



East Kootenay Invasive Plant Council 2015 Annual Report

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the work completed in the 2015 calendar year by the East Kootenay Invasive Plant Council (EKIPC). There were several new opportunities for the organization with a broader staff base, input from various working committees, and a diversity of initiatives to meet our goals. The outreach program was expanded to target specific user groups, with an evaluation tool to assess how awareness is increasing through EKIPC's efforts. The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program focused on waterbody risk assessments and surveys for non-native plants and mussels –none were found! Resource industries were contacted to support their efforts to prevent the further spread of invasives. EKIPC's research program evaluated how our current management strategies could be improved using science-based trials and resources. Field operations were effective with more sites treated, efficient monitoring, and strategic priority setting. Funding sources have diversified to support the variety of EKIPC's initiatives with increased partnerships and leveraged funds which demonstrate the power of collaborative efforts. Finally, EKIPC's board of directors and staff have initiated a strategic plan to guide the organization towards long-term sustainable operations.

EKIPC Foundations and Direction

Vision: An East Kootenay free of invasive species.

Mission: Mitigating the negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of invasive species.

Goals:

- Public commitment to our Vision and Mission
- Coordinated management of invasive species on public and private lands using an integrated and collaborative approach
- Adequate, stable and timely funding for education, prevention and treatment

Guiding Principles:

Effective

Knowledgeable

Innovative

Proactive

Collaborative

Objectives and Strategies:

1. Improve our priority-setting, planning, assessment and reporting
 - a. *Inventory the risk from invasive species*
 - b. *Develop a multi-year strategy*
 - c. *Identify measures for assessing and reporting key performance indicators (KPIs)*
2. Enhance governance
 - a. *Determine governance structure*
 - b. *Recruit and orient directors*
 - c. *Update Constitution and Bylaws*
 - d. *Adopt governance policies*
 - e. *Engage members*
3. Increase public commitment
 - a. *Advocate and lobby*
 - b. *Educate to create awareness and engage action*

EKIPC Team

- Executive Director: Todd Larsen (full time)
- Field Operations Coordinator: Katie Young (full time)
- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator: Linda McVetty (full time May - November)
- Terrestrial Invasive Species (TIS) Coordinator: Cathy Conroy (full time May - December)
- Field & Outreach Assistants: Hope Blissett & Blaire Smith (full time June – August)
- Research Coordinator: Jeff Nimmo (part-time September – December)
- Industry Engagement Liaison: Steve Byford (contractor September – December)
- A variety of individuals and companies were contracted for work as area controllers, rancher sprayers, and monitors.
- Board of Directors, see Table 1. As determined at Annual General Meetings in April.

Table 1. EKIPC’s Board of Directors in 2015.

2014/15	2015/16	Name	Organization
Chair	Chair	Pam Turyk	Kootenay Livestock Association
Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Stephanie Daniels	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
Treasurer		Darrell Smith	Ministry of Agriculture
Secretary	Secretary	Allana Oestreich	Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
Director	Treasurer	Pat Wray	Regional District of East Kootenay
Director		Catherine MacRae	Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
Director	Director	Peter Davidson	Rocky Mountain Trench Ecosystem Restoration Society
Director	Director	Sandra Loewen	Meadowbrook Community Association
Director	Director	Melissa Brown	Teck Coal
	Director	Randy Harris	Independent Consultant
	Director	Bill Coy	Windermere District Farmers Institute
	Director	Lily Durham	Waldo Stockbreeders Association

Education and Outreach: *Objective 3b*

- See 2015 EKIPC AIS and Terrestrial Reports for more details
- AIS and TIS Coordinators and Field & Outreach Assistants delivered educational messages at over 30 presentations, workshops, and events throughout the region
- Collaboration with other groups including community associations, First Nations, and Provincial Parks
- Invasive Species month events in June reached over 2,000 people
- Press releases, social media updates, interviews, videos, and more

Aquatics

- Columbia Basin Aquatic Invasive Species (CBAIS) Strategy: Collaboration with other regional invasive species groups for program consistencies
- AIS workshops & partnerships with lake stewardship groups
- Clean Drain Dry (CDD) ambassadors with the Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC)
- Loaned EKIPC's boat wash station to the Ministry of Environment for provincial boat inspection program

Terrestrial

- PlantWise ambassadors with the ISCBC to engage with gardeners, including the Cranbrook Garden Club Tour
- Audience-specific workshops: forestry, ranchers, First Nations, conservation properties
- Nine Community Weed Pulls in four communities
- Program evaluation forms provided valuable feedback

Industry Engagement

The objectives of the industry engagement initiative were to identify regional industries (forestry, utilities, transportation, aggregates) which may contribute to the spread of invasive plants, and introduce best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the spread.

