



KCP

Kootenay Conservation Program



2017 - 2018 Annual Report



Photo courtesy of Steve Short



The KCP partnership seeks to cooperatively conserve and steward landscapes that sustain naturally functioning ecosystems. We envision vibrant communities that demonstrate the principles of environmental stewardship that can in turn support economic and social well-being.

The Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia is a unique landscape of global ecological significance.

The East and West Kootenay still function as a natural ecosystem with a full complement of ungulates and carnivores and are home to a variety of both common and rare or endangered plants, wildlife and fish species.

However, development pressures throughout the region continue, leading to significant and irrevocable loss of wildlife habitat and the loss of other natural assets including clean water, clean air, food production, timber production, and carbon storage and sequestration.

Valued habitats occur throughout the Kootenays, but the valley bottoms have the richest diversity of habitats and biodiversity values.





Many of these important habitats are located on private land. There remains a viable opportunity to conduct private land securement and stewardship activities in the Kootenays that conserves and enhances these lands.

The foundation of the KCP partnership is a common approach to land conservation through coordinated securement, stewardship, and capacity-building efforts. We will endeavour, where possible, to use the social capital of the partnership to achieve the vision of KCP. The partnership is strengthened when all partners operate in a collaborative spirit that includes the opportunity to:

- Increase the effectiveness, collaboration and coordination of private land **securement**;
- Increase the effectiveness and coordination of **stewardship** activities taking place on private lands;
- Build and provide technical, financial and internal **capacity** for KCP and partner organizations to undertake securement and stewardship activities;
- Strengthen the **network** of conservation organizations through communications to achieve efficiencies, synergies and ultimately greater effectiveness.

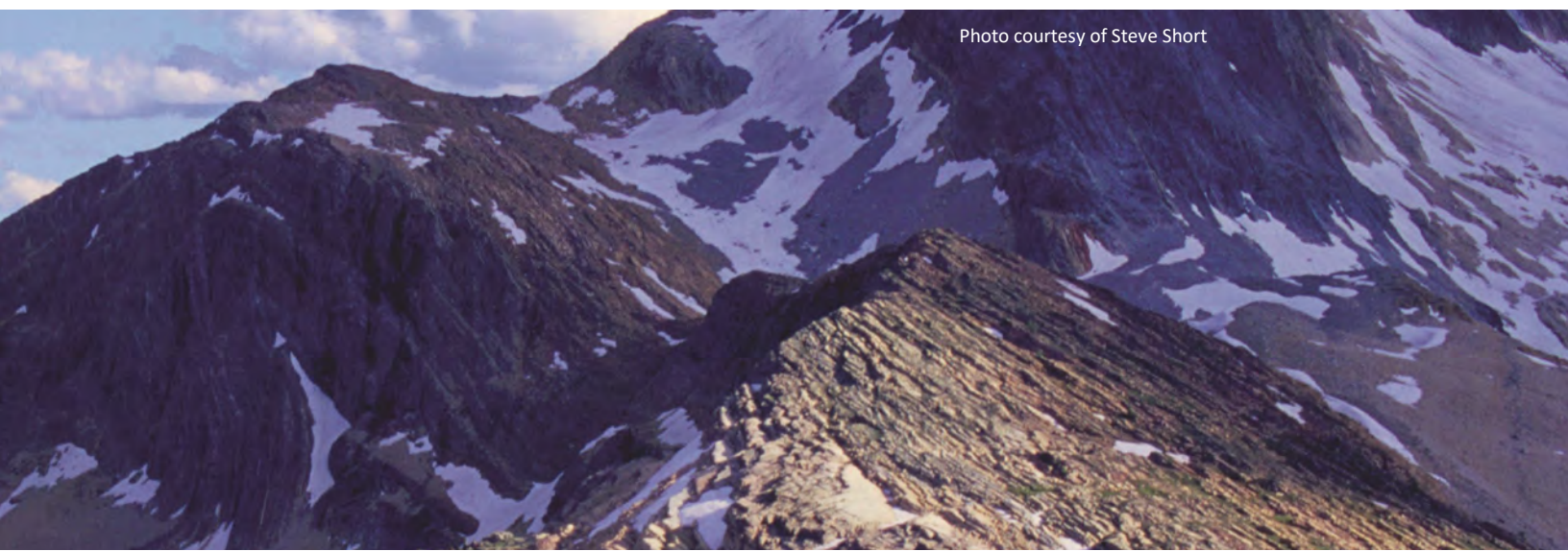


Photo courtesy of Steve Short



From the Chair

The 2017-18 year was a productive one for the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP). This year focused on *Grasslands to Wetlands: Connecting Diversity* and this theme was carried through the workshops, Fall Gathering and webinars. Highlights of 2017-18 include:

