FWCP
Fish & Wildlife
COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Project Outcomes

Columbia Region
2024–2025

fwcp.ca









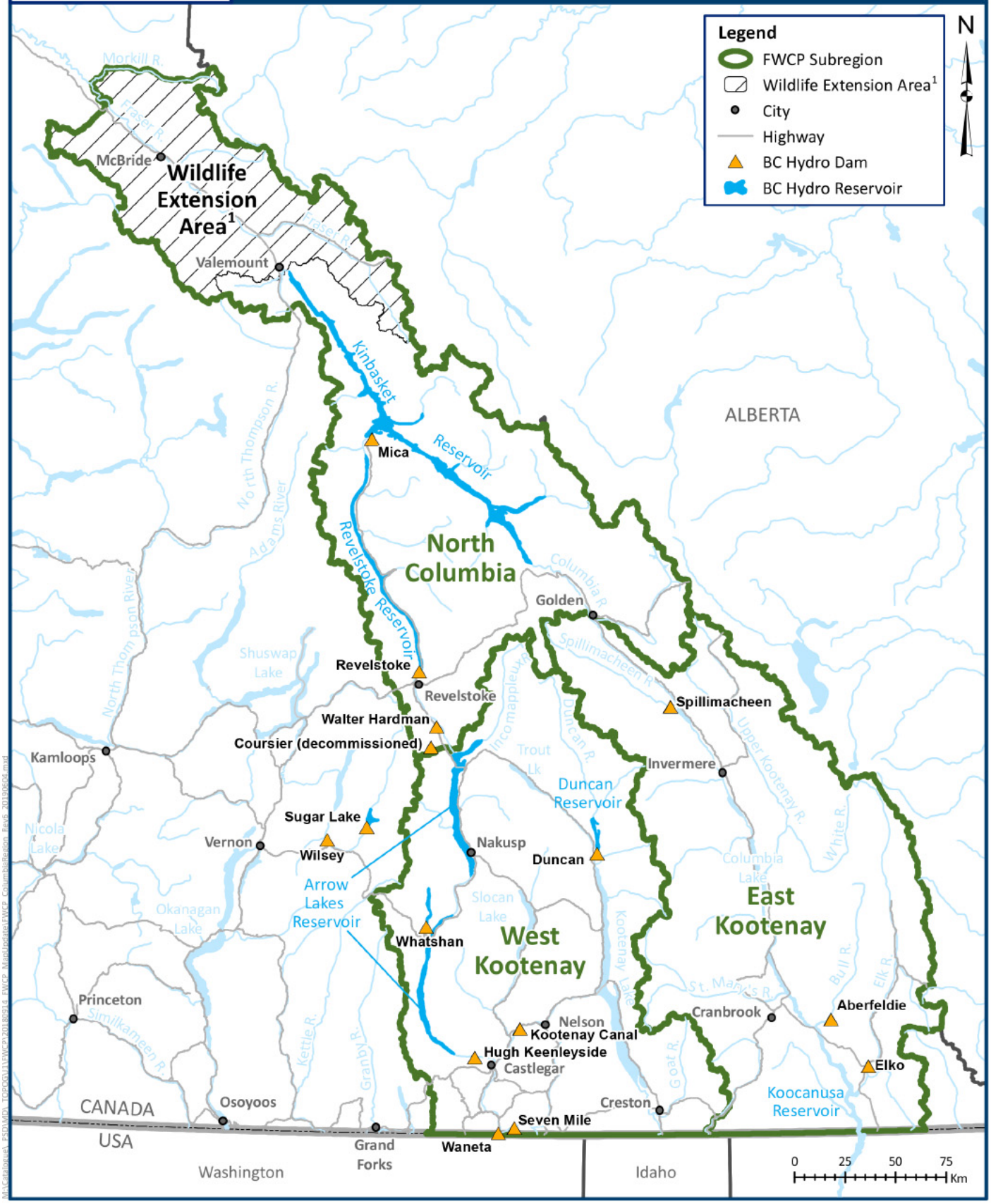
BC Hydro

British Columbia

Fisheries and Oceans Canada | Pêches et Océans Canada

The FWCP is a partnership between BC Hydro, the Province of B.C., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations, and public interest holders to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in watersheds impacted by BC Hydro dams.

Columbia Region



Photos: Al Mallette, Murphy Creek (A. Glass); whitebark pine (Moody Tree Ltd.);Northern leopard frog aerial (A. Glass); bank swallow bank, Athalmer (R. Darvill); highway pollinator project (Elk Root Conservation); Jen Walker-Larsen with kokanee (M. Sadler); planting live stakes (Elk River Alliance); FOKLSS beach cleanup (A. Glass), Western painted turtle hatchlings (A. Glass)

FWCP fish and wildlife projects 2024–2025

Our Coastal, Columbia, and Peace region boards approved ~$10.4 million for 95 fish and wildlife projects. Each project aligns with our regional action plans, which reflect our strategic objectives, mission, and vision.

Read our story.

Project outcomes and annual reports are also available for our Coastal and Peace regions at fwcp.ca.

