

Together we're taking care of our natural landscapes and our Kootenay way of life.



KCP
Kootenay Conservation Program

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020





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, many pressures throughout the region, including habitat fragmentation, lead to significant and irrevocable loss of wildlife habitat, habitat fragmentation, and the loss of other natural assets including clean water, clean air, food production, timber production, and carbon storage and sequestration.



Columbia Wetlands, Pat Morrow Photo

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 and provides critical landscape linkage in the face of climate change.

The foundation of KCP partnership is a common approach to land conservation through our following strategic goals:

- 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.



From the Chair

The 2019-20 year was another highly productive one for the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP). This year focused on Biodiversity Hotspots of the Kootenays and this theme was carried through all the events and initiatives that KCP delivered including the Fall Gathering, tours, webinars and forums. Highlights of 2019-20 include:

- Receiving a federal Environment and Climate Change Canada Nature Fund grant to fund “Kootenay Connect” conservation and stewardship projects in four priority areas in the Kootenays over the next four years: Creston Valley, Columbia Wetlands, Wycliffe Corridor, and Bonanza Corridor;
- Facilitating two ‘Conservation Action Forums’: one in the Elk Valley and one in the Creston Valley;
- New promotion and ongoing improvement of the ‘Stewardship Solutions Toolkit’ for landowner outreach materials;
- Continued coordination of land securement amongst land trust organizations in the region with two major properties (see page 3) acquired through this collaborative approach;
- Hosting a spring ‘Directors Tour’ of Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF) projects for Regional District of East Kootenay Columbia Valley Directors;
- Hosting East and West Kootenay ‘Stewardship Committee’ meetings and a spring tour at the Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area near Trail;
- Successful hosting of an annual ‘Fall Gathering’ including a field tour in the Columbia Valley featuring both the Nature Trust’s new Columbia River Wetlands – Edgewater conservation property and various Columbia Valley Local Conservation funded projects;
- Ongoing promotion of the concept of “Kootenay Connect” which identifies high priority landscape connectivity and biodiversity hot spots in the Kootenays;
- Hosting a webinar series on the theme of “Biodiversity of the Kootenays”;
- Administration and delivery of the ‘Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF)’ with almost \$170,000 being disbursed to nine conservation projects;
- Administration and delivery of the ‘Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund’ (KLLCF) with almost \$70,000 awarded to eight local conservation projects;
- Initial delegations to Slocan Valley local governments to share information from recent market research related to potential expansion of Local Conservation Funds;
- Finalization of the “Case for Conservation” brochure for private landowners.

KCP’s vision would not be achieved without the support of our ongoing and new funding partners, for whom we are extremely grateful. We sincerely appreciate the Nature Trust of British Columbia for their ongoing support as the fiscal sponsor of the KCP, another contribution critical to KCP’s success.

KCP would not be the effective network that it is without the interest, engagement and participation of KCP’s diverse partners, or the program’s dedicated team, who bring endless passion to KCP’s purpose of cooperatively conserving the biological diversity and naturally functioning ecosystems of the region. Thank you!

Derek Petersen
Chair, Kootenay Conservation Program



DEREK PETERSEN

Derek Petersen is the Chair of the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) Board. Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Derek’s 35+ 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.



From the Program Manager

2019/20 has been another busy and productive year for KCP. We have made great strides as a partnership in the region due to the amazing partner organizations who work passionately towards conservation. We sincerely appreciate your contributions to the success of KCP including hosting and participating in field tours to showcase your on-the-ground efforts, collaborating on landscape linkage corridors and biodiversity hotspots with 'Kootenay Connect', coming together in collaboration to identify shared priorities in the Elk and Creston valleys, providing your "stewardship solutions" for KCP's 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 so grateful to our KCP team whose energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills contribute immensely to the success of the program. Our Board tirelessly dedicated their time to offer experience and insights into the direction of the program. Marcy Mahr and Adrienne Shaw brought their decades of ecology experience to the role of Stewardship Coordinator and Nicole Trigg brought her vast experience to contribute to communications and partner events.

Last, but certainly not least, we are extremely grateful to our funding partners this year without whom we could not maintain a successful and productive partnership: Columbia Basin Trust, Real Estate Foundation BC, Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Environment and Climate Change Canada, The Nature Trust of BC, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Regional District of Central Kootenay and Regional District of East Kootenay.

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 and Kootenay Connect Project Manager. Her lifelong passion for conserving biodiversity has shaped her professional career over the past 30 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.

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.