- Completing the 2017 to 2021 KCP Strategic Priorities
- Co-facilitating the Columbia Valley Conservation Planning Forum
- Successful hosting of a Fall Gathering & AGM including a field tour to Pine Butte Ranch and Cherry Bummers Conservation Complex
- Hosting spring tours at Meadow Creek and in the Columbia Valley
- Hosting a webinar series on the theme of “Grasslands to Wetlands: Connecting Diversity”
- Co-hosting Critter Day with the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program
- Another successful year of administration and delivery of the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF) with over \$87,000 being disbursed to eight high impact conservation projects
- Second year of administration and delivery of the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund (KLLCF) with over \$65,000 awarded to six local conservation projects
- Providing a field tour for Local Area Directors and members of the KLLCF Technical Review Committee to see the on-the-ground results of the KLLCF
- Continued coordination of land securement amongst land trust organizations in the region with two properties acquired through this collaborative approach

We would like to express thanks to our ongoing and new funding partners, for without their support the KCP would not exist. Also, a note of special thanks to The Nature Trust of British Columbia for their willingness to continue as the fiscal sponsor of the KCP, another contribution critical to the ongoing and successful operation of the KCP.

We too appreciate the diversity and participation of the partners in the ongoing activities of the KCP, and the program’s dedicated staff who work tirelessly to ensure that the KCP remains our “Way of Life” Insurance for the Kootenays.

Derek Petersen

Chair, Kootenay Conservation Program



DEREK PETERSEN

Derek Petersen is the Chair of the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) Executive Committee. Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Derek’s 30-year career with Parks Canada has spanned responsibilities ranging from integrated land use planning, to social science, to conservation biology and has included postings across Canada. Derek has a Master of Science, an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies and Economics, and a diploma in Renewable Resources Technology. Derek splits his personal time between the East and West Kootenays.



From the Program Manager

This year has been a busy and productive one for KCP. We are extremely grateful to our partners who work tirelessly and enthusiastically towards conservation in our region. We sincerely appreciate your contributions to the success of Kootenay Conservation Program, including contributing to defining our shared priorities for the next five years, hosting and participating in field tours to showcase your on-the-ground efforts, coming together in collaboration to identify shared priorities in the Columbia Valley, providing your “stewardship solutions” for the online hub, maintaining a coordinated approach to securing the most important conservation lands possible, and contributing your success stories to our e-newsletter.

I am grateful to our KCP team whose energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills moved our initiatives forward this year. Our Board dedicated their time to offer experience and insights into the direction of the program. Marcy Mahr brought her landscape-level conservation planning skills as the Stewardship Coordinator and led the Conservation Planning and Stewardship Solutions initiatives. Returning from maternity leave to the role of Stewardship Coordinator, Adrienne Shaw brings her applied ecology experience. Nicole Trigg brought her communications experience to provide the monthly e-news, update the website, and coordinate events.

Last, but certainly not least, we continue to be extremely grateful to our long-term funding partners: Columbia Basin Trust, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Environment and Climate Change Canada, The Nature Trust of BC, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Thank you for your continued support!

Juliet Craig

Program Manager, Kootenay Conservation Program

JULIET CRAIG



Juliet Craig sees KCP as a valuable platform to connect people, the land, and each other in the important role of private land conservation. She has a Master of Science in ethnobotany and is a Registered Professional Biologist and Professional Agrologist. When not working, she enjoys camping and exploring the beautiful Kootenay region with her family.

MARCY MAHR



Marcy Mahr is KCP's Stewardship Coordinator. Her lifelong passion for conserving biodiversity has shaped her professional career over the past 28 years. Marcy has a M.Sc. in Plant Ecology and a B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology & Northern Studies. She lives with her family on a small permaculture farm in the Slocan Valley.