Columbia Region projects 2024–2025

In our Columbia Region, 42 projects were approved by our board in 2024–2025, for ~$6.8 million.

Approximately 61% of approved funding went to projects in the West Kootenay sub-region; 12% were for basin-wide projects; 24% to the East Kootenay; and 3% in the North Columbia. See Figure 1 for a breakdown of funding by sub-region.

This year, approximately 78% of approved funding went toward habitat-based actions (63%) or species-based actions (15%). See Figure 2 for a breakdown of funding by action type.

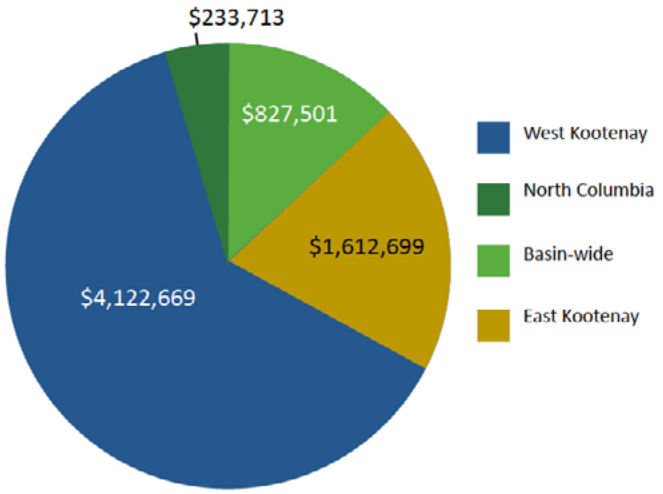


Figure 1: Columbia F25 approved funding by sub-region

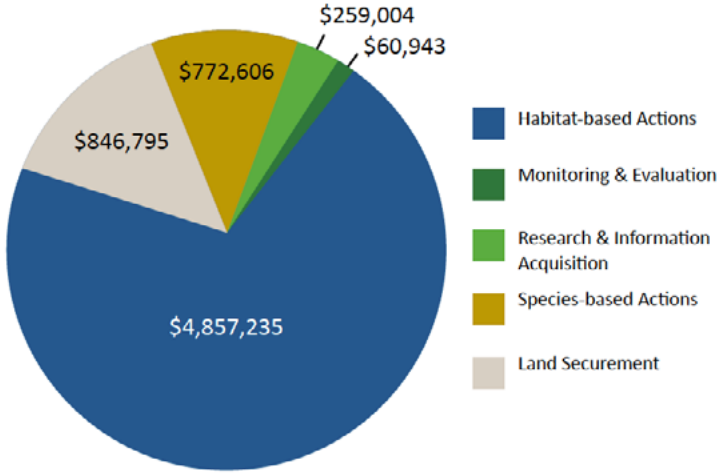


Figure 2: Breakdown of approved funding by action type

Project outcomes

Project outcomes for projects approved for 2024–2025 are summarized on the following pages.

We post final project reports on provincial databases so the results of projects we fund are available to everyone. Searchable spreadsheets of reports for each FWCP region are available at fwcp.ca/results.

Learn more about our projects

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Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program

Floating wetlands could help restore Joseph Creek

COL-F25-F-3997

Blue Lake Forest Education Society

$4,989

East Kootenay

Seed Grant

Blue Lake Forest Education Society

Assessing feasibility of floating wetlands in the East Kootenay: This Seed Grant project will assess the feasibility of constructing floating wetlands in Joseph Creek, near Cranbrook.

Restoring a degraded fish-bearing creek

Seed Grant funding was used to explore the feasibility of floating wetlands to support ongoing work to restore Joseph Creek in Cranbrook. The creek is important for recruiting juvenile westslope cutthroat trout but no longer functions as a healthy ecological system.

This project successfully identified three potential sites for the installation of floating wetlands along Joseph Creek where hydrological stabilization and diversion channels can support sediment management and thermal regulation, physical modifications to the meandering stream can enhance water retention and pollutant filtration, and where a floating wetland could significantly reduce fecal coliform levels and nutrient overloads caused by agricultural runoff. The study also highlighted opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous communities for plant sourcing and cultural knowledge integration.

Learn more

Bull trout populations in the Salmo River Watershed

COL-F25-F-4032

Salmo Watershed Streamkeepers Society

$14,730

West Kootenay

Species-based Action

iStock Mharing

Bull Trout Spawner Escapement in the Salmo River Watershed: This project will conduct bull trout redd counts in known areas of the Salmo River in 2024. This is part of a long-term monitoring program for this at-risk species in the Salmo River Watershed that will provide important information about population trends.

180+ Bull trout estimated in the Salmo River watershed

In this project year, 77 at-risk bull trout redds were observed in areas identified as prime bull trout spawning habitat through previous radio telemetry studies.

An expansion factor was developed to account for a section of the Salmo River in the United States that was not surveyed. The expansion factor and observations were used to estimate a total escapement for the system of 181 adult individuals, up from less than 100 individuals in 1998.

