



EAST KOOTENAY
INVASIVE SPECIES
COUNCIL

2020

Annual Report



From the Program Director

Like many organizations, 2020 presented us with a unique set of challenges. These challenges provided an incredible opportunity to adapt and meet the needs of our local communities and regional partners while keeping staff safe.

EKISC has coordinated invasive species management in the East Kootenays since 2008, and we are grateful for the many partnerships we have built over this time. It is these partnerships that supported us in the face of uncertainty and kept invasive species management as a top priority in the region.

The following report highlights some of the work we accomplished in 2020. Our operational programming ranges from administering contracts for delivering invasive plant treatments on our region's busy highways and forest service roads, to collecting water samples to test for invasive zebra and quagga mussels in high-risk lakes. Over the past two years, we have experienced an increase in requests for our organization to conduct invasive plant inventories and develop management plans (page 5) – a sign that more folks are recognizing that managing invasive species is crucial to the ecological and economic integrity of the region.

Our education and outreach programming persisted through the pandemic. We engaged with thousands of East Kootenay residents, mostly virtually, and shared invasive species information and resources to many local individuals and groups (page 7). We also had the opportunity to initiate new projects, like the Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Project (page 6), which has enabled us to work collaboratively to greatly increase management efforts in the area. We know that invasive species management is innately challenging – and its success relies on a coordinated approach.

I would like to extend my gratitude to our generous funders and partners, dedicated Staff and Board of Directors, and everyone in the East Kootenay region that have done their part – small or large – in helping to mitigate the negative impacts of invasive species.

All the best to our fellow land-stewards in the coming year,

Kendal Benesh
EKISC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

From the Chair

Well, I don't think any of us will miss the year 2020: Covid-19, masks, social distancing and endless Zoom meetings. Despite these difficulties, our staff brought in new project work in the Elk Valley and Wycliffe areas.

We have had some staff changes over the last year. Our long term Field Operations Manager Katie Reid took a parental leave to have second child (welcome Sage) and we hired Gabriela Halas to fill-in, while Danny Smart continued as our Field Operations Coordinator. Jessie Palaposki, our Education and Communications Manager stepped down last fall to pursue new ventures in Golden, and we were pleased to bring on Bailey Repp to fill the role. Bailey has had a challenging first year without the ability to attend meetings, farmers markets or field camps in person, but check out our website and social media for her updates, infographics and imaginative videos; she has been busy.

Late breaking news at the time of this memo is that Kendal Benesh, our highly proficient Program Director of the past two years will be leaving us in the spring

of 2021. I am not sure what we will do without her, but on May 15th we will find out. She will be working as a freelance project consultant (in case you need one) and the Board will be recruiting a new Program Director.

We have recruited two new Board members over the past year. Raelynn Blumhagen joined us to represent the Waldo Stockbreeders Livestock Association and is currently acting as our Secretary (thank you Raelynn). Hilary Baker, an Agrology Consultant, also joined us late in 2020. Jim Campbell who represented the BC Backcountry Hunters and Anglers stepped down last fall, but Rick Van Horn now represents that organisation. If you want to help out with our organisation in any capacity, please let us know; our website <https://www.ekisc.com/> has our contact information.

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

BJ Randall Harris
EKISC BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR



Our Team



Kendal Benesh
Program Director

Katie Reid
Field Operations Manager
(on leave in 2020)

Gabriela Halas
Interim Field Operations Manager

Danny Smart
Field Operations Coordinator

Emily Markholm
Field Operations Assistant

Emma de Groot
Field Operations Assistant

Bailey Repp
Education and Communications
Coordinator

Our mission

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

Our Board

EKISC is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors who represent stakeholders, including at-risk industries and recreational pursuits, with an interest in protecting the East Kootenay from invasive species. The Board Members are drawn from provincial and local governments, agriculture, non-governmental environmental organizations, and the private sector.

BJ Randall Harris
Chair

Shawna LaRade
Vice Chair

Lily Durham
Secretary

Raelynn Blumhagen
Secretary

Stephanie Daniels
Treasurer

Jim Campbell
Director

Jamie Davies
Director

Rick Tegart
Director

Stephanie Najda
Director

Dave Pick
Director

Rick Van Horne
Director



THE GOLDEN SHOVEL AWARD

Since 2010, EKISC has selected an organization and/or individual who made significant contributions to invasive plant management efforts in the region. We call this the Golden Shovel Award. EKISC presents this distinguished award at our AGM.



