Environment and Climate Change Canada
Canada Nature Fund: Community-Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk

Kootenay Connect: Wycliffe Focal Area

7WC Invasives
7WC Fencing
7WC Maintenance & Monitoring

March 12, 2026, Final Report

Photo: Graham Osborne

Kootenay Connect is a project facilitated by the Kootenay Conservation Program

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Photos Courtesy of:

NTBC, RMTNRS, EKISC, Mountain View Resources & Graham Osborne

Maps Courtesy of:

EKISC

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1. BACKGROUND – WYCLIFFE CONSERVATION PROPERTY COMPLEX AND PROJECT:

The Wycliffe Conservation Area Complex (the "Complex) is located just south of Kimberley, BC, and is comprised of twenty-three parcels totaling more than 1,400 hectares (3,459 acres). The complex includes parcels secured by The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC), the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), and the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (MWLRS or The Province), together known as the "Conservation Partners" or "Partners". Figure 1 shows the land management theme.

The Complex is ecologically significant with a diversity of habitats that support several species at risk, while also functioning as an important wildlife corridor. The size and configuration of the Complex, located between the two largest communities in the East Kootenay, heightens its importance to regional conservation efforts.

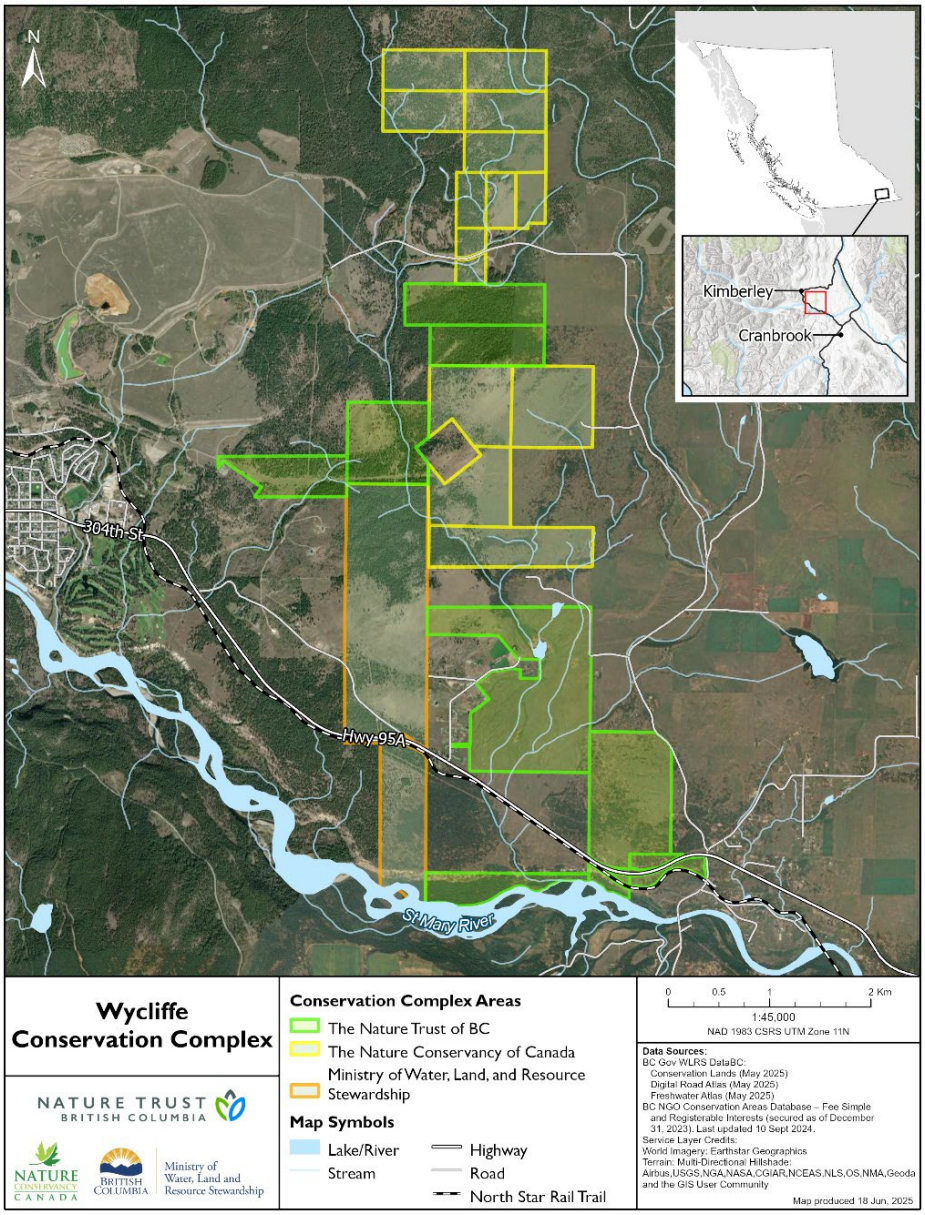

Figure 1: Wycliffe Conservation Complex – Conservation Context Map

In 2018-19, the Conservation Partners began working to secure funding for a large-scale, multi-year project to maintain, enhance and restore ecological conditions across the Complex. External funding would be necessary to support the Partners vision since internal funding amongst the organizations was limited. Fortunately, the Partners were successful in a grant application to the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) - Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP) for $600,000 to jumpstart the project. However, this funding came with matching fund requirements and thus, the Partners still needed significant external funds for implementation to begin.

Fortunately, in 2019 the Kootenay Conservation Program - Kootenay Connect proposal to Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canada Nature Fund for Community Nominated Priority Places for Species-at-Risk was successful. As one of the focal areas within the proposal, the Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex received significant funding to serve as the requisite CBT match. This allowed the Partners to begin work on a multi-year project. The funding provided through the Kootenay Connect initiative was initially available for four years. However, in 2022-23, the Federal Government confirmed it would extend funding to Kootenay Connect for an additional three years. This final report summarizes activities completed within the Complex during the seventh and final year of the project.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BACKGROUND – YEARS 1 - 6:

In previous reports, a summary of annual activities preceding the relevant reporting year was included in this section. This information has not been included in 2025/26 reporting for brevity. Please refer to Kootenay Connect Years 1-6 final reports from NTBC (and NCC) which present annual project accomplishments since 2019.

