



BC/NTBC Joint Conservation Land Management Program (Wildlife O&M)

HCTF Project #0-451

Regional Summary Reports
2022-2023



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West Coast Region

Region: West Coast

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Vancouver Island West Coast Region contains some of the most diverse and rarest ecosystems in British Columbia and supports internationally significant populations of fish and wildlife as well as some of the rarest species found in the Province.

Estuaries, wetlands and riparian areas are among the most diverse and productive ecosystems in the world. The importance of protecting and managing these habitats cannot be understated given their substantial life history functions and benefits not only to fish and wildlife but to the human population as well (e.g. clean water supplies, flood protection, mitigating impacts from climate change). It is estimated that more than 50% of wildlife species in North America rely on access to wetland habitat for at least part of their life-cycles, and almost 35% of all rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife species are dependent on wetland ecosystems (Wetland Action Plan for British Columbia, 2010).

In British Columbia, estuaries and coastal wetlands comprise less than 3% of BC’s coastline, while providing habitat to over 80% of all coastal fish and wildlife species. Approximately 500 species of named plants and animals are associated with wetlands and estuaries, and 70 of those species are federally listed as endangered or threatened. Vancouver Island and the Central Coast contain significantly higher ranked estuaries than any other eco-region in the province (CWS Technical Report Series #476, 2007). Of the 8 Class 1 estuaries in BC, 4 are located on Vancouver Island.

Despite their importance and rarity, approximately 43% of the province’s estuaries are threatened by coastal development, modification, and pollution; approximately 60% of marsh habitats along the estuaries of the Salish Sea have been lost.

Since 1976, The Nature Trust of BC and the Province of British Columbia has worked together with several partner agencies to secure these critical habitats on Vancouver Island and the Central Coast. From the Cowichan Estuary to the Kingcome Estuary more than 110 conservation properties have been secured protecting over 15,000ha of critical fish and wildlife habitat along with rare ecosystems.



Key Property Complexes

Baynes Sound	Buttertubs Marsh
Cluxewe Estuary	Cowichan Estuary
Dudley Marsh	Filberg Marsh
Kingcome Estuary	Lazo Marsh
Nanaimo Estuary	Orel Lake
Englishman River (PQWMA)	Salmon River Elk Reserve
Salmon River Estuary	Asseek Estuary
Somenos Marsh	Kumdis Slough
Willow Creek	Bella Coola Estuary
Koeve Estuary	Quatse WMA
Tofino Mudflats WMA	

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-2023, \$181,745 was invested by HCTF in the West Coast Region. This funding was matched by over \$3.9million dollars in partner cash contributions as well as \$5 in in-kind contributions by volunteer groups, local governments and First Nations.

Project Highlights:

- \$ 15,206 at the Nanaimo River Estuary Conservation Lands to support the replacement of a bridge damaged by flood events, installation of new regulatory signage, conduct invasive species surveys and treatments, and to maintain previous planting and restoration work that aligns with WCCLMP's estuary resiliency monitoring.
- \$12,857 at the Parksville Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management area to support both major restoration projects and daily operations and maintenance. The large-scale project of installing x3 large woody debris complexes in the lowest reaches of the Englishman River provided an opportunity to remedy public safety concerns of eroding riverbank. The project required re-grading and installing riparian planting sites where erosion was occurring. Planting sites were fenced with split rails and trails diverted away from potential dangers. Invasive plant treatments focused on large scotch broom patches within the high-marsh of the estuary. Trail upgrades including through-gates to deter homeless encampments and increased signage to inform and notify the public of sensitive ecosystems and regulations.
- \$54,194, which included \$35,000 from the Together for Wildlife initiative to complete an update a management direction statement and associated updates to mapping for the Lazo Marsh NE Comox Wildlife Management Area. Continuation of the Lazo Trail Plan with the identification of Trail Loop, Connector Trails, and Access Trails. Locations and numbers of signs determined for revised signs and trail markers to replace previous, dilapidated signs. Fabrication of aluminium trail signposts completed and design of new trail signs with maps, x20 new posts ready for installation. User data collection with non-compliant persons (dogs off-leash) finding over 80% non-compliance with the general public.
- \$7,991 at the Willow Creek Conservation Area to support partner (Discovery Greenways Land Trust) efforts to limit public disturbance to Willow Creek by installing fencing and re-planting impacted areas that have been degraded over years of use (mountain bikes). Trail maintenance with the replacement of boardwalks and re-surfacing trails as required. Bridge maintenance with replacement of railings along hand rails. Inventory survey for amphibian use