ADRIENNE SHAW



Adrienne Shaw works with KCP's diverse partners to develop and implement innovative solutions to challenging stewardship issues throughout the Kootenay Region. Adrienne has an M.Sc. in Conservation Ecology and Ecological Restoration and is a Registered Professional Biologist. She lives with her three daughters and husband in Pass Creek.

NICOLE TRIGG



Nicole Trigg is the Communications Coordinator for KCP. Nicole is an accredited journalist and communications contractor whose career has spanned diverse sectors. Originally from the West Coast, she now resides in the Columbia Valley where she can be found paddling the wetlands or exploring the nearby mountain ranges in her spare time.



Cherry Bummers Conservation Area, Cranbrook. Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow



KCP Board

Derek Petersen - Parks Canada (Chair)



Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Derek's 30-year career with Parks Canada has spanned responsibilities ranging from integrated land use planning, to social science, to conservation biology and has included postings across western and northern Canada. Derek has a Master's degree in Science, an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies and Economics and a diploma in Renewable Resources Technology. He splits his personal time between the East and West Kootenays.

Candace Batycki - Yellowstone to Yukon



Candace Batycki is the B.C. and Yukon Program Director for the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y), a joint Canada-U.S. not-for-profit organization that connects and protects habitat from Yellowstone to Yukon so people and nature can thrive.

Chris Bosman - The Nature Trust of British Columbia



Chris Bosman is the Kootenay Conservation Land Manager for The Nature Trust of British Columbia. Chris has an Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism and a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from Lakehead University in Ontario. He enjoys hiking, skiing, fly fishing, canoeing and hunting.

Ken Brock - Canadian Wildlife Service



Ken Brock is currently Head of Protected Areas and Stewardship for Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from McGill University and a Master of Environmental Studies from York University.

Doris Hausleitner - Selkirk College



Doris Hausleitner is an instructor at Selkirk College. She teaches first year Terrestrial Ecology and Applied Biology and Systems Ecology in the Integrated Environmental Planning Program (IEP) and Ecosystems Management for the Recreation Fish and Wildlife program.



The KCP Board is made up of elected representatives and provides strategic direction to the KCP including funding, budget, program priorities, annual workshop themes and recognition awards.

Rick Hoar - Lake Windermere Rod & Gun Club



Rick Hoar went to work for the BC Conservation Officer Service in 1974 and worked around the province before retiring in 2006. He currently is President of the Lake Windermere District Rod & Gun Club and sits on the Boards of the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners and Rocky Mountain Trench Society.

Adrian Leslie - Nature Conservancy of Canada



Adrian is a Registered Professional Biologist with experience working in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems from low elevation floodplains to high elevation forests throughout the Columbia Basin.

Jennifer Vogel - Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society



Jennifer is a Professional Agrologist and the Executive Director of the Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society. Jennifer has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and has spent her career working in the field of stewardship and invasive species management.

Dave White - East Kootenay Wildlife Association



Dave is past president of both the East Kootenay Wildlife Association and the BC Wildlife Federation, as well as past chair of the East Kootenay Conservation Program. He is a keen angler, hunter, and backcountry horseman. To support Dave's retirement activities, he left the KCP Board this year and Rick Hoar came on board.

GOAL 1 SECUREMENT

INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS, COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION OF PRIVATE LAND SECUREMENT.

Although private lands only make up ~8 % of BC, they contain 87 % of species at risk. Securement is the acquisition (fee simple) or long-term protection (covenants) of private lands for conservation purposes and protects conservation values on a property for generations to come. KCP's mandate of protecting healthy functioning ecosystems relies on important habitats like wetlands, riparian areas and mature forests that occur in the valley bottoms. From a large landscape perspective, undeveloped land

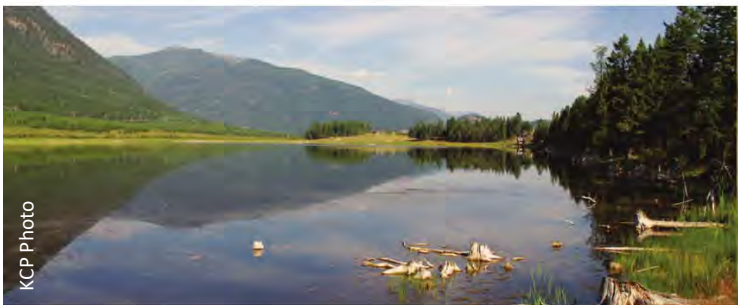
in valley bottoms acts as the connective tissue between adjacent mid and high elevation habitats; the protection of which allows contiguous wildlife travel corridors to exist between different higher elevation habitats. There are many organizations involved in land securement in the Kootenays including the Nature Conservancy of Canada, The Nature Trust of BC, and the provincial government. KCP plays a critical role in ensuring coordination of securement activities.