KCP Board

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

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 BC



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.

Suzanne Bayley - Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners



Dr. Suzanne Bayley is an expert in wetlands ecology hailing originally from the U.S. where she earned a PhD from John Hopkins University. She's now an Emeritus Professor of Ecology and most recently, in 2016, became the President of the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners.

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.



Chair, Derek Petersen - Parks Canada

Derek Petersen is the Chair of the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) Board. Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Derek's 35+ 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.

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.

Tasha Sargent - Canadian Wildlife Service



Tasha Sargent is the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture coordinator and has worked for CWS-ECCC since 2010. Previously, she worked with the Grasslands Conservation Council of BC and spent time in East Kootenay grasslands with KCP and partners. Tasha has worked primarily in habitat conservation for birds and species at risk.

Adrian Leslie - Nature Conservancy of Canada



Adrian Leslie 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.

Ivy Whitehorne - Canadian Wildlife Service



Ivy Whitehorne is a Conservation Coordinator with the Canadian Wildlife Service. She completed her MSc from Simon Fraser University in 2009 and started at CWS-ECCC in 2010. Ivy currently works on species at risk stewardship programs, including managing the Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk program in British Columbia.



KCP partners came together to share their ideas and vision for working collaboratively towards conservation. The resulting KCP Strategic Priorities are guiding KCP from 2017 to 2021:

SECUREMENT • STEWARDSHIP • CAPACITY • NETWORK

GOAL 1 SECUREMENT

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

Since 2002, the KCP has helped partners in their work to conserve over 240,000 hectares of land and invest \$165 million into conservation projects across the Kootenays.

World-class conservation efforts by local land trust partners have resulted in the acquisition of properties that protect fish and wildlife, movement corridors, grasslands, old forests, and riparian areas.

In 2019-20, KCP continued to coordinate communication between the land trusts in the region. KCP received six land securement referrals from KCP partner organizations or directly from interested landowners and undertook six property evaluations.

Based on the dedication and hard work of our partners, particularly The Nature Trust of BC (TNTBC) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), the Columbia River Wetlands - Edgewater property and two parcels contributing to the expansion of Kootenay River Ranch were acquired this year.



Columbia River Wetlands-Edgewater property, Pat Morrow Photo

COLUMBIA RIVER WETLANDS - EDGEWATER (The Nature Trust of BC):

Located north of Radium Hot Springs, these conservation lands cover 423 acres (171.5 hectares) and feature outstanding habitat and connectivity for Grizzly Bears and American Badgers. They also provide winter range for Elk, Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer and Moose. This property complements nearby Nature Trust conservation lands that are managed as part of the Columbia National Wildlife Area as well as the provincial Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area, which provides an additional benefit for wildlife and provides important migratory habitat for over 200 bird species.



Columbia River Wetlands - Edgewater property. NTBC Photo

KOOTENAY RIVER RANCH EXPANSION (Nature Conservancy of Canada):

The acquisition of two more land parcels along the Kootenay River valley bottom means 260 hectares (637 acres) more habitat for American Badgers, Grizzly and Black Bears and a variety of ungulates. These acquisitions combined with NCC's Kootenay River Ranch and Griffiths Nature Reserve (covenant) creates a contiguous area under conservation that now totals almost 1,711 hectares (4,228 acres). While both properties were selectively harvested over the past several years, they are dominated by native grassland and dry open forests with patches of closed forest scattered throughout.



Kootenay River Ranch Expansion. NCC Photo courtesy of Lyle Grisedale



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 Framework. Over the past year, the KCP stewardship program targeted four priorities: increasing coordination between partners by holding Stewardship Committee meetings, facilitating Conservation Action Forums to identify conservation targets and high priority actions in different areas, enhancing habitat for species at risk through the Kootenay Connect project, and promoting a coordinated approach to landowner outreach with the Stewardship Solutions toolkit.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

In spring 2019, KCP hosted an East Kootenay Stewardship Committee meeting in Kimberley, and a West Kootenay Stewardship Committee in Trail. The latter was followed by a local field tour in the afternoon to the nearby Fort Shepherd Conservancy Area.

Participants shared information and updates about their respective organizations, discussed KCP's initiatives and progress, and brainstormed on how to improve the effectiveness and promotion of KCP's Landowner Outreach Program: the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit. Participants also shared their own program and outreach materials that their organizations had available.



East Kootenay Stewardship Committee Meeting



Both meetings were extremely productive in that they fostered a collaborative spirit, and increased cooperation and awareness around the many on-the-ground stewardship activities taking place within the Kootenay Conservation Program's service area.



