



EAST KOOTENAY INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL



EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

2019 Summary

Thank you to our all those who supported EKISC's Education and Communication Program in 2019.

Funders:



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Table of Contents

2019 Education and Communication Program Overview	2
Education Summary	2
Outreach Events	3
Farmers' Markets	6
Special Events	6
EKISC Courses	6
Special Presentations	7
Weed Pulls	7
Indirect Events	7
Outreach Campaigns	8
Resources & Merchandise	9
Education Projects	10
Education Recommendations	12
Communication Summary	14
Success Metrics	14
Direct Marketing	14
Resources	14
e-Newsletter	16
Facebook Ads	16
Newspaper Articles and Published Ads	17
Indirect Marketing	18
Social Media	19
Facebook @EastKootenayInvasives	20
Twitter @EK_Invasives	22
Instagram @eastkootenayinvasives	23
Promotional Items and Resources	23
EKISC Branded Graphics	23
Promotional Items	25
Resources	26
2020 Communication & Marketing Recommendations:	26

2019 Education and Communication Program Overview

The East Kootenay Invasive Species Council's (EKISC) Education and Communications Program is responsible for the coordinated delivery of invasive species campaigns, professional development courses, public outreach, volunteer opportunities, and stakeholder support. Our vision is to provide professional education, training, and information to a variety of audiences. We strive to ensure that the public are informed of invasive species impacts and preventative methods, as well as the options available to learn more about invasive species management. EKISC's educational programming uses a variety of teaching methods to encourage the prevention and limit the spread of invasive species. Current education and outreach programming include direct and indirect outreach through a variety of courses, special presentations, activities, and field-based restoration initiatives.

EKISC's communication program uses multiple platforms to deliver invasive species messaging and information to target audiences. Currently, a combination of communication resources are used, including: print publications, EKISC branded website, social media (including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), newspapers, online newsletters, and outreach events.

EDUCATION SUMMARY

In 2019, the Education and Communications Manager and one Education Assistant were responsible for delivering the educational program and communication activities. Additional EKISC staff and board members also contributed to the reach of the education program through indirect event attendance.

Overall, EKISC's education program was involved in 96 events between January and December 2019. Events were held across the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) with a focus at events in more populated areas, where support and correspondence with particular groups was dominant, and where staff availability could be maximized. EKISC borders other regional, provincial, and international jurisdictions; where practical, the education and communications program extended its reach to include outreach and communication in these areas. Figure 1 illustrates the majority of events were hosted in each of the two largest cities within the RDEK, Invermere and Cranbrook. It is worth noting that the smaller education program in 2019 (EKISC hired one assistant, rather than two in previous years) affected the program's ability to support more events or projects on the in the smaller communities of the RDEK.

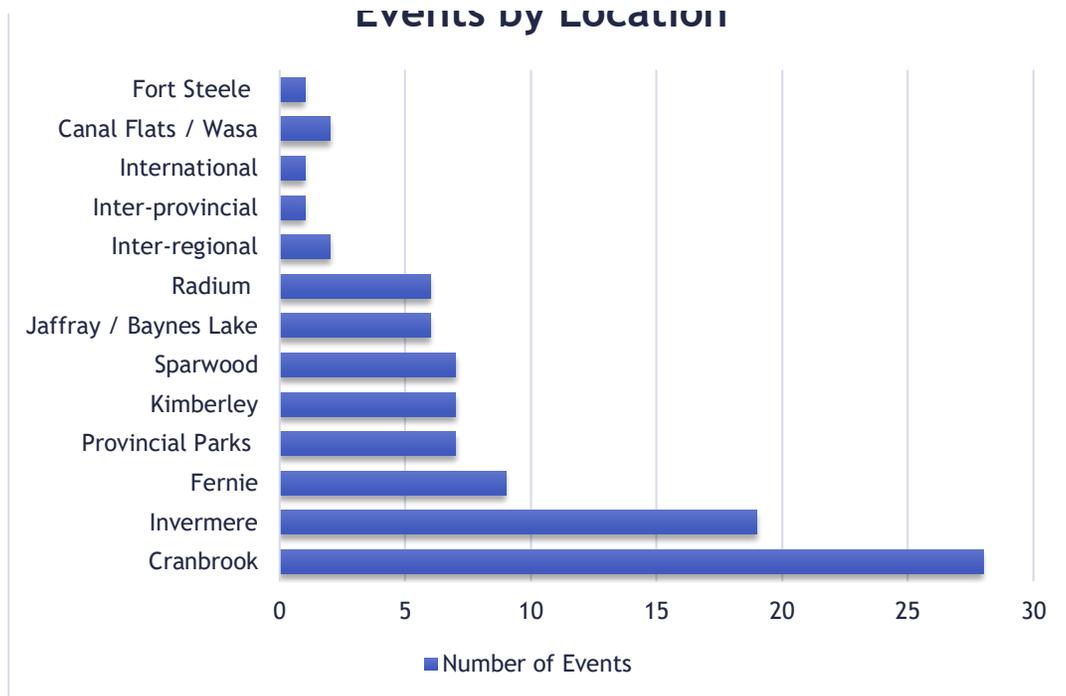


Figure 1: Number of events by location in 2019.

OUTREACH EVENTS

EKISC varies the type of outreach and education events hosted and/or attended to ensure programming is inclusive to various social groups and members of the public, people of different learning styles, target areas of the East Kootenay, and includes a variety of campaigns and messaging.

Each event is categorized on a specific type of outreach:

1. Farmers' Market outreach booth: Farmers' Markets consist of the outreach tent and an Education Assistant distributing resources, selling native plants and EKISC merchandise, and engaging the public in conversations about invasive species.
2. Special Event: These events consist of the same activities as above, as well as interactive displays/games (e.g. bean bag toss and zebra mussel shake) and chances to win prizes.
3. EKISC's courses or workshops: This category consists of EKISC specific courses that EKISC has designed, including: plant identification, art-based workshops, management technique courses, general invasive species information programs. These courses are usually publicly advertised.
4. Special Presentations: These presentations are EKISC courses or workshops that have been designed or personalized for a specific audience or group such as municipalities, recreational clubs, or industry. These presentations are usually requested by the group.
5. Weed Pulls and restoration projects: These projects consist of groups or organizations coming together to pull weeds from a specific area of interest. In some cases, this also means spreading native seed, planting native species, and making amendments to the soil to help these new plants grow.

6. Indirect events: Indirect events are hosted by other organizations that EKISC staff or board members attend and may or may not give invasive species information to participants. In comparison, events hosted by other organizations where EKISC does a presentation are considered 'special presentations.' This category also shows a commitment to EKISC's professional development and dedication to creating and maintaining partnerships.

EKISC has had increased success in delivering detailed and specific training to a number of specialized user groups in the last year; 51% of the education programming in 2019 was based on pre-designed and direct-targeted courses, workshops, and special presentations (Figure 2).