of upper storm-water retention pond. Regular danger tree removal and monitoring trespass/boundary encroachments with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- \$8,797 within the Salmon River Conservation Area for supporting WCCLMP's large scale restoration project wherein x2 breaches within the causeway to restore tidal flows and the installation of x2 clear span bridges to allow continued public access. Project also saw replacement of a kiosk, installation of informative signs, fencing, riparian planting, and the construction of an observation lookout along the trail leading to the project site. Additionally, invasive plant surveys and treatments continued with the support of the Coastal Invasive Species Council and the Action Team for Mid-Island to aid in treatments of scotch broom and knotweed. Wetlands Classification with ECCC and Wildlife Camera trapping with NERR also completed within the Salmon River Estuary.

Conservation Outcomes:

Key conservation outcomes for the West Coast region include:

- Invasive species control measures taken on approximately 8ha of estuarine and riparian habitat with 19 sites surveyed and treated. This includes over 3 ha of Yellow Flag Iris flower and seed pod removals and complete Scotch Broom removal at S'amunu WMA and nearly .05ha of Meadow Knapweed and Canada Thistle removed from Fanny Bay (Baynes Sound Conservation Area).
- Major restoration project support for the Nanaimo River Estuary Gravel Bar Removal, Englishman River LWD Installations and the Salmon River Estuary Causeway Breach and Bridge Installations.
- Restive planting of over 2,300 native trees, plants and shrubs in estuarine and riparian habitat within the Nanaimo River Estuary, Englishman River Estuary, Buttertubs Marsh, Willow Creek, and Salmon River Estuaries. Plating work part of WCCLMP's major restoration projects and regular operational workplans.
- Bridge replacement in the Nanaimo River Estuary (10m long). Boardwalk replacement within Willow Creek (10m long). Bridge railing replacement in Willow Creek (40m). Split Rail fence installation within Willow Creek (150m), Englishman River Estuary (100m), and Salmon River Estuary (80m).
- Increasing monitoring and inventory work at several conservation areas with focus on estuary resiliency, water quality, migratory and breeding birds, invertebrates, and salmonids.

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- On-going partnerships with First Nations, Local Governments, Stewardship Groups, and Fish and Game Clubs

Photographs

Please include some photographs highlighting project work in your region.



Nanaimo River Estuary Gravel Bar Restoration



Nanaimo River Estuary Bridge Replacement



Nanaimo River Estuary Gravel Bar Restoration
Invasive Plant Treatments - Sweet White Clover:
Before



Nanaimo River Estuary Gravel Bar Restoration
Invasive Plant Treatments - Sweet White Clover:
After



PQBWMA Englishman River LWD Complex Installs
Site 2 of 3: Before



PQBWMA Englishman River LWD Complex Installs
Site 2 of 3: After



PQBWMA Englishman River LWD replanting
riparian areas above LWD structures with
volunteers



PQBWMA Invasive Plant Treatments within the
Englishman River Estuary upper marsh "islands"



Lazo WMA Impacted Areas off trails with kids forts and dams blocking Hilton Springs Restored Stream



Lazo WMA Revised Trail Map with Lazo Loop Trail, Connecting Trails and Access Trails with Sign Post Locations to be installed



Willow Creek Boardwalk for Replacement



Willow Creek Bridge vertical slats replaced with horizontal rails



Salmon River Causeway Bridge Site 1: Before



Salmon River Causeway Bridge Site 1: After



Salmon River Causeway: Constructed Elevated lookout with split rail fencing



Salmon River Causeway: New kiosk and split rail fence at trailhead.