Learn more

Murphy Creek spawning channel

COL-F25-F-4141-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$26,600

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

FWCP

F25 Murphy Creek Spawning Channel Monitoring and Maintenance: The spawning channel supports the rainbow trout population in Murphy Creek, which feeds the resident Columbia River population.

Rainbow trout escapement up by 23%

Maintaining the Murphy Creek Spawning Channel along the Columbia River near Trail is critical for spawning rainbow trout.

In this year, monitoring estimated 92 fish using the channel—up from 75 in the previous year.

Volunteers helped install solar panels on a storage building, conducted in-stream maintenance, and took drone footage as part of monitoring efforts. Volunteers—other partners—helped re-install a sediment curtain that will help maintain the quality of spawning habitat in the channel.

Learn more

Meadow Creek spawning channel Kootenay Lake

COL-F25-F-4122-DCA

Province of B.C.

$291,366

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Actions

A. Glass

F25 Meadow Creek Spawning Channel: This project supports ongoing operations, maintenance, and monitoring at the Meadow Creek spawning channel. The channel provides spawning habitat for Kootenay Lake kokanee.

Highest spawner returns in a decade

Monitoring of kokanee fry outmigration in spring 2024 estimated 9.44 million fry—almost double the previous year. An estimated 245,795 spawners returned to the channel in fall 2024—up from 71,423 in the previous year and the highest in the last decade. An estimated 55.7 million eggs were deposited.

Learn more

Adding nutrients to Arrow Lakes Reservoir

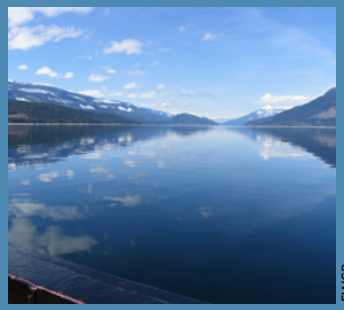
COL-F25-F-4124-DCA

Province of B.C.

$1,122,703

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action



FWCP

F25 Arrow Lakes Reservoir Nutrient Restoration Program: This ongoing restoration program addresses nutrient losses in Arrow Lakes Reservoir resulting from the construction of Hugh L. Keenleyside, Mica, and Revelstoke dams.

Nutrients added to Arrow Lakes Reservoir

Between early spring and fall 2024, this long-term project to address nutrient losses resulting from the construction of BC Hydro dams added agricultural-grade nitrogen and phosphorus to the reservoir to improve the food web.

Monitoring showed that approximately 312,000 kokanee spawners returned to index tributaries in the Arrow Lakes Reservoir and the Hill Creek Spawning Channel. In the year previous, spawner returns were estimated to be 320,000.

Learn more

Adding nutrients to Kootenay Lake

COL-F25-F-4125-DCA

Province of B.C.

$1,399,538

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

Province of B.C.

F25 Kootenay Lake Nutrient Restoration Program–North Arm: This ongoing restoration program addresses nutrient losses in Kootenay Lake resulting from the construction of Duncan Dam.

Nutrients added to North Arm Kootenay Lake: highest spawner estimates since 2014

Between early spring and fall 2024, this long-term project to address nutrient losses resulting from the construction of BC Hydro dams added agricultural-grade nitrogen and phosphorus to the North Arm of Kootenay Lake to improve the food web.

Monitoring in 2024 estimated 517,390 kokanee spawners, the highest number documented post-collapse in 2013. In 2023, the number of spawners were estimated at 154,000.

Learn more

Hill Creek spawning channel on Arrow Lakes Reservoir

COL-F25-F-4126-DCA

Province of B.C.

$295,700

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

A. Glass

F25 Hill Creek Spawning Channel: This project supports ongoing operations, maintenance, and monitoring at the Hill Creek spawning channel.

5.4 million kokanee eggs—target met

Monitoring of kokanee fry outmigration between April and June 2024 estimated 3.3 million fry—down from last year's estimate of close to 7 million fry. The egg-to-fry survival rate was almost 60%.

An estimated 110,633 adult kokanee returned to the Hill Creek Spawning Channel in fall 2024, and more than 42,000 spawned in the channel. Nearly 5,413,000 eggs were estimated to have been deposited in the channel, just over the annual target of 5.4 million. Approximately 3.5 million eggs were collected for provincial hatchery and stocking programs.

One hundred and eleven rainbow trout redds were counted in the spawning channel – which is an increase from the last two years when 52 and 82 redds were counted respectively, and closer to the average of 114 redds since counting started in 2005.

Learn more

Bull trout conservation and spawners

COL-F25-F-4149-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$36,887

West Kootenay

Species-based Action

Steve Rooke

Lower Columbia River Tributary Bull Trout eDNA sampling: The primary objective of this project is to identify bull trout presence in Lower Columbia River tributaries using environmental DNA (eDNA), with a secondary goal of visually identifying bull trout and their spawning behaviour.

eDNA used to detect bull trout presence

Five mainstem tributaries were sampled using eDNA and found no positive detections of bull trout, and surveys at the same sites found no redds.

These results indicate that no bull trout juveniles or adults were in the monitored creeks during the sampling. A lack of bull trout could result from tributary access issues (due to extended drought conditions), sampling outside the spawning window, or not being able to access upstream sampling sites.