3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION – YEAR 7:

Year 7 of the project (fiscal 2025-26) marked the final year of effort at the Complex, guided by a work plan comprised of several sub-projects. With another busy year on the books, the Conservation Partners again needed a project manager to assist with procurement, contract development, coordination and supervision. Marc Trudeau, Executive Director with the Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society (RMTNRS) was hired in April 2025 to serve in this role. This contract was funded entirely by CBT. Marc's time on the project was minimal compared to previous involvement, focusing solely on forest thinning and fencing sub-projects. The Partners managed the other sub-projects, while also leading administrative functions like financial tracking, organizing meetings and reporting.

The Partners hired the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council (EKISC) and its subcontractor (Mountainview Resources Ltd.), to implement invasive plant management across the Complex in 2025. This work was again guided by the Wycliffe Conservation Complex Invasive Species Management Plan (EKISC, 2020). Work included chemical treatment, treatment monitoring, long-term effectiveness plot monitoring, InvasivesBC data entry and reporting. Invasive plant management efforts during the 2025 field season were primarily funded by CBT EEP with Kootenay Connect providing a sizable contribution and a small contribution coming from MWLRS.

Fencing projects on the Complex were much smaller and scope than in recent years. During the 2025 field season, NTBC administered just one contract with a local fencing specialist (Darkside Fencing Ltd.) for a wildlife-friendly fence replacement project on NTBC managed land. In addition, MWLRS and the project manager disposed of fence materials located on provincial conservation land as a much smaller, second initiative under this sub-project.

Fence project work was primarily funded by internal NTBC sources, with a sizeable contribution coming from Kootenay Connect and a smaller contribution from CBT EEP. The fence replacement required significant staff labour contributions from NTBC.

Also in 2025, NTBC assumed the lead for the monitoring and maintenance sub-project and issued two separate contracts. Bootleg Contracting Ltd. was hired to complete fence assessments and repairs, focusing on segments that were not visited in 2024, while also completing a significant repair that was identified the previous year. Meanwhile, Momentum Mountain Solutions was hired to review and update the Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex – Effectiveness Monitoring and Maintenance Plan (2021). This work was funded by CBT, Kootenay Connect and NCC who hired a consultant to revisit a range monitoring assessment for its Luke Creek Wildlife Corridor.

All other sub-projects implemented in 2025/26 were led by NCC and included forest-thinning and recreation management, being reported out separately by NCC.

As we close out this multi-year project, we look forward to sharing the progress made over the past twelve months.

4. 7WC - INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT DESCRIPTION & HIGHLIGHTS:

While NTBC was responsible for administering invasive plant management, it communicated with the Partners throughout the sub-project. Invasive plant control efforts occurred across all three Partner jurisdictions for the sixth year in a row.

In spring 2025, the Conservation Partners invited the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council to submit a proposal and costing. A non-profit society, EKISC seeks to prevent and reduce the spread of invasive species in the region by connecting a broad range of partners and stakeholders to undertake management actions and communicate knowledge.

Because it developed the Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) in 2020 and has led on-the-ground management efforts since, EKISC was the obvious choice to serve as the contractor again in 2025. On June 12th, EKISC submitted a detailed proposal with costing. The proposal incorporated InvasivesBC data, ISMP recommendations and field experience from the last five treatment years into a logical approach.

Over several weeks, EKISC and NTBC corresponded and made minor revisions to the budget and work plan. A contract between the parties was finally executed on July 30th, which was later than expected due to the seasonal demands and constraints that NTBC staff were experiencing.

Treatments started in mid-August and continued throughout the summer and autumn months until mid-October, while data entry and report writing occurred over the winter months. A draft report was submitted to NTBC on January 26, 2026, which was reviewed by the Conservation Partners. Following some minor revisions, a final report and all deliverables were shared with the Partners on February 13th.

A total footprint of 13.81 hectares was completed during the 2025 field season, short of the 20-25ha objective listed in its Kootenay Connect contribution agreement. This can be attributed to more precise and focused efforts within ecosystem restoration polygons, which often involved work in rougher and more complex terrain with relatively low invasive plant densities.

It is important to emphasize that all invasive fieldwork associated with this sub-project was dedicated to invasive plants, as they are the primary alien threat to conservation values on the Complex. Invasive species, more broadly, receive attention in the ISMP and continue to be monitored for. However, they are not a current, known threat.

The following provides a summary of the results of this sub-project. EKISC's final report (Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex Invasive Plant Management Report 2025) was the source for most of the following information.

Inventory:

- Inventory was not a focus in 2025, primarily because a comprehensive effort was completed on the Complex at the time of the ISMP development in 2020.
- However, the subcontractor engaged in limited inventories during treatments, capturing new or previously unrecorded infestations on an opportunistic basis, which was then entered into the InvasivesBC database by EKISC staff and used to inform future treatments.

Treatment Background:

- Treatments were informed by a comprehensive inventory completed across the Complex in 2020 that was incorporated into the ISMP. The 2025 treatment plan considered the ISMP, InvasivesBC data from 2021-24, local knowledge of the EKISC sub-contractor, and any new infestations discovered in 2025.
- Treatments were implemented by long-time EKISC sub-contractor Mountainview Resources Ltd., who has led treatments on the Complex since 2020.
- Almost all treatments were chemical in nature and were implemented using an all-terrain vehicle equipped with a boomless nozzle and a hose reel that provides versatility in application (Photo 1).
- All chemical treatments utilized Clearview, a Class 2 & 4 Herbicide manufactured by Corteva Agriscience and approved for use in Canada by the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (Health Canada).
- Clearview is a selective herbicide for post-emergent control of annual and perennial broadleaf weeds, invasive plants and shrubs on rangeland, permanent pasture, rights-of way, industrial and other non-crop areas of Canada. The herbicide is packaged as wettable granules containing Aminopyralid, present as potassium salt (52.5%) and Metsulfuron – methyl (9.45%). The herbicide has low mobility, meaning it can be used up to the drip line of trees, isn't metabolized by livestock or wildlife, but has some soil persistence.