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South Coast Region

Region: South Coast

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The majority of Lower Mainland Region conservation projects focus on the Fraser River and its tributaries. One of the largest rivers in the world, the Fraser flows from the Rocky Mountains south and west to the Fraser-Puget lowland, and into the Pacific Ocean at the Strait of Georgia. The Fraser Basin watershed drains one quarter of the province. Sand and silt eroded from glacial terraces along its path are deposited as a delta in the Strait of Georgia. This delta is highly productive from an agricultural and human habitation perspective, making the Lower Mainland the socio-economic centre of the province.

The confluence of the Fraser and the Pacific Ocean results in delta marshes, estuaries, and an incredible level of diversity in fish and wildlife populations. The Fraser is the world's largest salmon river, while its estuaries provide critical resting areas for salmon migrating from salt to fresh water. Important year-round habitat for many bird species, the Fraser estuary is also a vital link in the Pacific Flyway, supporting over 1.5 million birds from three continents and 20 countries. The Boundary Bay, Sturgeon Bank, Roberts Bank, and South Arm Marshes Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have been designated as Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network sites. The estuary supports the largest wintering shorebird and waterfowl populations in Canada. The area also provides habitat for significant numbers of raptors and marine mammals.

The South Coast Region contains 23 Conservation Land complexes, administered regionally, including a number of properties owned by The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC).

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-2023 \$100,444 was invested in 19 conservation land complexes in the South Coast region, to assist regional staff and partners in achieving management objectives. Significant investments were made to eradicate invasive species, maintain infrastructure and public access, remove rubbish, and identify ecological restoration opportunities from these conservation lands.

In October 2017, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) partnered with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), NTBC, and the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment and Climate Change Canada to initiate the South Coast Conservation Land Management Program (SCCLMP). Modelled off the successful West Coast Conservation Land Management Program (WCCLMP), the goal of the SCCLMP is to

provide a more collaborative and integrated approach to the management of conservation lands for the benefit of fish, wildlife, species at risk, and their habitats. In 2022/2023 this program continued to leverage resources to apply a strategic focus to the management of Wildlife Management Areas in the South Coast. A full-time Coordinator leads the partnership, including overseeing the South Coast HCTF Conservation Lands O&M budget and expanding the capacity of the program by soliciting additional funds and promote community stewardship throughout conservation lands. HCTF O&M funding continues to support the activities of the SCCLMP partnership program.

In 2021 the federal and provincial governments selected the Fraser River Estuary Salmon Habitat (FRESH) Restoration Projects to receive \$5 million from the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund over a three-year period. These projects are led by DUC in partnership with Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Tsawwassen First Nation, and the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance. These projects include the Sturgeon Bank Sediment Enhancement Pilot Project, Alaksen Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, and North Arm Jetty Breaches, which will restore habitat and access to habitat for wild Pacific salmon throughout the Sturgeon Bank WMA, Roberts Bank WMA, and Alaksen National Wildlife Area. In March 2022, Raincoast Conservation Foundation completed the construction of the first of three breaches in the North Arm jetty to facilitate fish passage and transportation of freshwater and sediments to the Sturgeon Bank WMA foreshore; within days of construction works, juvenile salmon were using the breaches to access the foreshore marshes of the Sturgeon Bank WMA! In February 2023 DUC oversaw the first round of sediment addition in Sturgeon Bank WMA. Within days, sediment had already begun being redistributed towards the shore providing area for tidal marsh plants to begin to grow. Monitoring in 2023 will provide information on how sediments settled throughout the foreshore and if vegetation begins to propagate in areas of marsh recession.