CONSERVATION NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION FORUMS

In May 2019, KCP hosted its fourth Conservation Action Forum in the Elk Valley (Ferne), which was inspired by interest on the part of the Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Association. KCP hosted a fifth Conservation Action Forum in January 2020, this time in the Creston Valley (Creston), which was co-hosted with the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

Each of the Forums were attended by almost 30 people; brought together researchers, land managers, stewardship organizations, First Nations, and other government partners to identify conservation action priorities for their respective regions; and included speed presentations by researchers focused on best practices for land managers to conserve for species and habitats at risk. The Forums also included break-out sessions to identify priority actions under themes deemed most relevant and conducive to action by forum participants.



The Elk Valley Forum resulted in six Priority Action Plans (not ranked):

1. Take a landscape-level approach to conservation in the Elk Valley
2. Protect high quality habitats – purchase ecologically intact lands
3. Access management habitat restoration (land and water) – trails and road
4. Bighorn sheep habitat restoration
5. Riparian/Wetland habitat restoration – landscape level
6. Reducing human-wildlife conflict – transportation and towns

The Creston Valley Forum resulted in five Priority Action Plans (not ranked):

1. Develop a Landscape Scale Ecosystem-based Inventory of Biodiversity
2. Enhance Landscape Connectivity and Corridors Through a Climate Change Lens
3. Expand Stewardship Opportunities to Protect High Quality Habitats
4. Restore Floodplain Connectivity of the Kootenay/Kootenai River
5. Perform Fire Maintained Ecosystem Restoration



KCP is pleased to report that of the 27 Priority Actions identified across the first four KCP Conservation Action Forums (excluding the most recent Forum in Creston), 22 were underway by March 31, 2020 – over 80%!

Conservation Action Forums
Priority Actions In Progress





Elk Valley Conservation Action Forum

“The breakout groups are an amazing opportunity to share knowledge and experiences and to get potential projects sketched out.”

Elk Valley Conservation Action Forum participant



Creston Valley Conservation Action Forum

“Developing action plans for conservation projects was a highlight, felt tangible, and was very useful in identifying priorities and collaborators.”

Creston Valley Conservation Action Forum participant



KOOTENAY CONNECT

In August 2019, KCP was awarded an Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canada Nature Fund grant for Kootenay Connect, a four-year project that aims to enhance, restore, and manage important valley bottom habitats to support the recovery of 16 listed species at risk, such as American Badger, Grizzly Bear, Little Brown Myotis, Western Screech-owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Bobolink, and Northern Leopard Frog, and over a dozen other species of concern.

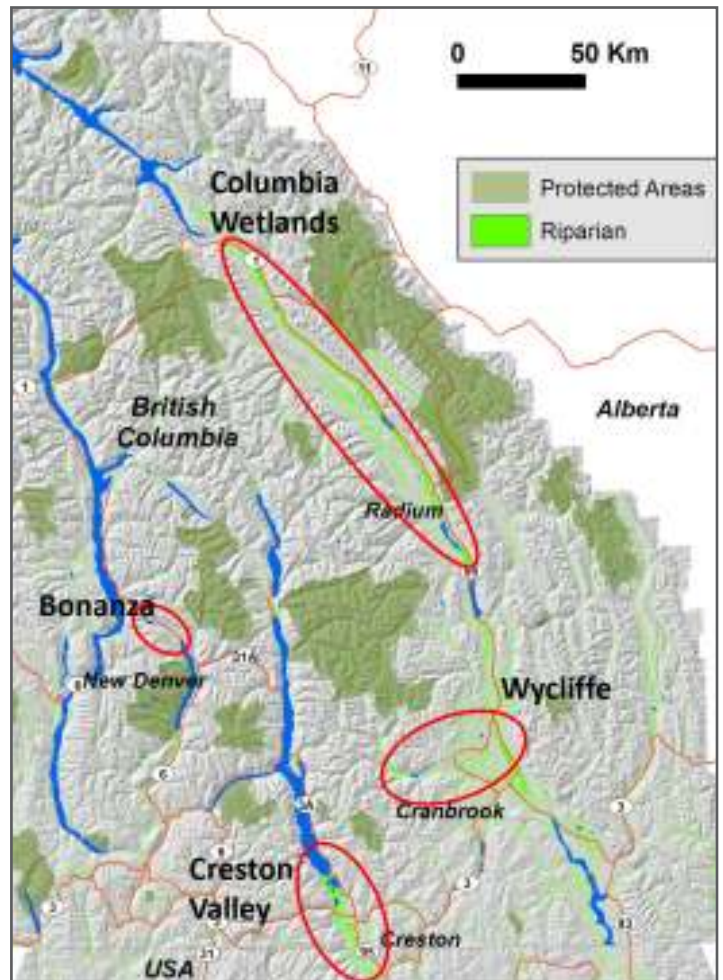
The goal of Kootenay Connect is to sustain biodiversity across local landscapes by improving habitat conditions and connectivity within and between valley bottoms and mountain ranges to sustain exceptional places of biodiversity. This project stems from the report that KCP supported last year (Kootenay Connect: Riparian Wildlife Corridors for Climate