Photo 1: Boomless nozzle treatments via ATV were the primary treatment method across the Complex as pictured, Sept. 2025

Photo 2: In the distance, a striking visual example of a treated area on the left, with untreated Sulfur cinquefoil on the right, Sept 2025

Treatment Priorities:

- For the EKISC contract, chemical treatments were guided by three different priorities, described below:

  Priority 1 (P1):
  The top priorities for treatment targeted vectors of spread, while also pre-treating areas that will experience disturbance in the future (forest thinning activities). Specifically, Priority 1 work included:

i) Treating vectors of spread (roadways, high use recreation areas, trails, parking areas/trailheads, etc.) for low distribution species including Common Tansy, Diffuse Knapweed, St. John's Wort, Common Burdock, Orange Hawkweed, Blueweed, and Spotted Knapweed.
ii) Treating all occurrences of other low to medium distribution, but low priority species such as Hounds Tongue, Dalmatian Toadflax, Oxeye Daisy, and Canada Thistle advantageously (i.e., when nearby target species are treated) to reduce spread.
iii) In areas where Ecosystem Restoration (ER) work is planned (forest thinning), treatments focused on satellite or outlier sites of Sulphur Cinquefoil and Yellow Hawkweed adjacent to and within the Treatment Units (TUs). For the 2025 treatment season, this included from highest to lowest priority, as resources permitted: NCC Luke Creek Wildlife Corridor (TU4 Prune, TU5 Prune, TU1 Slash & Prune, TU02-1 Slash & Prune) and NTBC Wildlife Corridor (TU4 Slash and Prune).

Priority 2 (P2):

Priority 2 treatments used a land base calculation where approximately 43% of time/cost was allocated to NCC, 32% was allocated to NTBC and 24% was allocated to MWLRS. Specifically, Priority 2 work included:

i) Treating all infestations of Yellow Hawkweed and Sulfur Cinquefoil within the containment lines in NCC's Luke Creek ER units, MWLRS ER units, and NTBC's ER units, which were thinned between 2021-25, thus reducing further spread.

Priority 3 (P3):

Following the completion of Priority 1 and 2 treatment, Priority 3 work was allocated using a land base calculation (as above). Specifically, Priority 3 work included:

i) Treating satellite or outlier sites all infestations of Yellow Hawkweed and Sulfur Cinquefoil within the containment lines in NCC's Luke Creek ER units, MWLRS ER units, and NTBC's ER units, which were thinning between 2021-25, thus reducing further spread.
ii) Treating areas adjacent to private lands where active control of high distribution species such as Sulfur Cinquefoil and Yellow Hawkweed was taking place, using a "good neighbour" approach.
ii) A gridded broadcast treatment of the NTBC Trap and Skeet club lease area.

Treatment Results:

- Treatments took place over fourteen days between August 16 and October 17, 2025.
- The sub-contractor spent 6.6 days on Priority 1 treatments, 4.6 days on Priority 2 treatments and 3 days on Priority 3 treatments.
- A total of 13.81 hectares of chemical treatment occurred across the Complex in 2025. This represents the second smallest treatment footprint to date, which occurred at 33 different treatment points, none of which were new treatments.
- The total area-based treatment can be broken down as follows: MWLRS conservation areas (2.50 ha), NCC conservation areas (8.18 ha), and NTBC conservation areas (3.13 ha).
- In total, 12.626 kilograms of undiluted Clearview herbicide was applied.
- The primary invasive species controlled, in no order, included: Spotted knapweed, Blueweed, Dalmatian toadflax, Sulfur cinquefoil, Canada thistle and Yellow Hawkweed.

- Just one mechanical treatment was completed in 2025. Spotted knapweed was hand pulled on the NTBC Trap and Skeet Parcel in proximity to the domestic well located near the clubhouse.
- All treatment data was recorded in InvasivesBC, the new provincial geo-database for invasive species in BC.
- Limited photos were taken during treatments, some showing the results/success of treatments from previous and current years (Photos 2, 3 & 4).
- Treatment maps, based on GPS tracking were developed and included in the EKISC final report (see Figure 2 below as an example).

Photo 3: Spotted knapweed in foreground showing herbicide kill, note the 'invasive flagging' hanging above for ease of field reference, Oct. 2025

Photo 4: Note parallel sets of tire tracks along the distribution line as a result of ATV treatments, with 'invasive flagging' shown, Oct. 2025