- See "EKISC Report on Industry Engagement Initiative 2015" for more details
- 55 individuals from 25 companies were contacted
- BMPs were introduced and encouraged with these contacts
- Several forestry operations engaged in site visits, invasive plant awareness workshops, and management plans

Advocacy: *Objective 3a*

- Increased level of partnerships with local politicians to emphasize the importance of invasive species awareness and management
- *MLA Bill Bennett*: Several public relations opportunities including funding announcements and provincial mussel defence program
- *MLA Norm MacDonald*: Discussed areas that require further support
- *MP David Wilks*: Collaborated on federal commitment to control invasive weeds at the old Flathead border crossing
- Partnership building

Research: *Objective 1c*

EKIPC developed a research program in 2015 to evaluate existing management/monitoring practices, produce fact sheets, and propose research trials.

- Future monitoring efforts will collect long-term data to evaluate the success of management options and to prioritize plant risk assessments
- Science-based fact sheets will inform management decisions for knapweed and cheatgrass
- Several research trials are proposed for implementation in 2016 to assess priorities
- Blueweed report was finalized, summarizing a 3-year herbicide trial which has altered management plans for the plant

Field Operations

Aquatic:

EKIPC began a baseline AIS monitoring program in 2015 within the framework of the new Ministry of Environment (MoE) monitoring and reporting protocols. A risk assessment matrix was developed and implemented to triage which waterbodies are at risk of AIS introduction

- Surveys for non-native aquatic plants at 40 lakes. None were found!!!
- Yellow flag iris plants were removed from the only known site in the East Kootenay
- Purple loosestrife sites were surveyed and hand pulled at Bummers Flats wetland
- Invasive mussel veliger (larvae) sampling at four lakes (Tie, Wasa, Windermere, Kooacanusa), in addition to the 10 other lakes sampled by MoE staff

Terrestrial:

- Hand-pulling of weeds at twelve sites, covering at least 1,480 m²
- Restoration with grass seeding over 6.5 ha using three 14 kg bags of grass seed
- Biocontrol inventory, collection, and releases across the region to assess agent populations.

Funding for invasive plant herbicide treatments is summarized in Table 2. Several of these projects supplement work done on crown land and show the need to leverage support from other sources beyond provincial ministries. Regardless, the amount of funding and area treated tend to increase over the years, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 3 displays which species are treated, with spotted knapweed and blueweed being the most common.

Table 2. Overview of EKIPC herbicide treatments in 2015.

Funding Partner	# of Sites*	Amount of Herbicide Used		Hectares treated (ha)	Funding (\$)**
		(L)	(kg)		
BC Hydro	54	15.72	1.38	33.45	\$18,000.00
Columbia Valley Cons. Fund – SIPCOLS	42	9.83	0	2.19	\$4,500.00
Crown of the Continent - Flathead					\$4,500.00
Conservation Properties: NCC, FWCP, TNT, MOE	116	13.01	3.45	36.47	\$66,240.00
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development - old Flathead Border Crossing	8	4.63	0	15.96	\$2,700.00
FortisBC	29	14.1	0.71	18.08	\$10,350.00
Grassland & Rangeland Enhancement Program	316	65.59	8.94	99.73	\$49,500.00
Madera	36	8.62	2	8.48	\$7,200.00
MoE Parks	11	2.9	0	4.14	\$4,500.00
MFLNRO	639	99.3	7.18	121.45	\$138,600.00
MOTI	271	235.62	33.03	284.64	\$153,000.00
RDEK transfer stations	23	18.7	3.14	23.49	\$22,275.00
Rocky Mountain Trench ER	36	0.25	1.76	8.38	\$13,500.00
Total	1,581	488.27 L	61.59 kg	656.46ha	\$494,865

*Several sites were treated more than once, bringing the number of site-visits to 2,569.