Supporting salmon reintroduction initiative

COL-F25-F-4153-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$159,845

West Kootenay

Research & Information Acquisition

iStock

Syilx ceremonial release of sockeye salmon in Slocan Lake: This project will use passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags implanted in sockeye fry released to Slocan Lake as part of a Syilx salmon release ceremony to track their ocean out-migration and estimate survival and fish behaviour.

Project in progress

Restoring fish habitat in Shuswap Creek

COL-F25-F-4197-DCA

Shuswap Band

$125,060

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

iStock imagine golf

Shuswap Creek stream restoration project phase 1: The long-term goal of the project—split into three phases—is to restore the natural channels of Shuswap Creek, promoting fish habitat, migration, streambank stabilization and reducing the risks of environmental contamination.

Project in progress

Improving riparian function by removing invasives

COL-F25-W-3991

Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society

$53,722

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

CKISS

Kootenay Riparian Invasive Plant Control: This multi-year project will support the development and implementation of a plan for removing invasive yellow flag iris and purple loosestrife along the West Arm of Kootenay Lake and the Kootenay River downstream of Brilliant Dam.

Invasives treated and biological control is at work

Invasive yellow flag iris and purple loosestrife were removed from 17 sites along the Kootenay River from Brilliant Dam to Six Mile on the West Arm of Kootenay Lake.

Monitoring confirmed the presence of a biological control agent—the black-margined loosestrife beetle—at work and helping reduce the presence of purple loosestrife.

Four sites treated previously for invasives, were planted with 173 native plants in 2023. Monitoring in 2024 confirmed that close to two-thirds of the plants are in good health.

More than 31,000 people were reached with stewardship messages and information through in-person and online engagement. More than 1,055 kilograms of invasive plants were removed.

Learn more

Simpcw First Nation assesses grizzly bears

COL-F25-W-3993

Estsék' Environmental Services LLP

$51,257

North Columbia

Species-based Action

A. Glass

Simpcw Grizzly Bear Monitoring and Connectivity Study: This Indigenous-led conservation initiative will assess grizzly bear (ském̓cis) populations in the Columbia-Shuswap and their connectivity with bears from other parts of Simpcw Territory (Simpcwúl̓ecw).

Project in progress

Learn more

Enhancing habitat on Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Reserve

COL-F25-W-4009

Tobacco Plains Indian Band

$69,105

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

iStock Twildlife

Yaq̓it ʔa.knuqƛi‘it Open Forest and Grassland Enhancement: Open forest and grassland habitat on Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Reserve east of Cranbook is highly valued for elk, mule, and white-tailed deer. In recent years the forage quality has declined due to forest encroachment and invasive plants.

Enhancement update: Prescribed burn, monitoring, and invasive treatments completed

It was a busy year for the project team working on managing the ecosystem to restore critical habitats for ungulates and other species.

The team located 767 Endangered Spalding campion plants on Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Reserve lands and established monitoring plots for this rare plant threatened by invasives.

A prescribed burn was completed on Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Reserve lands. Post-vegetation monitoring plots were established, invasive plant surveys were completed and they confirmed St. John’s wort, cheatgrass, and sulphur cinquefoil as the most common of nine invasives identified.

Learn more

Improving habitat for at-risk swallows

COL-F25-W-4010

Wildsight Golden

$19,319

North Columbia

Habitat-based Action

R. Darvill

Upper Columbia Swallow Habitat Enhancement Project: This multi-year project aims to conserve and enhance habitat for at-risk bank and barn swallows in the North Columbia and East Kootenay and conducts ongoing monitoring of natural colonies and enhanced sites.

Breeding sites enhanced for at-risk swallows

In this project year, two sites were enhanced and restored to increase breeding habitat for at-risk bank and barn swallows.

At the Birchland Creek bridge crossing south of Golden, substrate piles were reshaped to provide suitable nesting habitat. And at Spike Elk Farm / Moberly Marsh near Kinbasket Reservoir the first artificial nest structure for Bank Swallows in western Canada was constructed.

This project also tracked migration movements of 100 bank swallows tagged at nesting sites near Invermere in 2022 and 2023 using the Motus Wildlife Tracking System.

Results suggest that Columbia bank swallows may take a different route south than tagged bank swallows from northern BC, Yukon Territories, Alaska and Saskatchewan

The project team also worked to increase public awareness of this bird which has seen significant population declines in recent years.

Learn more

Managing invasive species in Revelstoke Reach

COL-F25-W-4011

Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society

$8,714

North Columbia

Habitat-based Action

Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society

Revelstoke Reach Invasives: The goal of this multi-year control project is to focus on high-priority invasive species management along the mouth of the Illecillewaet River near Revelstoke. This area has high value for migratory birds, western painted turtles, and other wildlife.

65 volunteers trained to manage invasives

Volunteers played a big part of this project in 2024. Five community weed pulls took place and 65 volunteers received training on best practices to manage invasive weeds.