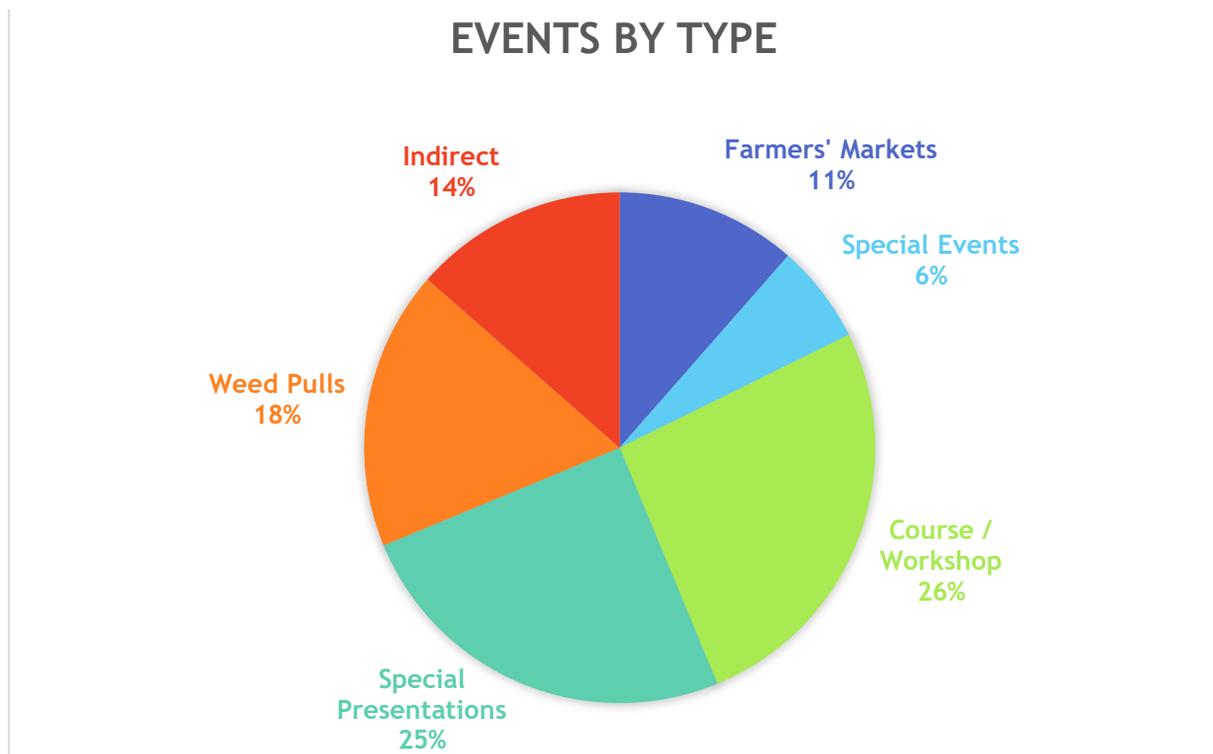


Figure 2: Number of events by type delivered in 2019

EKISC categorizes events into active and passive engagement approaches. Passive engagement does not target a specific audience or utilize specific programming. These events rely on a broadcast of (usually) various information and many people to consume the information at will. Passive engagement includes farmers' market and special event type outreach tables and displays, or brochures at a partner's table or a mail-out campaign. For the purposes of tracking, indirect events are also included in passive engagement.

Active engagement allows the delivery of specific messaging and information to a direct reach target audience using a prepared presentation, program, or activity such as workshops, courses, special presentations, and weed pulls. These events target a specific group of people, have high engagement levels, and are mostly attended by people who have participated in previous passive engagement opportunities.

Of the 96 events attended and presented in 2019, EKISC used active program engagement 65% of the time and passive engagement 35% of the time (Figure 3). This was an increase from 57% active engagement in 2018.

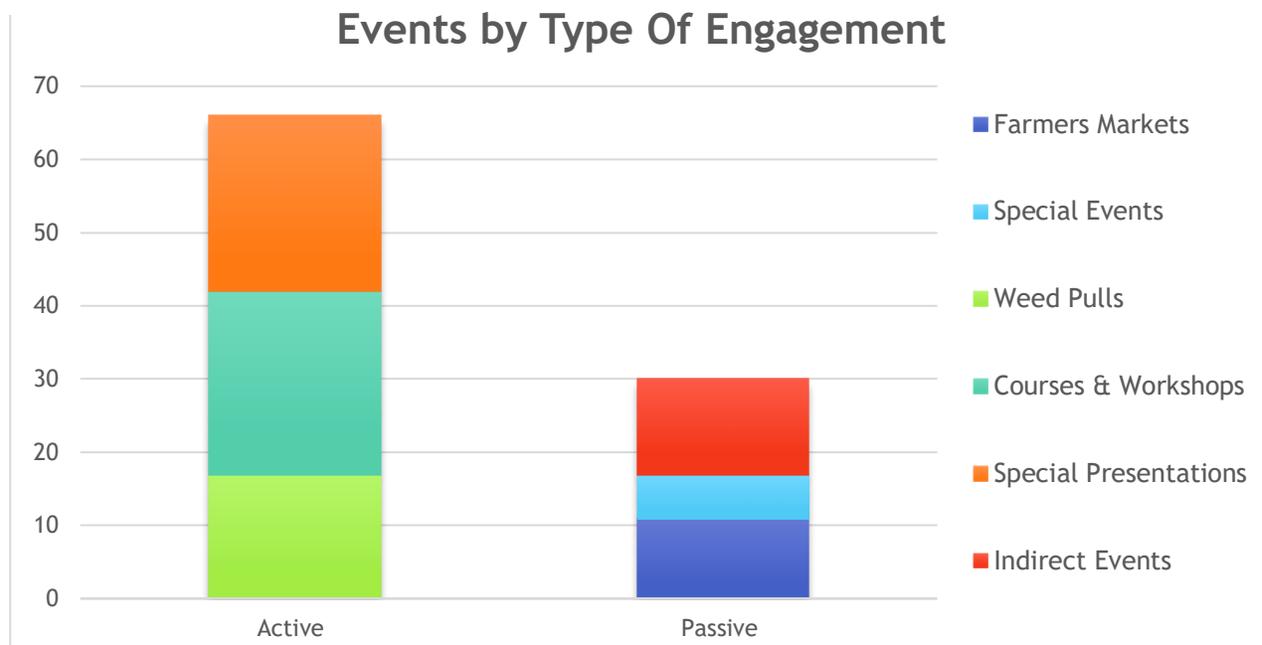


Figure 3: Engagement by program type in 2019.

EKISC tracked the number of people reached at each event and categorized reach in three ways:

1. Target audience: This refers to the overall reach, or the total number of people who attended the event, including if EKISC did or did not interact with them.
2. Indirect reach: The total number of people who visited the booth or walked by and glanced at EKISC resources, read a sign, or took a brochure or sticker, but did not directly engage in conversation or purchase an item.
3. Direct reach: The total number of people who engaged with EKISC either through conversation, workshops, purchased merchandise, or in some way interacted with EKISC in a meaningful way.

In 2019 EKISC had a target audience of 5,902 people, a decrease of over 9,000 people from 2018. Of that audience, 2,555 people were indirectly reached, and 2,793 people had direct engagement with EKISC. These numbers represent a decrease of 2,418 people indirectly reached, and an increase of 328 people directly engaged in 2019 compared to 2018. Figure 4 shows the total reach by event in 2019.

The decrease in the number of indirect events and engagements in 2019 was largely due to having only one Education Assistant. Indirect events, such as Sam Steele Days in Cranbrook attracts a large number of people; therefore, the effects on the target audience, or overall reach, changes significantly when EKISC cannot attend these events. A decrease in the target audience results in a decrease of the number of people EKISC is able to indirectly interact with. This year, with the decrease in staff, EKISC chose to focus on direct targets and we were able to increase our capacity to engage individuals directly.

Farmers' Markets

EKSIC attended 11 farmers' markets throughout most municipalities in the RDEK, a decrease from 17 markets in 2018. The target audience for all markets was 3,050, indirect reach of 1,200, and direct reach of 975 people. Farmers' markets represented 52% of the total target audience for the year, 40% of the indirect reach of the year, and 38% of the direct reach.

Farmers' markets make up a large portion of the reach for EKISC and these events include a large number of people who are visiting the RDEK from outside the regional boundary. Farmers' markets are a great way to spread the word throughout the local community and tourist population.

