

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



KCP
Kootenay Conservation Program

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021



COVER PHOTO BY NICOLE TRIGG
INSET PHOTOS (LEFT) BY MARC-ANDRE BEAUCHER • (RIGHT) BY MARCY MAHR

KOOTENAYCONSERVATION.CA



*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.

This region still functions as a natural ecosystem with a full complement of ungulates and carnivores and is home to a variety of both common and rare or endangered plant, wildlife and fish species.

However, human pressures and climate change have threatened the loss of wildlife habitat and rare ecosystems, impaired critical wildlife movement corridors, and contributed to 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 **securment**;
- 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 2020-21 year presented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Kootenay Conservation Program quickly adapted its program delivery to comply with health advisories to reduce face-to-face contact. This compliance was accomplished by shifting to the use of a virtual platform for events, focusing on the development and utilization of innovative methods of communication and responding to our partners' needs for assistance in designing their response to the constraints imposed by the pandemic. The theme for the Fall Gathering was "Conservation in a Time of Uncertainty: Adapting to Challenges" and we were endlessly impressed and inspired by the resiliency and creativity displayed by our partner organizations throughout the year. Highlights of 2020-21 include:

- Facilitating a virtual 'Conservation Action Forum' for the Golden area that brought together 32 participants from 24 organizations via an online format;
- Hosting a virtual Spring Tour featuring 5 different conservation projects in the Kootenays: three projects supported by the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund, and two supported by the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund;
- Successful hosting of a hybrid Fall Gathering, with a virtual Conference on Day 1 followed by localized and physically-distanced tours at four different sites across the Kootenays on Day 2;
- Hosting another successful Winter Webinar series, this year on the theme of "From Alpine to Valley Bottom: Conserving Essential Habitats in the Kootenays";
- Delivering Year 2 of Environment and Climate Change Canada's four-year Canada Nature Fund grant "Kootenay Connect"; focused on conservation and stewardship projects in four priority areas in the Kootenays: Creston Valley, Columbia Wetlands, Wycliffe Corridor, and Bonanza Corridor;
- Ongoing promotion of the scientific principles of the Kootenay Connect concept — i.e. identification of high priority landscape connectivity and biodiversity hotspots across the Kootenays;
- Ongoing enhancements of the 'Stewardship Solutions Toolkit' for landowner outreach;
- Continuing coordination of land securement amongst land trust organizations in the region with one property (see page 9) acquired through this collaborative approach and a second property acquired through a community-based approach;
- Administration and delivery of the 'Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF)' with over \$114,000 being disbursed to eight conservation projects;
- Administration and delivery of the 'Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund' (KLLCF) with over \$75,000 awarded to eight local conservation projects;
- Hosting online East and West Kootenay Stewardship Committee meetings;
- Providing online delegations that focused on the benefits of Local Conservation Funds to the Regional District of East Kootenay, Regional District of Central Kootenay, and the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Government.

KCP's vision would not be achieved without the support of funding partners, for whom we are extremely grateful, for their flexibility when it came to adapting our programming in response to the pandemic. As always, we sincerely appreciate the Nature Trust of BC for their ongoing support as the fiscal sponsor of the KCP, another contribution critical to KCP's success.

Despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19, KCP partners and team worked tirelessly to overcome them, achieving higher levels of engagement online than what in-person gatherings have typically realized in the past. That said, we greatly miss the innovative and inspiring collaborations and discussions that always take place in face-to-face gatherings and look forward to a time when they can happen again.

Myself, on behalf of the KCP Board and partnership would also like to acknowledge and thank the KCP team (Juliet Craig, Marcy Mahr and Nicole Trigg) for their ongoing dedication, passion and the professionalism with which they approach their roles and the collective work of KCP. It is because of your efforts that KCP has achieved the success that it has.

Derek Petersen
Chair, Kootenay Conservation Program



From the Program Manager

2020-21 has been an interesting year, not only for KCP but for our partner organizations and the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated health advisories limited in-person events and the ability to gather in large groups. Despite these challenges, we have made great strides as a partnership this year, both in on-the-ground stewardship and securement as well as maintaining a strong network. We sincerely appreciate our partner organizations' contributions to the success of KCP including hosting and participating in the small field tours, the webinar series, and Fall Gathering presentations 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 Golden region, creating incredible short videos of your "stewardship solutions" and local conservation programs 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 particularly appreciative to our Board who tirelessly dedicated their time to offer experience and insights into the direction of the program. I am particularly grateful to the KCP team whose energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills contribute immensely to the success of the program. Marcy Mahr continued to bring her decades of ecology experience to the role of Kootenay Connect Project Manager and Stewardship Coordinator and Nicole Trigg continued to bring her vast experience to the role of Communications Coordinator.