2019 RECIPIENT
Pam Turyk

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

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

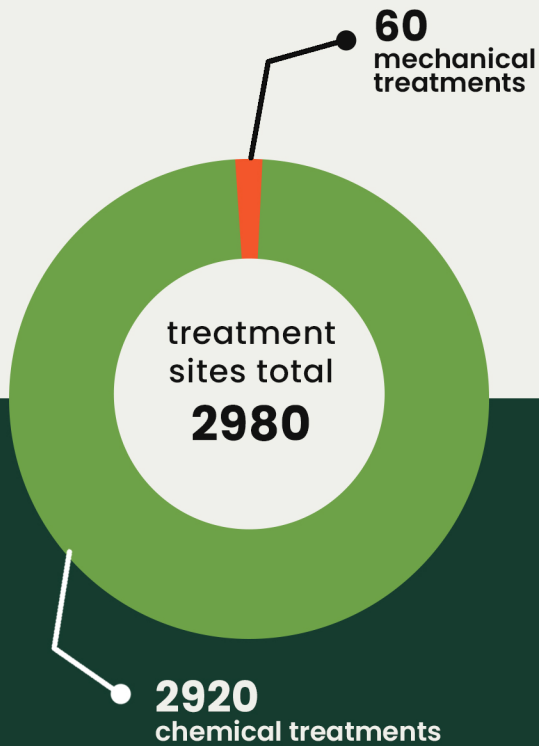
To **prevent** the introduction and spread of invasive species.

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

Field Operations

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

The majority of the work EKISC administrators is fee-for-service work, which includes coordination and delivery of invasive plant surveys, treatments (mechanical, chemical, and biological), monitoring, and management planning. We also work with various granting agencies to conduct lake water sampling for invasive mussels, and deliver education and outreach activities in the region. In 2020, we built on previous project accomplishments, and also had the opportunity to administer new initiatives in the East Kootenays.



Treatments included:

Strategic control

of species such as Spotted and Diffuse knapweed, Blueweed, St. John's wort and Yellow hawkweed.

Containment and reduction

of species such as Leafy spurge, Common tansy, Hoary alyssum, Flat peavine, and Caraway.

Eradication efforts

for species like Rush skeletonweed, Field scabious, Policeman's Helmet, Japanese knotweed, and Teasel.

13 Invasive Plant Management Areas



10
Invasive plant
inventories
completed!

That's
1944 ha of
land!

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES



EKISC administers an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program that is supported through the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the British Columbia Ministry of Environment.

15 TEST SITE LOCATIONS

**7 LAKES
MONTHLY**

**8 WATERBODIES
EVERY 2 WEEKS**

149 SAMPLES COLLECTED

ZERO ZEBRA OR QUAGGA MUSSELS DETECTED!

In all samples across BC

*BC's Invasive Mussel Defence Program



Programming Highlights

East Kootenay Invasive Mussel Monitoring

This year the EKISC Field Ops team was able to continue another year of invasive mussel monitoring in lakes across the East Kootenay with the support of the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and the Ministry of Environment. 15 waterbody sites were tested monthly or bi-weekly over the course of the season. No invasive Zebra or Quagga mussels were detected.

Upper Elk Valley Invasive Plant Management Plan

In Year 1 of this multistakeholder project, EKISC administered invasive plant inventories on ~330 km of rights-of-ways (Forest Service Roads, transport, hydro, and recreation trails), collecting 342 inventory points, and expanding invasive plant species and distribution data to the upper two-thirds of the Elk Valley. Treatments took place on 52km of right of ways focused on high value habitat and rec trails. 10 permanent effectiveness monitoring plots were established and one project workshop was delivered.

Rangeland Tenure Holder Invasive Plant Assist Program

EKISC administered a new component for tenure holders called the Rangeland Tenure Holder Invasive Plant Assist Program (IPAP). The IPAP program is designed to provide guidance, resources, and support (including financial) to treat new occurrences of priority invasive plants on Public land range tenures.

**8 SITES OF
BLACK
HENBANE**

**4 SITES OF
PERENNIAL
PEPPERWEED**



EARLY DETECTION RAPID RESPONSE

**2 PROVINCIAL EDRR
SPECIES TREATED**

**ACHIEVABLE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE
IS ERADICATION**



RANCHER-SPRAYERS

TREATING INVASIVE PLANTS ON PUBLIC LAND RANGE TENURES IN THE REGION THROUGH OUR GRASSLAND RANGELAND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT.

Education & Communications

2020 was a year of adapting for the Education and Communications team. With a change of hands in management and navigating a new (virtual) education landscape, the education team worked with the generous support of our funders to continue invasive species education and outreach across the region. We hosted our first online webinar, and piloted a weed pull kit borrowing program, which helped pave the way for programming in 2021. Behaviour change continues to be the emphasis of EKISC's education and outreach programming. The opportunity to increase our online presence was a silver lining.



