

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a campsite. In the foreground, a campfire is burning brightly in a metal fire pit, with large logs and flames visible. To the left, a young man in a blue jacket is sitting on the ground, looking towards the right. In the background, another person is playing an acoustic guitar. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a grassy area in the distance.

**KOOCANUSA**  
Recreation

2014 - 2023

**Acomplishments  
of the  
Koocanusa  
Recreation  
Steering  
Committee**

The Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee (KRSC) was formed in 2014 as a partnership between the Province of B.C., Ktunaxa Nation, Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔit (Tobacco Plains Band), Regional District of East Kootenay, and Columbia Basin Trust.

Since 2014, over \$1.6 million has been invested in recreation management and planning to enable residents and visitors to enjoy safe and sustainable recreation in the Koocanusa area. This report provides a summary of what was accomplished over the past decade.

## Hu sukitkuq'nata?ni kin wakit ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa

KRSC Respectfully acknowledges that the Koocanusa area is within the traditional and unceded territory of the ʔakanuxunik and Ktunaxa people. This holds significant cultural value for the Ktunaxa, including key ecosystems and water bodies, traditional and contemporary use areas, and archeological sites.



Jeff Zukiwsky is a land use planner who coordinated the Koocanusa Recreation project. Jeff invested over 4,000 hours to support the KRSC in developing and implementing the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Zukiwsky'.

Jeff Zukiwsky, RPP  
jeff@zumundo.com

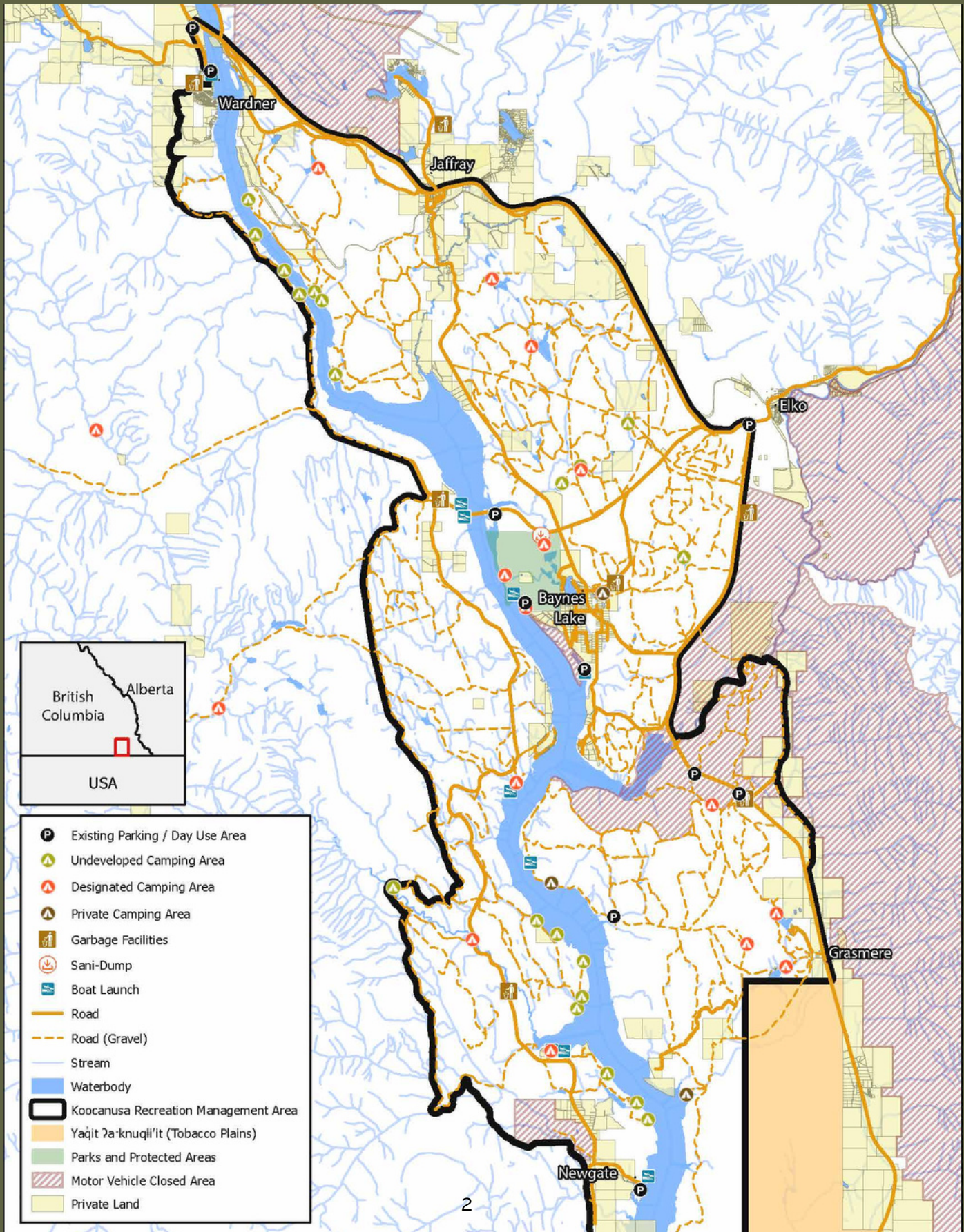
In partnership with:





# Koocanusa Area

The Koocanusa Recreation Management Area encompasses 570 square kilometres (57,000 hectares) extending from Wardner in the North to the United States border in the south. The area is regionally important tourism and recreation asset, attracting tens of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts for activities such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, wildlife viewing, and off-road vehicle use.





## Recreation management in the Koocanusa area should continue to be guided by the KRSC Vision and Guiding Principles

**Vision:** Public recreation use in the Koocanusa area enables residents and visitors to enjoy safe and sustainable recreation that respects important ecological, cultural and resource values and conserves what is unique, special and distinctive about the area.



- Encourage sustainable recreation use through improved information and education.
- Land use regulations are clearly communicated, and enforced where necessary.
- Respect and safeguard Ktunaxa cultural and archaeological values and resources.
- Reduce recreation impacts on existing tenured activities on public land.
- Avoid additional tax burdens on local residents, and develop approaches that are funded, at least in part, by recreation users.
- Build on previous recreation management planning processes and seek collaboration with future planning.
- Avoid measures that will result in relocating Koocanusa recreation management issues and conflicts to surrounding areas.
- Engage local residents and stakeholders with respect for diverse beliefs and values.
- Apply adaptive management approaches based on best available information to support flexible, integrated solutions.
- Encourage recreation that supports local economic development and provides benefits to local residents, businesses, recreation users and the Province.
- Ensure that the selection, development and maintenance of recreation sites and trails is conducted in accordance with accepted provincial guidelines and best management practices

