

KCP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2017-2022

PURPOSE

The Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) is a broad partnership of land and water conservation and stewardship groups, government agencies, resource industries, and agricultural producers working throughout the East and West Kootenays. The partnership seeks to cooperatively conserve the biological diversity and naturally functioning ecosystems of the region while providing mutual project support and leveraging technical and financial resources.

VISION

The KCP vision is to have landscapes in the Kootenays that sustain naturally functioning ecosystems that can in turn support economic and social well-being. We envision vibrant communities that demonstrate the principles of environmental stewardship for future generations.

MANDATE

The KCP mandate is to coordinate and facilitate conservation efforts on private land, and to generate the support and resources needed to maintain this effort.

KCP does not directly pursue conservation projects. Rather, as a partnership, KCP supports its members to pursue activities that help realize shared goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are necessary for an effective partnership and for successful achievement of the outcomes desired through the KCP. The KCP is a partnership of autonomous organizations that have differing goals and priorities, yet each organization sees the value of collaboration and comes together around a common set of guiding principles:

- *Accountability*
- *Collaboration*
- *Commitment*
- *Communication*
- *Cooperation*
- *Program Support and Recognition*
- *Unity*

KCP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The foundation of the KCP partnership is a common approach to land conservation through coordinated securement, stewardship and capacity building efforts. We will endeavor, where possible, to use the social capital of the partnership through effective networking to achieve the vision of the KCP. This document will be reviewed annually and specific actions will be identified in the annual work plan.

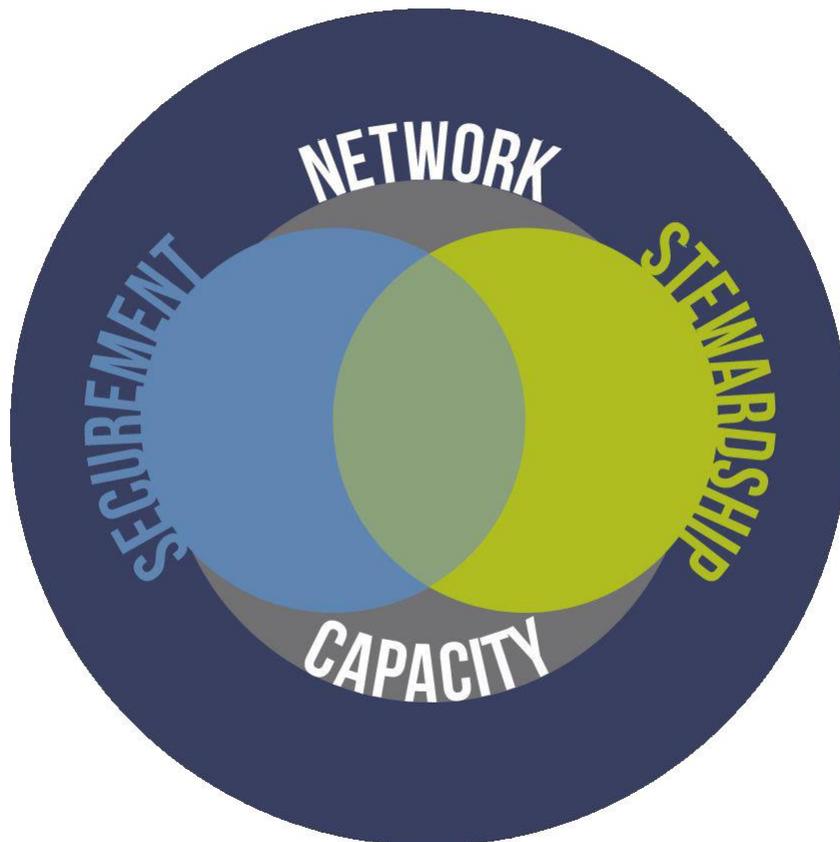


Figure 2: Overview of Kootenay Conservation Program's Strategic Goals.

GOAL 1. 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 the 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

- 1.1.1 Maintain the Securement Committee (with land trusts, provincial government, and others who secure private conservation lands) as a confidential forum to share information, and discuss and coordinate securement acquisitions, activities and issues.
- 1.1.2 Strategically support funding applications for land securement in the region.
- 1.1.3 Continue to build confidence in funding partners that the best projects for the region are being proposed and that all interested parties are in agreement with those priorities.
- 1.1.4 Maintain a database of properties that have been secured through the KCP partnership.
- 1.1.5 Ensure the current map layer of conservation lands is updated regularly and accessible to the KCP Securement Committee in order to identify corridors and better coordinate activities.
- 1.1.6 Ensure landowner contact for securement purposes is conducted in a strategic and unified manner.