Inventories of invasives confirmed new infestations within the Revelstoke Reach, and many known sites were treated using chemical and mechanical treatments. Seventeen sites monitored as part of this project passed inspection.

Learn more

Restoring cottonwood trees in the Elk Valley

COL-F25-W-4012

Elk River Watershed Alliance (operating as Elk River Alliance)

$54,779

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

Elk River Alliance

Elk Valley Cottonwood Restoration Program: Cottonwood trees are an iconic species in the Elk Valley, but many stands have been lost to human activities and settlements.

Project in progress

Learn more

Stewarding conservation lands

COL-F25-W-4016

The Nature Trust of British Columbia

$39,100

Basin-wide

Habitat-based Action

Walter Clough

NTBC Land Stewardship Activitie – CFC Program: This project supports conservation field crews to do stewardship and operational projects each year on conservation properties in the East and West Kootenay to maintain and enhance biodiversity and wildlife values.

Twenty-five sites stewarded by youth crews

This year, the Nature Trust of BC (NTBC) field crews worked on 25 land complexes in the FWCP's Columbia Region. More than 125 kg of native grass seed was applied, more than two hectares of invasive plant infestations were mechanically treated, more than 20 conservation-related signs were installed, wildlife cameras were used for monitoring at 22 sites, and 21 photo plot sites were monitored. In addition, 195 nursery stock native trees and shrubs were planted.

Learn more

Bat abundance and diversity in Columbia Region

COL-F25-W-4018

Wildlife Conservation Society Canada

$82,817

Basin-wide

Species-based Action

C. Lausen

NABat, BatCaver and Beyond: Protecting Columbia Basin Bats: This multi-year project will use the North American Bat Monitoring (NABat) protocol to continue monitoring the diversity and relative abundance of bats and their overall condition in the FWCP's Columbia Region.

76 bridges checked for bat presence

The project team followed the North American Bat Monitoring Protocol to record bat activity at 13 West Kootenay bat detectors. Recordings were made from an additional 17 sites near remnant old-growth patches around the Kinbasket Reservoir to identify potential hotspots of northern myotis activity.

Thirty-three artificial roost structures were created using either artificial bark or chainsaw cuts. Bat guano was sampled from West Kootenay roosts, and 10 more bridges were sampled for bat presence, bringing the total to 76 bridges in the FWCP's Columbia Region have been examined for bats.

Learn more

Improving Elk Valley ungulate habitat

COL-F25-W-4028

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council

$19,818

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action


EKISC

Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Year 5: The goal of this multi-year project is to minimize and contain the presence of invasive plant species on bighorn sheep and other ungulate range. This also complements ongoing habitat restoration work in the area through the East Kootenay Enhancement Project.

73.8 hectares treated for invasives in Elk Valley

In this project year, the team focused on 255 invasive plant sites in the Elk Valley covering 73.8 hectares. Sites burned in 2023 wildfires, and areas adjacent to high-value grassland were prioritized.

Seventy-five kilograms of grass seed were applied to the Chauncey-Todd Hunter Access Management Area and Big Ranch Conservation Property. Data was collected from 11 vegetation plots, and photo monitoring was complete. Outreach to build awareness occurred at in-person events and online.

Learn more

Reducing spread of invasive species

COL-F25-W-4029

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council

$27,410

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action


EKISC

Galton Range Invasive Plant Management: The goal of this project is to reduce the introduction and spread of invasive species in high-value habitat and complement ongoing habitat restoration work in the area through the East Kootenay Enhancement Project.

45.03 hectares treated for invasives in Galton Range

During this project year, 39 sites in the East Kootenay's Galton Range were treated for invasive weeds, covering 45.03 hectares.

Thirty-five kilograms of seed was dispersed in critical areas susceptible to invasive plants. Outreach to build awareness occurred via the society's e-letter and social media content.

Learn more

Restoring Kootenay River wetland

COL-F25-W-4030

Ducks Unlimited Canada

$67,056

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

A. Glass

Bummers Flats floodplain and wetland habitat restoration: This multi-year project will restore 264 hectares of wetland in a floodplain along the Kootenay River.

Floodplain restoration ready to begin in East Kootenay

In this first of five project years, the team began the planning for the North Bummers floodplain restoration.

Extensive baseline information was collected through elevation surveys, bathymetric surveys, river modelling, songbird diversity studies, incidental mammal surveys, vegetation mapping, and drone photography. This data will inform construction expected to start in fall 2025, pending approvals.

Learn more

Restoring wetland along the Columbia River

COL-F25-W-4031

Ducks Unlimited Canada

$101,431

North Columbia

Habitat-based Action

A. Glass

Moberly Marsh floodplain and wetland habitat restoration: The goal of this multi-year project is to restore 270 hectares of wetland and 133 hectares of associated upland in the floodplain along the Columbia River near Golden.

Wetland planning complete - construction is next

In Year 1 of the project, Ducks Unlimited Canada BC Parks completed project initiation, preliminary research and planning, baseline monitoring, elevation surveys and conceptual design plans at the northernmost compartment of Moberly Marsh (known as Braul Marsh). Additional components included river modelling and hydraulic studies, archaeological work, and Indigenous engagement. Water Sustainability Act (WSA) amendments were submitted to Water, Land and Resource Stewardship in October 2024. The team plans to start construction in fall 2025.