Recommendations for 2020:

- The City of Cranbrook and Kimberley do not allow non-profit organizations to attend more than one farmers' market per year; EKISC could attend farmers' markets as a 'business' selling items (t-shirts, native plants, Plant ID books, salves, and seeds) in order to increase awareness knowledge in local communities.
- The promotion of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities began in 2019, however promotional operational capacity needs to be increased in 2020; training on public interactions will help EKISC staff engage people.
- Ensure there is adequate change for the float and that merchandise is accounted for in tracking sheets. Square reader / iPad should be fully charged and used.

Special Events

EKSIC attended 6 special events with an overall target audience of 818, indirect reach of 268, and direct reach of 182 people. These outreach events represented 14% of the total target audience for the year, 10% of the indirect reach of the year, and 7% of the direct reach.

Many of the special events from 2018 were not attended in 2019 due to event cancellations and lack of staff and resources. Many of these events encourage interaction with the outreach booth and offer giveaways or prizes for participation. Unlike farmers' markets, which generalize and promote all campaigns, these markets *usually* have a focus depending on the type of event. For example, the Paddle Palooza in Invermere focuses on *Clean, Drain, Dry* messaging; specifically targeting recreational boaters to clean their equipment before and after going on the lake, therefore giving purpose and context to invasive species from the perspective of recreational canoeists, kayakers, swimmers, SUP users, and others.

Recommendations for 2020:

- The location of the event tent plays a large role in whether the event is successful or not. In most cases it is best to be close to other tents (preferably with similar messaging).
- Engagement is key with these events; be sure to maintain engagement through an activity, game, give-away, or contest.
- Increased staffing would allow EKISC to attend more of these special events.

EKISC Courses

EKISC held 25 courses or workshops in 2019. The target audience for these events was 369, reaching 387 people indirectly and 373 people directly. These outreach events represented 6% of the total target audience for the year, 14% of the indirect reach of the year, and 15% of the direct reach.

These events include specific courses that EKISC has designed, including: plant identification, art-based workshops, management technique courses, general invasive species information programs which cater to a certain user group or audience. Targeting audiences like this, allows the instructor to provide information that is more relative and specific to the interests of the group; therefore, engagement tends to be higher than generalized events. Many of these events require pre-registration, and in some cases, a fee for service is charged to cover classroom rental, extra resources, staff travel, and workshop supplies.

Recommendations for 2020:

- Many of these events require a pre- and/or post-engagement survey or follow-up email with resources. Be sure to maintain records of these in Survey Monkey and/or an email follow-up folder.

Special Presentations

EKISC held 22 special presentations in 2019. The target audience for these events was 894 reaching 820 people indirectly and 813 people directly. These presentations represented 15% of the total target audience for the year, 29% of the indirect reach of the year, and 32% of the direct reach.

These presentations are EKISC courses or workshops that have been designed or modified for a specific audience or group such as municipalities, recreational clubs, or industry. These presentations can be funded specifically and are usually requested by a specific group. Some examples include: BC Parks interpretive events, open houses, school presentations, and Lake Keepers workshops.

Weed Pulls

Weed pulls are a large component of the educational programming with EKISC; they are often some of the most memorable and engaging ways for the community to learn about invasive plants, and an opportunity for individuals to take part in the fight against them. As with special presentations, courses, and workshops, these events are often very engaging to the target audience and have high reach. This year the EKISC education team hosted 16 educational weed pulls with a target audience of 246 people, with indirect reaches at 220 and direct reach 189 people. Weed pull events represented 4% of the total target audience for the year, 8% of the indirect reach of the year, and 7% of the direct reach. Overall, 85 bags of invasive plant material was collected.

Weed pulls offer great partnership opportunities and are most successful when the partner organization has a pre-established group of volunteers who use the weed pull as a community stewardship project.

Recommendations for 2020:

- Keep track of the number and weight of bags pulled at each event.
- Continue to partner with other organizations.
- More weed pulls can be accomplished if more partners are contacted earlier in the year, particularly school groups (contact late in April to organize pulls in May and June).

Indirect Events

Twelve indirect events were attended in 2019 representing a target audience of 525 people, with indirect reaches at 285, and direct reach 236 people. These events represented 9% of the total target audience for the year, 10% of the indirect reach of the year, and 9% of the direct reach.

These events are hosted by other organizations where EKISC staff or board members attend the event and may or may not give invasive species information to participants. The events offer highly valued networking and professional development; often translating to future projects, partnerships, funding, and insight.

Recommendations for 2020:

- Continue to increase the number of indirect events that staff and board members attend.

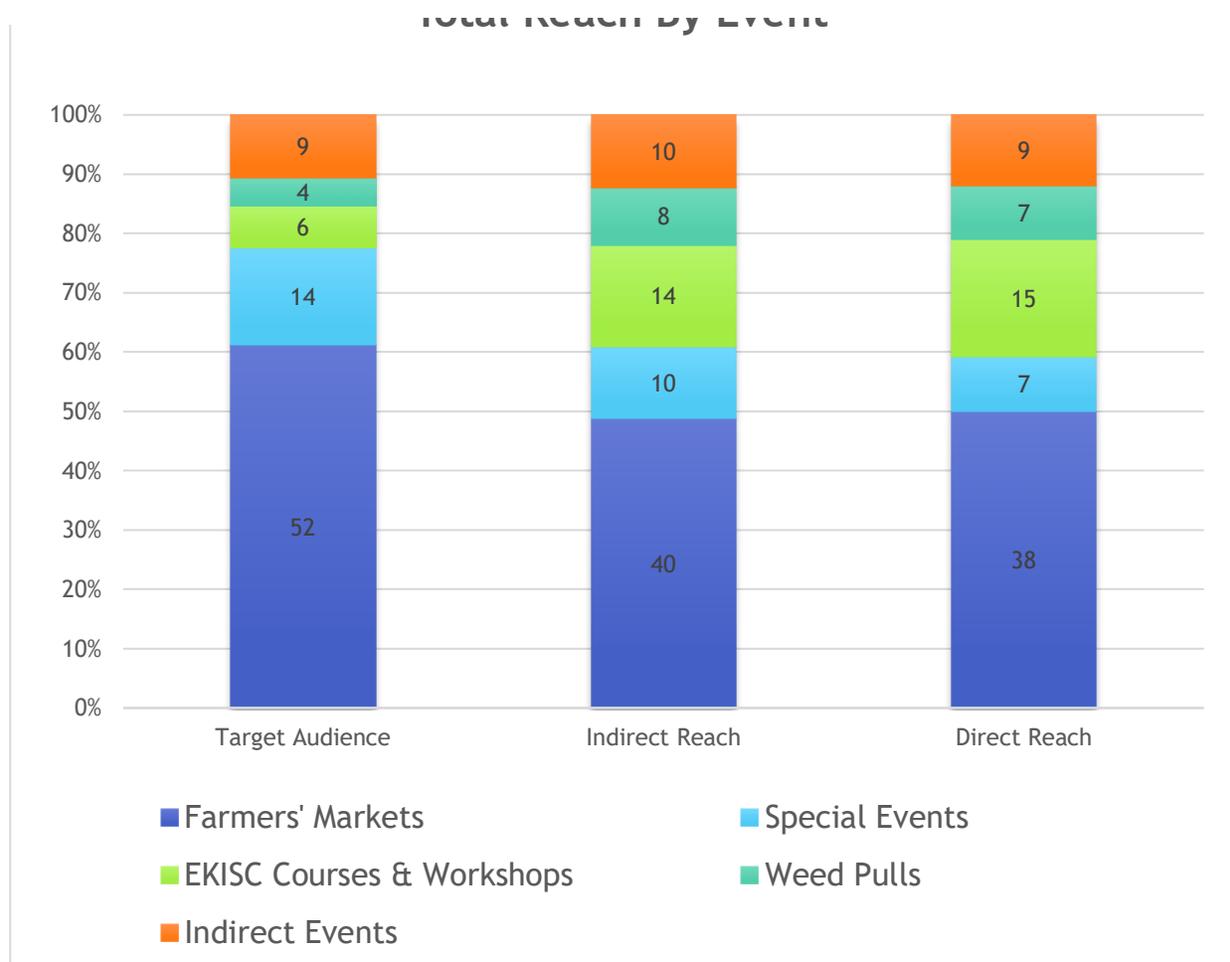


Figure 4: Overall, indirect, and direct for all events in 2019.

OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS

In addition to EKISC's own programming, we are ambassadors and partners for existing national and provincial campaigns; we ensure the delivery of these programs where appropriate and at a variety of events. These campaigns include *Play, Clean, Go*; *Clean, Drain, Dry*; *PlantWise*; *Grow Me Instead*; *Burn It Where You Buy It*; and *Don't Let it Loose*.

In 2019, 15 events included all campaigns; 10 focused specifically on *Clean, Drain, Dry* campaigning; 6 focused on the *PlantWise* or *Grown Me Instead* campaign; 2 focused specifically on *Don't Let it Loose*; 2 on *Play, Clean, Go*; 28 were specific to EKISC programming; and 32 were categorized as 'other' or likely pertaining to events that EKISC attended indirectly or to weed pulls (Figure 5); 14% of the events

focused specifically on aquatic invasive species (AIS), 29% focused solely on terrestrial invasive species (TIS), and the remaining 57% of events applied a combination of both aquatic and terrestrial information.

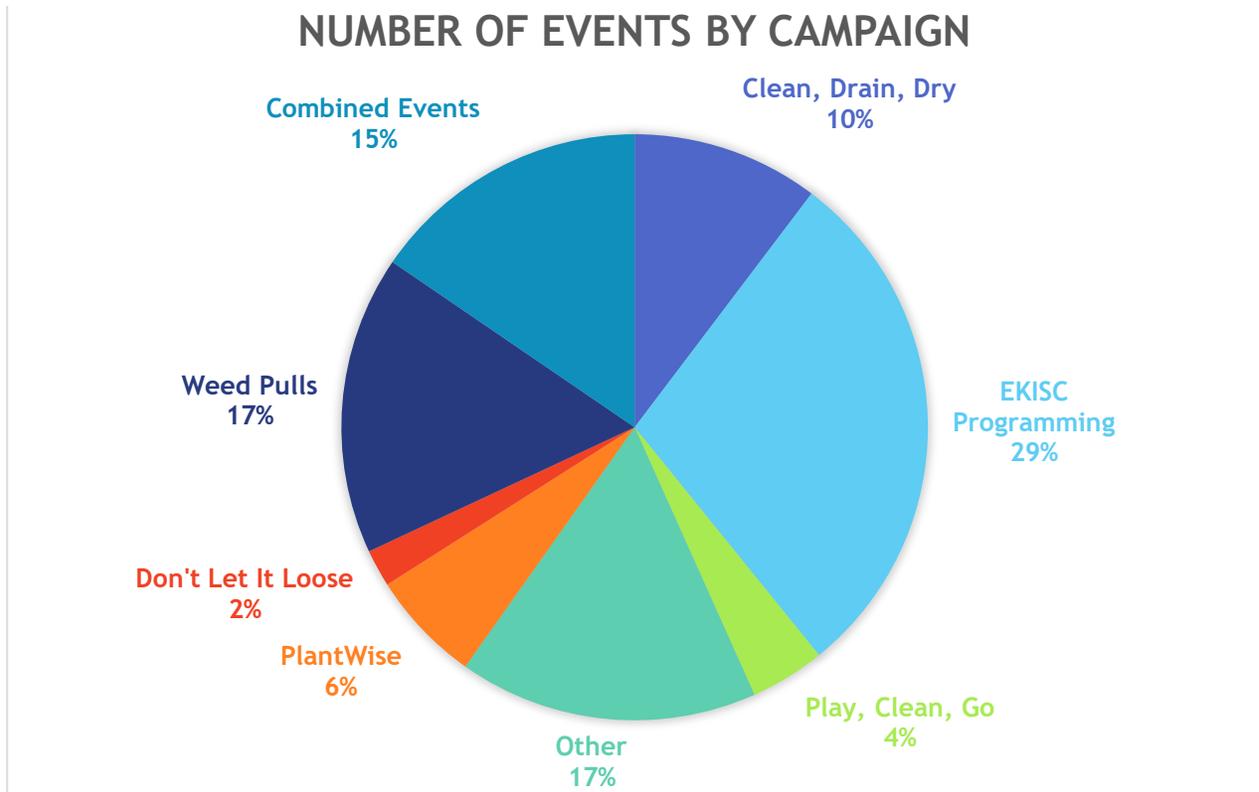


Figure 5: Number of Events by Programming.

Clean, Drain, Dry Pilot Project

The Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC) partnered with EKISC in 2019 to expand Clean Drain Dry (CDD) messaging throughout the region via signage and resources. Our CDD partnership agreement included installing 14 signs throughout the region and promoting CDD messaging at events. A full report of the CDD project delivery was submitted to the ISCBC in October 2019.

RESOURCES & MERCHANDISE

Resource distribution via brochure runs and event distribution was tracked through the year. The total number of resources distributed at events in 2019 was 1,332 items while the total number of resources distributed by hand to businesses and partners was 290.

EKISC sells a variety of merchandise as a way of engaging support for our education program. The merchandise can be purchased from our online store, at farmers’ markets, or directly from EKISC staff. EKISC also sells native plants during the summer at farmers’ markets. The chart below shows the amount of merchandise sold at farmers’ markets and online in 2019; totaling just over \$800.00 in merchandise. The money from sales of merchandise is used to purchase more merchandise and help support the education and outreach program.

2019	Biodiversity Seed Mix (\$5)	Plant ID Book (\$5)	Native Plants (\$3)	Skin Salve (\$10)	Water Hat (\$20)	Grass Hat (\$20)	Total
Items Sold Online	5	2		1			8
Items Sold Markets	38	9	23	5	12	11	98
Total Revenue	215	55	69	60	240	220	859

Recommendations for 2020:

- Connect with businesses and partners that had resources distributed in 2019.
- Add resource funding requests to grant applications for 2020 and beyond.
- Get plants from Tipi Mountain Native Plants Nursery early in the season to sell at Seedy Saturdays and at early farmers' markets.

EDUCATION PROJECTS

Projects are an important part of the education and communication program. In 2019, the EKISC education assistant was asked to complete several projects throughout the summer.