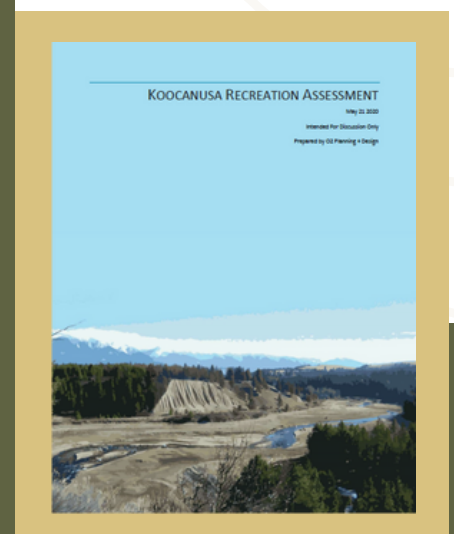
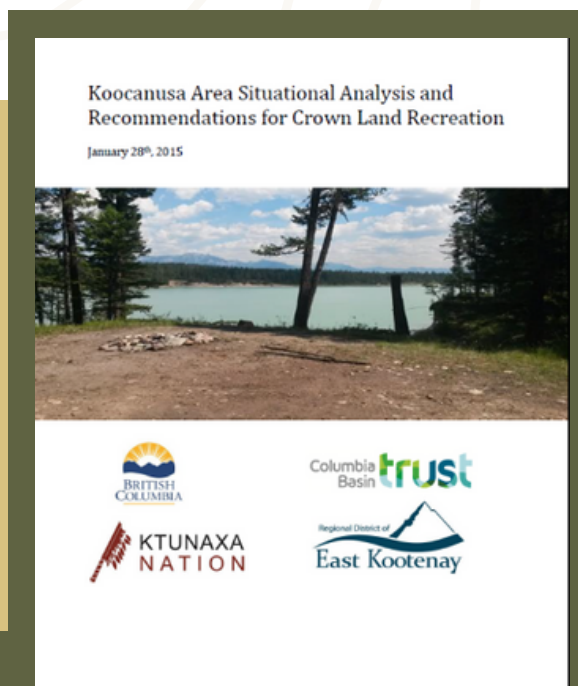
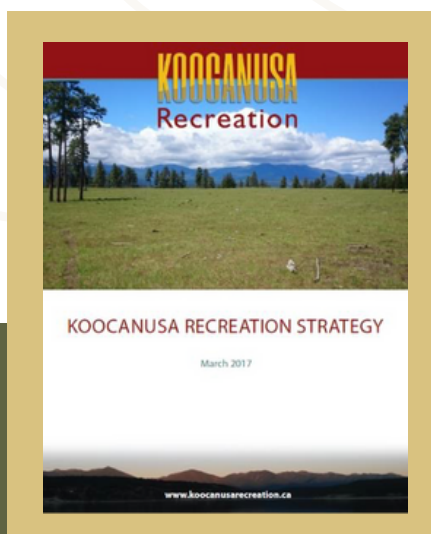


# Recreation Planning & Assessment

A situational analysis was commissioned in 2014 to help identify recreation management issues, gaps and challenges with current management approaches, and