Project Highlights:

\$8,218 invested in Boundary Bay WMA for property inspections, rubbish removal, invasive plant management, sign maintenance, and engagement with local stakeholders for integrated planning. Working with partners anthropogenic large woody debris was removed to restore 1.47 hectares of tidal marsh. 2023 also saw the beginning of construction for the Living Dike pilot project by the City of Surrey, City of Delta, West Coast Environmental Law, and Semihamoo First Nation.

\$7,996 invested in Forslund-Watson Conservation Area, including \$7,500 of funding from Together for Wildlife, to control invasive species and work with BCIT students to restore an ephemeral wetland to support at-risk amphibians and other native wildlife.

\$15,106 invested in the Lhá:lt/Harrison-Chehalis WMA for property inspection, rubbish removal, invasive species management, maintenance of property information signage, and integrated shared stewardship with local stakeholders. \$12,342 of Together for Wildlife funding was used to create a co-management framework with Sts'ailes to set the foundation for the WMA management plan update for completion in 2023/24.

\$15,696 invested in the Pitt-Addington Marsh WMA to assess land management needs and ecological values, maintain informational signage, maintenance of public access trails and facilities, and discussing with community partners fish habitat restoration opportunities at Addington Point.

\$7,186 was invested in Pemberton Wetlands WMA, Perkins Flats, and Pemberton Valley TAC to improve signage and community knowledge of the conservation lands. A surveyor was also contracted to help resolve boundary uncertainty required to integrate the Pemberton Valley TAC into the WMA.

\$4,579 was invested in the Skwelwil'em Squamish Estuary Wildlife Management Area to improve signage throughout the WMA. District of Squamish was supported to enforce no-camping compliance throughout the WMA. Squamish Environmental Society and Squamish Nation were supported to implement phase 2 of the spit removal project, removing an additional 550 m of the spit to improve connectivity within the estuary. Squamish Watershed Society was supported to install a new Purple Martin nest box structure to rehome 12 nest boxes within the estuary.

Conservation Outcomes:

Restoration and enhancement of conservation lands for habitat values ensures that these lands are optimal for use by fish and wildlife that depend on them; approximately 8.43 hectares of conservation lands were directly restored or enhanced in 2022/2023. Informational signage, indicating property ownership and management partners, serves to demarcate boundaries and to provide the public with the means to contact a land manager to discuss management concerns and issues. Maintenance of access points and facilities on conservation lands ensures that public access will be safe.

Signs installed throughout Pemberton Wetlands WMA, and Pemberton TAC were prioritized for completion in 2022 as a result of requests from Lil'wat First Nation to address vehicle access to the Lillooet River and ensuing habitat degradation. All work on updating the Lha:lts Harriosn Chehalis WMA management plan are being done with input from Sts'ailes. Together SCCLMP,

WLRS, and Sts'ailes are working to define what co-management of this site means and how it will be implemented.

Photographs

1. Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area – Volunteer garbage cleanup event.



2. Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area – Himalayan blackberry removal.



3. Camp Slough – Native plantings in area cleared of invasive plants, with volunteers.



4. Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area – mapping invasive *Spartina* and cleaning up shoreline debris.



5. Lhá:lt/Harrison-Chehalis WMA – assessing area treated for Himalayan blackberry with benthic mats (left); removal of invasive Scotch broom (right).



6. Silverhope Creek – installation of no camping signage.



7. Wells Sanctuary – before and after invasive plant removal on Luckakuck Creek.



8. Forslund Watson Wetland restoration site. Students from BCIT supported by surveying and planting native vegetation.





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Thompson Okanagan Region

Region: Thompson Okanagan

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Thompson Okanagan Region has a dry, continental climate, as it lies in the rain shadow of the Coast and Cascade Mountain ranges. Vegetation varies from Engelmann spruce and lodgepole pine at subalpine elevations, Douglas-fir at lower elevations, and ponderosa pine, bunchgrass, and sagebrush at the valley bottom. These vegetation zones are in relatively close proximity to one another, resulting in extremely rich biological diversity in a small area.