Learn more

Wildlife corridors in the Elk Valley

COL-F25-W-4041

Province of B.C.

$12,593

East Kootenay

Monitoring & Evaluation

Safe Passages for Wildlife in the Southern Canadian Rockies: This project will monitor the effectiveness of highway wildlife crossings (i.e., overpasses and underpasses) to reduce the road mortality of wildlife.

Early results: fencing reduces wildlife collisions at underpasses

As of 2024, 8.4 kilometres of wildlife fencing was installed along Highway 3 in the Elk Valley, and six underpasses were retrofitted with fencing to improve wildlife access. Camera monitoring captured more than 1.4 million images, and grizzly bear collaring continued.

Wildlife detections at underpasses have increased two-to-three times where fencing was installed, and early data collection suggests fewer reports of roadkill at the fenced underpasses. Further assessment of roadkill data will help confirm if fencing reduces collisions.

Learn more

Improving Rocky Mountain ungulate habitat

COL-F25-W-4045

Golden District Rod and Gun Club

$52,993

North Columbia

Habitat-based Action

iStock M. Cuda

Kicking Horse Canyon Habitat Enhancement Project: The goal of this multi-year project is to enhance approximately 112 hectares of elk winter range in the Upper Kicking Horse Canyon, near Yoho National Park, and will benefit elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer.

56-hectares of elk winter range restored

Brushing was completed on approximately 22 hectares of habitat in the Upper Kicking Horse Canyon, near Yoho National Park. This will help elk and other ungulates move through the terrain, detect predators more easily, promote forage growth, and improve forest structure for snow interception.

More than 56 hectares of elk winter range have now been treated in this elk winter range area where pellet sampling occurs each spring, and pre- and post-treatment is compiled and analyzed.

Learn more

Recovering endangered whitebark pine

COL-F25-W-4077
Moody Tree
$56,820
East Kootenay
Species-based Action


K. Wright

Columbia Whitebark Pine Recovery Planting: This project will focus on planting 30,000 endangered seedlings near Valemount and Nakusp and reducing competition for whitebark pine trees in 10 hectares on Bootleg Mountain near Kimberley.

More than 33 hectares of whitebark pine habitat restored

In this project year, work to recover endangered whitebark pine continued: 10,620 seedlings were planted at three East Kootenay sites near Kimberley and monitoring transects were established. To improve growing conditions, competing plants and trees adjacent to growing seedlings at previously planted sites were removed. Through these efforts, a total of 33.43 hectares of whitebark pine habitat was enhanced or restored.

To support future planting efforts, 839 seed cones were collected at seven sites yielding 41,888 seeds which could produce up to 16,000 seedlings. Outreach and awareness activities continued with First Nations, youth, ski area staff and guide outfitters.

Learn more

Fire ecology: enhancing West Kootenay ecosystems

COL-F25-W-4121-DCA
Province of B.C.
$193,831
West Kootenay
Habitat-based Action


A. Glass

F25 West Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement: Efforts to suppress wildfires over the past 60-80 years have increased tree density and ground fuel in West Kootenay upland forests.

Restoration work continues with prescribed burns

In an ongoing effort to enhance West Kootenay ecosystems, the project team worked on several fronts to plan with BC Wildfire Service to prepare and implement prescribed burns.

A 130-hectare burn was completed at Deer Park Mountain and Conservation Area along the Arrow Lakes Reservoir.

Work included pre-treatment of invasive species, fuel treatment, and fuel modification to establish a fire guard adjacent to a free-to-grow plantation.

Ecosystem restoration prescriptions for prepared monitoring and control plots were established and sampled.

Learn more

Stewardship of conservation lands

COL-F25-W-4123-DCA

Province of B.C.

$243,642

Basin-wide

Habitat-based Action

A. Glass

F25 Land Management Operations: This annual and ongoing project conducts land stewardship activities on conservation lands.

Restoration and monitoring continue on conservation lands

Activities to manage conservation lands this year included monitoring and treating priority invasive plant species, including burdock, yellow flag iris and others.

Members of the Okanagan Nation Alliance participated in the invasive treatments, and two crew members of the Penticton First Nation patrolled as part of the Guardian program.

The Guardian program monitors the lands and land uses, documents non-compliant activities, updates signage as required, and engages with partners and the public.

Crew members from the Splatsin First Nation and Simpcw First Nation also served as Guardians.

Learn more

Enhancing East Kootenay ecosystems

COL-F25-W-4127-DCA

Province of B.C.

$227,838

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

Province of B.C.

F25 East Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement: Efforts to suppress wildfires over the past 60-80 years have increased tree density and ground fuel in East Kootenay upland forests.

East Kootenay upland and dryland ecosystems enhanced

Slashing, piling, pile burning, and prescribed burns were used to enhance ecosystems and manage invasive weeds at multiple sites in the East Kootenay.