to provide a roadmap with recommendations for improved recreation management.

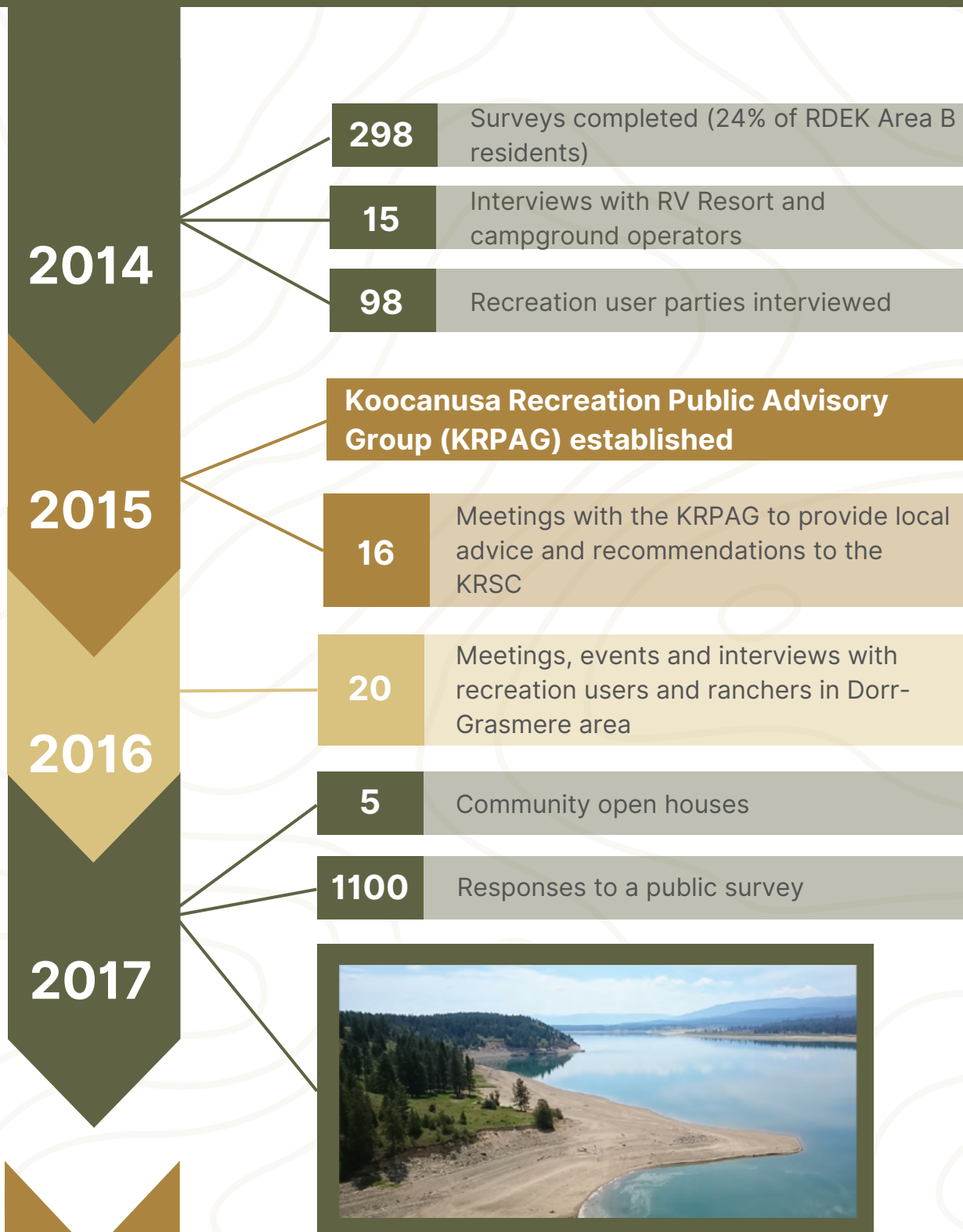
Recreation and trail assessments were completed in 2017 and 2020 to help understand recreation uses and issues on the ground, and to obtain recommendations for sustainable use and management.