The Thompson and Nicola landscapes in the north and east of the region vary from the Cariboo Mountains in Wells Gray Provincial Park to rolling grasslands and the river valleys of the North and South Thompson Rivers that merge in Kamloops and reach the Fraser River in Lytton. The region also extends beyond into Lillooet and the surrounding Coast Mountains through the Bridge River valley which flows from snowfields in the Coastal Mountains and joins the Fraser River near Lillooet. The landscape has more than 300 lakes, sage-dressed hills, rolling grasslands, looming mountains and alpine valleys. The grassland areas north of Kamloops Lake are recognized for their importance to wildlife, primarily California bighorn sheep, mule deer and many species at risk.

The Okanagan portion of the region, especially in the south, contains large numbers of unique flora and fauna, as it is the northern extension of the Columbia Plateau. Analysis has shown that the South Okanagan is both the top biotic rarity hotspot and the top species richness hotspot in British Columbia. It has more federally listed species at risk than any other area of the province, and more provincially Red-listed and Blue-listed species than elsewhere. Furthermore, with some 303 species of birds recorded from the Okanagan, and similar richness in other animals and plants, many species are found here and nowhere else in Canada (Scudder 2006).

Human development over the past century has resulted in dramatic reductions in native habitat. Grasslands, and the antelope-brush ecosystem in particular, have been greatly impacted. Over the past 15 years, the antelope-brush ecosystem has been reduced in area by over 65%, with current loss estimated at 2% per year. Channelization of the Okanagan River for flood control in the 1950s reduced its associated marshland by 85 to 90%, seriously impacting riparian habitat viability in the region. With population expected to double in the next 25 years, habitat in the Okanagan will become increasingly endangered over time.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) has been working in the Okanagan area since 1971. To date, 25 properties have been secured with the help of many funding partners, totalling over 5,247 hectares. These conservation holdings are particularly contiguous, providing habitat corridors on a landscape scale.

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

A total of **\$95,250** of Conservation Lands O&M funding was invested in the Thompson Okanagan Region in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and this greatly assisted the conservation partners in addressing key land management objectives (see bolded amounts below). In addition, \$420,000 in partner funding and in-kind support was invested on TOR conservation lands.

Project Highlights:

- **\$22,200** was invested at Ginty's Pond Lease to complete Phase I of a Wetland Restoration Project in partnership with Southern Interior Land Trust, BC Wildlife Federation, Lower Similkameen Indian Band and many other community partners (which included at additional \$111,000 in partner support)
- **\$4,135** was invested at Antlers Saddle Complex, with an additional \$2,800 in kind support, to monitor and report on the intensive fireguard rehabilitation work completed in partnership with Penticton Indian Band and Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society in 2021-2022.
- **\$11,060** was invested at Swan Lake WMA, with an additional \$30,000 in Together for Wildlife funding, to develop a Foreshore Integrated Management Plan, including species at risk management plans, invasive species management plans, and a foreshore habitat sensitivity index. This FIMP is expected to form the basis of a collaborative operational management plan for the WMA.
- \$147,800 in partner funding (including \$65,000 in Together for Wildlife funding) was invested at nsək'łniw't/McTaggart-Cowan WMA to support collaborative management of the site with Penticton Indian Band. Activities in 2022-2023 included a Traditional Ecological Knowledge Keeper's summer assessment of the site, development and implementation of wildfire recovery work and development of an Indigenous Guardian Program for the WMA to be implemented in 2023.
- **\$6,000** was invested at the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch. Primary tasks included site visits, continuing wildlife camera project to understand movement corridors for species; continuing support to Burrowing Owl Conservation Society Program to reintroduce Burrowing Owl's to the Region (the WLB site had one owl return); conducting Species at Risk survey for Great Basin Spadefoots and Tiger Salamanders; assisting the Southern BC Cougar Project at a "kill site"; performing invasive species management including survey and mechanical removal,; working with the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society and National Research Council and other stakeholders to continue an area-based pilot project; performing fence repairs/maintenance as well as removal of redundant and derelict barb wire; and continuing the photographic monitoring program.
- **\$5,025** was invested at the Vaseux Lake – Emery and Franmar property. Primary tasks included site visits, continuing the wildlife camera project to understand movement