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, 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 M.Sc. 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.

Derek Petersen - Board Chair



Derek Petersen is the Chair of the KCP Board. Derek's 35+ year career with Parks Canada spanned integrated land use planning to conservation biology and has included postings across Canada. Derek has a M.Sc., an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies and Economics, and a diploma in Renewable Resources Technology.

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 Ph.D. 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.

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.



Pine Butte Ranch, Richard Klafki Photo



In 2020, KCP developed a special award to recognize Board Chair Derek Petersen's immense dedication to KCP and the tireless hours that he has contributed to KCP's growth and success. From strategic direction to reviewing reports, his knowledge, expertise and commitment has been instrumental to the program. The Outstanding Contribution to KCP award (a framed Pat Morrow photograph) was presented to Derek at the 2020 Virtual Fall Gathering.

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.

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.

Rick Hoar - Lake Windermere Rod & Gun Club

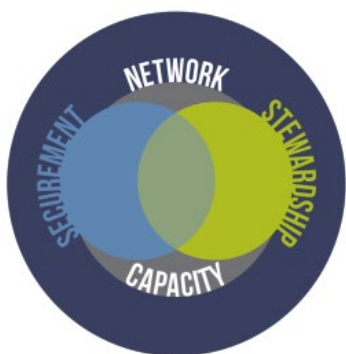


Rick Hoar went to work for the BC Conservation Officer Service in 1974 and worked around the province before retiring in 2006. He currently is President of the Lake Windermere District Rod & Gun Club and sits on the Boards of the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners and Rocky Mountain Trench Society.

Ivy Whitehorne - Canadian Wildlife Service



Ivy Whitehorne is a Conservation Coordinator with the Canadian Wildlife Service. She completed her M.Sc. 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 B.C.



KCP's Strategic Priorities are guiding KCP from 2017 to 2021 and reflect a collaborative approach to shared goals and partners' priorities:

SECUREMENT • STEWARDSHIP • CAPACITY • NETWORK

GOAL 1 SECUREMENT

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

Since 2002, KCP has helped partners in their work to conserve over 240,000 hectares of land and acquire over 60 properties 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 2020-21, KCP continued to coordinate communication between the land trusts in the region. KCP tracked six land securement inquiries from KCP partner organizations or directly from interested landowners responded and undertook five property evaluations. The Nature Trust of BC acquired the Rixen Creek property in the Marsden complex west of Nelson, and we are grateful to the dedication and hard work of the Cottonwood Lake Preservation Society, which acquired the upslope portion of Cottonwood Lake south of Nelson that will be managed in the future by a land trust partner.



Columbia Valley, Juliet Craig Photo

RIXEN CREEK - WEST KOOTENAY (THE NATURE TRUST OF BC): Located within the West Kootenay dry warm Interior Cedar Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, the 32-hectare Rixen Creek property has a mix of habitat types including forest, meadow and riparian, which occur among varied elevations, slopes and aspects. The property has an intact riparian corridor that supports mature western redcedar, western hemlock, black cottonwood, and Douglas-fir forests. This property is less than two kilometres away from The Nature Trust of BC's 98-hectare (242 acre) Marsden Face property complex on the north side of Kootenay River. This property was donated by the landowners and contains a high diversity of tree species, including the previously mentioned species, along with lodgepole pine, grand fir, western larch, white spruce, paper birch, water birch, ponderosa pine, western white pine, and amabilis fir. The cool water, riffles and pools of Rixen Creek provide Rainbow Trout habitat and the property contains Ungulate Winter Range for Mule Deer, along with habitat for a variety of other wildlife species including Cougar, Bobcat, Black Bear and Moose.



Rixen Creek. Chris Bosman/NTBC Photo

The Nature Trust of BC acquired 32 ha of conservation land in January 2021



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. The Stewardship Framework was updated and approved at the KCP AGM in the fall of 2020 to include a new priority to “*Foster a Landscape Approach to Conserving Biodiversity, Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Connectivity*”. This new priority reflects the latest science of landscape connectivity and the important role of a collaborative multi-jurisdictional partnership.

SPRING MEETINGS & TOURS

In May 2020, KCP hosted online East and West Kootenay Stewardship Committee meetings that offered a chance for KCP Partners to connect during the difficult transition to physical distancing as a result of the pandemic and share ideas on how to adapt to the COVID-19 environment. These meetings also provided an opportunity for local organizations to share updates on their programs, seek opportunities to collaborate, and learn about current and leading edge science. Our Stewardship Committee meetings increase cooperation and awareness around the many stewardship initiatives taking place within KCP’s service area.