Change, Proctor and Mahr 2019) that identified a dozen key areas within the Kootenays that are critical for wildlife movement corridors and for conserving vulnerable and at-risk species into the future.

The Canada Nature Fund grant will focus on four priority places: Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor (north of New Denver), Creston Valley, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, and the Columbia Valley Wetlands. Over 25 KCP Partners are actively working together to enhance and restore habitat for species at risk in these four biodiversity hotspots in the Kootenays.

Restoration and enhancement efforts target improving and protecting a broad spectrum of habitat types such as native grasslands, rich wetlands, cottonwood riparian areas, and mature cedar-hemlock forests that support species at risk. The project focuses on the important linkage between these habitats that is critical for maintaining healthy



Opposite page: Western Screech-owl (Arina Habich/ Dreamstime.com Photo)

This page, top to bottom: Little Brown Myotis (Geoffrey Kuchera/Dreamstime.com Photo), Grizzly Bear (Gillian Sanders Photo), Northern Leopard Frog (Marc-Andre Beaucher Photo)

Map: The four focus areas of the Kootenay Connect Canada Nature Fund grant: Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor (north of New Denver), Creston Valley, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, and the Columbia Valley Wetlands. (Proctor and Mahr, 2019)



STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS TOOLKIT

KCP moved forward with our coordinated landowner outreach initiative by heavily promoting the “Stewardship Solutions Toolkit” with a widespread media campaign across the Kootenays in summer 2019, with the development of a promotion kit for KCP Partners to help them easily promote the toolkit to their audiences, and with Stewardship Solutions presentations by KCP staff at a number of events, including two RDEK town hall meetings, the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council Agricultural Symposium, the Friends of Kootenay Lake Annual Summit, and the KCP Conservation Action Forums in Fernie and Creston.

In its first year, the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit website was accessed by over 800 people more than 1,100 times, and KCP Partners distributed roughly 1,500 Stewardship Solutions Toolkit handouts in 14 different Conservation Neighbourhoods.

This toolkit is organized by Conservation Neighbourhood and showcases the services that many KCP partners offer to promote private land stewardship in the Kootenays. The diversity of local organizations offer information, tools, incentives, services, learning opportunities, and/or funding for stewardship activities. Services 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.

The Stewardship Solutions Toolkit serves as a central hub for this information and features Kootenay-based resources for that address stewardship issues on private land.

“This is a fantastic toolkit.”

Stewardship Solutions Service Provider

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.



Columbia Wetlands, Pat Morrow Photo

STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS

FOR LANDOWNERS & LAND MANAGERS IN THE KOOTENAY REGION

- ☒ Do you need help with wildlife conflict or invasive plants?
- ☒ Would you like to enhance wildlife habitat, wetlands and riparian areas on your property?
- ☒ Would you like to be involved in monitoring programs?
- ☒ Do you want to make your property FireSmart or develop an Environmental Farm Plan?
- ☒ Are you interested in funding opportunities to help you?

☒ If you've answered yes to any of these questions then this is the toolkit for you!

KOOTENAYCONSERVATION.CA/TOOLKIT

The KCP Stewardship Solutions *Online Toolkit* will help you learn about the local resources & tools to help with conservation on your property.

Together We're Taking Care of Our Natural Landscapes and our Kootenay Way of Life

"Thanks for putting all of these great resources together in one place!"

Stewardship Solutions Service Provider

SLOCAN VALLEY STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS

FOR LANDOWNERS & LAND MANAGERS

- ☒ Do you need help with wildlife issues or invasive plants?
- ☒ Would you like to enhance wildlife habitat on your property?
- ☒ Are you interested in funding opportunities to help you?
- ☒ Would you like to be involved in monitoring programs?
- ☒ Do you want to protect the natural environment on your property?