1.1 Facilitate, support and coordinate private land securement efforts

1.2 Prioritize efforts to ensure that securement is focused on the most valuable properties for conservation objectives

1.3 Provide a coordinated and collaborative approach for private land securement inquiries and information

1.4 Increase securement funding and acquisitions



GOAL 2 STEWARDSHIP

INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND COORDINATION OF STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE ON PRIVATE LANDS.

Stewardship promotes responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices. In the Kootenays, over 80 organizations are involved in stewardship which can focus on grassland restoration, invasive species control, species at risk management, and wetland construction to name a few. Components of private land stewardship include conservation planning to ensure the “biggest bang for the buck”, reaching out to

landowners to provide them with information and motivation to be stewards of their property, and applying conservation tools to local government planning. These activities protect vulnerable native species, provide ecosystem services, and promote healthy and vibrant natural habitats as well as local human communities that are connected to their natural surroundings.

2.1 Increase collaboration and coordination between partners

2.2 Facilitate neighbourhood conservation planning to identify conservation targets and high priority actions

2.3 Promote a coordinated approach to landowner outreach for conservation

2.4 Support local governments to incorporate and apply conservation principles into local land use planning

GOAL 3 CAPACITY

BUILD AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND INTERNAL CAPACITY FOR KCP AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO UNDERTAKE SECUREMENT AND STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES.

The broad range of KCP Partners bring a wealth of knowledge and skills to conservation and resource management in the Kootenay region. One of KCP's roles is to facilitate the sharing of technical resources among partners and others so that land and water stewardship considers the best available information and practices. Many of KCP Partners are non-profit societies or other

organizations with limited funding and staff capacity. KCP has identified the need to build financial capacity of these partners and has played an instrumental role in establishing local conservation funds in the region. In order to continue the valuable role that this conservation partnership plays, KCP must ensure that its internal capacity as an organization is also maintained.

3.1 Develop the technical capacity of partners to become leaders and innovators in implementing biodiversity conservation

3.2 Build and promote financial capacity for partners

3.3 Maintain KCP capacity to ensure financial viability and organizational resilience



Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow

GOAL 4 NETWORK

STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK OF CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES, SYNERGIES AND ULTIMATELY GREATER EFFECTIVENESS.

With diverse landscapes, relatively large geographic distances, and a multitude of active conservation organizations, the Kootenays is a special place. The basic premise of KCP is that we work better and more effectively together than apart. KCP is regarded as an important regional network capable of bringing diverse perspectives and partners to the table

to support conservation initiatives and form a cohesive conservation community. KCP also works beyond its boundaries to bring resources, knowledge and skills to the region. Finally, KCP recognizes the contributions of its partners by showcasing their conservation successes within and outside the region.

4.1 Foster engagement, communication, and connection within the partnership

4.2 Represent KCP interests and connections outside current partner organizations

4.3 Showcase conservation efforts including the achievements of KCP and its partners

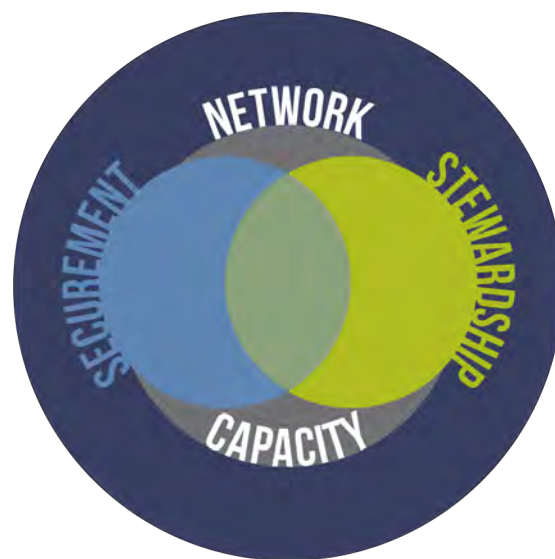


Northern Leopard Frog reintroduction site at Brisco, Columbia Valley. Photo courtesy of Kalista Pruden



KCP Strategic Priorities

KCP partners came together to share their ideas and vision for working collaboratively towards conservation over the next five years. The resulting KCP Strategic Priorities will guide KCP from 2017 to 2021. We are excited about this guiding document for our program.