Sites that were burned previously were treated this year for invasives. Stand Management Prescriptions were developed in partnership with Yaq̓it ʔa.knuqƛi ‘it First Nation. The prescriptions recommend further enhancements (e.g., slashing, piling, and pile burning) before a prescribed burn into the Red Canyon drainage.

Vegetation monitoring was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the invasive weed treatment implemented at these sites.

Learn more

Enhancing habitat for non-game species

COL-F25-W-4128-DCA

Province of B.C.

$247,420

Basin-wide

Habitat-based Action

B. Meunier

F25 Non-game Enhancement: This annual and ongoing project focuses on maintaining habitat features such as roosting and nesting sites for non-game species.

Badger, bat, loon and turtle habitat enhanced

Enhancement work continued for non-game species including bats, badgers, loons, and turtles. Eight bat roosts for the Townsend's big-eared bats were monitored, and 375 metres of fencing was maintained to reduce badger mortality. At Elizabeth Lake in Cranbrook, 570 western painted turtle hatchlings were counted, 34 turtle nests recorded, and 18 nest boxes monitored.

In the West Kootenay, five loon floating platforms were monitored at Whatshan Lake, and western toad habitat was monitored with 347 toads marked and 600m of toad fencing installed at Summit Lake.

Learn more

Recovering caribou near Nakusp

COL-F25-W-4129-DCA

Province of B.C.

$158,767

Basin-wide

Species-based Action

T. Anderson

F25 Caribou Recovery: This annual and ongoing project supports a multi-agency effort led by the Province of B.C. to recover threatened caribou sub-populations in the Central Selkirk Mountains east of Nakusp.

Caribou census planned and predator survey completed

Caribou censuses were planned for the Central Selkirks and North Columbia areas subject to suitable weather. A predator track survey was completed and confirmed seven wolves in three packs.

The team also assisted in the capture of caribou cows that were moved to a secure maternity pen in the West Kootenay.

Learn more

Endangered northern leopard frog recovery

COL-F25-W-4130-DCA

Province of B.C.

$371,327

West Kootenay

Species-based Action

D. Adama

F25 Northern Leopard Frog Recovery: This annual and ongoing project involves conducting inventory, monitoring, and stewardship of the Endangered northern leopard frog population at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

Eight egg masses protected and invasive bullfrogs controlled

The Rocky Mountain population of Endangered northern leopard frogs was monitored and inventoried. The inventory confirmed eight egg masses, which were protected during the sensitive egg stage. One hundred and twenty-seven frogs were captured and 45 were PIT-tagged. A total of 3,481 tadpoles were translocated to the reintroduction site and 18 to captive assurance populations at zoos to ensure the species.

The invasive American bullfrog was detected and counted and 570 bullfrogs captured and euthanized to reduce the threat to northern leopard frogs from this invasive bullfrog.

Learn more

Restoring and enhancing wetlands

COL-F25-W-4131-DCA

Province of B.C.

$25,000

West Kootenay

Monitoring & Evaluation

iStock Jillian Cooper

F25 Wetland and Riparian Enhancement: The goal of this project is to complete basic monitoring and maintenance of previously restored wetlands.

Project in progress

Learn more

Land securement in our Columbia Region

COL-F25-W-4132-DCA

The Nature Trust of British Columbia

$46,795

Basin-wide

Land Securement

S. Ogle

KCP Land Acquisition & Base Support F25: Each year, our Columbia Region board allocates funding towards the Kootenay Conservation Program's work to support priority land-acquisition projects that strongly align with Columbia Region action plan priorities.

Land securement supported

With funding from FWCP, the Kootenay Conservation Program completed three property evaluations and four property appraisals. This work supported the Nature Trust of BC to acquire three conservation properties in our Columbia Region: Bummers Flats (Maple Cross Benchlands), Lower Wolf Creek, and another that is currently confidential.

By providing support to evaluate conservation lands, and funds to help purchase critical habitats, the FWCP is compensating for habitats lost to reservoir creation.

Including the purchase of the Geddes Creek Conservation Area (COL-F25-W-4154-DCA) by the Nature Conservancy of Canada near Radium Hot Springs, these four conservation properties add 565 hectares of conservation lands to our Columbia Region.

Managing invasive American bullfrogs

COL-F25-W-4144-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$48,565

West Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

ONA

American Bullfrog Management, Nelway/Pend d'Oreille: The objective for 2024 is to continue monitoring and managing the invasive American bullfrog population in the Nelway and Pend d'Oreille areas to prevent loss of biodiversity, assess nearby habitat capable of supporting bullfrog populations, and spread public awareness.

250 Invasive American bullfrogs captured and removed

This year, more than 250 bullfrogs were captured and removed from sites Nelway and area sites.

eDNA sampling was used to detect bullfrog presence.
Compared to past years, fewer bullfrogs were detected at the Beaver Pond site, but more were detected at Lomond Lake.

Approximately 250 people received stewardship information and signs to build awareness about this invasive species were installed at three locations.

