



2014 - 2015 Annual Report

Message from the Chair



The 2014 - 2015 year was another extremely productive one for the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP). We realized ongoing improvements in areas of governance, land stewardship and local conservation fund expansion.

Some of the specific achievements included:

- Development of a webinar series in partnership with the Columbia Basin Watershed Network.
- Successful hosting of a Fall Gathering & AGM including a field trip into NCC's Darkwoods property.
- Delivery of a small Professional Development Bursary Program to assist partner members in developing capacity through the undertaking of training activities.
- Another successful year of administration and delivery of the Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund with over \$120,000 being disbursed to 10 high impact conservation projects.
- Supporting the Regional District of Central Kootenay in establishing a new Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund within electoral areas A, D and E. The KCP will continue to work with the RDCK to ensure the successful implementation and delivery of the conservation fund .
- Completion of a KCP Stewardship Framework and initiation of Stewardship Tracking and Relationship Mapping Project.

We would like to express thanks to our ongoing and new funding partners, for without their support the KCP would not exist. Also, a note of special thanks to The Nature Trust of British Columbia for their willingness to continue as the fiscal sponsor of the KCP, another contribution critical to the ongoing and successful operation of the KCP.

We too appreciate the diversity and participation of the partners in the ongoing activities of the KCP and for the program's dedicated staff who work tirelessly to ensure that the KCP remains our 'Way of Life' Insurance for the Kootenays.

Derek Petersen

Chair, Kootenay Conservation Program



DEREK PETERSEN

Derek Petersen is the Chair of the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) Executive Committee. Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. Derek's 30 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. Derek splits his personal time between the East and West Kootenays.

Message from the Program Manager



Thank you for everything you did over the past year to help protect our land and water throughout the Columbia Basin. When I look back on the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP) accomplishments in 2014, I couldn't be more proud of how far we have all come together. All of the work celebrated in the pages that follow is only made possible thanks to passionate and dedicated people like you.

Many of you gave your time and expertise freely; some made financial donations; others campaigned hard to help establish the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund; still others helped us connect with new partners, governments, and businesses critically important to our collaborative approach to conservation.

It's safe to say that the KCP has never been stronger. In 2014, we worked very hard to help build capacity for conservation within the region. Firstly, we were successful in our endeavor to establish a local conservation fund in the rural areas around Kootenay Lake - only the second such fund in Canadian history. Secondly, we launched the KCP Bursary Program to help support the professional development needs of our partners. Thirdly, we hosted a Webinar series in partnership with the Columbia Basin Watershed Network to share new information and technology. Finally, we attracted new, and long-term, funding support to the region from Environment Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, and the Vancouver Foundation.

The challenges we face have also become more significant. In turn, we need to think bigger, act faster, work harder, adapt to change and constantly innovate to meet these challenges head on in 2015 - and beyond.

Thank-you for your continued support!

D.E. (Dave) Hillary

Program Manager, Kootenay Conservation Program



DAVE HILLARY

Dave Hillary is the Program Manager for the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP). Dave sees the KCP as the Kootenays' own conservation organization known for its focus on private lands, collaboration and getting things done for the benefit of people and nature. He oversees the KCP's securement, stewardship, and capacity building efforts, and works to develop and implement new ways to collaborate across organizations and borders. He is a champion for the idea of conservation outcomes through collaboration and was previously Chairperson of the East Kootenay Conservation Program and the Heart of the Rockies Initiative.



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, development pressures throughout the region continue, leading to significant and irrevocable loss of wildlife habitat and the loss of other natural capital including clean water, clean air, food production, timber production, and carbon storage and sequestration. Valued habitats occur throughout the East and West Kootenay, 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 East and West Kootenay that conserves and enhances these lands.

The foundation of the KCP partnership is a common approach to land conservation through coordinated securement, stewardship and capacity building efforts. We will endeavor, where possible, to use the social capital of the partnership to achieve the vision of the KCP. The partnership is strengthened when all partners operate in a collaborative spirit that includes the opportunity to:

- Increase the level of sustainable securement and stewardship on private lands as guided by the KCP Securement Committee and Stewardship Committee(s);
- Build and provide capacity (financial and technical resources) for KCP partner organizations to undertake securement and stewardship activities;
- Strengthen engagement, collaboration, communication, education and accountability within, and outside of, the partnership.



Executive Committee

Derek Petersen - Parks Canada



Derek currently coordinates the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program for Banff, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. He has a Master of Science and an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies. Derek splits his personal time between the East and West Kootenays.

Rob Neil - The Nature Trust of British Columbia



Rob is the Kootenay Conservation Land Manager for The Nature Trust of British Columbia. He brings extensive experience in the areas of Forest Ecosystems, Regional Habitat Conservation, Fisheries and Planning.