WEED PULLS + PLANT WALKS

3 EVENTS

17 PEOPLE

*PILOTED A NEW WEED-PULL KIT BORROWING PROGRAM

ATTENDED 38 ONLINE EVENTS

REACHING 1125 PEOPLE

6

Workshops & Courses hosted

Including our very first webinar!



OUTREACH BOOTHS

1 FARMERS MARKET

6 PARKS + BOAT LAUNCHES

325 PEOPLE DIRECTLY REACHED



750 PRINT RESOURCES DISTRIBUTED





**CREATED AN EAST KOOTENAY
PRIORITY PLANT GUIDEBOOK**



**4 new
videos**



www.ekisc.com

GO!

2959

unique website visitors



11

e-newsletters

360+

regular readers

64%

**avg open
rate**



REACH

20716

1413

FOLLOWERS

565

310

Finances & Funders

ᑭᐱᑭᐱ Community

BC Hydro

BC Parks

BC Parks – Parks Enhancement Fund

Canada Summer Jobs

Columbia Basin Trust

Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund

Crown-Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada

Environment Canada

Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program

Fortis BC

Grassland & Rangeland Enhancement Program

Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation

**Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
& Rural Development**

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Nature Trust of British Columbia

Regional District of East Kootenay

Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society

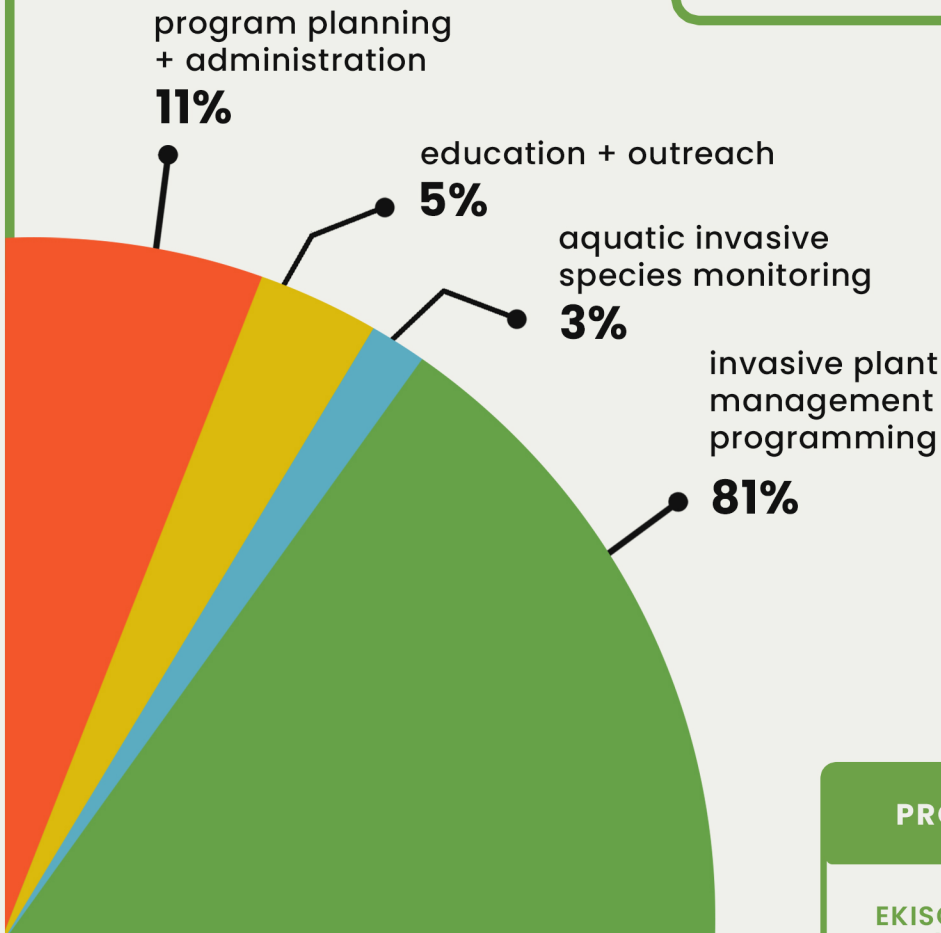
Village of Radium

20

**Funders supporting
EKISC in 2020**

GROSS REVENUE
IN 2020

\$972,297



PROUD TO SUPPORT LOCAL

EKISC'S PROGRAMMING SUPPORTS LOCAL JOBS, CONTRACTORS, RANCHERS, STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE LAND

2020
Expenses by
percentage





@eastkootenayinvasives



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www.ekisc.com



@ek_Invasives



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Cranbrook, BC
VIC 7G1**



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