A *Recreation Strategy for Koocanusa* was developed in 2017; this *Strategy* outlined various approaches to be implemented in the Koocanusa area, including improved education and communication, regulatory changes, increased enforcement, and improved recreation facilities.



# Community Engagement

Community engagement has been critical to the success to the of the KRSC. Recreation management and implementation has always been guided by input from local residents, stakeholders, and recreation users.





2018



100+

People attended 4 community open houses

191

Feedback forms completed

2019



244

Responses to public survey

3

Meetings and survey with Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it (Tobacco Plains) community

2021

72

Local stakeholders contacted for input (tenure holders, tourism operators, recreation user groups, etc.)

2022



# Key Milestones

**2014**

Koocanusa  
Recreation Steering  
Committee (KRSC)  
was formed

**2017**

Public consultation

Dorr-Grasmere recreation assessment

Koocanusa Recreation Strategy Developed

**2015**

Situation analysis report and  
recommendations

Koocanusa Recreation Public  
Advisory Group (KRPAG)  
formed

Inventory of important values

**2018**

Begin trail decommissioning  
and ecological restoration  
work in Dorr-Grasmere area

**2019**

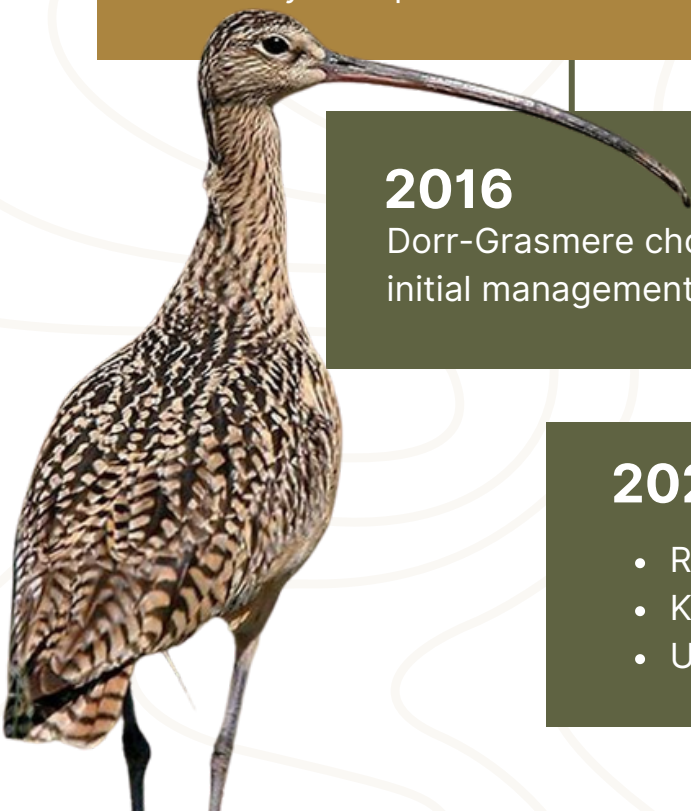
Establishment of  
designated trails and  
camping areas in  
Dorr-Grasmere area

**2016**

Dorr-Grasmere chosen for  
initial management efforts

**2020 - 2023**

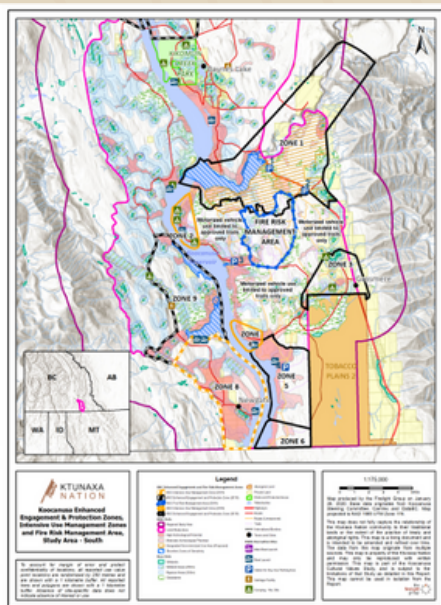
- Regulatory changes implemented
- Koocanusa Recreation Strategy updated
- Undeveloped camping areas identified





# Identifying Recreation Uses & Important Values

A key aspect of understanding appropriate recreation management strategies, is understanding where recreation users are going, determining the important values that exist, and ensuring those values are not degraded by recreation use.



**OVER \$50,000**

Invested to engage with Ktunaxa citizen, elders, knowledge holders, land users, staff, and leadership to identify and map Cultural Conservation Values in the Kootenai area.



**\$40,000**

Invested in GIS and mapping to maintain an online webmap and database of recreation uses and values, and to develop and print maps for planning and engagement sessions.



**\$56,000**

Invested in conducting archaeological assessments to identify important value areas and direct recreation use.



Comprehensive inventories on foot and bike were completed to identify recreation access roads, trails, camping areas, and parking areas across Kootenai. These inventories were used to inform recreation management strategies.



# Improving Education

A cornerstone of recreation management efforts is stewardship and education campaigns that support responsible recreation use and provide information to recreation users on how they can become better stewards while enjoying the area for its beauty and recreation opportunities.



**\$120,000+**

**34**

Invested since 2015 to design, print and install recreational signage across the Kootkanusa area.

informational kiosk signs are in place at prominent recreation access points

**KOOTKANUSA**  
Recreation  
Guidelines  
and Map

**35,000**



Brochures printed and distributed to recreation users across the Kootkanusa area since 2015.

The KRSC has maintained a website which has provided updated information to recreation users since 2015.

**\$6,500**

Invested in website development, maintenance and updates.

**7000+**

Unique website visitors per year

**63%**

of website visitors are from Alberta

**6**



Newsletter Campaigns

**179**



Subscribers

**81%**



Average Open Rate



# Compliance & Enforcement

The KRSC has continuously supported and advocated for improved compliance and enforcement of recreation-related offences in the Kootenai area.



Compliance and enforcement officers from the Conservation Officer Services have played an active role on the KRSC since its inception - ensuring management actions and strategies are enforceable and helping to set policy priorities for the area.