Crystal Klym - Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program



Crystal is a Professional Agriologist and Program Manager for the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program. A great lover of the outdoors, Crystal spends much of her free time exploring the beautiful West Kootenays.

Dave White - East Kootenay Wildlife Association



Dave is past president of both the East Kootenay Wildlife Association and the BC Wildlife Federation, as well as past chair of the East Kootenay Conservation Program. He is a keen angler, hunter, and back-country horseman.

Adrian Leslie - Nature Conservancy of Canada



Adrian 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.

Ken Brock - Canadian Wildlife Service



Ken is currently Head of Protected Areas and Stewardship for Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from McGill University and a Master of Environmental Studies from York University.



Securement

Over the past decade, the KCP has helped partners in their work to conserve over 250,000 hectares of land and invest \$150 million into conservation projects across the Kootenays. World-class conservation efforts include Darkwoods, the Flathead Agreement, Tembec Lands, Pine Butte Ranch, Wycliffe Wildlife Corridor, Columbia Lake Lot 48, Hoodoo-Hofert and The Big Ranch.

In 2014 - 2015, the KCP continued to coordinate communication between the land trusts in the region. The KCP featured securement tools and projects as part of its 2014 Field Tour, and at the KCP AGM & Gathering we explored the topic of Biodiversity Offsets which included a tour of NCC's Darkwoods – the largest conservation property in Canadian history.

This year, the KCP undertook seven property evaluations and updated our securement rankings accordingly.



NCC Darkwoods Field Tour



Kinbasket Narrows



During this period the KCP supported the following securement projects:

Wigwam Flats (The Nature Trust of BC): This property will contribute to the grassland, open forest and closed canopy forest on the adjacent conservation properties and surrounding Crown land. This habitat will provide excellent winter habitat for elk and mule deer and is particularly important spring lambing and breeding habitat for approximately 250 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Besides the diversity of habitat that makes the Wigwam Flats such an important area for wildlife, the natural topography provides excellent escape terrain for bighorn sheep when threatened by natural predators such as cougar and wolves.

Pine Butte South (Nature Conservancy of Canada): This property is adjacent to the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Pine Butte Ranch Conservation Area. Pine Butte Ranch is also connected to other conservation holdings totaling 1,600 acres. This property is in the Wycliffe Prairie area which has expansive native grasslands and open forests which make the property a high priority for protection.



Wigwam Flats (Photo Credit - The Nature Trust of BC)



Pine Butte South (Photo Credit - Michael Curnes)



Stewardship

The KCP continued with its focus on stewardship. In June, we conducted a two day cross-Kootenay field tour with 35 KCP partner representatives. Throughout the tour, local experts shared their regional experiences and knowledge around land securement, ecosystem restoration, offsite offsets and capacity building.

The KCP's first Stewardship Tracking Report was completed, and as part of this report, a pilot Stewardship Map was developed to show where stewardship projects are occurring on private land across the Kootenays (see Figure 1 opposite). The KCP will expand the number of projects represented in this map in 2015.

The KCP has also been collecting conservation social network information from our partners to create a Conservation Relationship Map. Visually displaying the social network through a relationship map can help us understand what the collaboration looks like spatially. The map will also identify ways to enhance the effectiveness of collaborative efforts between organizations responsible for regional conservation planning.