GOAL 1 SECUREMENT

INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS,
COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION OF
PRIVATE LAND SECUREMENT.

Over the past decade, the KCP has helped partners in their work to conserve over 250,000 hectares of land and invest \$150 million into conservation projects across the Kootenays. World-class conservation efforts include Darkwoods, the Flathead Agreement, Pine Butte Ranch, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, Columbia Lake Lot 48, and Meadow Creek South.

In 2017-18, the KCP continued to coordinate communication between the land trusts in the region. The KCP received four land securement referrals from within KCP partner organizations or directly from interested landowners. This year, the KCP undertook three property evaluations. Based on the dedication and hard work of our partners, particularly the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), the Morrissey Meadows and Teck Wycliffe Corridor (NCC) completed this year.



Morrissey Meadows. Photo courtesy of Nature Conservancy of Canada



Luke Creek. Photo courtesy of Nature Conservancy of Canada

MORRISSEY MEADOWS (Nature Conservancy of Canada): This 106 acre property is located near Fernie, B.C. in the Elk River valley. This property provides a high ecological value wildlife corridor including linkage to existing protected areas. The property supports important habitat for grizzly bear, moose, badgers, bats, waterfowl and a wide variety of other focal species.

LUKE CREEK WILDLIFE CORRIDOR (Nature Conservancy of Canada): This 396-acre property is located southeast of Kimberley, B.C. in the Wycliffe Prairie area and provides a contiguous connection between the St. Mary River in the south and Crown land in the north, maintaining connectivity for wide-ranging mammals such as grizzly bears. It includes rare grassland habitats, riparian areas, extensive aspen stands, and key winter range for elk and deer, and also supports habitat for several at-risk species including badger, Williamson's sapsucker and Lewis's woodpecker.



West Kootenay Stewardship Committee meeting

GOAL 2 STEWARDSHIP

INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND
COORDINATION OF STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES
TAKING PLACE ON PRIVATE LANDS.

The KCP continued with its focus on stewardship guided by the KCP stewardship priorities. The goals of collaborative stewardship include increasing collaboration and coordination between partners, facilitating neighbourhood conservation planning to identify conservation targets and high priority actions, promoting a coordinated approach to landowner outreach for conservation, and supporting local governments to incorporate and apply conservation principles into local land use planning.

SPRING TOURS

In May 2017, KCP hosted full-day East and West Kootenay Stewardship Committee meetings that included a morning business meeting and networking lunch for committee members, followed by local field tours in the afternoon — the afternoon field tours were open to all KCP partners.



West Kootenay Stewardship Committee Spring Tour



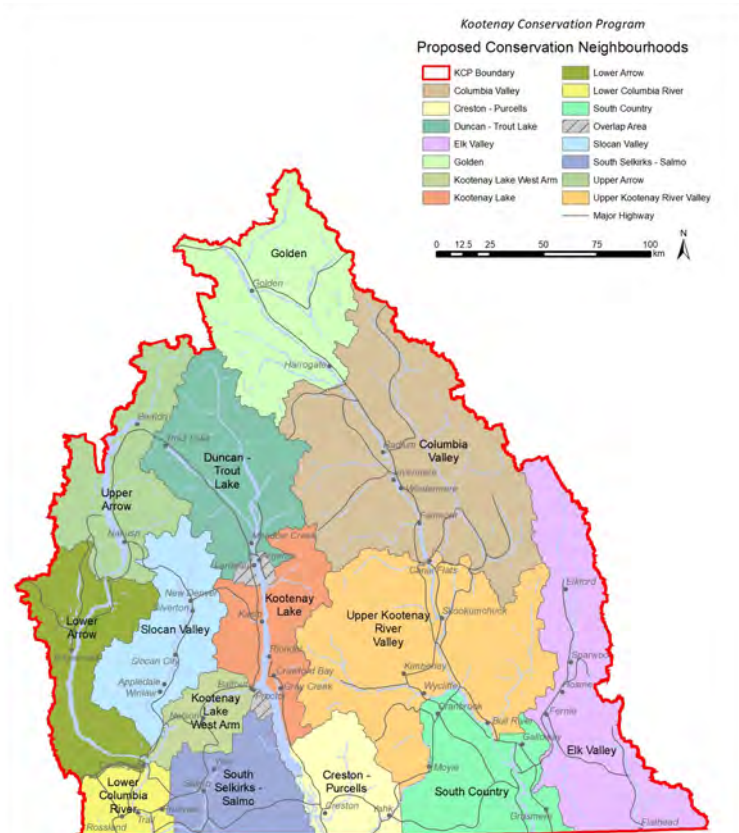
East Kootenay Stewardship Committee Spring Tour