1.2 **PRIORITIZE** EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT SECUREMENT IS FOCUSED ON THE MOST VALUABLE PROPERTIES FOR CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

- 1.2.1 Maintain and improve property ranking system as required to identify most ecologically important properties.
- 1.2.2 Evaluate high priority candidate properties using a ranking system based on biological and administrative criteria and expert opinion.
- 1.2.3 Maintain a current database of candidate properties and their rankings to identify regional priorities for securement.

1.3 PROVIDE A COORDINATED AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR PRIVATE LAND SECUREMENT INQUIRIES AND INFORMATION

- 1.3.1 Respond to public inquiries about donations, covenants and sale of private land for securement.

1.3.2 Provide information about securement to partners and the public including the process, value and available tools.

1.3.3 Continue to engage with key landowners, including agriculture, timber, recreational and mining industries to find win-win solutions for private land conservation that include economically viable operations as well as conservation objectives.

1.3.4 Track public inquiries about securement properties to better assess capacity issues and gaps in securement.

1.4 INCREASE SECUREMENT FUNDING AND ACQUISITIONS

1.4.1 Maintain close contact with major funders to look for opportunities.

1.4.2 Identify and promote a target level of annual funding required for securement in Kootenays.

1.4.3 For properties ranked as ecologically significant, consider other factors that influence funding such as recreation, hunting, or agriculture.

GOAL 2. 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

2.1.1 Maintain East and West Kootenay Stewardship Committees as a venue to share knowledge, ideas, and resources and to encourage collaboration.

2.1.2 Identify gaps in service and facilitate partners to fill those gaps.

2.1.3 Regularly update and promote the KCP Stewardship Framework to identify shared stewardship goals and priorities and to identify KCP’s role.

2.1.4 Define conservation target species, ecosystems and habitat features, as well as a proactive approach for addressing threats, for stewardship and securement in the Kootenays.

2.2 FACILITATE **NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSERVATION PLANNING** TO IDENTIFY CONSERVATION TARGETS AND HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

2.2.1 Identify “conservation neighbourhoods” (focal areas) for conservation planning and activities in the Kootenays based on local organizations’ request, input and lead.

2.2.2 Host and facilitate meetings, workshops and other opportunities to identify conservation threats and priority actions within these conservation neighbourhoods.

2.2.3 Assist with engaging multiple perspectives and partners to come to the table, including stewardship groups, land trusts, local/ provincial/federal government, First Nations, major landowners, and industry.

2.2.4 Identify opportunities for all forms of land conservation actions in these neighbourhoods including securement, stewardship agreements, ecological restoration, habitat protection, and landowner outreach and incentives.

2.2.5 Work with local governments to identify and map important corridors, inventory information, and sensitive ecosystems to strengthen natural area conservation within a regional context.

2.2.6 Capture and report on the state of biodiversity and conservation progress on private lands in the region.

2.3 PROMOTE A COORDINATED APPROACH TO **LANDOWNER OUTREACH** FOR CONSERVATION

2.3.1 Facilitate and support partners' efforts to engage private landowners in conservation and stewardship by including their opportunities and resources on KCP website, e-news and other materials.

2.3.2 Develop KCP materials that assist landowners with identifying stewardship groups and opportunities in their area.

2.3.3 Create a central hub of on-line digital stewardship information by collating partners' resources (Stewardship Outreach Toolbox) to assist partners, local government, private landowners.

2.3.4 Facilitate training opportunities for KCP Partners who visit private lands in aspects of stewardship and resource management beyond their own expertise.

2.4 SUPPORT **LOCAL GOVERNMENTS** TO INCORPORATE AND APPLY CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES INTO LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING

2.4.1 Work with local governments to identify their needs and gaps in incorporating and applying conservation principles to land use planning.

2.4.2 Continue to work with Regional Districts and liaise with local government on behalf of partners to support local government officials to work towards KCP vision.

2.4.3 Keep government involved and aware of conservation tools, resources and successes by providing regular presentations to municipal and regional district councils.