In June 2020, KCP also hosted a Virtual Spring Tour focusing on the benefits of the Local Conservation Funds in the region. The tour this year switched to an online format and had 57 registrants.

KOOTENAY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

VIRTUAL SPRING TOUR

LEARN ABOUT PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE KOOTENAYS' TWO LOCAL CONSERVATION FUNDS

22 JUNE 2020

NORTH KOOTENAY LAKE WATER MONITORING, CVLCF

LUXOR LANDSCAPE RESTORATION, CVLCF

COLUMBIA LAKE WATER MONITORING, CVLCF

BEAVER SURVEYS, KLLCF

BEAVER SURVEYS, KLLCF

Enjoy a virtual tour of 5 different projects that are supported by the Columbia Valley and Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Funds (CVLCF & KLLCF) — from the comfort of your home!

FOR MORE INFORMATION...
Marcy Mahr, KCP Stewardship Coordinator
marcy@kootenayconservation.ca

WHEN & WHERE:
Zoom
Monday, June 22, 2020
1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. PST / 2 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. MST

REGISTER ONLINE:
https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_Q8oEvq2xSkimtbWLvZAIQA

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



This virtual tour highlighted five projects that have been supported, in part, by Local Conservation Funds including the North Kootenay Lake Water Monitoring Program (that has since rebranded as Kootenay Watershed Science), beaver restoration along the Lardeau and Duncan River floodplains, removal of invasive knotweed on private lands, the Luxor Linkage resilience and forest restoration project, and Columbia Lake ecosystem monitoring and education.

CONSERVATION NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION FORUMS

In November 2020, KCP, Wildsight Golden and Kootenay Connect co-hosted the Golden Conservation Action Forum virtually using the Zoom platform. During this full-day workshop, 32 people representing 24 organizations and diverse perspectives such as scientists, resource managers, conservationists, fish and wildlife associations, keepers of Indigenous knowledge, and recreationists worked together to identify priority actions that would contribute to maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations and ecological functions in the Golden Area over the next five years.

The Forum included speed presentations by knowledge holders focused on key recommendations for conservation in the Neighbourhood area.

The Forum also included break-out sessions to identify priority actions under themes deemed most relevant and conducive to action by forum participants.

WETLANDS • WILDLIFE • ECOSYSTEMS • CONNECTIVITY

25 NOV 2020

The purpose of this forum is to identify priority collaborative actions that contribute to maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations and ecological functions in the Golden area over the next five years.

WHEN & WHERE?
Wednesday, November 25 - Save the Date!
Full Day Virtual Meeting via Zoom (exact times TBA)

WHO?
Scientists, resource managers, conservationists, rod and gun clubs, keepers of indigenous knowledge, and other organizations that contribute to local conservation efforts. Participation is by invitation only.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...
Marcy Mahr, KCP Stewardship Coordinator
marcy@kootenayconservation.ca

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

1. Combine Science and Indigenous Knowledge to Protect Habitat for Species at Risk and Biodiversity
2. Identify and Prioritize for Conservation of Multi-Species Wildlife Corridors
3. Reduce Intensity of Human Disturbance in Backcountry, Sensitive Areas and Wildlife Corridors
4. Mitigate Recreational Impacts by Incorporating Recreation and Ecological Data to Inform Land Use Decision-Making
5. Build Climate Disruption, Adaptation and Mitigation Thinking into All Conservation Activities

These five priority actions were collectively generated and incorporated policies, objectives and activities that align with participants' organizational and programmatic interests. All participants and invitees were provided with the Forum's findings and will be encouraged to pursue these priority actions as they are able.



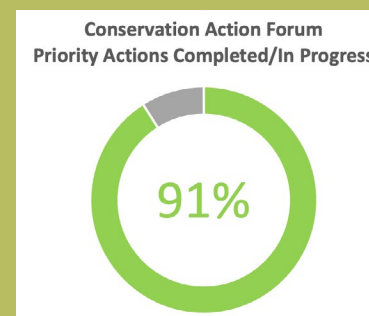
"Excellent use of technology, everything was seamless!"

**Golden Conservation
Action Forum participant**

"It was good to hear from such a diverse group and it provided valuable context and perspective for past and future conservation efforts."

**Golden Conservation
Action Forum participant**

KCP is pleased to report that of the 32 Priority Actions identified across the first five KCP Conservation Action Forums (excluding the Golden forum), 29 were either completed or were actively being pursued by March 31, 2021 – 91%!