Watercolour Paint Making Video Project: A video of how to make your own watercolours from weeds was created and put up on our YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy0HYK2k4QA&t=9s>

Report A Weed App Use Video: A very basic video was made to direct users how to use the Report-A-Weed App. The video can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_h3QtLAeoo

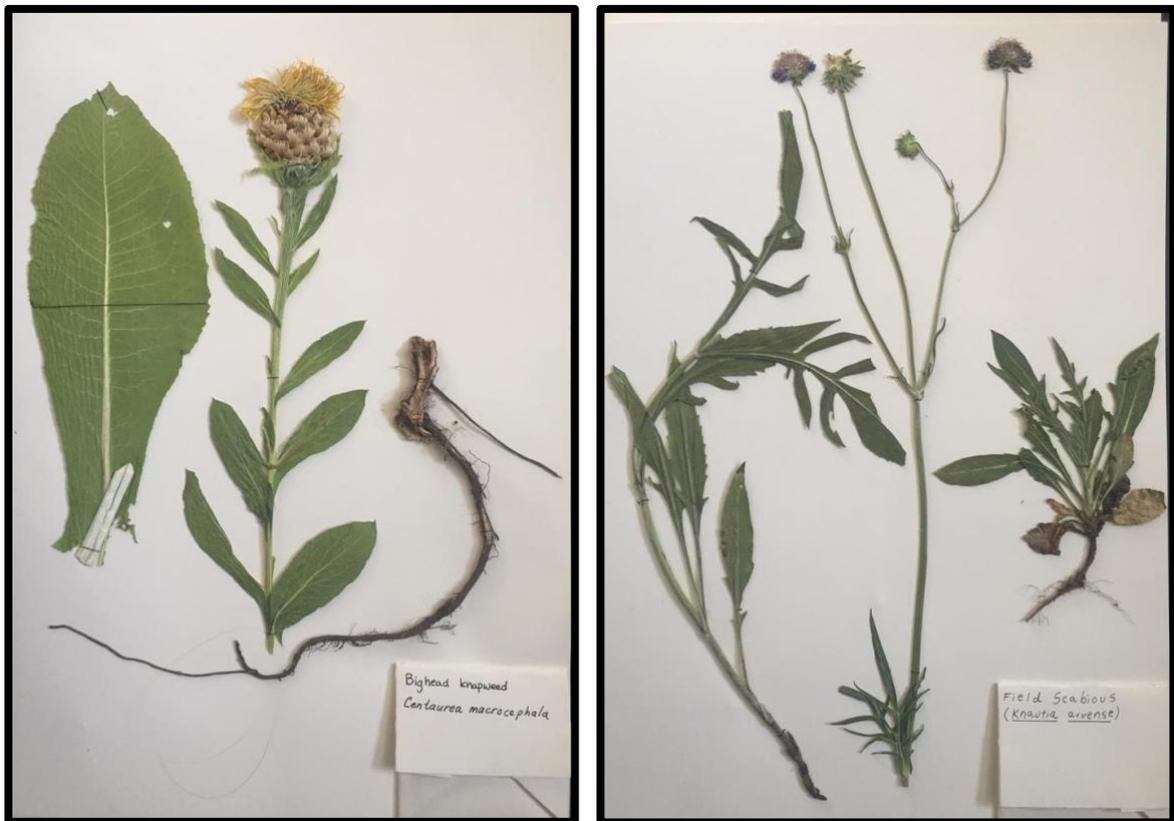
Waldron Ranch Video: Leafy Spurge: Another video was also created during the Southwest Alberta Invasive Species Management tour. The video showcases the use of biological control and sheep grazing to control a large leafy spurge infestation. The video is also available on the YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFsKtlfCQH8&t=3s>

Engagement Project: EKISC wanted to physically link the issue of invasive species to individuals who may not normally be interested in invasive species education or management. The idea behind the engagement project was to bring public awareness of the impacts of invasive species by engaging with the invasive plants in a meaningful way. EKISC's "Weeds and Watercolours" workshop was born from this idea. EKISC hosted the workshop in Fernie, Cranbrook, and Invermere, and attracted dozens of people. Participants were instructed on how to create a painting using watercolours derived from various invasive plant species. Each participant created a to bring home. During the workshop, participants discussed issues and personal experiences with invasive plants, as well as best harvesting practices in the field.



EKISC Herbarium Project: This project was created to showcase well preserved samples of invasive species in the area. In 2019 we collected and preserved 10 species on herbarium paper. These samples are now used for teaching plant ID courses.



EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The education team had a successful season. Some key recommendations moving forward will help ensure the success continues and goals are met:

1. Horticulture Industry/ *Plantwise* campaign:
 - a. Re-visit or contact garden centers early in the year (February) before they start to stock up. Perhaps mail out packages with a follow up phone call instead of visiting garden centers.
 - b. Continue partnership with Tipi to sell native plant species.
 - c. Engage earlier with Seedy Saturday events throughout the region (some pop up in early February planning).
 - d. Continue to host point-of-sale donation boxes for people to purchase *Biodiversity Seed Mixes*; consider expanding this project to more locations (currently at Home Hardware in Invermere and Top Crop in Cranbrook).
2. Real Estate:
 - a. Contact real estate agents with a mail out package including information on how to obtain professional development points for engaging with EKISC courses.
 - b. Offer a webinar for agents to take on their own time.
 - c. Offer the course as continuing education / professional development credits to realtors.
3. Weed Pulls:

- a. Continue to encourage community groups to host weed pulls and make them aware of the requirements to earn the stipend for their club.
 - b. Ask people to sign up for weed pulls and other upcoming events at outreach table.
4. Farmers' Markets and Non-market Events:
- a. Consider purchasing another EKISC themed outreach tent set-up and have 2 teams working simultaneously in different parts of the region. Hire a second education assistant.
 - b. Ensure that farmers' markets in *a//* municipalities are attended to in the peak months of the season (June through September).
 - c. Continue selling Plant ID Books, EKISC merchandise, and native plants at the markets.
5. General Recommendations:
- a. Continue to attend training courses and professional development offered through the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN); they are a wonderful way to stay connected with our education network, learn new education techniques, and make new contacts.
 - b. Education Assistant training:
 - i. Start educational projects early in the season before the busy outreach events start (i.e.: media projects, workshop projects, herbarium additions, photographing).
 - c. Coordination and Management:
 - i. The Education and Communications Manager should communicate with the field operations department regularly throughout the summer; schedule time to participate in operational activities.

COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

EKISC's communication program is responsible for the delivery of invasive species messaging through marketing and advertising, presenting news and updates, promoting campaigns, scheduling courses and presentations, and endorsing the vision of EKISC. Our vision is to provide up to date information about invasive species from a local perspective and beyond. We strive to ensure the public are informed of the work of EKISC and our partners and that EKISC is seen as a supportive and transparent not-for-profit council.

In 2019, EKISC's marketing and advertising was delivered through social media, partnering with other organizations on social media to give us 'shout-outs', advertising in the Wings Over the Rockies program, and Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine, some newspaper advertisements, brochure and rack card delivery to target retailers, and updating the search engine optimization (SEO) on our website. EKISC also uses outreach events and word-of-mouth as main streams of advertising and awareness.

SUCCESS METRICS

Success for marketing and communications is currently being assessed in the following ways:

- Social media insight numbers
- Website metrics
- Reach (direct and in-direct) at events
- Post-event or presentation surveys
- Resource distribution

DIRECT MARKETING

In 2019, EKISC used direct marketing in the form of email marketing, social media ads, resources distribution, ad placement in key publications, and newspaper articles. To measure the success of EKISC's marketing and advertising efforts, reach calculation and cost benefit analysis were done.

Resources

Overall, EKISC distributed ~1,222 resources at the 96 events attended in 2019. These resources included rack cards, brochures, stickers, tattoos, and plant ID guides. Merchandise sold or donated for various reasons are not included in this number.

EKISC also delivered 10 brochure packages to key retail locations across the RDEK (see contents below). Packages with information relative to each business were delivered in May as the assistants were attending some of the first events of the year.