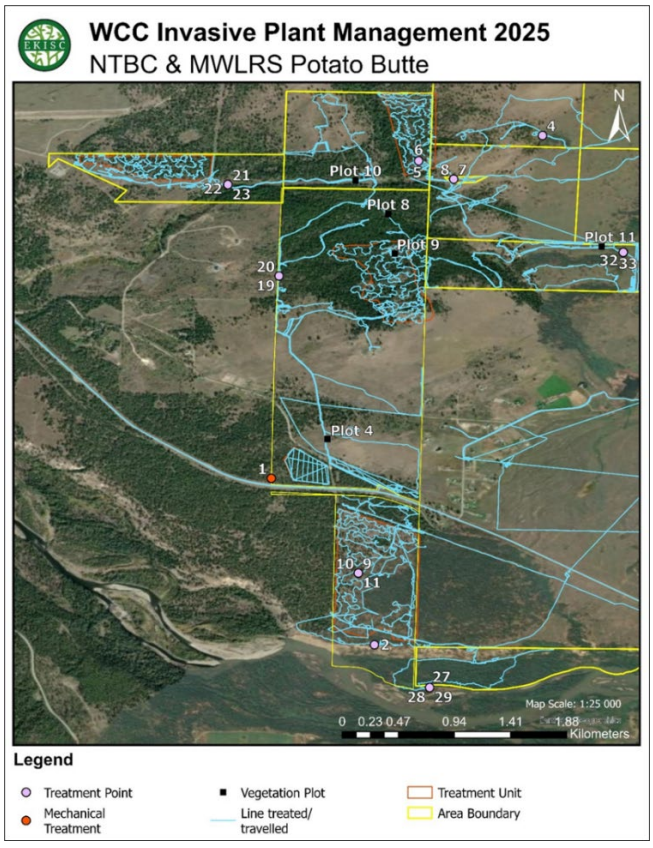

Figure 2: Example of GPS'd treatments across a portion of the Complex in 2025, note the concentration of work in the areas where forest thinning has taken previously taken place

Treatment Monitoring Results:

- The contract with EKISC stipulated that a minimum of 10% of treatments be monitored for efficacy and site completion following treatment.
- EKISC staff undertook monitoring activities on October 2, 2025, at 4 of 33 treatment points, representing a 12% capture, exceeding the contract requirement. Two of the monitored sites were in NCC conservation areas and two were located on MWLRS conservation areas. Follow-up monitoring is planned for spring 2026 and will be expanded to include NTBC parcels within the Complex.
- EKISC monitors did not identify any performance issues, with all treatment points receiving passing scores. On average, the sub-contractor achieved 10 out of 10 for site completion and 9.7 out of 10 for efficacy.
- Common Tansy, previously located in very limited density and distribution on the Complex, was not found again in 2025 for the third consecutive year and is likely to have been eradicated.

Photo 5: EKISC staff monitoring Plot 6, notice plot centre with flagging and a spike nail, July 2025

Photo 6: EKISC staff monitoring 1 of 11 long-term effectiveness plots across the Complex, July 2025

Long-term Effectiveness (Vegetation Plot) Monitoring in 2025:

- The Partners are committed to long-term effectiveness monitoring of chemical treatments and in concert with EKISC, established 11 long-term effectiveness monitoring plots across the Complex in 2020.
- A modified protocol of the Province's Ecosystem Restoration Program Routine Monitoring Protocols for Understory Cover Sampling has been utilized for these plots.
- After getting baseline data in 2020, plots were monitored for the first time following treatments in June 2021 and each year after. In 2025, the plots were visited by EKISC staff on July 2 & 3 (Photos 5 & 6).
- In 2025, plot data found that sulphur cinquefoil and cheatgrass continued to be the most detected invasive species, consistent with trends observed throughout the project and the original inventory in 2020.
- Compared to 2024 plot results, 5 plots saw a decrease in percent of invasive plant cover, ranging from 1.2% to 15.8%; four stayed the same at no or very low amounts, ranging from 0 to 0.6%, and two saw modest increases ranging from 0.6 to 0.8%. This reflects an overall trend of reduction since 2020 (Figure 3).

Project Result Summary from all years (2020-2025):

- For the full roll-up of treatment and monitoring results, please refer to both the Wycliffe Conservation Complex Invasive Plant Management Report (EKISC, 2025) and the Kootenay Connect Cumulative Report (NTBC, 2026).
- It's important to note that changes to data management systems over the course of the project affected how treatment metrics were quantified and compared. In 2023, the switch from IAPP to InvasivesBC database for

provincial invasive species records meant that spatial data was represented differently and direct, year-over-year comparisons were not possible, unfortunately.

- Treatments (primarily chemical) were implemented on the Complex between 2020 and 2025 and ranged in footprint from 8.550 hectares up to 33.750 hectares, having a total treatment area of 143.026 hectares, of which 63.59ha were new treatments (i.e. were not re-treatments of previous infestations). The number of sites (infestations) treated annually varied between 18 and 60.
- A total of nine invasive species were treated during the project, one of which appears to have been eradicated.
- Broadly speaking, when considering conditions across the Complex as well as the long-term effectiveness monitoring plots, the results show a progression from higher treatment effort on new infestations in the early years towards more targeted maintenance and suppression treatments in the later years.
- A general reduction in invasive species distribution relative to baseline conditions has occurred. Several species initially classified as high or medium were reduced to medium or low levels, and no species demonstrated a sustained increase beyond baseline conditions. Sulphur cinquefoil was the only recorded species with consistently high levels. Although cheatgrass has not been recorded in contractor data, its rapid expansion across the Complex since 2020 is concerning and will be difficult to control until the federal government approves a specific herbicide for this invasive grass.
- EKISC and the Partners believe that invasive plant treatment work over the years has successfully met the objectives of Wycliffe Management Plan (Masse, 2020) and the ISMP (EKISC, 2021) by preventing the spread of invasive plants relative to baseline levels. However, this work will continue in perpetuity, with monitoring and adaptive management along with sufficient resources being critical to continued progress.