Parsons Wetlands, Marcy Mahr Photo

KOOTENAY CONNECT

In 2020, KCP coordinated the second year of the 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 31 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 35 species of concern, such as Great Blue Heron, Mountain Goat, Western Toad and Kokanee.



A logo was developed for Kootenay Connect in 2020.

The Canada Nature Fund grant is focussing on four priority places in the Kootenays totalling 10,000 km²: Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor (north of New Denver), Creston Valley, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, and the Columbia Valley Wetlands. In 2020, 25 KCP Partners and Specialists including stewardship groups, land trusts, science and technical consultants, and recovery teams worked on 23 sub-projects including riparian and wetland restoration, beaver study, and comprehensive biodiversity inventory and mapping in the Bonanza Corridor; northern leopard frog habitat restoration and habitat connectivity assessment in the Creston Valley; invasive plant management, grassland assessment, and species at risk habitat enhancement in Wycliffe Corridor; and a species at risk inventory, wetland community mapping and classification, and hydrologic monitoring of the Columbia Wetlands.



For Kootenay Connect, nearly 1,000 species were found in a Species at Risk survey in the Bonanza Biodiversity Corridor. See KCP News for details. Ryan Durand Photo

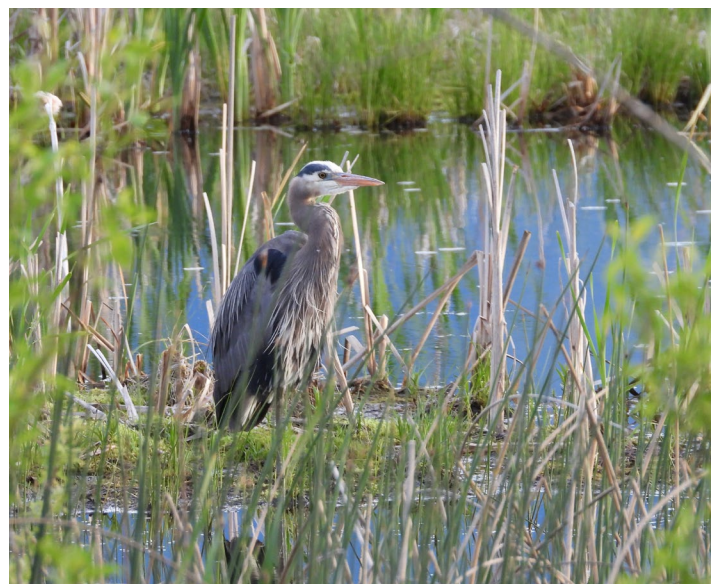
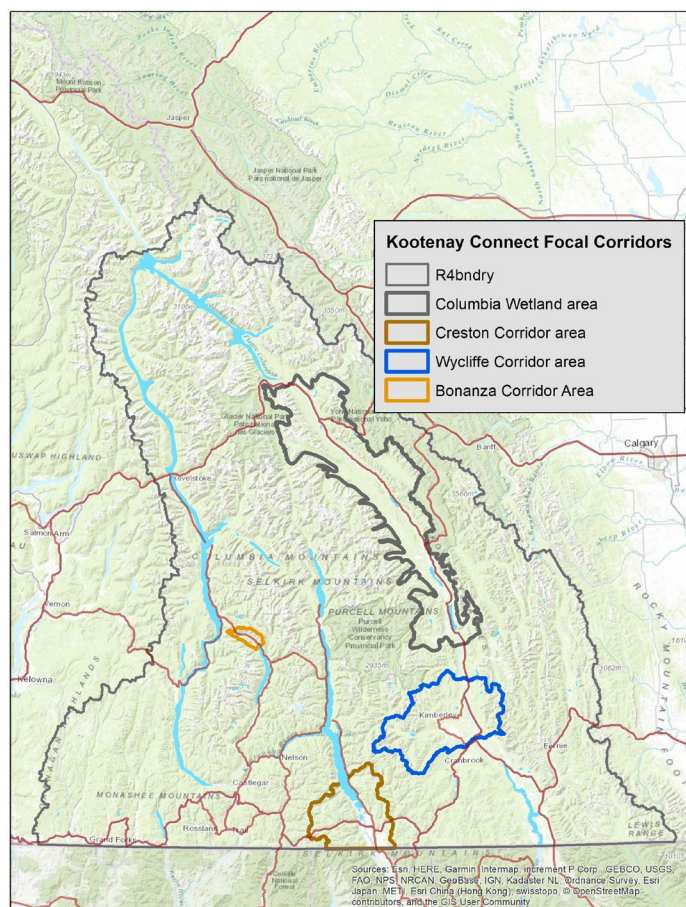
Ongoing outreach of the “Kootenay Connect” concept, which identifies high priority landscape connectivity and biodiversity hotspots, included co-hosting a special edition



Kootenay Connect webinar with the BC Chapter of The Wildlife Society and presenting to a national audience for Environment and Climate Change Canada's first-ever Facebook Live event as a featured Canada Nature Fund project. Information from Kootenay Connect was also provided to the RDEK for the Steamboat Jubilee Official Community Plan this year, demonstrating the value of Kootenay Connect informing local government planning.