**Most of these funding partners provided more funding than listed here but was allocated to other areas such as outreach and administration.

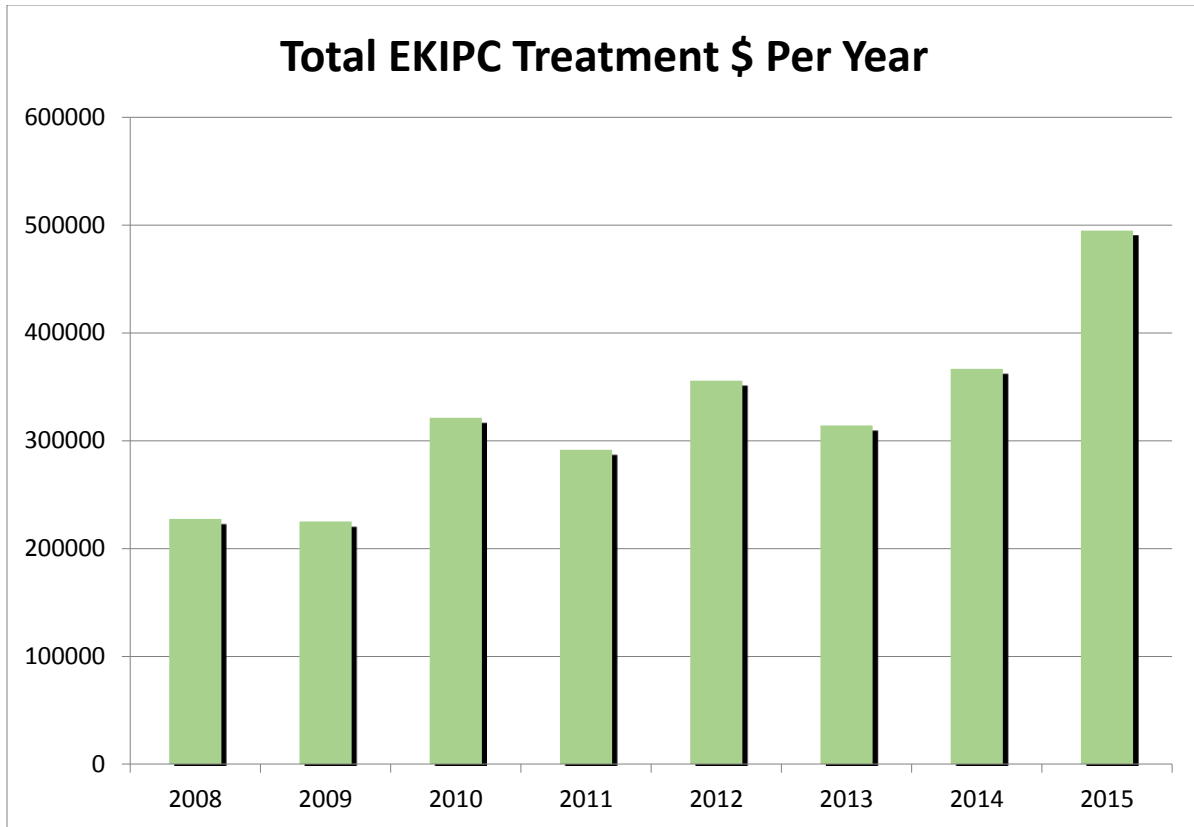


Figure 1. Total amount spent by EKIPC on herbicide and contract work per year.