Learn more

Strengthening Indigenous engagement in projects

COL-F25-W-4147-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$23,351

West Kootenay

Monitoring & Evaluation

iStock G. Kuchera

Smallwood artificial bat roost monitoring: This project will support monitoring artificial bat roosts at a site in our Columbia Region to better understand if t'ənt'anwiyaʔ (bats) are using this habitat.

Bat monitoring continues in West Kootenay

Annual monitoring of bat roosting habitat enhancements at Smallwood Creek, near Nelson, built in 2021, confirmed bat use at all monitored sites in 2024.

Monitoring included bat guano collection, bioacoustics monitoring, and temperature logging. Only minimal amounts of guano were collected, so six permanent guano traps were installed to improve future data collection.

A Syilx community member was trained in bat monitoring techniques, integrating Indigenous knowledge with conservation practices.

An interpretive sign was also installed in a high-activity area to enhance public awareness about the project.

Strengthening Indigenous engagement in projects

COL-F25-W-4148-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$9,485

West Kootenay

Research & Information Acquisition

V. Huff

Syilx Herbarium for the Preservation of Ethnobotany: This project supports FWCP's Indigenous engagement objective, and it will support Syilx communities and others to learn about ethnobotany in the eastern Syilx Nation traditional territory within our Columbia Region.

Ethnobotany project collects 53 specimens and 27 species

Project activities in the past year included public outreach and the successful collection and labelling of specimens.

A total of 48 species (53 specimens) in 24 families were ethically harvested from an elevation range between 421 metres and 1,557 metres, resulting in 27 species being mounted. Input from Syilx Elders and Knowledge Keepers ensured the cultural accuracy and integrity of the project.

Public engagement was enhanced through outreach materials (laminated specimens), social media and the attendance of 85 students and instructors at the ONA Project Lead speech in November 2024 at Selkirk College in Castlegar.

Securing critical habitats in our Columbia Region

COL-F25-W-4154-DCA

Nature Conservancy of Canada

$800,000

East Kootenay

Land Securement

NCC

Geddes Creek Land Securement: The construction of BC Hydro dams resulted in the loss of important valley bottom wildlife habitat. Each year, the FWCP's Columbia Region board allocates funding towards land-acquisition projects that strongly align with Columbia Region action plan priorities.

Geddes Creek: 193 hectares of Grizzly habitat secured

Funding approved previously by our board for land securement was allocated this year toward the purchase of the 193-hectare (477 acre) Geddes Creek Conservation Area in the East Kootenay, adjacent to Kootenay National Park.

This 193-hectare (477-acre) property north of Radium Hot Springs is on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains adjacent to Kootenay National Park and overlooks the Columbia Wetlands Wildlife Management Area in the valley bottom below. This conserves an important piece of the Radium wildlife corridor, identified by the Kootenay Connect initiative as an area critical for at-risk species and wildlife movement.

This is Grizzly bear habitat and the lands feature almost two-square kilometres of Douglas fir and montane spruce forest, plus open grassy habitat, and a seasonal creek north of Radium Hot Springs.

Improving health of ʔaq̓am grasslands

COL-F25-W-4164-DCA

ʔaq̓am

$56,910

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

Keefer Ecological Services Ltd.

Pre & Post Goat Grazing Monitoring: Twenty-one days of targeted grazing treatments were conducted on ʔaq̓am's Long Prairie and Adrian Lake grasslands in the summer of 2019.

Goats prevent the spread of invasives

Monitoring confirms that goats grazing on ʔaq̓am's Long Prairie and Adrian Lake grasslands near Cranbrook are preventing invasive plants from forming seeds and that's reducing the seed bank.

One hundred and fourteen plots where sulphur cinquefoil is present were monitored. Goats have been grazing on these plots since 2019. For a few weeks each year the goats graze at this location and monitoring confirms the goats are efficient at removing top growth of this invasive.

Learn more

Reducing bighorn sheep and vehicle collisions

COL-F25-W-4199-DCA

Shuswap Band

$50,665

East Kootenay

Habitat-based Action

Doell

Monitoring the Radium Wildlife Overpass: The Radium-Stoddart bighorn sheep herd has been declining since the 1990s. Approximately 10% of the herd is killed annually by vehicles. To mitigate these losses a wildlife overpass is being built on Highway 93/95, just south of Radium.

Project in progress

Securing Indigenous food sources

COL-F25-W-4316-DCA

Okanagan Nation Alliance

$50,019

West Kootenay

Research & Information Acquisition

L. Halverson

Syilx Chronic Wasting Disease Management Program: The project seeks to establish a Chronic Wasting Disease monitoring and surveillance program to prevent the spread of this fatal prion disease, which poses a significant threat to food security, public health, and Indigenous cultural practices.

Project in progress

Bighorn sheep habitat and migration corridors

COL-F25-W-4317-DCA

Akisqnuk First Nation

$39,655

East Kootenay

Research & Information Acquisition

A. Glass

Columbia Lake Bighorn Sheep Collaring Project: Akisq'nuk First Nation will deploy 10 GPS collars on bighorn sheep in the Columbia Lake herd to identify and assess the condition of lambing areas, post-natal habitats, over-wintering ranges, and seasonal migration corridors.

Project in progress