



EAST KOOTENAY
INVASIVE SPECIES
COUNCIL

2021

Annual Report

From the Chair

2021 has been the most hectic year ever for staff turnover. Of four permanent positions, we have had staff resignations in all of them, a record we do not want to repeat. On May 15th 2021, Kendal Benesh our highly organized and efficient Program Manager resigned, and moved to the Slocan Valley and found work as the Program Assistant for the Kootenay Conservation Program. We wish her the best in her new role. To replace Kendal, we hired one of our Board members, Hilary Baker, to take her place; however Hilary resigned in late September. It took us six weeks to hire the obvious candidate, Katie Reid, as Program Director. Katie has been our Field Operations Manager for 10 years and as of November 17th, 2021 she has been bringing stability, deep understanding of our organization, and re-organizational spirit to our program. We are now looking for a new Field Operations manager to fill Katie's old role.

Bailey Repp was hired in May 2020 as our Outreach and Education Coordinator, but she left us in mid-September to take up her dream job as Communications Manager at Wildsight in Kimberley. To fill in the breach we brought back Emma de Groot, who has worked with us as a Field Assistant and Field Crew Lead for the last two years. With no overlap possible with Bailey, Emma managed to cover our education and communication requirements. In January we re-hired Jessie Paloposki, our previous Education and Communications Manager who had stepped down in fall 2020 to pursue work in Golden. Good to see you again Jessie, we need a steady hand on the tiller this year. We hope to have a permanent Education and Communication Manager in this role before summer.

Emma is currently learning new report and grant writing skills as she fills in for as the Field Operations Coordinator, Danny Smart. We hope to raise Emma into this position permanently in the new fiscal year. Danny left us at the end of December to fill new challenges with Keefer Ecological Services. We wish Danny good luck in her new duties.

Of course, we have been very surprised by this turnover, and we have been talking to the staff about what EKISC could do to keep them in positions longer. Changes are proposed for the new year and we wish to pursue new professional service contracts along with our traditional weed treatment and education programs. We will still deliver on these core programs, but the management contracts allow us to accumulate more revenue to offer better wages and benefits for our staff. But more importantly our staff can flex and develop their managerial muscles by taking on more challenging tasks like weed inventories and writing invasive plant management plans.

As far as the Board of Directors it has been relatively quiet. Hilary Baker left the Board, but we have been joined by Myra Juckers. Myra is currently finishing her defense of her Master of Science degree which involved invasive plant control by goat grazing and grass seeding on the Tobacco Plains Indian Band reserve. Myra is also currently the Environment Lead to the Yaq̓ it̓ ʔa·knuq̓i 'it (Tobacco Plains Indian Band) and she represents the Band on our Board. We are very thankful for this as our Board has wanted a First Nation perspective on our operations and planning for a very long time.

We are, as always, looking forward to another good year with spray contractors, rancher sprayer contractors and our own in-house spray, inventory and communication crews, all working together for a weed free East Kootenay.

Randy Harris

From the Program Director

Challenges pave room for opportunity!

As Randy has said, 2021 was a year of a lot of change and turnover. But instead of focusing on what has happened, I want to give attention to all the great things that current and new staff have done and will do in the coming year!

I was excited to step into the role of Program Director. After 10 years of being EKISC's Field Operations Manager I've developed great relationships with our contractors, project partners, land managers, other regional invasive species organizations, and the public on invasive species management. With this close-knit role, stepping into the Program Director position was a transition that was equal parts a natural step, and welcome professional challenge. With a whole suite of new skills to learn, I've welcomed the way in which EKISC functions – full of great staff, a core group of Board Members, and new projects we continue to be successful in applying for and receiving!

2021 was another successful year for invasive plant management. Collaborations with multiple partners means several landscape-level projects have seen success. For example, the Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Plan completed it's second year of extensive inventories and treatments and we are excited for Year 3. The Wycliffe Conservation Complex saw Year 2 treatments take place, and Peckham's also saw large-scale effective treatments occur in high-value grasslands. Each of these three projects also contained research plots to monitor long-term invasive plant management, increasing EKISC's capacity for research and important data collection.

We also gained approval for two seed grants from the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Fund (FWCP) to explore project feasibility in either the Galton Range or the Bull River area. Projects like this support EKISC's work and we are grateful to our on-going funders who believe in the work of invasive plant eradication!