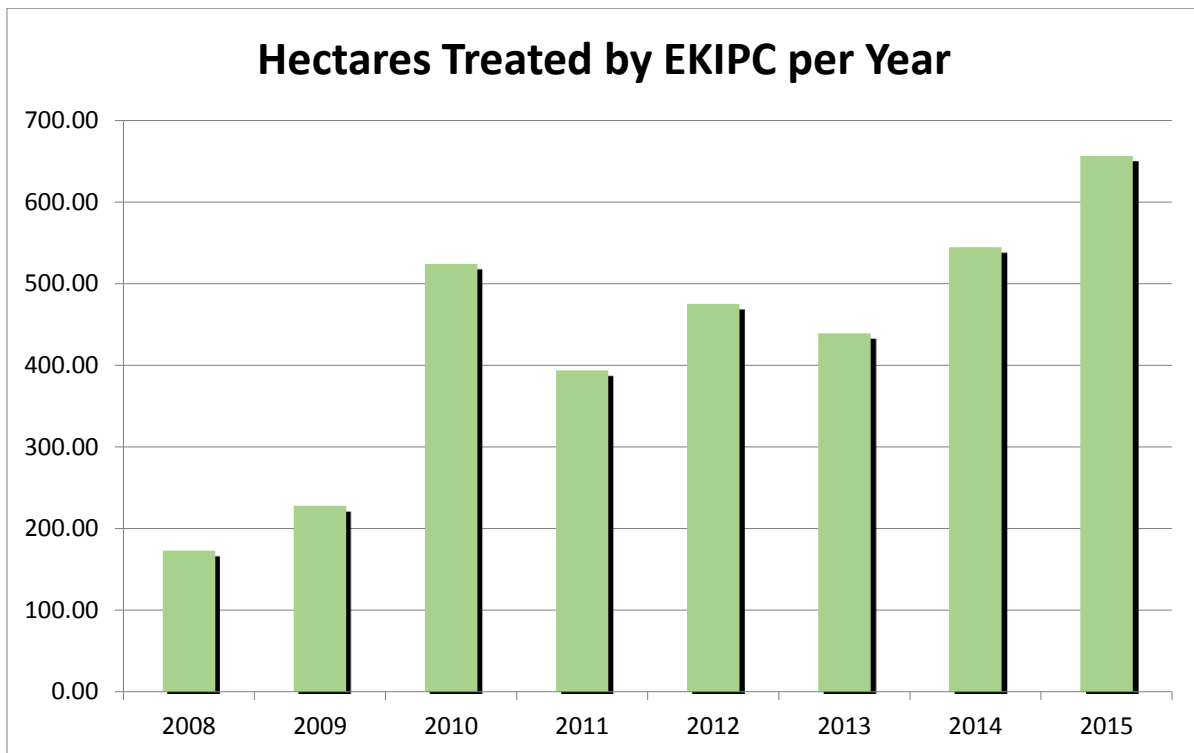


Figure 2. Total number of hectares (ha) treated by EKIPC per year.