## \$280,000

Invested between 2015 and 2018 to support the Kootenai Recreation Steward program. Two additional Natural Resource Officers were deployed in the Kootenai area to improve education of recreation users and conduct enforcement.



The KRSC continues to support the ʔa·knusti (Ktunaxa Guardian) program. ʔa·knusti engage with Ktunaxa knowledge holders and citizens to celebrate Ktunaxa culture as it relates to stewardship, collect information that is used in decision-making, share Ktunaxa covenants, and uphold the stewardship-related laws of the land.

# Improving Ecological Values

Nearly

**\$500,000**

Invested in projects to improve ecological values degraded by unsustainable recreation use\*



\*This amount includes funding provided by the Province of BC, and leveraged through partnerships with other programs and organizations.



**BEFORE**

**100+**

Unauthorized and unsustainable recreation trails have been decommissioned and restored since 2017.



**AFTER**



**\$160,000**

Invested between 2020 and 2022 to support the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council to conduct invasive species treatments in areas impacted by recreation use.



# Regulatory Changes

Two major regulatory changes were initiated in the Kooacanusa Area

## Kooacanusa Recreation Management Area

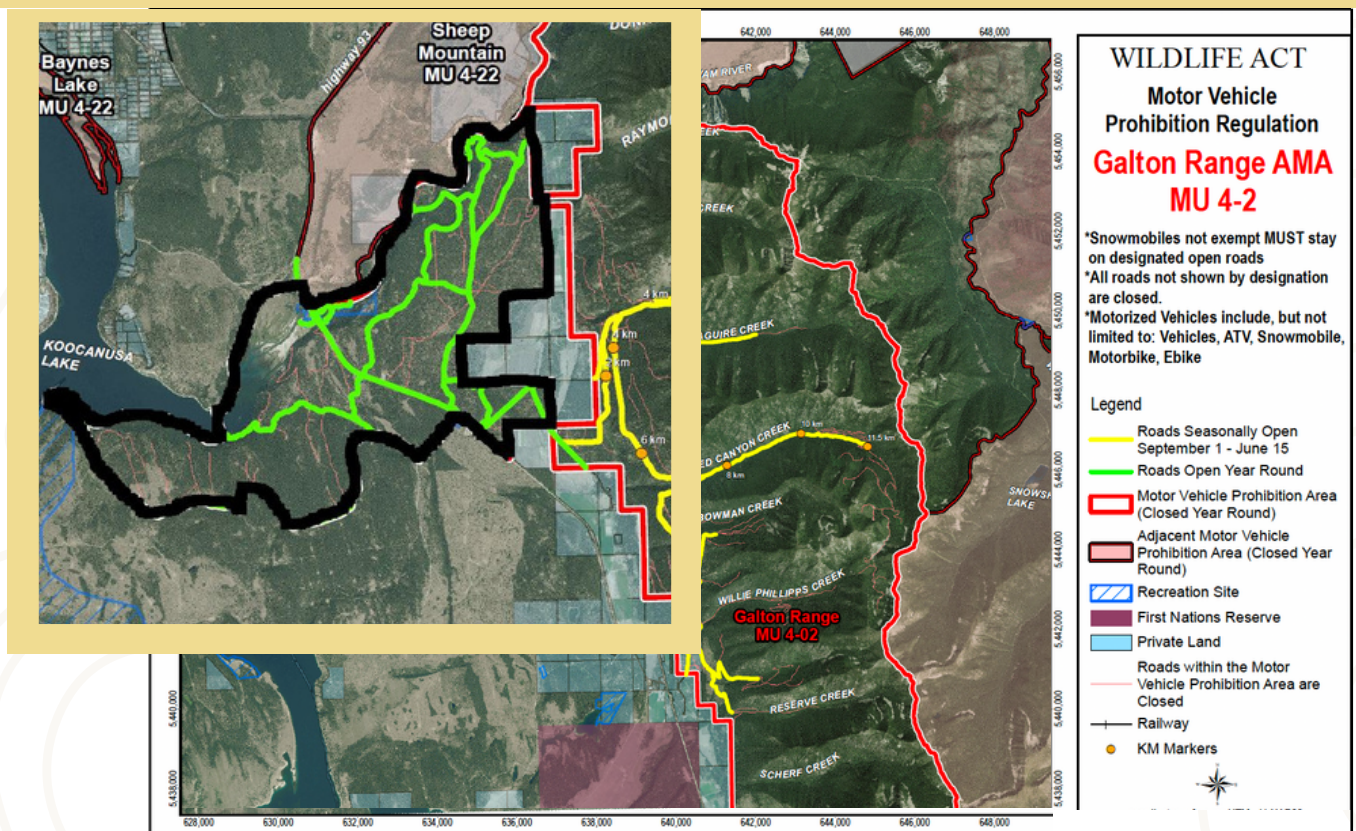
### RECREATION ORDER RESTRICTIONS APPLY

Motorized recreation and Crown land camping prohibited outside of designated roads, trails and campsites.

Mudbogging and other off-road vehicle use is prohibited and subject to enforcement and penalties.

In 2020, a Recreation Order was implemented across the Kooacanusa area. Pursuant to the Forest and Range Practices Act, motorized recreation is limited to designated roads and trails, and public land camping is permitted only in the designated sites and undeveloped camping areas identified in the Kooacanusa Recreation Strategy. The Kooacanusa Recreation Strategy was updated in 2021 to align with the BC Government's Recreation Order.

In 2020, the Galton Range Access Management Area (AMA) was expanded to include an additional Motor Vehicle Prohibition Regulation within the Kooacanusa area, protecting high value wildlife habitat along the Elk River corridor.





# Establishing Designated Recreation Trails



The KRSC has supported the establishment of designated trails for recreation users in the Kooicanusa area.



## 61 Kilometers

of single-track trails were designated for motorized recreation use.



## 3

New parking areas were established to support trail-based recreation users