Right: The four focal areas of the Kootenay Connect project.

Bottom: A Great Blue Heron conservation project was funded as part of Kootenay Connect Year 2 in all four focal areas. Marc-Andre Beaucher Photo



In 2020, 25 KCP Partners and specialists including stewardship groups, land trusts, science and technical consultants, and recovery teams worked on 23 sub-projects for Kootenay Connect.



Summit Lake Wetland, Ryan Durand Photo

STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS TOOLKIT

KCP's landowner outreach initiative, the "Stewardship Solutions Toolkit", continued to gain traction across the Kootenays in its second year and the content for this virtual hub was enhanced this year. The Stewardship Solutions Toolkit serves as a central hub for this information and features Kootenay-based resources that address stewardship issues on private land.

In its second year, the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit website was accessed by 863 people more than 1,153 times.

Organized by KCP's 14 Conservation Neighbourhoods, the toolkit showcases the services that many KCP partners offer to promote private land stewardship in the Kootenays. It is designed for stewardship practitioners, local government planners and other service providers, and as a one-stop shop for private landowners interested in stewardship options for their property. The diversity of services includes information, tools, incentives, services, learning opportunities, and/or funding for stewardship activities focussing 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.

We continued to update this online directory as well as enhance website functions (our print distribution was paused due to the pandemic). Ongoing promotion of the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit to partners as well as interested organizations and individuals included the "For the Love of the Kootenays" daily video series event in

FOR THE LOVE OF THE KOOTENAYS
A DAILY VIDEO SERIES
CELEBRATING STEWARDSHIP IN THE KOOTENAY REGION

BEGINS FEBRUARY 10!

Next Creek photo by Steve Ogle

The purpose of this video series is to raise awareness about the amazing resources featured in the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit available to landowners and land managers in the Kootenay region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...
Marcy Mahr, KCP Stewardship Coordinator
marcy@kootenayconservation.ca

WHEN & WHERE?
Every week day morning from Wednesday, February 10 through to Friday, February 26 (excluding BC Family Day on Monday, February 15), receive a link in your inbox to a daily video featuring a different Stewardship Solution.

REGISTER ONLINE:
<https://kootenayconservation.ca/for-the-love-of-the-kootenays/>

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

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS FUNDERS:

Columbia River Trust NATURE TRUST FWCP NATURE CANADA



February 2021 where over 200 participants signed up to receive one video a day of key messaging from a featured Stewardship Solutions organization for a total of 12 videos. We also presented on Stewardship Solutions to the Association of Kootenay Realtors as part of a webinar hosted by the Kootenay Lake Partnership and delivered an online “Lunch ‘n’ Learn” presentation to provincial government staff to help raise awareness about this valuable resource.

“I think the toolkit is a fantastic product.”

Stewardship Solutions Service Provider

KOOTENAY LAKE WEST ARM 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.

KCP Kootenay Conservation Program
VISIT KOOTENAYCONSERVATION.CA/TOOLKIT
Together We're Taking Care of Our Natural Landscapes and our Kootenay Way of Life

KCP Kootenay Conservation Program
LUNCH 'n' LEARN
WEBINAR FOR BC PROVINCIAL STAFF
3 FEB 2021

The purpose of this webinar is to introduce the Stewardship Solutions Toolkit to provincial government staff so they can become more familiar with the stewardship resources in the Kootenay region.

WHEN & WHERE?
Wednesday, February 3, 2021
Online
11 am - 11:30 am PT / 12 pm - 12:30 pm MT

WHO?
BC Provincial Government Staff.
Participation is by invitation only.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...
Marcy Mahr, KCP Stewardship Coordinator
marcy@kootenayconservation.ca

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

THANK YOU TO OUR STEWARDSHIP SOLUTIONS FUNDERS:
Columbia River Trust, NATURE TRUST, FWCP, real estate foundation, NATURE CANADA

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 our annual Winter Webinar Series under the theme of “From Alpine to Valley Bottom: Conserving Essential Habitats in the Kootenays”. The four-part webinar series included:

- **Drones & Dens: Using non-invasive techniques to find wolverine dens** *with Doris Hausleitner*
- **A Provincial and Regional Overview of BC’s Old Growth Forests: Where are we at and what happens now?** *with Rachel Holt*
- **Looking for the Big Picture: the Creston Valley Green Map and habitat connectivity** *with Brian Churchill*
- **Columbia Valley Wetland Mapping Project: Combining digital technologies and wetland ecology** *with Ryan Durand*

Recordings of these webinars and past webinar are all available at <https://kootenayconservation.ca/winter-webinars/>.