Despite the somewhat bumpy road EKISC experienced in 2021, I am more than confident that our team is moving forward in a positive and grounded way. Currently we have Emma de Groot on staff as Field Operations Coordinator. Emma will be responsible for our summer assistants, special projects, and inventory coordination. Gabriela Halas, Program Assistant, will be responsible for our area-controllers and GREP rancher-sprayers, special projects, and overall program needs. Jessie Paloposki has continued to lend a supportive hand, and we thank her for returning to get EKISC back on track with Education and Communications. We are especially grateful, as with Jessie's help, we have just hired a new permanent full-time Education and Communication Manager, Megan MacPhee. Megan started with us in April, 2022. Keep your eye out for our May newsletter where we welcome her to the team!

I want to thank all the supporters of EKISC for the hard work each of you have put into keeping our organization running!

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself"- Henry Ford.

Katie Reid

Our Staff



Katie Reid
Program Director



Emma Struivig de Groot
Field Crew Lead & interim Education & Communication Assistant



Hilary Baker
Program Director (May-September 2021)



Jess Duncan
Education & Communication Assistant



Gabriela Halas
Program Assistant



Chris Martin
Field Assistant



Danny Smart
Field Operations Manager



Bailey Repp
Education & Communications Coordinator



Jessie Paloposki
Interim Education and Communications Manager

Our Board

EKISC is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors who represent stakeholders, land managers, and community members with an interest in protecting the East Kootenay from invasive species. The board members are drawn from provincial and local governments, First Nations, agriculture, non-government environmental organizations, and the private sector.

Randy Harris
Chair

Rick Van Horne
Vice Chair

Raelynn Blumhagen
Secretary

Stephanie Daniels
Treasurer

Myra Juckers
Director

Shawna Larade
Director

Jamie Davies
Director

Rick Tegart
Director

Dave Pick
Director

Stay connected with EKISC and join our next AGM to express YOUR interest in joining our Board!

GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD

2020 Recipient: Kendal Benesh

Former EKISC Program Director, Kendal Benesh, received the Golden Shovel award for her dedication to EKISC from 2019 - 2021, and her continued work in environmental services.

Our mission

Mitigate the negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of invasive species in the Regional District of the East Kootenay.

To **coordinate** the management of invasive species on public and private lands in the East Kootenay using an integrated pest management approach.

To **educate** about invasive species and their impacts.

To **prevent** the introduction and spread of invasive species.

To **foster extended support** of invasive species management initiatives in the East Kootenay.

Field Operations

3246 chemical

63 manual

3309 sites treated

805 ha. treated
13 Invasive Plant Management Areas



10

invasive plant inventories completed

That's 8954 ha of land!

21

regional EDRR sites treated



Adult 25 mm

21 SITE LOCATIONS

15 WATERBODIES

134 SAMPLES TAKEN

ZERO

Zebra & Quagga Mussels detected in British Columbia!

Program Highlights

Upper Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Plan

EKISC successfully implemented Year 2 of the Upper Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Plan. This multi-stakeholder project works to reduce the introduction and spread of weeds into high value wildlife habitat, specifically Bighorn sheep. To achieve this goal, we treated over 90 ha of land across conservation properties, recreation trails, and forest service roads.

Long-term Monitoring

EKISC collected data from 51 permanent monitoring plots across four projects in the East Kootenay. These vegetation plots will show how invasive plant treatments are impacting targeted weed species and desirable native species. The data will be used to better inform treatment prescriptions, increasing the positive impact invasive plant treatments have on the landscape.



6 Rancher-sprayers treating

364 sites across

5 range units

The EKISC team worked with **19 funding sources** to deliver invasive species management, coordination, and outreach activities in the region. Many other individuals and organizations supported our work and helped to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in our communities.

The majority of the work that EKISC administers is fee-for-service work, which includes coordination and delivery of invasive plant surveys, treatments, monitoring, and management planning. We also work with various granting agencies to conduct lake water sampling for invasive mussels and aquatic invasive species education.

Education & Communications

2

community weed pulls



12 e-newsletters

356 subscribers

46% average open rate

5

BC Parks Outreach Events



2406

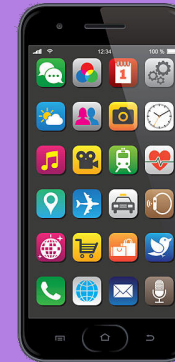
unique website visitors

3

webinars

1

new video



REACH



8431

FOLLOWERS

606



1326

398

VIDEOS



280

FOLLOWERS

77



105

3

2 new

advertisements with other regional organizations featured in:

Backroads Mapbook & Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine

ARE YOUR SHOES AND GEAR CLEAN?