## 21 KM

The 21 km Elk Rim Trail was re-established as a *non-motorized recreation trail*. It is a popular trail for mountain biking, running, and equestrian, particularly in the spring and fall seasons.



# Designating Camping Areas

The KRSC supported a regulatory change to permit camping in designated sites and undeveloped camping areas only.

305



Public camping sites for overnight recreation use exist in the Koocanusa area. These sites are located in Kikomun Creek Provincial Park, and at the nine existing recreation sites in the area at Wapiti, North Star, Suzanne Lake, Kikomun Creek, Loon Lake, Edwards Lake, Gold Creek Bay, Gold Creek and Englishman Creek.

20



20 locations were identified for undeveloped camping through the Koocanusa Recreation Strategy. Sites are marked with signage on the ground, and geo-referenced maps are provided on the website. 200 camping units can be accommodated at these sites.

2



Recreation Sites were established at Western Pine and Grasmere.

99%



Undeveloped camping areas cover about 95 hectares (0.15%) of the public land in the Koocanusa area. Overnight camping is not permitted on more than **99%** of the land base.



# Potential Next Steps

**Sustainable recreation management is an ongoing and collaborative process. Members of the KRSC continue to advocate for actions to improve recreation management in the Kootenai area and beyond. KRSC members see the following as important opportunities for continued sustainable recreation management:**

- Regulatory reform is required for improved recreation management. This includes tools that allow government to easily permit or restrict recreation uses in specific areas, and/or during specified times of the year or seasons.
- Compliance and enforcement agencies must have the ability to enforce recreation-related offences on public land, including for out-of-province visitors.
- A managed recreation approach on public land must continue to be pursued, with users being directed to designated camping areas, roads and trails.
- Maintaining and improving partnerships with the Ktunaxa / Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it Guardian (Aknusti) Program and continued presence of compliance and enforcement officers in the region.
- Continued education of recreation users including through updates to signage, brochure distribution and a dedicated website.
- Continued collaboration between government, First Nations and stakeholders.
- Sustained funding and resources for recreation management will be important to the ongoing success of this project.

**Please do your part to support this process!**