Doris Hausleitner



Rachel Holt



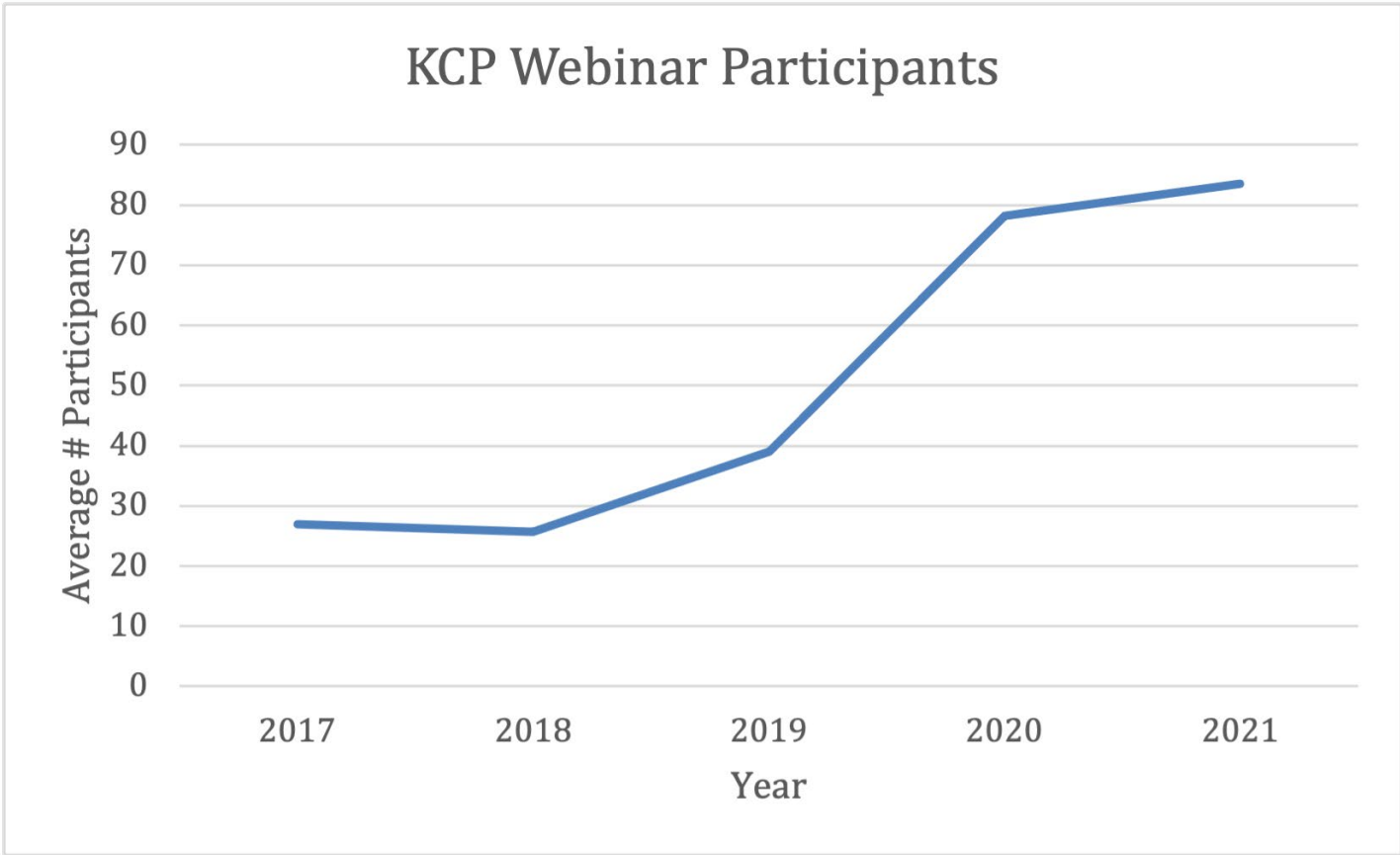
Brian Churchill



Ryan Durand



Pollinator on Aster, Valerie Huff Photo



Attendance for the 2021 Winter Webinar Series reached a new all-time high with an average of 84 attendees per webinar, which represents an increase of roughly 211% in attendance since 2017.