Plantwise Package Contents

- 1 *Grow Me Instead* booklet
- 5 Protect the Kootenays from Terrestrial Invasive Species brochures
- 10 *Grow Me Instead* brochures
- 15 *Grow Me Instead* wallet cards
- 5 Invasive Plants are Everyone's Problem bookmarks
- 1 *Plantwise* Partnership Program sheet
- 1 Be *PlantWise* tips sheet
- 1 T.I.P.S sheet



Clean, Drain, Dry Package Contents

- 4 Prohibited Aquatic Invasive Species book
- 10 Aquatic Invasive Species wallet cards
- 5 Protect our Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species brochures
- 5 Protect B.C. Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species rack cards
- 5 Has your Watercraft Been Outside of B.C. in the last 30 days? rack cards



Play Clean Go Package Contents

For Mountain Biking Outlets (e.g., GearHub sports)

- 20 *Play, Clean, Go* - Give Invasive Species the Brushoff (**green**) rack cards
- 10 T.I.P.S How to Get on the Right Track to Weed Prevention! brochures

For Motorsports Dealerships (e.g., Peak Performance)

- 20 *Play, Clean, Go* - Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks (**blue**) rack card
- 10 T.I.P.S How to Protect our Natural Resources from Invasive Plants brochures

For Camping, Outdoor Outfitters, Fly Fishing stores (e.g., Mountain Man)

- 20 *Play, Clean, Go/ Buy it Where You Burn It* (**red**) rack cards
- 10 T.I.P.S How to Protect our Natural Resources from Invasive Plants brochures

e-Newsletter

In 2019, EKISC sent out 12 monthly e-Newsletters to our subscribers via email and link sharing on our website and social media accounts. Success in engaging the reader improved from 2018. This was because we eliminated bounced email addresses and cleaned up the subscribers list. Below is a table of the distribution and related action from each e-Newsletter.

EKISC is well above the averages for email marketing statistics; the average open rate being between 15 – 30 % and average click rate between 2 – 5%.

Month	Total People newsletter sent to	Total Opened	Total clicks	Delivery Percentage	Open Percentage	Click Percentage
January	303	179	32	95	59	11
February	185	123	29	99	66	16
March	173	116	45	100	67	26
April	168	123	21	100	73	13
May	197	121	15	99	61	8
June	159	114	20	100	72	13
July	205	123	10	100	60	5
August	197	129	19	99	65	10
September	225	139	17	99	62	8
October	187	129	12	99	69	6
November	117	73	11	99	62	9
December	177	117	15	96	66	8
Total	2293	1486	246			
Average	192	124	20	99	65	11

Facebook Ads

Overall, Facebook advertising was effective. EKISC boosted 7 Facebook posts between January 1 and December 31, 2019 and spent a total of \$300.00 USD reaching 23,372 people and engaging 205 people with the ads.

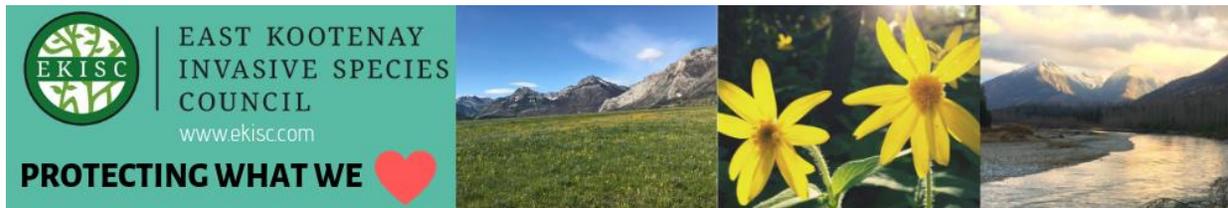
Newspaper Articles and Published Ads

Media articles are unpaid but represent a good amount of publicity for EKISC in terms of keeping the public informed of who EKISC is, what they do, and what's happening within the invasive species world. EKISC was mentioned in and/or produced 28 stories that made headlines in 2019:

Date	Media	Title/ Link
01 March 2019	CBWN Newsletter	Member Spotlight
01 May 2019	Mainstreams Newsletter	Selkirk Leadership Class Pulls Invasives from Mark Creek
03 May 2019	Columbia Valley Pioneer	Pair of Invermere paddling events set to stoke for summer season
19 April 2019	e-know.ca	The impacts of invasive species
15 May 2019	e-know.ca	City treating noxious and invasive weeds
16 May 2019	e-know.ca	Volunteers help restore Sinclair Creek
16 May 2019	Columbia Valley Pioneer	Wings Over the Rockies Spotlight
22 May 2019	Cranbrook Townsman	Weed Warrior Frank: Dandelions
24 May 2019	Kimberley Bulletin	Weed Warrior Frank: Dandelions
31 May 2019	Kimberley Bulletin	The plight of the honeybee
01 June 2019	KCP Newsletter	Columbia Valley Directors tour Local Conservation Fund projects
30 June 19	Columbia Valley Pioneer	Just what are we testing for in these waters?
02 July 2019	Cranbrook Townsman	Invasive species council gets funding for mussel testing
2 July 19	HCTF Website	East Kootenay Invasive Mussels Monitoring Continues
2 July 19	e-know.ca	Invasive Mussel Monitoring Continues in the Region
5 July 19	BCLocal News	Invasive species council gets funding for mussel testing

6 July 19	Kimberley Bulletin	Wildsight hosts weed pull and tell at Marysville Eco Park
16 July 19	Columbia Lake Stewardship Society Newsletter	Tackling Spreading Knapweed Along the Lake
30 July 19	Kimberley Bulletin	
31 July 19	e-know.ca	Tackling Spreading Knapweed Along the Lake
05 Aug	Kimberley Bulletin	Volunteers needed for knapweed pull in Cherry Meadows Conservation Area
20 Sept	e-know.ca	Plants That Sting and Burn
28 Oct	e-know.ca	Fighting Back Against Invasive Weeds
06 November	fernle.com	Local Management of Invasive Plants Showcased
06 November	e-know.ca	Invasive plants management showcased at open house

EKISC placed an advertisement in the 2018 Wings Over the Rockies flyer. The cost was \$300, and it was printed and distributed to 17,000 people before and during the 7-day event. Overall, this resource relayed a positive message to the Wings Over the Rockies community; however, there was no way of tracking the reach of the advertisement. Future recommendations are to place a unique link in the ad and analyzing the results of that link.



The full flyer for Wings Over the Rockies can be viewed here: https://www.wingsovertherockies.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/19WOR_ProgramLR-attachement.pdf

INDIRECT MARKETING

An online presence allows EKISC to communicate indirectly with the target audience. If people are interested in EKISC they will use the website or social media platforms to find out more information. Depending on the platform used, EKISC is able to interact with online users who are interested in invasive species. On social media, it is widely understood that fans or followers are registered because they are aware of the product or business and want to learn more. While followers certainly are expecting to receive useful information from EKISC's social pages, useful information for EKISC can also be collected from follower participation.

The objectives of an online presence include:

- Providing resources;
- Allowing opportunities to register for courses;
- Sharing event information;
- Posting useful, relevant, and interesting links;
- Asking fans to engage and contribute with comments;
- Organizing contests and promotions;
- Providing a place to leave reviews and other feedback;
- Offering incentives for activity on the page;
- Adding another way for people to contact EKISC.

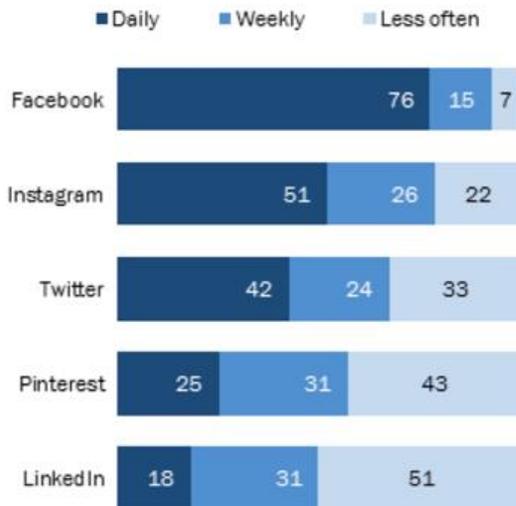
SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently EKISC uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as social media presence; each providing a different means of interaction with information and audience. The goals of using social platforms are to increase brand awareness; drive traffic to the website; generate new leads; boost engagement; build a community around EKISC; and to increase mentions in the press.