☒ If you've answered yes to any of these questions then this is the guide for you!

Inside **FIND LOCAL SERVICES TO HELP WITH CONSERVATION ON YOUR PROPERTY.**

VISIT **KOOTENAYCONSERVATION.CA/TOOLKIT**

Together We're Taking Care of Our Natural Landscapes and our Kootenay Way of Life

"I think it is great that this information is out there."

Stewardship Solutions Service Provider



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 its annual ‘Winter Webinar Series’ under the theme of “Biodiversity in the Kootenays”. The four-part webinar series included:

- **Getting to know Grebes: Different Species and how they link to Wetland Health & Conservation** *with Rachel Darvill*
- **“We Should Plant Meadows”: A Systems Approach to Recovering Pollinator Pathways** *with Valerie Huff*
- **An Evidence-to-Action Approach for Carnivore Coexistence in Adapt-or-Die Landscapes** *with Dr. Clayton Lamb*
- **Back to the Basics: Re-evaluating Bat Boxes based on Bat Needs** *with Dr. Cori Lausen*

Registration for the 2020 Winter Webinar Series reached an all-time high with an average of 74 attendees per webinar. These webinars were recorded and are all available at <https://kootenayconservation.ca/winter-webinars/>.



Rachel Darvill



Valerie Huff



Dr. Clayton Lamb



Dr. Cori Lausen



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 \$1.7 million in more than 75 securement and stewardship projects which address local priorities including ecosystem restoration, invasive species control and lake stewardship. This critical funding has helped leverage \$6 million in conservation investments in the local area.

In 2019, the CVLCF funded its 10th year of projects. Funding was awarded to eight stewardship projects that together received almost \$170,000: reintroduction of the provincially red listed northern leopard frogs to the Columbia Wetlands, riparian area enhancement on farms, water monitoring on Columbia Lake and Lake Windermere, forest restoration, bat conservation, the Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey and invasive plant control. In addition, a contribution was made towards the acquisition of TNTBC's Columbia Wetlands Edgewater property.



2019 CVLCF funded project: Wrapping up the Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey - Wildsight Golden



2019 CVLCF funded project: Lake Windermere Community-based Water Monitoring - Lake Windermere Ambassadors



In May 2019, KCP hosted a CVLCF Directors Tour. The five Regional District of East Kootenay directors who make up the Columbia Valley Sub-Committee, plus members of the CVLCF Technical Review Committee were invited to tour five projects that have received CVLCF support. The tour was followed by a lunch meeting that gave KCP, RDEK Directors and Technical Review Committee members the opportunity to discuss the Fund's administration and how to improve its effectiveness.



CVLCF Project: Columbia Wetlands Waterbird Survey - Wildsight Golden. Location: Radium Mill Pond



CVLCF Project: Reintroducing Northern Leopard Frogs to the Columbia Marshes. Location: Edgewater Pond



CVLCF Project: Columbia Valley Farmland Advantage Stewardship Project. Location: Elk Park Ranch



CVLCF Project: Luxor Linkage Resiliency and Forest Restoration Project. Location: Luxor Linkage Conservation Area



In 2019, the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund (KLLCF) funded its fourth year of projects in the Kootenay Lake area after becoming a service of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) in 2014. KCP worked with the RDCK to coordinate funding of almost \$70,000 to six priority projects in the region including grizzly bear conflict reduction, ecosystem pollination, toad mortality mitigation, water monitoring, and bat and Western painted turtle conservation. In addition, a contribution was made towards the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Next Creek Property Acquisition, the last missing piece in a vast conservation landscape puzzle of inland temperate rainforest that extends over 1,100 square kilometres.



2019 KLLCF funded project: Fish/Bear Lake Western Toad Ecology and Hwy 31A Mortality Mitigation Study - Valhalla Wilderness Society



2019 KLLCF funded project: Grizzly Bear Coexistence Solutions - Friends of the Lardeau River

Since the establishment of the CVLCF and KLLCF, two more Local Conservation Funds have been established in BC in the Okanagan region and the concept continues to spread. Local governments are recognizing the opportunity not only to invest in locally important conservation and community sustainability projects, but also leverage additional funding for these priorities in their communities. KCP began meeting with local government elected officials, staff and community groups to share market research results from 2018 which indicated constituent support for expanding the Local Conservation Funds to other service areas in the Kootenays.