Spring Stewardship Field Tour



Kootenay Lake Shoreline Clean-up



KCP 2014 Stewardship Map

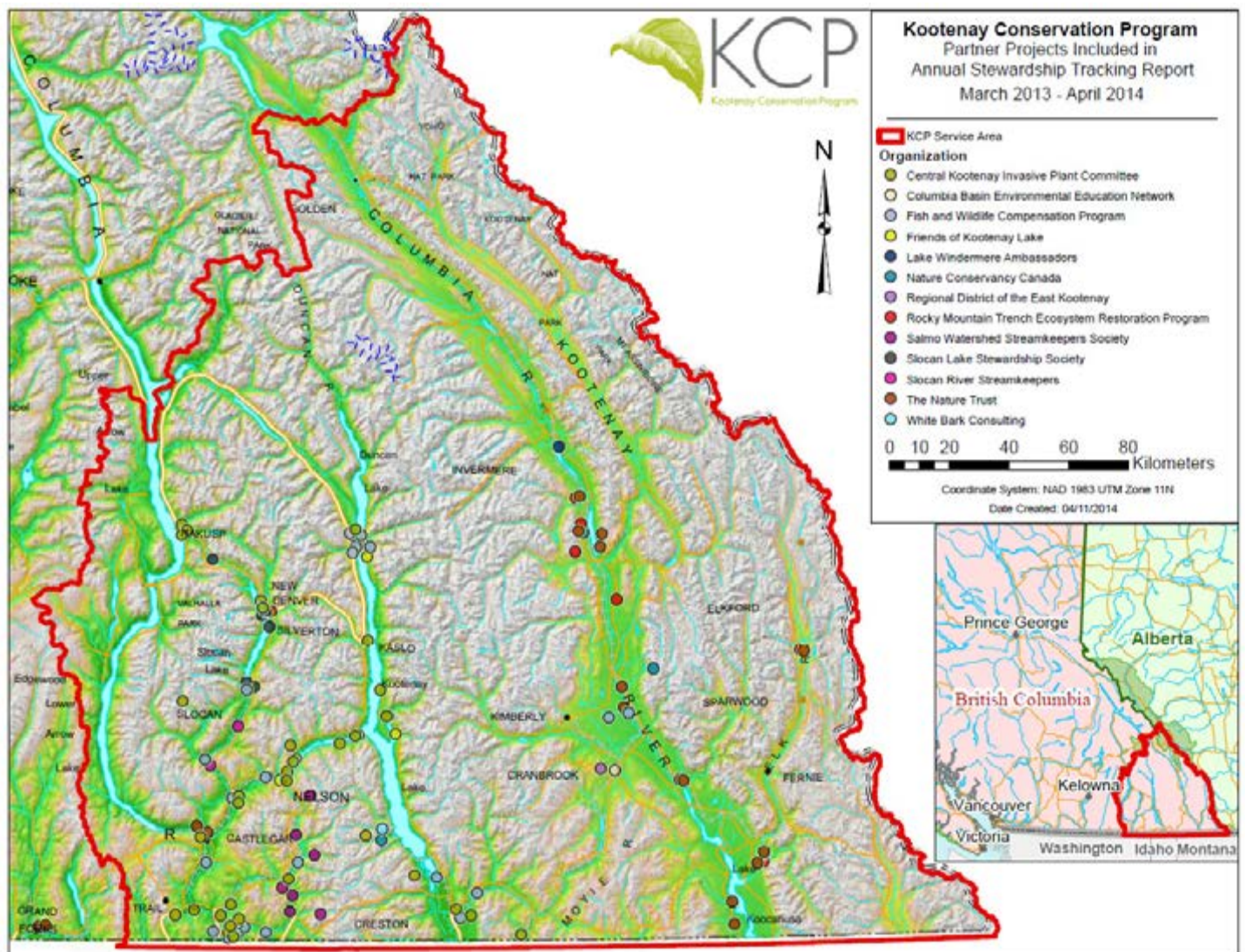


Figure 1: The KCP 2014 Stewardship Map was developed as a pilot project to show where stewardship projects are occurring across the Kootenays.



Bursary Program

With CBT's support, the KCP launched a Professional Development Bursary Program to support staff and volunteers of KCP partner organizations in attending professional development activities. This year the bursary program supported eight applicants in attending professional development activities including:

- ♦ Columbia River Basin 2014 Conference
- ♦ Invasive Species Council of BC Annual Gathering
- ♦ Living Waters Rally
- ♦ North American Environmental Education Conference

Recipients have all submitted final reports including key resources and information that we will share through our eNews and website at www.kootenayconservation.ca.



Recipients of the 2014-2015 KCP Professional Development Bursary Program



Webinar Series

The KCP also worked in partnership with the Columbia Basin Watershed Network (CBWN) to host a Winter Webinar Series which attracted over 200 registrants to the following webinars:

- ♦ History of Salmon in the Basin and Challenges for Restoring Salmon to the Headwaters
- ♦ Identifying and Investing in Resilient Landscapes
- ♦ Freshwater Storytelling
- ♦ Biogeoclimactic Ecosystem Classification
- ♦ Emerging Issues in Mountain Watershed Management

These webinars were recorded and are all available at www.kootenayconservation.ca.



Presenters featured in the 2014 - 2015 Winter Webinar Series



Local Conservation Fund

In 2008, the 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 \$1,500,000 in more than 50 securement and stewardship projects which address local priorities including ecosystem restoration, invasive species control and lake stewardship. This critical funding has helped to leverage over \$5,000,000 in conservation investments in the local area.

The KCP continues to support the Regional District of East Kootenay in the administration of the CVLCF. This year the KCP conducted a field tour for the Technical Review Committee and RDEK representatives. The RDEK has confirmed funding of \$145,000 to 10 projects in 2015.



Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund Spring Field Tour

e & open space

We live in one of the most amazing places on earth. Want to help keep it that way? Then simply vote **YES** to the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund on November 15.

vote
 **YES**

©2014 STEVE SHORT

Vote **YES** to clean water wildlife & open space

kootenay lake
local conservation fund

©2014 MARC ANDRÉ BEAUCHER

We live in one of the most amazing places on earth. Want to help keep it that way? Then simply vote **YES** to the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund on November 15.

vote
 **YES**

This year, the KCP was also instrumental in establishing the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund (KLLCF) in the rural areas around Kootenay Lake.