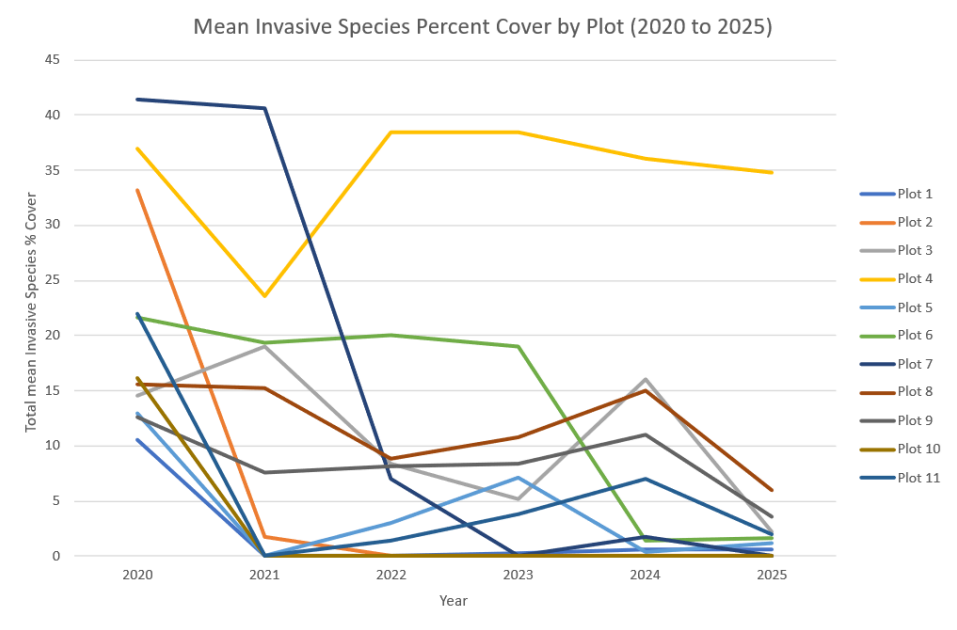

Figure 3: Total mean invasive species percent cover at monitoring plots within the Wycliffe Conservation Complex 2020-2025 (EKISC)

Data Entry (InvasivesBC):

- The contract stipulated that all treatment and inventory data had to be submitted into InvasivesBC by November 15, 2025, as required by the province.
- This was deliverable was met as EKSIC shared InvasivesBC data extracts with NTBC, including chemical and mechanical treatments.

Biocontrol:

- EKISC submits requests to the province annually for biocontrol (which is the only agency permitted to collect and distribute biocontrol in BC).
- The use of biocontrol at the Complex would add another important pest management tool in the toolbox. However, EKISC has not received any biocontrol agents for several years. It recently received guidance that it would be a preferred practice if the Ministry of Water, Lands, and Resource Stewardship requests (and receives) biocontrol for release at project sites. This represents a change from past and should be considered for 2026.

Final Report:

- EKISC delivered a final report summarizing all project activities completed under the contract. The report included treatment metrics and maps, tables and monitoring results. It also included a section that provided results and analysis for the past six years. Other deliverables included: spatial data, long-term effectiveness plot data, photos and videos, and InvasivesBC treatment and inventory extracts.
- Recommendations included in the final report will be utilized for 2026 work planning.

5. 7WC - FENCING PROJECT DESCRIPTION & HIGHLIGHTS:

The twenty-three parcels that make up the Wycliffe Conservation Complex interface with many private and Crown parcels. Given the ecological values of the Complex, particularly species-at-risk habitat vulnerability, it's important that conservation areas managed by NCC, NTBC, and MWLRS have fenced boundaries that are demarcated to control access and use. Unmanaged livestock grazing and motorized vehicle trespass have historically threatened conservation values but can be mitigated by well-designed, constructed and maintained fences.

In 2025, there were just two fence projects implemented across the Complex, representing a much smaller scope of work than in previous years. Regardless, the work succeeded in replacing an old and non-functional fence with a new wildlife-friendly design plus, the removal of derelict fence materials from several locations.

Fence Assessment and Plan:

The need to survey existing fencelines and determine fencing priorities was identified in 2018 by the Conservation Partners, before this multi-year project was funded. This need was later corroborated by consultants who developed the Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex Management Plan (2021), where they identified the need to develop a 'Property Complex Fencing Plan'.

In 2021, the Conservation Partners began to address this need by developing a fence assessment tool. Next, field documentation of all fence segments was completed using a spatial data software app for mobile devices (ESRI Field Maps). A total of 103 fencelines were sorted by score into four priority categories for management consideration (*Very High, High, Moderate,* and *Low*). The higher the score, the higher the priority a fence segment was to address. Initially, there were many *Very High* and *High* priority fence needs. This resulted in some difficult choices over the first 2-3 years of the project. In some cases, lower priority projects (Moderate and Low) were selected for ease of access and due to budget constraints.

Procurement

Typically, fencing contracts have been competitively sourced at the Complex over the past four years. In 2025, only one project required a contractor and NTBC made the decision to direct award the work on its conservation area. This decision

was made after the project manager met on-site with the preferred contractor in late July and obtained a quotation. After some careful consideration, NTBC and the project manager issued a contract to Darkside Fencing Ltd., based on previous and positive work experiences and because the value-for-quality is nearly unmatched in the local marketplace.

The second project was completed 'in-house' by WLRS staff and the project manager and did not require outside assistance.

Fence Specifications & Design (Wildlife-Friendly):

Scientific literature and real-world observations confirm that fences can act as a deterrent, even a barrier, to wildlife movement across the landscape. Because the Wycliffe Conservation Complex is a regionally significant wildlife connectivity corridor, fence design and build specifications must consider this. Early on, the Partners made the decision that all fences would be designed to be 'wildlife friendly', using a combination of the MWLRS Four Strand Barbed Wire Fence Specifications and specifications from the Alberta Conservation Association, plus additional modifications. Several years of trail camera deployment across the Complex and other anecdotal observations demonstrate that these design/builds allow for wildlife movement (Photo 7). For 2025, the wildlife friendly design/build considerations utilized the following:

- Only four-strand range fence builds were completed to increase wildlife permeability.
- Barbless-barbed wire was used for all four strands. This is just the second time this product has been used for a fencing project at the Complex. It's strong and durable, does not cut wildlife passing over/thru/under, and is easier and more efficient for a contractor to install.
- For range fence builds, the maximum top strand wire height was 40", with the bottom strand being hung 18" from ground (Photo 8). This helps to increase wildlife passage over the fence, and for young-of-the-year to pass under.
- Range fences utilized droppers to improve fence rigidity, while also reducing entanglement risk by increasing fenceline visibility to ungulates and other wildlife.