New content on Facebook is posted at least 6 days a week, Twitter, 2 days a week, and Instagram on an as-and-when basis depending on where EKISC staff are and what they are doing. It is important to keep content moving as people tend to use these platforms daily and old material will quickly get passed by.

Three-quarters of Facebook users and half of Instagram users use each site daily

Among the users of each social networking site, % who use these sites ...



Note: Do not know/refused responses not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.
"Social Media Update 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: <https://www.smartinsights.com/>

Facebook @EastKootenayInvasives

The EKISC Facebook account is designed to build a lasting connection with EKISC partners, followers, and the public; increase brand awareness among members of the EKISC target market and the general public; informally interact with the target market; gain insights about EKISC brand, services, and opportunities; advertise products, services, and events; and network with other organizations.

The EKISC Facebook page gained momentum again in 2019. The site gained 74 new followers in 2019, for a total of 518. EKISC also increased the number of people who liked the Facebook page from 447 likes to 510. The following statistics were taken from the EKISC Facebook site between January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019:

- **Total Page Followers:** 518
- **Total Page Likes:** 510
- **Total Number of Posts in 2019:** 385
- **Lifetime Post Total Reach.** The number of people who had your EKISC's post enter their screen. Posts include statuses, photos, links, videos and more. (Unique Users): 72464
- **Lifetime Posts Total Impressions.** The number of times your Page's post entered a person's screen. Posts include statuses, photos, links, videos and more. (Total Count): 97291
- **Lifetime Engaged users.** The number of unique people who engaged in certain ways with an EKISC page post, for example by commenting on, liking, sharing, or clicking upon particular elements of the post. (Unique Users): 4476

EKISC uses Facebook as a platform to deliver news and information, engage target audiences, and share interesting articles with followers. In 2019 EKISC created 385 posts, of that 4,476 people engaged with the material that was posted or shared.

The most engaging posts were those which advertised jobs, in some way engaged the users to guess a species, or informing them about a particular species' impacts. Below are some examples:

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council - EKISC
Published by Jess Paloposki [?] · 20 September 2019 · 🌐

READ: <https://www.ekisc.com/news-on-invasives>

Some folks in the Elk Valley are feeling threatened with the risk of invasive plants causing complications with pets. Here's an updated story and response from EKISC regarding Giant Hogweed in the RDEK.

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council - EKISC
Published by Jess Paloposki [?] · 30 May 2019 · 🌐

What's your guess? Does this vase contain invasive, native, or non-native plants?

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council - EKISC
Published by Jess Paloposki [?] · 29 November 2019 · 🌐

We don't currently have this species in the RDEK but it is on our priority list. Can you name it?

East Kootenay Invasive Species Council - EKISC
Published by Jess Paloposki [?] · 27 June 2019 · 🌐

Oh no!!

Irene Joyce ▸ Chilliwack BC Hiking Club
22 June 2015

Keep a watchful eye open as you hike, so you don't come into contact with hog weed.

286 People reached 90 Engagements Boost Unavailable

👍👏 Allison Bendis, Stephanie Daniels and 5 others 4 Comments 3 shares

Twitter @EK_Invasives

The EKISC Twitter account acts as a news and information sharing platform; with goals of interacting with the public and partners; driving people to participate in promotional activities and campaigns; enhancing the EKISC brand; and monitoring the EKISC brand as well as the brands of others. Tweets mostly consist of news or journal articles, Retweeted articles, and event announcements.

In 2019 EKISC Tweeted 61 times; these Tweets had 21,549 impressions (times a user is served a Tweet in timeline or search results), 184 engagements (mentions or profile views), and generated 14 new followers.

Top tweets included the key use of @ and # symbols for tagging key groups or specific newlines helped increase the impressions on these posts. Examples of top tweets are below:

A free online toolkit to help **#Kootenay** communities care for their properties in ways that benefit wildlife, water & wild spaces is now available! Click on the interactive home page map to see what services are available in your area. **#StewardshipSolutions**
kcpstewardship.ca

EKISC has lots of **#volunteer** opportunities this summer:
-Weed Pulls
-Restoration Workshops
-BC Parks Interpretive Plays
#InvasiveSpecies
#BCParks
#communitymatters
pic.twitter.com/dK55RDFICt



Volunteer with EKISC
WE'RE LOOKING FOR GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN

You can call us the weedy women. Here are the faces of **@EK_Invasives** for 2019.
pic.twitter.com/nJAqQPwoAb



♥ 5

e-KNOW
e-know @eastknow · Sep 20

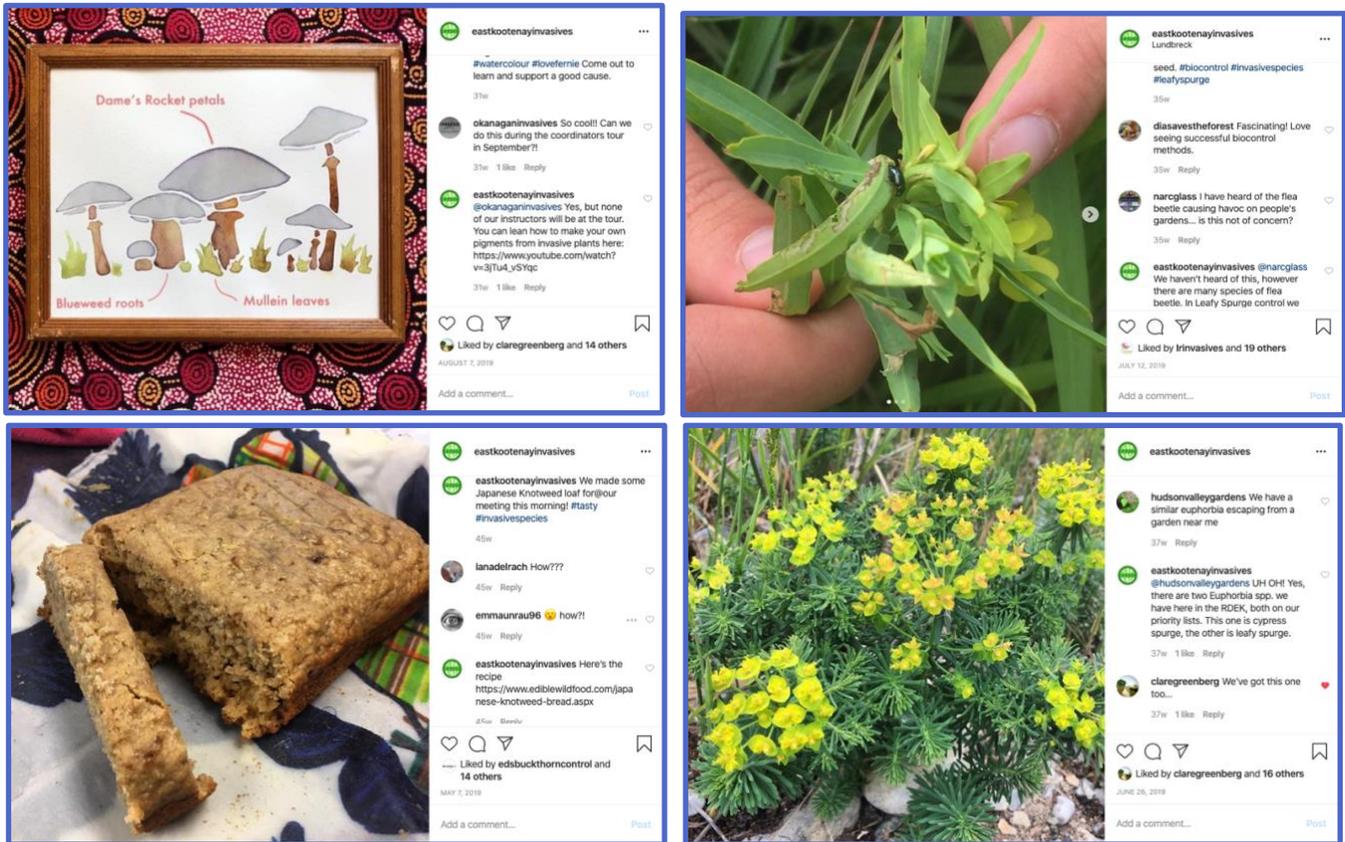
Plants that sting and burn .**@EK_Invasives**
#Sparwood
e-know.ca/regions/elk-va...
pic.twitter.com/CXTarlan9v



Instagram @eastkootenayinvasives

The goal of EKISC's Instagram account is to increase brand awareness; demonstrate company culture, showcase the EKISC team, increase customer engagement and loyalty, and showcase products and services.