“Fantastic presentation both by the presenter and in handling questions by moderator and presenter!”

Winter Webinar Series attendee



LOCAL CONSERVATION FUNDS

In 2020, the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF) funded its 11th year of projects. Funding was awarded to eight conservation projects that together received over \$114,000: 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, conservation of biodiversity in the Columbia Wetlands, forest restoration on the Luxor Linkage property, bank and barn swallow conservation, and invasive plant control.

In 2020, the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund (KLLCF) funded its fifth year of projects. KCP worked with the RDCK to coordinate funding of \$75,000 to eight priority projects in the region including grizzly bear conflict reduction, ecosystem pollination, toad mortality mitigation, water monitoring, invasive plant control, and bat and beaver conservation.

Since the establishment of the CVLCF and KLLCF, two more Local Conservation Funds have been established in B.C.'s Okanagan region and the popularity of the concept continues to spread. Local governments are recognizing the opportunity not only to invest



2020 CVLCF funded project: Luxor Linkage Resiliency and Forest Restoration Project - Nature Conservancy of Canada



2020 CVLCF funded project: Columbia Valley Swallow Project - Wildsight Golden



in locally important conservation and community sustainability projects, but also leverage additional funding for these priorities in their communities.

To share the benefits of Local Conservation Funds, KCP provided a presentation to the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) in April 2020.

KCP also provided delegations to the RDEK and the RDCK focused on Local Conservation Funds and the importance of local governments for this service.

We also assisted Local Conservation Fund recipients with developing short videos on their projects that were featured at the AKBLG workshop. The videos are also being used to promote the benefits of this valuable local government service and communicate to residents about the local projects occurring in their areas.

In 2020, \$189,000 was distributed by the Columbia Valley and Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Funds to 16 high-priority stewardship projects.



2020 KLLCF funded project: Landowners and Citizen Scientists as Allies in Local Bat Conservation: Direct Action Preparing for White-Nose Syndrome - Wildlife Conservation Society Canada



2020 KLLCF funded project: North Kootenay Lake Water Monitoring Project - Kootenay Center for Forestry Alternatives



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. Given the restrictions of the pandemic, we delivered a hybrid approach in 2020 with a Virtual Fall Gathering and AGM followed the next day by four localized field tours that allowed participants to maintain physical distancing while still exploring a field site, sharing knowledge, and meeting face-to-face.

Over 50 individuals from 38 organizations registered for the 2020 Fall Gathering on the theme of “Conservation in a Time of Uncertainty: Adapting to Challenges”. Speakers included Duncan Whittick with the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network, Ian Parfitt with the Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre, Casey McCormack with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and



*2020 Fall Gathering Field Tour Columbia Valley - Galena Creek.
Pat Morrow Photo*



*2020 Fall Gathering Field Tour Elk Valley - Morrissey Meadows.
Kendal Benesh Photo*



Greg Utzig with Kutenai Nature Investigations Ltd. The four localized field tours included the Fish/Bear Lake toad project and wildlife corridor along Highway 31A between Kaslo and New Denver, Yaqan Nukiy wetland restoration with the Lower Kootenay Band in the Creston Valley, a visit to the recently acquired Morrissey Meadows property with Nature Conservancy of Canada in the Elk Valley, and an exploration of Galena Creek with the Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners and Shuswap Indian Band in the Columbia Valley.



2020 Fall Gathering Field Tour Slocan Valley - Fish/Bear Lake. Marcy Mahr Photo



2020 Fall Gathering Field Tour Creston Valley - Yaqan Nukiy Wetlands. Norm Allard Photo



Columbia Wetlands, Larry Halverson Photo

NETWORK NEWS

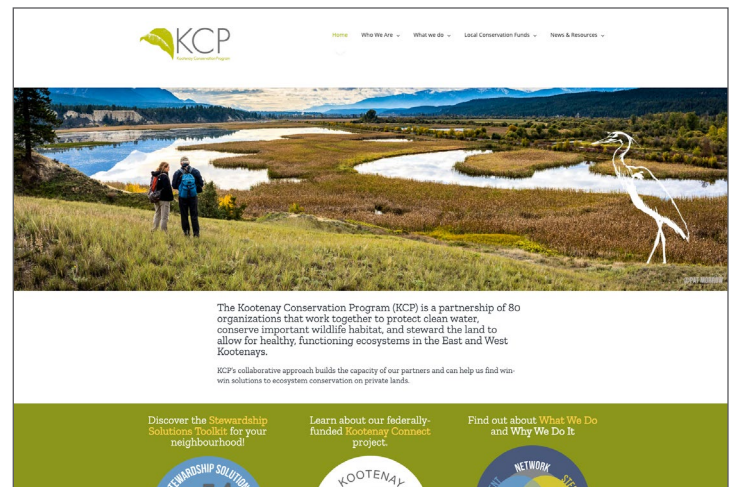
In June 2020, we launched a new and enhanced website that has seen over 8,600 new users looking for information about KCP initiatives and activities and the KCP network in general.