Photo 7: A trail camera captured several crossings of the fence by deer and elk as pictured, Dec 2025

Photo 8: Four-strand barbless barb wire shown on the replacement fence, Nov. 2024

Legal Surveys, Utility Locates, Permissions & Access Agreements:

Fence replacement and construction is a considerable expense, and diligence ensures the infrastructure is not located in trespass. For the replacement fence project, a legal survey paid for by NTBC in 2020 still had survey lathe intact along the legal boundary. Thus, the fence contractor was able to legally situate the fence, which often deviated several feet from the original fence which had been in partial trespass.

As further due diligence, a BC 1 Call report was generated for the proposed fenceline by the project manager. There was little chance of a buried electrical utility, which was confirmed by the BC Hydro-generated report. However, with a FortisBC natural gas pipeline crossing under the fence at one location and a service farm tap running adjacent to the fenceline for

several hundred metres in another, it complicated matters considerably. As a result, NTBC applied for an authorization from the utility in early August. A pre-work site visit with local FortisBC staff was arranged on September 22nd and after months of waiting, FortisBC staff arrived on site on November 12th ready to assist. At this time, the exact locations of the main pipeline and service pipe were located, and old fence posts were safely removed and new ones installed by the contractor - all under the watchful guidance of FortisBC (Photo 9).

In the past, one of the main logistical challenges to fencing projects has been accessing project locations within the Complex. Fortunately, in 2025, this was not an issue. NTBC and the project manager met with two adjacent landowners in the spring to inform them of the planned replacement, to get feedback on the planned project and to request access permission. The provision of access through neighbouring private land created obvious efficiencies. One of the landowners even went a step further and removed some decrepit fencing before the contractor was able to mobilize on-site. This same landowner also purchased and provided a gate, which offers another access onto the Complex in case of emergency like wildfire response (Photo 10). This was a great example of early communication leading to a positive project outcome with rural neighbours.

Photo 9: FortisBC overseeing post removal and installation alongside its main pipeline and farm tap junction, Nov. 2025

Photo 10: A gate being installed to provide access to the Complex through neighboring, private land, Nov. 2025

Fence Project Results & Discussion:

Fence projects took place between September and December 2025 and were led by an experienced, local fence contractor with previous work experience on the Complex plus, an 'in-house' crew of MWLRS staff and the project manager. The contractor employed a small crew of 2 workers. Because of a busy fencing season and an extended and mild autumn, it meant that work on the larger project did not begin until the second week of November and was completed by the beginning of December, under ideal conditions. Meanwhile, the removal of old fence materials on MWLRS conservation land was done in one September day, after the wildfire risk had diminished.

Despite a much smaller scope of fencing projects in 2025, the Partners were able to realize the goal listed in the Kootenay Connect contribution agreement and addressed over 1,000 linear metres of fence projects. The partners were also successful in meeting the goal of benefitting 292 hectares of habitat through completion of these fencing projects, though all were previously counted hectares from other reporting periods.

In total, approximately 1,020 metres of fence was addressed in 2025, through two separate jobs. This included 1,020 metres of fence removal and replacement along with the point removal of old fencing materials.

Over the course of the multi-year project, there was impressive progress made with respect to fencing related work across the Complex. This included:

- The development of a tool and assessment of 103 fence segments across the Complex that resulted in the development of a Property Complex Fencing Plan used to help prioritize projects during the project lifetime.
- Over the course of the project the following was accomplished: i) 10,984m of derelict/unneeded fences were removed from the landscape; ii) 2,968m of fences were repaired; iii) 4,034m of fence was installed where one hadn't been located before; iv) 9,095m of fence was replaced and rebuilt.
- In total, 27,081m of fence projects were addressed at the Complex over five years, ensuring 792 hectares of ecologically rich habitats are identified and protected from livestock and motor vehicle trespass well into the future.
- With the exception of some repairs, all fence projects utilized wildlife-friendly design and build specifications.
- Note: metrics above do not include the monitoring and maintenance work completed in 2024 or in 2025, as described in the next section

The following section provides a detailed summary of fencing projects completed in 2025, including the use of images and a map (Figure 5) to provide a visual representation of the work across the Complex.