corridors for species; performing invasive species management including survey and mechanical removal; performing fence repairs/maintenance as well as removal of redundant and derelict barb wire; conducting Species at Risk Survey for Behr's Hairstreak populations and Antelope-brush recruitment; working with partners to remove Yellow Flag Iris from Vaseux Lake; working with partners to facilitate Antelope-brush restoration and grassland complexity; and continuing the photographic monitoring program.

- **\$4,439** was invested at the Skaha Lake Eastside property. Primary tasks included site visits; working with partners to continue wildlife camera project to understand movement corridors for species; installing and monitoring signage to restrict/mitigate unauthorized activities such as rock-climbing; planting rabbitbrush and sagebrush to protect bank erosion along trails; maintaining secondary trail closures; collecting native seeds; conducting Species at Risk survey for Dalles milkvetch; and performing invasive species management including survey and mechanical removal.
- **\$5,000** was invested at the Vaseux Lake (LEA8) – Schneider property. Primary tasks included site visits; working with partners to facilitate Antelope-brush restoration and removal of dense conifer stand; implementing conifer thinning to improve/restore movement corridors for Bighorn sheep; burning thinning piles from conifer thinning and reseeding with native grass seed; invasive plant management including survey, control and planning; conducting Species at Risk surveys for Behr's Hairstreak populations and Antelope-brush recruitment; continuation of the photographic monitoring program; reviewing and discussing the monitor wells and leachate control plans with RDOS staff and contractors.
- **\$3,988** was invested at the Kilpoola Lake (LEA) property. Primary tasks included site visits, removing redundant fence lines to improve movement corridors; mending broken fences to prevent cattle trespass; conducting surveys for the endangered Lyall's Mariposa Lily; and performing invasive species management including survey and mechanical removal.

Conservation Outcomes:

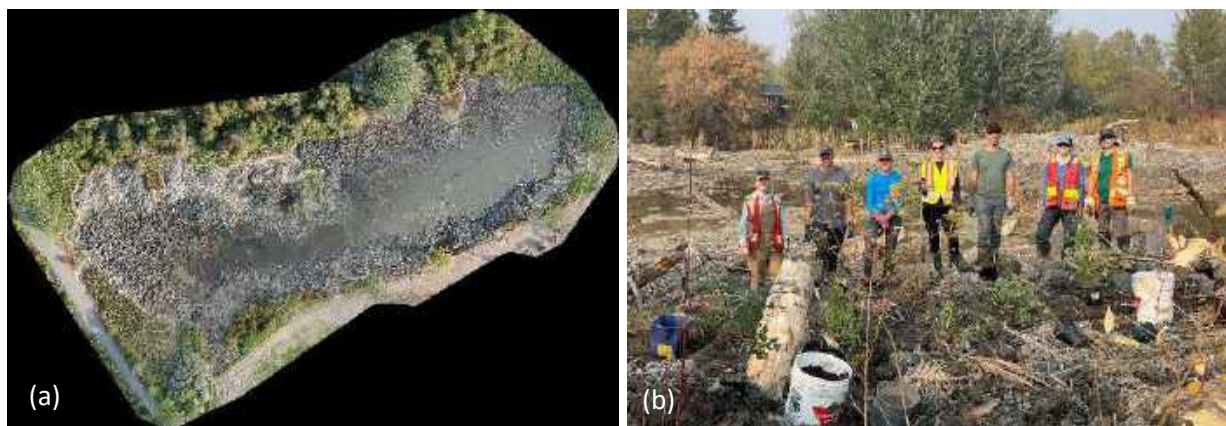
Each of the conservation lands in the Thompson Okanagan Region has distinct management needs and objectives that reflect the unique landscape and ecology of the area. Numerous conservation outcomes were achieved on these lands in 2021-2022 using Conservation Lands O&M funding. Over **50 ha** of land were directly or indirectly restored or enhanced through restoration activities. Many of these outcomes continue to build upon the efforts and investments of previous years. Partner contributions to conservation land management continued to be high in 2022-2023, with \$420,000 in additional provincial, federal and partner funding and in-kind support attracted to the Conservation Lands Program in the TOR. In particular, these funds facilitated collaborative management and planning projects with Indigenous communities.