Participants in both the East and West Kootenay were extremely engaged and shared many ideas around promoting conservation and restoration, and KCP's collaborative role in the region. Most valuable, perhaps, was the opportunity for partners to learn firsthand about each other's projects and activities, with many synergies identified, ultimately promoting increased cooperation and effectiveness in each region. Highlights from the West Kootenay tour included the Halleran Wetlands and The Nature Trust of British Columbia's Duncan-Lardeau Conservation Complex. Highlights from the East Kootenay included visiting the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Luxor Linkage Conservation Area in Edgewater, and the northern leopard frogs reintroduction site at the Columbia Wetlands in Brisco.

CONSERVATION NEIGHBOURHOODS

In December, KCP partnered with the Columbia Wetland Stewardship Partners (CWSP) to bring together researchers, land trusts, stewardship organizations, First Nations, and other government partners to identify conservation action priorities for the Columbia Valley.



Columbia Valley Conservation Neighbourhood



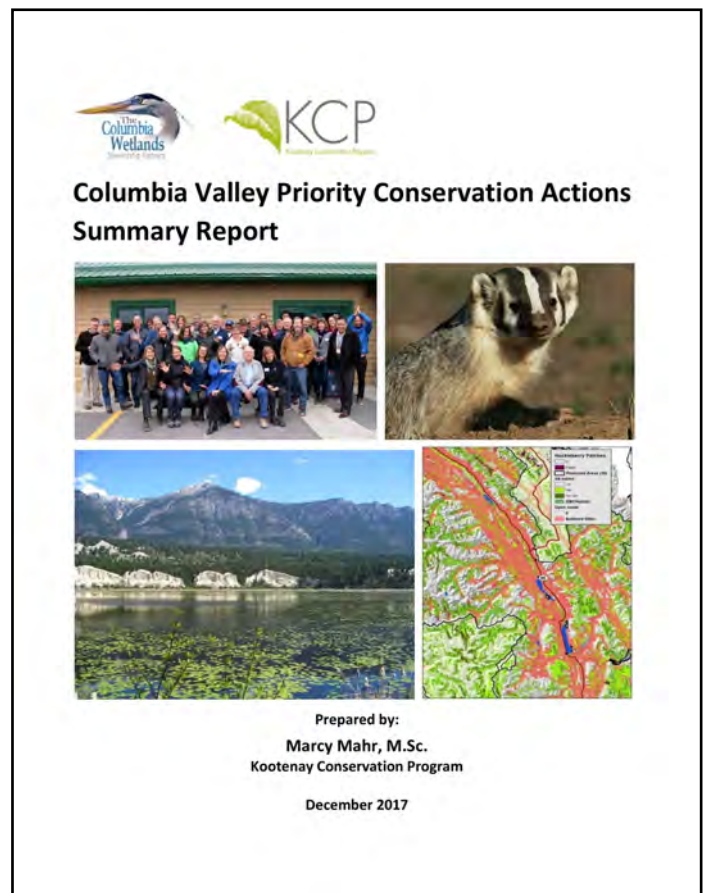
This Forum included speed presentations by 13 researchers on a broad range of conservation topics including fire ecology, hydrology, bats, birds, grizzly bears, Kokanee, burbot, westslope cutthroat trout and culturally important plants.

The majority of the Forum focused on break-out sessions to identify priority actions under the themes of preventing invasive species, protecting habitat, ensuring landscape connectivity, reducing recreation pressure, and preparing for climate change resilience.

STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS HUB

KCP moved forward in the coordinated landowner outreach initiative by creating an online hub of “Stewardship Solutions”. Many KCP partners are involved in landowner outreach as part of promoting stewardship in the Kootenays. These local organizations may offer information, tools, incentives, services, learning opportunities, and/or funding for stewardship activities. They focus on such topics as wildlife, species at risk, invasive plants, water quantity and quality, forest and grassland ecology, fire interface management, and habitat restoration to name a few.

This online toolkit serves as a central hub for this information and features Kootenay-based resources for stewardship solutions that address issues on private land. This toolkit is designed for stewardship practitioners, local government planners and other service providers as well as a one-stop shop for private landowners interested in stewardship options for their property.





GOAL 3 CAPACITY

BUILD AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND INTERNAL CAPACITY FOR KCP AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO UNDERTAKE SECUREMENT AND STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES.

WEBINAR SERIES

KCP coordinated and delivered another 'Winter Webinar Series' under the theme of 'Grasslands to Wetlands: Connecting Diversity'. The four-part webinar series included:

- Fire and Forests: What We Need to Know in the Kootenays – John Cathro, Cathro Consulting
- Fish and Wildlife Mapping: Tools Everyone Should Know About – Albert Chirico, BC Ministry of Environment
- BC Soil Information Finder Tool: Because What's Underground Matters – David Poon and Deepa Filatow, BC Ministry of Environment
- Lentic and Lotic Riparian Assessment: A Standardized Approach – Dr. Paul Hansen, Ecological Solutions Group LLC

These webinars were recorded and all are available at www.kootenayconservation.ca.



Presenters in the KCP Winter Webinar Series. Left to right: John Cathro, Albert Chirico, David Poon, Deepa Filatow, Paul Hansen



LOCAL CONSERVATION FUNDS

In 2008, KCP was instrumental in establishing the first Local Conservation Fund in Canadian history in the Regional District of East Kootenay's Upper Columbia Valley. The Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF) has now invested over \$1,600,000 in more than 60 securement and stewardship projects which address local priorities including ecosystem restoration, invasive species control and lake stewardship. This critical funding has helped leverage \$6,000,000 in conservation investments in the local area. In 2017-18, the CVLCF was awarded to eight projects receiving \$87,000 in funding.

In 2017, the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund (KLLCF) funded its second year of projects in the Kootenay Lake area after becoming a service of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) in 2015. KCP worked with the RDCK to coordinate funding \$65,000 to six high priority projects in the region including projects osprey nest monitoring, western toad mitigation, bat surveys, grizzly bear co-existence, outreach on the Kootenay Lake Shoreline Guidance document, and north Kootenay Lake water monitoring.



Photo by Rachel Darvill

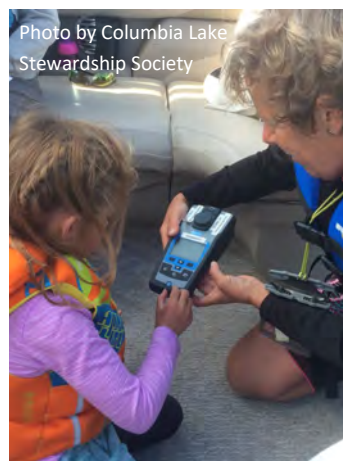


Photo by Columbia Lake Stewardship Society



Photo by Friends of Kootenay Lake



Photo by Jakob Dullise

Left to right: Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey (CVLCF), Columbia Lake Ecosystem Monitoring and Education (CVLCF), Kootenay Lake Osprey Nest Monitoring Phase II (KLLCF), Grizzly Bear Co-existence Solutions (KLLCF).



Kootenay Lake. Photo courtesy of Heather Leschied

In May, KCP hosted a field tour for Local Area Directors and members of the KLLCF Technical Review Committee. This tour visited four project sites where grantees spoke about their projects and answered questions. This opportunity allowed participants to get a better understanding of the impact of the funding, as well as clarification on a variety of aspects of these projects.



The Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund Field Tour held in May 2017. KCP Photos



GOAL 4 NETWORK

STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK OF CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES, SYNERGIES AND ULTIMATELY GREATER EFFECTIVENESS.

ANNUAL GATHERING AND AGM

The KCP Fall Gathering & AGM serves as one of the primary opportunities to connect and re-connect KCP partners from across the region.