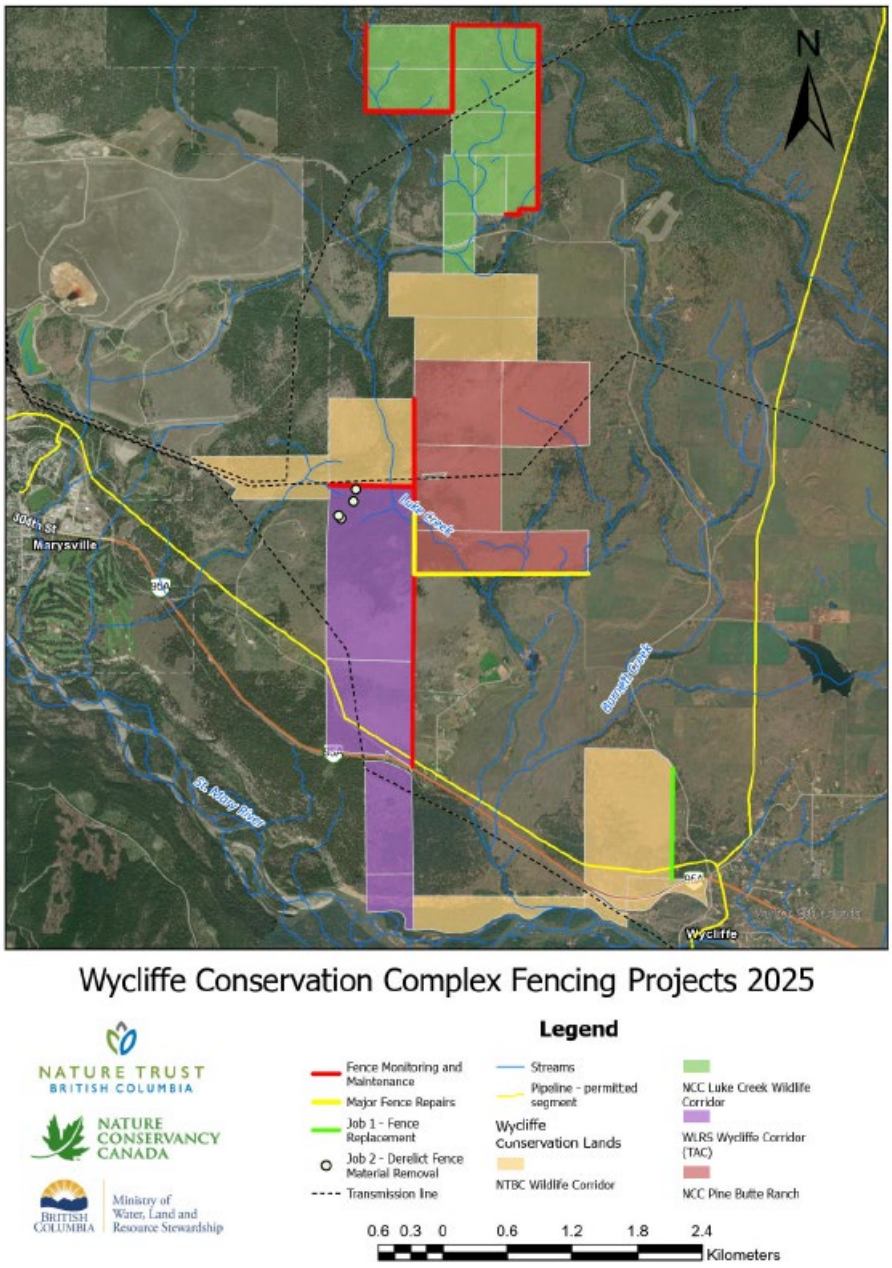

Figure 4: Wycliffe Conservation Complex Summary of Fence Projects (2025)

Project/Job 1 = NTBC (PID 016-923-979) / 2 Private Parcels – Fence Replacement

- Project was primarily funded by NTBC, which contributed about 75% of the costs while Kootenay Connect contributed about 25%, with a very minor contribution coming from CBT.
- The project required a legal survey and staking prior to construction, since the fence interfaced with two private parcels. The survey was completed in 2020 and paid for by NTBC.
- This fenceline segment in the Wycliffe Fencing Complex Plan scored as a Very High priority for action (52/80) or 10th out of 103 fence segments. While the adjacent landowners do not currently have livestock, future trespass concerns and the derelict condition of the existing fence and its hazard to humans and wildlife justified the work in 2025.

- NTBC and the project manager spent considerable time contacting and meeting with adjacent acreage owners to inform them of the project and to ensure that gate replacement and fence configurations would be amenable to them. One landowner contributed in-kind time and a gate to the project.
- The job required a permit from FortisBC since it bisected a high-pressure natural gas pipeline. The permit meant that FortisBC staff had to be on-site to pinpoint pipeline location for safe installation of fence posts.
- The purpose of the project was to replace an approximately 1,020 metre range fence to demarcate the eastern boundary of the NTBC conservation area and safeguard the values within it from potential trespass using a wildlife friendly design.
- The project was completed by Darkside Fencing Ltd. between November and December 2025 under ideal conditions, aided by a long autumn with mild and dry conditions (Photo 11).
- The fence included two steel gates (at FortisBC gasline and interfacing with adjacent landowner).
- The project included the removal and disposal of all posts and wire at the RDEK transfer station/landfill.
- Several bird boxes removed from the old fence were re-installed in the same location on the replacement fence.
- Grass seeding of soil disturbance was completed prior to snowfall, using a native grass seed blend (Photo 12).
- This project replaced boundary fencing that benefitted approximately 292 hectares of conservation area, primarily for human use/access management. This benefit area was accounted for in previous annual reports, as other Kootenay Connect fence projects have been implemented on this parcel. Photos 13 and 14 show the before and after photos for one portion of the project.

Photo 11: Darkside Fencing Ltd. installing new posts for the replacement fence, Nov. 2024

Photo 12: Project manager, Marc Trudeau seeding soil disturbance post-installation, notice minimal ground disturbance, Nov. 2024

Photo 13: Chris Bosman on NTBC on a site visit, July 2024

Photo 14: Same location after new fence construction, Nov. 2024

Project /Job 2: MWLRS (PID 016-986-024) – Internal Fence Removal

- This project was a small, low-cost initiative funded by MWLRS and CBT funding.
- The project was unranked and not included in the Wycliffe Fencing Complex Plan, as it was undiscovered until recently. During desktop planning efforts, it was originally thought to have been more involved, requiring the services of a contractor. However, through a field reconnaissance the project manager confirmed the scope of work and GPS'd all locations of derelict fence materials (Photos 15 & 16). It was determined the work could be completed in less than a day with internal resources.
- It is assumed that the public removed this derelict fencing at some point and piled the materials.
- In September, MWLRS staff and the project manager drove into the conservation area in a marked government pickup truck. They collected the materials and disposed of them at an RDEK transfer station/landfill afterward. The work was done during the autumn to coincide with low wildfire risk.