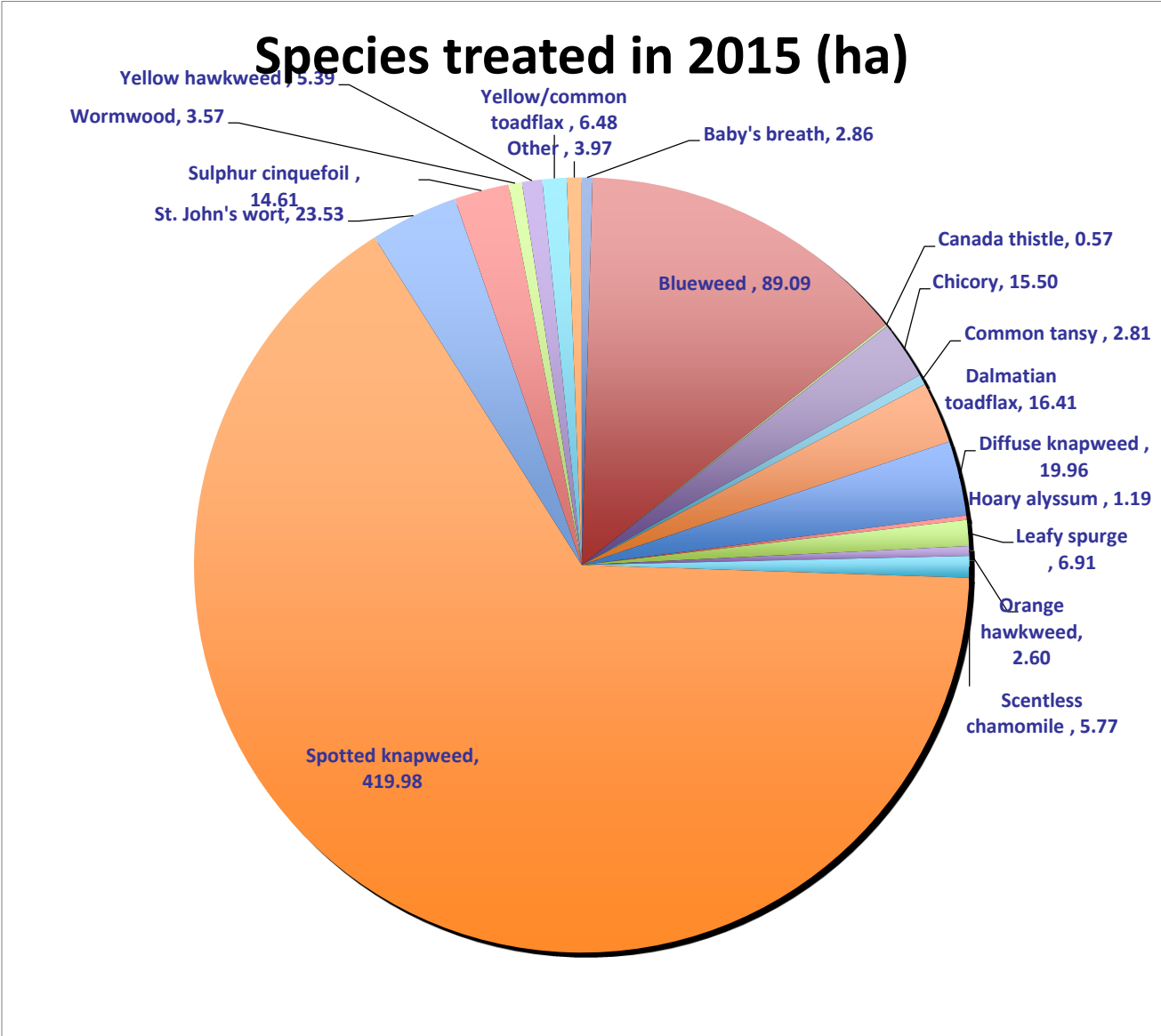


Figure 3. Invasive plant species treated in 2015.

List of 2015 Projects

- See "EKIPC 2014 Annual Operating Plan"
- BC Parks
- Canada Summer Jobs: Wage subsidy for two summer students
- Central East Kootenay Community Directed Funds (CEKCDF): Education, Planning, Industry Engagement
- Columbia Basin Trust: Core Funding for program coordination and Education
- Columbia Basin Trust: AIS Initiatives
- Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (CVLCF): Strategic Invasive Plant Control Of Leafy Spurge (SIPCOLS)
- Crown Treatments: Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO), Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) (Right-of-Ways and gravel pits), BC Hydro, FortisBC
- Crown of the Continent –Flathead Valley
- Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development (DIAND): old Flathead border
- Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) -Columbia Valley, Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Program (UKEEP): Management & Restoration of Invasive Plants in Protected Areas (MRIPPA)
- Grassland & Rangeland Enhancement Program (GREP): Crown Range Treatments, rancher education, research program
- Madera Ranch
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO): Coordination & Awareness funding
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO): Conservation Properties
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)/Keefer Ecological Services (KES): Grass seeding trial
- Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)
- Neighbourhood Invasive Plant Program (NIPP)/Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK)
- Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK): Transfer Stations
- Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resource Society (RMTNRS)
- The Nature Trust of BC (TNT)

Funding

Revenue for 2015 came from a variety of sources, with a majority of funds coming from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) and from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). These funds are directed primarily towards herbicide treatments of invasive plants on provincial crown land within the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK). Other groups provide funding for other invasive plant management, certain projects, and/or general operations. Figure 1 charts annual revenue since the pilot program began in 2005. See "2015 EKIPC Financial Statement".