MUD AND SEEDS CARRY INVASIVE PLANTS!

ARRIVE WITH CLEAN GEAR
Brush your boots, packs and pets before hitting the trail.

YOU CAN PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS WITH THE FOLLOWING TIPS:

STAY ON THE TRAIL
To reduce the chance of picking up seeds and mud.

LEAVE WITH CLEAN GEAR
Use a boot brush, clean your packs and pets after your adventure.

CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY
Your boots, kayaks, SUPs and fishing gear.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES



EKISC.COM

CKISS.CA

COLUMBIASHUSWAPINVASIVES.ORG



EAST KOOTENAY INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL



CENTRAL KOOTENAY INVASIVE SPECIES SOCIETY



COLUMBIA SHUSWAP INVASIVE SPECIES SOCIETY

Invasive Plants of the Crown of the Continent

Third Edition



new field guide

in coordination with partners from the Crown Managers Partnership



Similar to 2020, EKISC's outreach capacity was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, our team did a great job at delivering both in-person and virtual events. We were able to sustain weekly social media updates, monthly newsletters, and expand our audience by adding to social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. We continued to partner with other regional invasive species groups to coordinate meetings, create new resources and advertising, and maintain continuity of outreach and field operations.

Finances & Funders

?aq'am community

BC Hydro

BC Parks

Canada Summer Jobs

Columbia Basin Trust

Columbia Basin Watershed Network

Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs
Canada

Environment Canada

Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program

Fortis BC

Grassland and Rangeland Enhancement Program

Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations, and Rural Development

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Nature Trust of BC

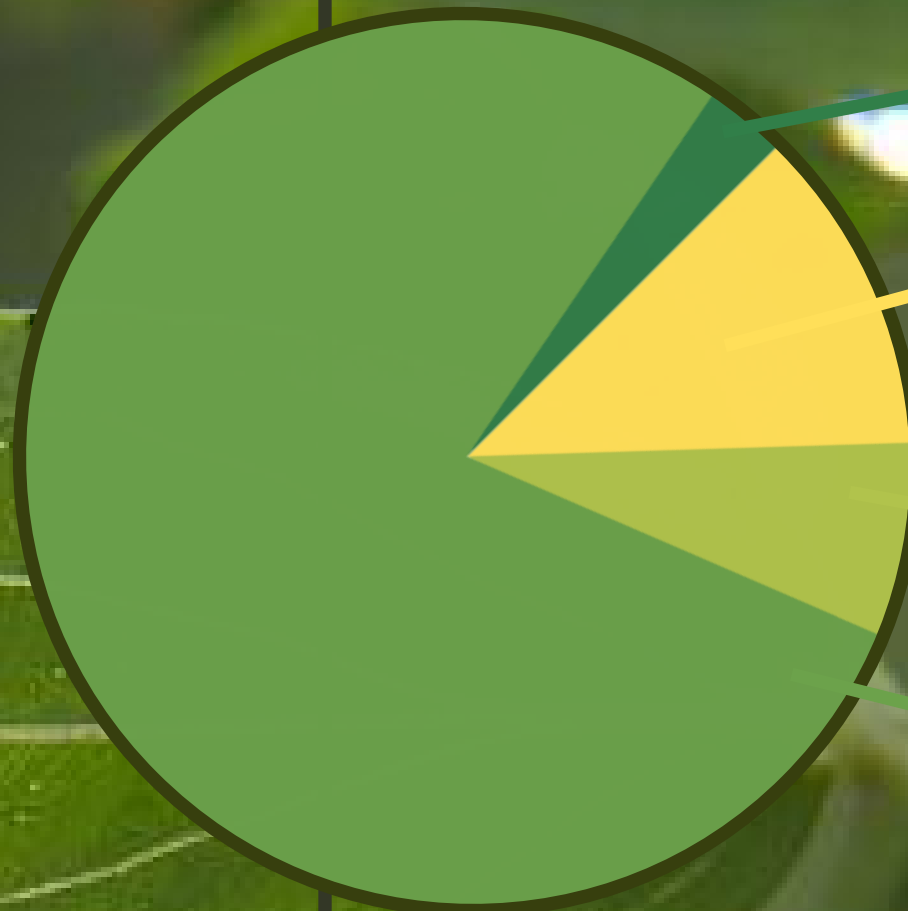
Regional District of the East Kootenay

Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resource Society

Village of Radium

\$972,370

Gross Revenue



3% Aquatic Program

12% Program Administration

7% Education &
Communications Program

78% Operations Program





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