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. Almost 70 individuals from 34 organizations attended the 2019 Fall Gathering and AGM, which was held in Invermere on October 4 and 5, 2019, on the theme of “Biodiversity Hotspots of the Kootenays”.

The importance of conserving biodiversity hotspots and species at risk from a global to a local level was shared, including updates on outcomes of KCP Conservation Action Forums.

The field tour included visits to The Nature Trust of BC’s Columbia Wetlands Edgewater property, and the Brisco Wetlands. Presenters including representatives from The Nature Trust of BC, Farmland Advantage, East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners, and Calgary Zoo.



*Akisqnuq First Nation
Chief Alfred Joseph*



*East Kootenay Invasive Species Council
Program Manager Kendal Benesh*



*BC Govt Rare & Endangered Species
Biologist Lindsay Anderson*



2019 KCP Fall Gathering Field Tour, Pat Morrow Photo

NETWORK NEWS

We continued to maintain and optimize our website and monthly newsletter: the KCP eNews. Our eNews, which underwent a major redesign in late 2019, is distributed to over 750 recipients across the region. Our monthly Faces & Places feature continues to have high uptake and offers the opportunity for KCP Partners to showcase their current projects and innovations — not only in our eNews, but on our website and Facebook page as well as in local news outlets that receive “Faces & Places” as a KCP media release. The KCP Facebook page, which has grown to almost 450 followers who regularly share our posts, is an effective channel for promoting KCP Partner events and initiatives to a Kootenay-wide online audience. *(Numbers as of March 31, 2020)*



759 Newsletter
Subscribers



447 Facebook
Followers



2019 KCP Fall Gathering Field Tour, Pat Morrow Photo

CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

The KCP awarded the annual Conservation Leadership Award as part of our Annual Gathering and AGM in Invermere. This award showcases some of the outstanding work being done in conservation in our region. The recipients of the 2019 Conservation Leadership Award were Dan Murphy and Susan Bond, both formerly with the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program, and Dr. Michael Proctor with the Trans-border Grizzly Bear Project.

Dan Murphy and Susan Bond were a key tag-team of conservation drive in the East Kootenays for many years to promote ecosystem restoration (ER) and lead the Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Program to great success. Dan, now retired as Executive Director of the Trench Society, was typically found juggling funding proposals, project delivery and supporting the Trench Society membership. Susan (who passed away in 2018) provided expert communications, raising public support for ER activities such as forest thinning and prescribed burns. She produced the acclaimed Blueprint for Action document that continues to be used as the template for ER in



Kootenay Conservation Program Chair Derek Petersen (right) presents KCP'S 2019 Conservation Leadership Award for the East Kootenay to Dan Murphy (left) and Mary Ellen Bond (centre) who accepted the joint award on behalf of her late sister Susan Bond. Photo by Pat Morrow



the region and beyond. Their combined legacy has helped foster a strong conservation ethic among many East Kootenay landowners and managers.

As the lead Canadian researcher with the Trans-border Grizzly Bear Project, **Dr. Michael Proctor** has identified key linkage areas for grizzlies all along Highway 3—a major barrier for wildlife movement across southern B.C. and Alberta—giving conservation organizations an all-important scientific

foundation for deciding where and what to conserve. His independent research on grizzly bears underpins much science-based conservation work in the region, such as where to secure private land based on grizzly bear movement corridors. Recently, Michael has helped spearhead the Kootenay Connect project, where his science has led to the prioritization of where rich riparian-wetland habitat and grizzly bear movements overlap, in order to help direct restoration and conservation efforts to make the most difference in the long term.



Kootenay Conservation Program Chair Derek Petersen (right) congratulates Michael Proctor (left) as the recipient of KCP'S 2019 Conservation Leadership Award for the West Kootenays. KCP Photo





Testimonials

"We are fortunate to have KCP as a coordinating agency supporting and promoting conservation initiatives all of which enhance our chances of a sustainable future."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"KCP is a one-stop source of information on what is going on in the conservation community."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"Every KCP event, workshop, newsletter I have ever attended or read has been well worth my time and full of value! Thank you!"

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"As a KCP Partner, I am able to gain a personal relationship with key actors in the conservation movement throughout the East and West Kootenays."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"KCP staff are a wealth of knowledge and always generous with their time."

KCP Partner Survey Participant



Columbia Wetlands, Pat Morrow Photo



Our Supporters



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East Kootenay



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CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE:

1-844-775-2722

INFO@KOOTENAYCONSERVATION.CA