Throughout the year we distributed our monthly newsletter. Our eNews mailing list continues to grow and is now distributed to over 1,060 recipients across the region.

In addition to conservation-related news, events and opportunities for the Kootenay region, our eNews also showcases a monthly Faces & Places feature that offers the opportunity for KCP Partners to highlight their current projects and innovations. Always popular, Faces & Places is made available on our website and Facebook page as well as in local news outlets that receive it as a KCP media release.

The KCP Facebook page, which has grown to over 620 followers (a 43% increase in the last year), who regularly share posts, is an effective channel for promoting KCP Partners' events and initiatives to a Kootenay-wide online audience. In our 2020-21 year, 200 posts were made on the page with up to 2,000 people reached with the most popular posts.

The KCP YouTube channel engagement has also grown considerably, with 4,400 views this year compared to 999 views the year before.



The home page of the new KCP website.



1,060 Newsletter
Subscribers



620 Facebook
Followers



4,400 Channel
Views





CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

The KCP awarded the annual Conservation Leadership Award as part of our Virtual Fall Gathering. This award showcases some of the outstanding work being done in conservation in our region. The recipients of the 2020 Conservation Leadership Award were Marlene Machmer with Pandion Ecological Research Ltd. for the West Kootenay, and Penny Ohanjanian, formerly with the Northern Leopard Frog re-introduction program as part of the province's NLF Recovery Team, for the East Kootenay.

Marlene Machmer has been an outstanding leader in conservation in the Kootenays for decades. She has passionately led many initiatives including a reptiles at risk project, a reptile sanctuary in Warfield, heron rookery and osprey reporting and conservation with private landowners, and Yellow-breasted chat conservation to name a few. Her conservation fingerprints are present throughout the Kootenays, including many management plans for parks and conservation properties; land remediation and conservation plans for highly impacted industrial lands; wildlife interpretations for the new Kootenay-Boundary ecosystem field guide; local inventory and stewardship projects on several listed species (e.g., Great Blue Herons, Yellow-breasted chats, North American racers), and road kill mortality. Her long-term Great Blue Heron monitoring and stewardship project has engaged private landowners, naturalist clubs, and others in identifying and protecting important heron rookeries.



For the West Kootenays, the 2020 recipient was Marlene Machmer, with Pandion Ecological Research Ltd., who received a framed photograph of a Steller's jay by Jakob Dulisse.



Corn Creek Marsh, KCP File Photo

Penny Ohanjanian has made significant contributions to our understanding of species at risk in the Kootenays throughout her career. She initiated and completed much of the early work on Northern Leopard frogs, and with Doug Adama discovered the remaining population in the Creston Valley. Since that time, she has worked for the last 20+ years on this species, at the Upper Kootenay and Brisco re-introduction sites. Penny's work on the distribution of Long-billed curlews led to the Skookumchuck Prairie IBA designation, one of two IBAs in the Kootenays. She also completed much of the early inventory work on Coeur d'Alene Salamanders. She has completed a number of research and inventory projects on a range of other species, including Western Screech-Owls, Flammulated owls, Williamson's Sapsucker, Grebes, and invertebrates. Penny has also conducted inventory and assessments of important or threatened habitats in the East Kootenay, such as upland and dryland wetlands, and grasslands.



For the East Kootenay, the 2020 honours went to Penny Ohanjanian, who received a framed Pat Morrow photograph of the Brisco Wetlands, where she worked tirelessly on the Northern Leopard Frog re-introduction program as part of the province's NLF Recovery Team.



Testimonials

"KCP staff are top notch as are the materials and events. The monthly e-newsletter is very helpful (there are several similar ones now, but KCP was the first and is still the best!)."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"KCP is doing a considerable amount of very positive conservation work in the Kootenays."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"Kootenay Connect is a fantastic collaboration that brings together a number of partners for a common purpose."

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"The KCP Contractors/Staff and Board work well together. It seems to be a strong team that has built a lot of conservation momentum - great work, keep in up!"

KCP Partner Survey Participant

"You are all doing a really great job! Keep up the good work:) It's amazing, all that you do. Thank you."

KCP Partner Survey Participant



Darkwoods, Bruce Kirkby Photo



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