

# RECONNECTING FLOODPLAINS AND CULTURAL VALUES ALONG THE KOOTENAY RIVER

## YAQAN NU?KIY

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# Floodplain function and aquatic habitat connectivity along the Kootenay River



**Historic floodplain 1929**



**Current floodplain**

Floodplain has become disconnected , Loss of diversity, Reduced access to resources traditionally relied upon for sustenance and cultural uses, Loss of wetlands and wetland function which led to loss of culturally significant plants, loss of fish (aquatic desert)

# Floodplain Management Plan

- ⦿ *16,700 ha = Kootenay River Floodplain*
- ⦿ *~8,150 ha = converted to agriculture etc.*
- ⦿ *~6,917 ha = wildlife management reserves (~6,400 CVWMA & ~517 yaqan nu?kiy) which require active management*
- ⦿ *~89.6km of Dikes*
- ⦿ *~16 km undiked (all within LKB reserve land)*
- ⦿ *~6 tributary streams modified within floodplain*

# What does this mean?

- ① The historical connection of the floodplain needs to be restored to improve habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species including White sturgeon, Burbot, Kokanee, Rainbow Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Northern leopard frog, Western painted turtle and culturally important plants and waterfowl
- ① A commitment has been made by the yaqan nu?kiy to seek this balance in the floodplain and revitalize traditional social, spiritual and cultural traditions

# What has been done?

- Floodplain Management plan
- Indian Creek Restoration Project (1.5km of riparian area)
- IR2 Dike Repair, IR5 Setback Dike (54000 m<sup>2</sup> floodplain connected)
- yaqan nukiy Wetlands Project (~90 ha of wetlands Restored/Created)
- Hunting Grounds ?anaxamnamki Wetland Restoration Project ~90 ha of wetlands and Flood Plain Reconnected/Created
- Goat River South Channel Restoration (in process)
- Old Goat River Channel Reconnection (proposed)

# “What Should Be Done – Top Recommendations that Will Make a Difference”

- ⦿ Restore floodplain connectivity where possible –  
*Big Picture Approach*
  - Remove unnecessary dikes and Restore Natural Inlets and Outlets
  - Set Back Dikes
  - Repair Dikes and contribute to Holistic Valley Wide Compensation Plan
- ⦿ Restore floodplain connections and wetlands to as close to natural functioning state as possible
- ⦿ Restore tributaries in the floodplain
- ⦿ Create mutually beneficial habitat for agriculture