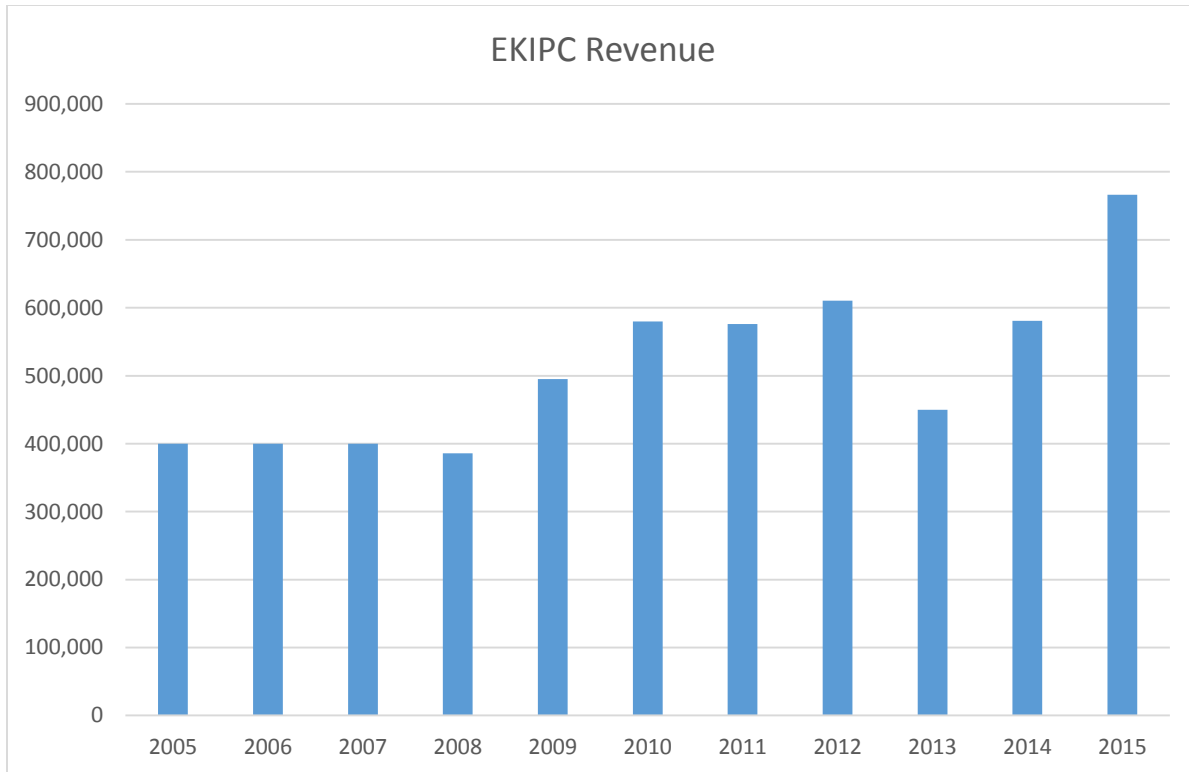


Figure 4. Total EKIPC revenue per year.

2015 Funders, Sponsors, and Partners (green were new partners in 2015)

EKIPC greatly appreciates the support of our various partners. Invasive species affect all individuals and organizations, but it is only through collaborative efforts that we can have a chance to minimize these impacts.

- BC Hydro
- Blue Lake Centre
- Canada Broadcasting Corporation
- Canada Summer Jobs
- Central East Kootenay Community Directed Funds
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Columbia Basin Watershed Network
- Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund
- Crown of the Continent
- Crown Managers Partnership
- Crown Roundtable
- Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development
- Elk River Alliance
- First Nations: Akisqnuq, Aq'am, Tobacco Plains
- Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program: UKEEP
- Fortis BC
- Grassland and Rangeland Enhancement Fund
- Invasive Species Council of BC

- **Keefer Ecological Services**
- Kootenay Conservation Program
- Kootenay Livestock Association
- **Lake Stewardship Groups: Columbia Lake Stewardship Society, Jimsmith Lake Community Association, Lake Windermere Ambassadors, Wasa Lake Land Improvement District**
- Madera Ranch
- Meadowbrook Community Association
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Environment –BC Parks
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Municipalities & Communities
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Regional District of East Kootenay
- Regional Weed Committees of BC
- Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society
- Shaw Cablesystems
- Teck Resources
- The Nature Trust of BC
- TransCanada Pipelines
- Waldo Stockbreeders Association
- Wildsight
- Windermere District Farmers Institute
- And many others...



EAST KOOTENAY
INVASIVE PLANT
COUNCIL