

# **Kootenay Connect Fairmont Keystone Corridor Project Report**

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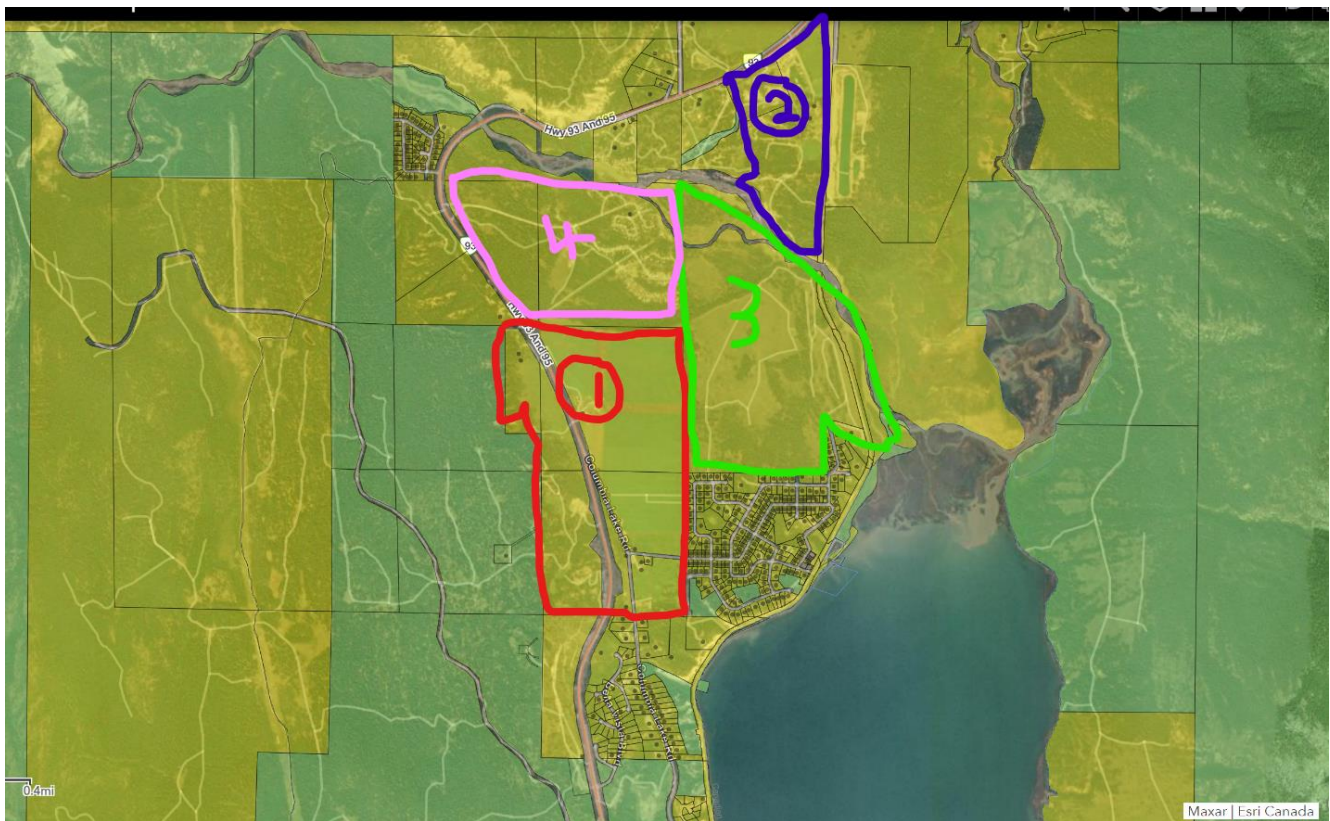
**on behalf of the Windermere District Farmers Institute**

## Background

The project targets the Fairmont Keystone Corridor shown in map below. This corridor has been identified as a critical corridor for ecological connectivity between the Purcell and Rocky Mountains. The goal of this project for Kootenay Connect is to retain the critical connectivity in this wildlife corridor at the north end of Columbia Lake and to improve the health of the grassland and riparian habitats for the benefit of the many species that depend on them. This goal will be accomplished by contracting the farmers who manage the land to improve habitat quality and thereby its connectivity through relevant stewardship projects.

### Year 1 Targeted Parcel

Parcel number three on the map below was targeted for the first year of the project.



Ownership of properties shown on the map:

1. Columbia Lake Ranch
2. Downey Farm
3. Haynes (managed by Columbia Lake Ranch)

While most of the stewardship work funded by Kootenay Connect Priority Places (ECCC) will occur on properties #1 and #3, it is important to note that the Farmland Advantage program has identified the entire agricultural area as important for stewardship that will benefit wildlife habitat and reduce the risk of fire. As a complementary project, Farmland Advantage is also working with

landowners on properties #2 and #3 to improve the health of the riparian and grassland habitats along the property boundary.

This year's work included the following steps:

1. Planning and preparation was completed
  - a. Reviewed maps and discussed strategy with Kootenay Connect
  - b. Contacted owners and managers to discuss options and determine interest
  - c. Worked on contracting with Columbia Wetland Stewardship Partners
  - d. Created initial draft budget
  - e. Connected with partners to start to explore synergies
2. Assessed the Site and Prescribed practices
  - a. Contacted farmers to get approval to assess site
  - b. Completed site assessment and prescription
3. Contracting Farmer to Complete and Maintain Sitework
  - a. Creating a contract to complete and maintain the prescribed works for the duration of the project.
4. Farmer Completed the Work
  - a. Including fencing, weed control, and grazing management
5. Verified Contract Compliance
  - a. Visited the site to ensure contract compliance and measure progress
6. Completed progress report

## Results

### Year 1 (2024) on Haynes property

1. 65 ha of land assessed for health and treatment prescription
2. 65 ha of land fenced
3. 65 ha of land will be grazed strategically for habitat health
4. Over 5 ha of noxious weeds sprayed
5. 2450 m of fence installed

## Photos

The following photos illustrate management activities on the Haynes ranch lands in 2024.

### 1. Grassland Polygon Assessment Plot on the site.



2. Photo from the forested portion of the property. This pre-treatment photo shows the need for thinning and limbing work in this polygon.



**3. Example of Knapweed infestation that was treated this year.**



4. a) Example of Burdock on site; b) Burdock that was pulled after spraying and burned to avoid further spread.

a



b



**5. Newly installed fence on Haynes property.**