2.4.4 Represent KCP values during OCP processes in the Kootenays.

GOAL 3. 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

- 3.1.1 Identify and publicize opportunities for training, education, networking, and technical support in the Kootenay region.
- 3.1.2 Facilitate peer learning by providing opportunities for partners to share knowledge and showcase on-the-ground best practices.
- 3.1.3 Continue to facilitate the implementation and use of technical resources for partner agencies by sharing them on e-news, website, and directed outreach.
- 3.1.4 Identify partner capacity needs and hold workshops or webinars to respond to these needs.
- 3.1.5 Create awareness of the range of tools available to aid in the conservation of private lands (e.g. through webinars, workshops, meetings, e-news).
- 3.1.6 Develop a web-based collection of conservation resources (Conservation Planning Toolbox) in the KCP region.

3.2 BUILD AND PROMOTE FINANCIAL CAPACITY FOR PARTNERS

- 3.2.1 Lead the growth and expansion of Local Conservation Funds.
- 3.2.2 Continue to work with local governments to administer Local Conservation Funds.
- 3.2.3 Raise awareness about the success of Local Conservation Funds through positive media coverage and field tours.
- 3.2.4 Continue to identify new funding sources and bring existing funding opportunities to partners' awareness.

3.3 MAINTAIN KCP CAPACITY TO ENSURE FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

- 3.3.1 Continue to work with funding agencies to ensure that KCP's goals, contributions and values of a coordinated approach are recognized.
- 3.3.2 Continue to foster and build relationships with partners, governments, local businesses, the public, and funding institutions.
- 3.3.3 Build a strong Board by providing sufficient communications, clearly identifying their roles and responsibilities, ensuring compliance with governance charter, and drawing on their knowledge and skills.

3.3.4 Develop a fundraising strategy to ensure KCP is financially viable and can achieve its goals through the provision of a Program Manager, and contract specialists as needed.

3.3.5 Assess the relevance and implications of expanding the current KCP program boundary to the extent of the full Columbia Basin.

GOAL 4. 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

4.1.1 Maintain and promote KCP as a “one-stop shop” that can help find the best fit of partners with their conservation interests.

4.1.2 Communicate to existing and potential partners the benefits of participating in the KCP as a means of achieving common goals in the most effective way.

4.1.3 Continue to build the KCP partnership by identifying key missing partners for private land conservation and encouraging them to participate through targeted outreach.

4.1.4 Continue to build a sense of “conservation community” and reinvigorate partners by providing, and communicating, the concrete and meaningful benefits of working together and connecting people and groups.

4.1.5 Ensure that KCP stays relevant to partner organizations by conducting regular surveys and soliciting feedback from partners.

4.1.6 Provide opportunities for the stewardship and securement committees to work together to enhance landscape scale conservation.

4.2 REPRESENT KCP INTERESTS AND CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE CURRENT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

4.2.1 Where possible, represent the interests of the KCP and partner organizations with key constituencies through membership on Steering Committees, working groups, strategic planning roundtables.

4.2.2 Promote trans-boundary learning and information sharing by participating in neighbouring events.

4.2.3 Roll-up conservation achievements to communicate joint successes, while ensuring partners are recognized for their roles and contributions.

4.2.4 Participate in a “network of networks” (e.g. Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network, Columbia Basin Watershed Network, and Columbia Mountains Institute) to identify collaborative synergies and partnerships to strengthen conservation successes in the Kootenays.

4.2.5 Help to liaise between private and public land conservation and stewardship.

4.3 SHOWCASE CONSERVATION EFFORTS INCLUDING THE ROLE OF KCP AND ITS PARTNERS

4.3.1 Increase the profile for private land stewardship and conservation and showcase accomplishments of KCP as a valuable partnership program.

4.3.2 Make a case for private land conservation and its importance for conservation in the Kootenays.

4.3.3 Provide outreach and communication within partners to highlight the achievements of partners (e.g. e-Newsletter, website, brochure, annual report, field tours, stewardship road show).

4.3.4 Promote the work of KCP partners at all available opportunities to showcase how stewardship and securement contributes to the resiliency of the Kootenay region.

4.3.5 Recognize conservation leaders through the KCP “Faces and Places” e-news feature and the Annual Conservation Leadership Award.

4.3.6 Celebrate land use decisions that are aligned with KCP’s vision by featuring them on website, e-news and partner activities.

4.3.7 Work to develop mechanisms to measure and report on conservation status achievements in the Kootenay region.