Photo 15: Barbed wire was rolled up and attached to tree limbs and stumps, as shown here, Sept. 2025

Photo 16: Fence posts were stashed in Several locations, as shown here, Sept. 2025

6. 7WC – MONITORING & MAINTENANCE - PROJECT DESCRIPTION & HIGHLIGHTS:

A final sub-project component led by NTBC in 2025/26 included monitoring and maintenance activities for work previously completed across the Complex. Initially, this was to include the capture of aerial imagery (drone) for areas of the Complex that had previous ecosystem enhancement and restoration completed. Because the Partners hadn't obtained drone imagery in 2019/20 when the project commenced, no baseline photos or videos were in existence. Reluctantly, this was removed from the workplan since it offered limited pre-and-post result comparisons. However, the other two initiatives proceeded as planned.

First, given the level of fence infrastructure completed on the Complex over the past few years, it was prudent that all fences built, replaced or repaired be inspected to ensure they are functioning as intended. This work began in 2024 when Bootleg Contracting Ltd. was hired to inspect and maintain fences addressed during the first 2-3 years of the project. In 2025, the contractor was hired again to inspect the remaining fence segments that were not targeted the year before. Working over four days (x 2 crew) during late October, the contractor also completed several major repairs identified the year before (Photo 17). In total, 15 fence segments were inspected and maintained while three additional segments had major repairs completed (windfall removed, wires spliced and tightened, etc.) (Figure 4). As part of the contract, workers collected monitoring notes on each segment (wildlife and livestock, sign, trespass, other items of note). Recommendations for future fence maintenance and repairs were also noted and included in a report: Fence Assessment/Repair: Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex that was delivered on December 18th to close out the contract. This report has been included as part of the reporting package.

The second project was a comprehensive revision of the Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex: Monitoring and Maintenance Plan (Masse, 2021)(Photo 18). Several years had passed since it was developed and the Partners were looking to update its contents with a status tracker, as well as increased clarity over measures of success and recommended monitoring protocols. The maintenance recommendations were also updated to reflect current and anticipated scenarios. This work was led by Momentum Mountain Solutions, supported by NTBC staff and was reviewed by the other partners during winter 2026. The updated plan has been included as part of the reporting package and will serve the Partners well in the coming years.

Photo 17: Fence inspection and maintenance taking place for a fence built in autumn 2024, Oct. 2025

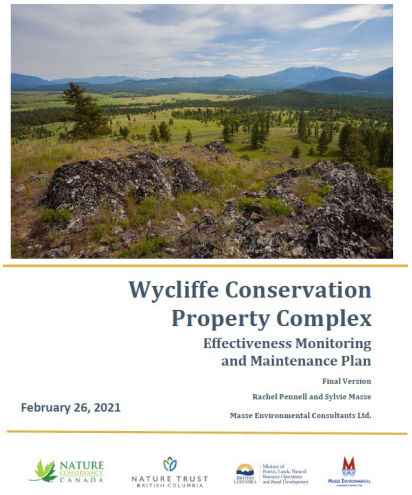

Photo 18: This original plan was revised over the winter of 2026 to provide the Partners with a contemporary document to

guide monitoring and maintenance efforts in the future

7. CONTRACT REPORTING DELIVERABLES:

This report satisfies the requirement of a Summary Report, as per NTBC's Contribution for 2025/26 Kootenay Connect funding. A separate Results Report (At-a-Glance Summary) has also been produced and shared by NTBC. Meanwhile, interim reports were submitted at the established reporting dates throughout 2025. A separate cumulative Y1-Y7 report and spreadsheet have also been completed and shared. Finally, a video report has also been created and shared.

NTBC Kootenay Connect Year 7 deliverables as laid out in Schedule A of KCFA Service Contract 2025/26–WC–NTBC-01, have been shared with Marcy Mahr using a file-sharing service. These include:

7WC Invasives:	7WC Fencing:	7WC Monitoring & Maintenance:
▪ Data extracts (InvasivesBC) ▪ Long-term effectiveness monitoring data ▪ Report from contractor (EKISC) ▪ Maps and spatial data ▪ Various project photos & videos	▪ Maps and spatial data ▪ Various project photos & videos	▪ Fence Monitoring & Maintenance Report from contractor (Bootleg Contracting Ltd.) ▪ Updated Wycliffe Conservation Complex Monitoring and Maintenance Plan – V2 (Momentum Mountain Solutions). ▪ Various project photos & videos

8. PROJECT FINANCIALS:

Documents related to project finances have been shared through an online file-sharing service also. They include:

- NTBC invoice to Kootenay Centre for Forestry Alternatives/Kootenay Connect
- NTBC in-kind and cash declaration form

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

NTBC, NCC, and MWLRS wish to thank Environment and Climate Change Canada and its Canada Nature Fund: Community Nominated Priority Places for Species at Risk for making these projects possible in 2025/26.

We were happy to share information about the project (including partners and funders), through one, large field tour conducted in 2025 as part of the Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology conference "What's the future of grasslands and rangelands in the East Kootenay". While the Partners offered fewer tours compared to 2024, we continue to love sharing the results of this multi-year effort!

The Wycliffe Conservation Complex Partners also wish to recognize the Columbia Basin Trust for providing multi-year funding through its Ecosystem Enhancement Project, which has been an important source of match funds. The Conservation Partners contributed invaluable cash and in-kind contributions again this year, as they have throughout the initiative.

Thank you to the Kootenay Centre for Forestry Alternatives for its role as the fiscal sponsor of the Kootenay Connect initiative. We also appreciate the commitment and efforts by the project manager, Marc Trudeau and all contractors who carried out work across the Complex during the 2025 field season. Finally, a very big thanks to the Kootenay Conservation

Program, particularly Michael Proctor and Marcy Mahr for their vision of Kootenay Connect! The on-the-ground results over the past six years have been impressive, both at Wycliffe and other focal areas.

We trust that this report satisfies all reporting requirements as we say goodbye to seven years of Kootenay Connect projects at the Wycliffe Conservation Property Complex – it's been an incredibly successful project, and we should all be proud of the results. If there are questions that arise from this report, please reach out.

Chris Bosman
NTBC Kootenay Conservation Land Manager
The Nature Trust of British Columbia
March 12, 2026