The organizing theme for this year's Fall Gathering was "Grasslands to Wetlands: Connecting Diversity". We explored rare habitats and species of the Kootenays and how to work together to steward them. The field tour included visits to NCC's Pine Butte Ranch and TNTBC's Bummers Flats-Cherry Creek Conservation Complex.

Presenters including representatives from Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Trust of BC, BC Government, Stewardship Centre for BC, Slocan Lake Stewardship Society, and Trans-Border Grizzly Project, and featured the film "On the Shoulders of Giants" about private land conservation in Montana.



Fall Gathering Field Tour presenters, left to right: Wetlands restoration expert Tom Biebighauser, Chris Bosman (The Nature Trust of BC), Richard Klafki and Hillary Page (Nature Conservancy of Canada). Photos courtesy of Pat Morrow



Pine Butte Ranch. Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow



Pine Butte Ranch. Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow

CRITTER DAY

KCP co-organized Critter Day in May with the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program to raise awareness of the valuable conservation opportunities in the Trail area. The event brought together 12 conservation partners, six funders, and over 560 community members to learn about local critters that inhabit the area.

WEBSITE

KCP continued to maintain its website (www.kootenayconservation.ca), updating it on a regular basis with news posts, upcoming events and information relevant to partners and the public.

eNEWS

KCP issued its monthly eNews at the start of each month to a growing list of subscribers (668 in March 2018). The eNews is the go-to source of conservation information for the Kootenay region, helping publicize partner news as well career opportunities, events, and more.

FACEBOOK

KCP created a Facebook page in 2017 (160 followers in March 2018) with some posts reaching up to 3,200 people through social media sharing. The KCP Facebook page aims to promote Partner news and events as well as KCP activities.



KCP CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The KCP awarded the annual Conservation Leadership Award as part of our Annual Gathering and AGM in Cranbrook. This award showcases some of the outstanding work being done in conservation in our region. This year Rob Neil and Irene Manley were the recipients of the 2017 Conservation Leadership Award.

ROB NEIL has contributed over 40 years of vision and expertise to conserving landscapes in the Kootenays. Rob moved to Cranbrook in 1972 to work in the habitat protection section of the Ministry of Environment's Fish and Wildlife Branch (in all its names and iterations), in both the East and West Kootenay. During this time, Rob helped establish important Wildlife Management Areas and Access Management Areas, and provided landscape level



KCP Chair Derek Petersen (left) presents a 2017 Conservation Leadership Award to Rob Neil (right).

planning efforts like the Southern Rocky Mountains Management Plan. For the last 14 years, from 2003 until his retirement in the spring of 2017, Rob worked as the Kootenay Conservation Land Manager for The Nature Trust of BC. Spectacular places are now better protected because of Rob's incredible foresight and tireless perseverance in his work. His legacy includes Bull River, Hoodoos, Columbia River Wetlands, Bummers Flats, Wigwam Flats, Meadow Creek, Duncan River, and Slocan Island. A fantastic mentor to many, Rob's knowledge of the land base and his dedication continue to leave a legacy for protection and conservation of Crown and private land in the region.



KCP Fall Gathering Field Tour at the Pine Butte Ranch. Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow

IRENE MANLEY is a well-respected wildlife biologist with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations in Nelson who has proven herself a leader in ecosystem conservation. Irene has worked extensively with species-at-risk and has almost two decades of experience in the Kootenays (East and West) where she has studied the distribution and habitat requirements of Northern Leopard Frogs, Western Toads, Flammulated Owls, Western screech-owls and Lewis' Woodpeckers. In addition, she also has led and participated in many projects in the Kootenays – ecosystem restoration, wetland restoration and conservation land management to name a few. Irene has an M.Sc. in wildlife biology from Simon Fraser University and is a Registered Professional Biologist. She works tirelessly to lead and support many conservation efforts throughout the Kootenay region, encouraging and offering guidance to countless projects being conducted by non-profit societies that sometimes require the support of biologists to move their projects forward.



Irene Manley holds her 2017 Conservation Leadership Award.



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For more information on the Kootenay Conservation Program, please email info@kootenayconservation.ca or call 1-844-775-2722.



KCP Fall Gathering Field Tour at TNTBC's Bummers Flats - Cherry Creek Conservation Complex

Photo courtesy of Pat Morrow