The Instagram account posted 47 times in 2019 and has 67 new followers. Instagram has the most engagement of all platforms with 37% of the posts being commented on and 100% of posts being liked at least six times; many with numerous comments and likes. Some examples of the most popular posts can be seen below:



PROMOTIONAL ITEMS AND RESOURCES

As a compliment to the education and communications program, and to offset the cost of outreach materials, EKISC sold merchandise in 2019 at or slightly above cost. A partnership with Tipi Mountain Native Plant Nursery allowed us to sell native plants at farmers markets, highlight the importance of planting non-invasive species and add a talking point to our outreach booth. In addition to EKISC hats and t-shirts, EKISC also added an invasive plant-based body salve from Purcell Organics and a wildflower seed mix from Nature's Garden Seed Company available as merchandise options online and at some events and markets.

EKISC Branded Graphics

EKISC designed a number of branded graphics to use in social media posts in 2018 and 2019. The idea behind creating these graphics was to maintain continuity in our brand and to offer pre-made post

material (social shout-outs) to other groups to post on our behalf. graphic is meant to be eye-catching and easy to read, and was always accompanied by a more detailed explanation of the message.



AIM TO PROTECT YOUR GAME
WWW.EKISC.COM
#PLAYCLEANGO



**A WISH FROM THE FISH:
#CLEANDRAINDRY**
WWW.EKISC.COM



AND YOU THOUGHT THE MOSQUITOS WERE ANNOYING!
WWW.EKISC.COM
#BUYITWHEREYOUBURNIT



RIDE WITH PRIDE
WWW.EKISC.COM
#PLAYCLEANGO



WE LOVE OUR BACKYARD, AND WE HOPE YOU DO TOO.
HELP US KEEP IT BEAUTIFUL BY PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS.



PACK ONLY THE ESSENTIALS
HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES
WWW.EKISC.COM
#PLAYCLEANGO

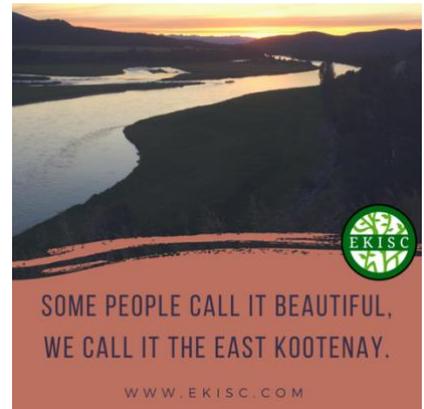
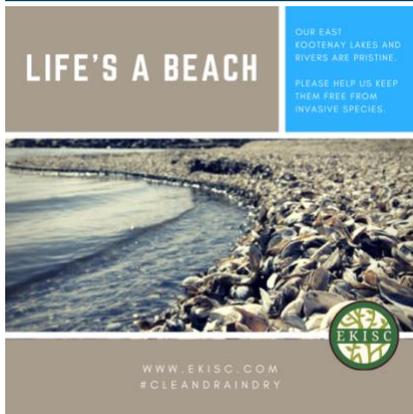


OUR BACKYARD
WWW.EKISC.COM
#PLAYCLEANGO



WE LOVE OUR BACKYARD, AND WE HOPE YOU DO TOO.
HELP US KEEP IT BEAUTIFUL BY PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS.





Promotional Items

Promotional items are for the purpose of publicity, giveaways, and public engagement. These items include EKISC branded t-shirts for adults and youth, adult tank tops, stickers, and tattoos. EKISC branded hats, patches, wildflower seed packs, skin salve, and Plant ID books were available for sale or given away as gifts of appreciation.



Resources

EKISC maintained a number of brochures and rack cards throughout the year including: AIS and TIS brochures, 3 different *Play, Clean, Go!* and *Burn It Where You Buy It* rack cards, boater wash station cards, *PlantWise* and *Grown Me Instead* cards and booklets, noxious weeds of BC booklets, *Don't Let It Lose* rack cards, and whirling disease information cards.

2020 COMMUNICATION & MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS:

In general, the communications effort was increased in 2019. Some key recommendations moving forward will help ensure EKISC maintains communication in 2020:

Direct Marketing Recommendations

- A key factor in the success of our direct marketing campaigns should be to include a "call to action," offering an incentive or enticing message to get the target audience to respond or act in a desired way.
 - It is a good idea to think about what EKISC can offer as a benefit, whether it is money off their purchase at a partner store (think: 10% off at a partner retailer if they bring in invasive seeds for disposal or if they get a transfer station receipt for invasive weeds) or an invitation to an EKISC members only event.
- While direct marketing involves EKISC attempting to change behaviour, promote weed management, and make information available to our customers, it is also good to have a 'return - on-investment.' If, when handing out brochures at an event, we see them in the streets or in the garbage, it's not worth the effort. The good thing about direct marketing is that there are so many alternatives that if one approach doesn't work, we can easily switch to another. Offering a coupon or gift card for people who got the brochure from a farmer's market with a lucky number written inside.
- Have the Education Assistants do a brochure run early in the season. Do not wait until mid-summer to distribute brochures to retailers.

Indirect Marketing Recommendations:

- Social Media allows EKISC to gain valuable insights into user information; however, EKISC isn't currently using these metrics to their full capacity. EKISC should engage in "social listening" - the process of tracking conversations around specific topics, keywords, phrases, brands or industries, and leveraging insights to discover opportunities or create content for those audiences. Ex: Hootsuite, BuzzSumo, Meltwater, SproutSocial etc. (more here: <https://financesonline.com/top-20-social-media-monitoring-tools/>).
- Generally, EKISC looks for an increase in participant numbers to determine success; however, a qualitative methodology should also be considered to determine which interactions are the most meaningful (or change behaviour most).
- More social shout-outs would be very helpful in engaging different groups. Ensure that individuals are contacted early in the season and that the strategy is easy to use.

Promotional Items, Signage, and Brochures Recommendations:

- A better system needs to be developed to keep track of sales at farmers markets and events to ensure the EKISC Education Assistants are keeping record of items sold in a way that is easily tracked for bookkeeping purposes.
- Continue to sell native plants at farmers' markets – and be sure to start at the beginning of the summer.
- Advertise the availability of educational and interpretive signs that are available for groups to purchase early in the year to give partners a chance to purchase it before the busy summer season.

General recommendations:

- a. Continue to attend marketing and communications training workshops and webinars. ISCBC, [Hootsuite](#) and PCG.org hosted some good ones in 2019.
- b. When possible, conduct engagement, pre-course, and after-course surveys via *Survey Monkey*. Where paper forms are used to measure success, data needs to be converted to the Survey Monkey form.