On November 15, 2014, voters in these areas voted 'yes' to establishing the second local conservation fund in Canadian history. The KCP is now assisting the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) in developing a Terms of Reference, establishing a Technical Review Committee, and operationalizing the fund for the first intake of proposals.

On Saturday November 15, 2014

Vote **YES** to the Local Conservation Fund

Voters in the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) Areas A, D & E around Kootenay Lake will be asked:

Are you in favour of the Regional District of Central Kootenay adopting Bylaw No. 2420 to:

- Establish the 'Regional District of Central Kootenay Local Conservation Fund Service' within Electoral Areas A, D and E; and
- Annually requisition up to a maximum of \$106,500, or the product of \$0.062 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value of land and improvements, whichever is greater, to be collected by an annual parcel tax?

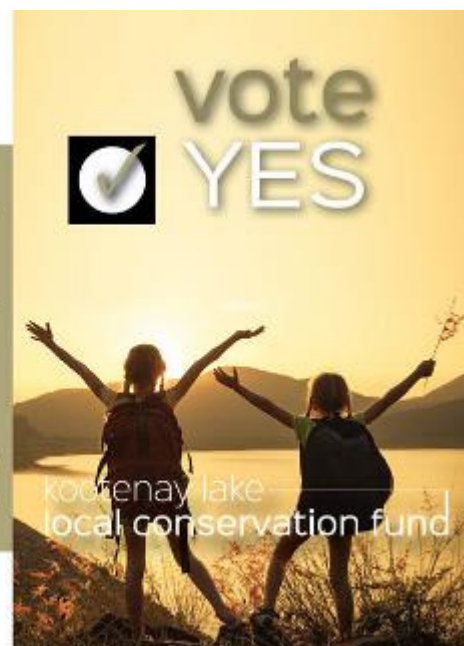
What am I actually voting for?

The RDCK wants to know whether you're willing to put \$15 of additional property tax towards a dedicated conservation fund. But legally the RDCK can only define the total amount to be collected annually (\$106,500). All parcels would be taxed equally, regardless of assessed value - and that works out to about \$15 per parcel.

The amount is about \$15 a year

\$15 is a small price to pay to help conserve clean water, wildlife and open space around Kootenay Lake. Natural lands filter our water, supply open spaces for wildlife and people, and provide quality of life to communities. Support conservation in your backyard by voting YES in upcoming local election.

For more information, visit www.kootenayconservation.ca
info@kootenayconservation.ca 250-688-1508



Advertisement used to encourage voters to 'vote yes' in the referendum on the Kootenay Lake Local Conservation Fund



Conservation Leadership

The KCP awarded the annual Conservation Leadership Awards as part of our Annual Gathering & AGM in Creston. This is an opportunity to showcase some of the outstanding work being done in conservation in our region. This year, Jennifer Yeow and Nancy Newhouse were the 2014 recipients, both demonstrating conservation leadership.



Nancy Newhouse began working for The Nature Conservancy of Canada in September of 2009 in the role of Canadian Rocky Mountains Program Manager. Prior to this she was the Program Manager for the East Kootenay Conservation Program (EKCP) from 2007 to 2009 and was EKCP Executive Committee Chairperson from 2009 through 2013. Nancy continued on as Past Chairperson of the KCP during 2013. The EKCP

was initiated in 2002 with a goal of conserving the working landscape in the East Kootenay through coordinated stewardship and securement activities and over time has evolved into what we know today as the Kootenay Conservation Program (KCP).

Nancy has been actively involved in conservation in the East Kootenay for over 20 years. She holds a B.Sc. in Zoology and a Master of Environmental Design and has been involved in numerous wildlife conservation projects including badger research, roadkill mitigation, riparian research, and wildlife viewing programs. Her passion is to find ways to maintain the beauty and quality of life in the Kootenays.



Jennifer Yeow has dedicated herself relentlessly for over 20 years towards protecting our water courses and furthering environmental knowledge, education and understanding of water. When she moved to the Slocan Valley in 1990, she quickly became involved with the Slocan Valley Watershed Alliance and brought her enthusiasm and work ethic to the forefront of numerous local water quality issues and envi-

ronmental movements. She developed a water monitoring network with several stations and trained volunteers throughout the Slocan Valley and proceeded to provide advice and assistance to other environmental organizations.

In 2004, she was a key member in the start-up of the Slocan River Streamkeepers Society, a group dedicated to initiating environmental projects and public out-reach and education throughout the Slocan Valley. Through Slocan River Streamkeepers Society, Jen has started and fostered school-based educational programs focusing on benthic macroinvertebrates as a measure of water quality, especially pertaining to the CABIN protocols. Through her community outreach work she has facilitated within the community a broader understanding of water quality issues as they are related to environmental health. Her ongoing effort with local land owners has helped to nurture an ethic towards stewardship and ecological sustainability.



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