Columbia Wetlands, and is supported in part by funding from Columbia Basin Trust and Environment Canada and Climate Change Strategy.

To learn more about this and other Wildlife Conservation Society Canada bat conservation projects check out the website www.wcsbats.ca.

GOLDEN STAR