On-the-ground restoration and enhancement works were a significant focus for 2022-23. A highlight of this year was the completion of Phase I of the Ginty's Pond Wetland Restoration Project: this project included deepening 1.2 ha to wetland to create open water conditions as well as the creation of 0.8 ha of new shrub-thicket riparian habitat to benefit species at risk. This project also included the addition of over 100 m² of coarse woody debris and planting 1,700 riparian trees and shrubs to further enhance habitat features. This work could not have been done without our partners, including Lower Similkameen Indian Band, who contributed to project planning, excavation, habitat enhancement and cultural monitoring. Another significant project this year was completion of syilx Fall 2022 Habitat Restoration Implementation in nsək'niw't/McTaggart-Cowan WMA in partnership with Penticton Indian Band over an area of 48 ha of wildlife habitat previously impacted by wildfire. The amount of partner contribution to the Conservation Lands Program speaks to the importance of these lands in the regional context.

The Nature Trust of BC land management staff worked with various partners to maximize O&M funding at eligible conservation sites. On-the-ground, restoration and enhancement work continued to play a key role in NTBC's land management efforts in 2022-23. Invasive plant management focused on mechanical control of target species at high priority sites as well as targeted surveys. Mechanical treatments occurred at 50 sites covering approximately 10 hectares of conservation land, while target surveys occurred at 122 sites covering approximately 180.3 hectares. Working with School District 53 and 67 along with other partners approximately 1 hectare of antelope-brush was planted at 3 NTBC conservation properties.

Photographs

1. Ginty's Pond Lease: (a) post-wetland restoration construction drone photo, (b) collaborative wetland restoration planting with project partners.



2. Antlers Saddle Complex fireguard rehabilitation work with Penticton Indian Band: (a) pre-treatment May 2021, (b) post-treatment Aug 2021, (c) monitoring July 2022.



3. White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch: (a) building a fence around a riparian area, (b) banding Burrowing Owls (BOCS Partnership), (c) tiger salamander during a SAR survey.





4. Vaseux Lake-Emery and Franmar property: (a) showing SD67 how to properly plant an antelope-brush plug, (b) a pre-picture of all the antelope-brush plugs about to go in the ground, (c) yellow flag iris removal with Agrowest Consulting.



5. Skaha Lake Eastside property: (a) planting rabbitbrush and sagebrush on eroded slope, (b) watering restoration work on trail closure, (c) installing new sign that was burnt in recent fire.



6. Vaseux Lake (LEA8) – Schneider property: (a) students gathering near one of the antelopebrush plantings, (b) conducting species at risk surveys for Behr's hairstreak.



7. Kilpoola Lake (LEA) property: (a) learning how to use the application Field Maps, (b) proud crew showing off all their hard work bagging invasive weeds, (c) group shot of the beautiful mountain range behind Kilpoola.





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Kootenay Boundary Region

Region: Kootenay Boundary

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Kootenay region is world renowned for its scenic beauty and biological diversity. Forest, shrub, grassland and wetland ecosystems provide habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species, including many species at risk.

From the heights of the Rocky Mountain Range, there are vantage points where you can overlook the entire expanse of the East Kootenay region of south-eastern British Columbia. The western horizon, viewed from these vantage points, is profiled by the Purcell Mountain range which is separated from the Rocky Mountains by an enormous valley known as the Rocky Mountain Trench. Two great rivers begin here; the Kootenay flowing south through dry grasslands, with signs of historic wildfires, and the Columbia flowing north through a series of long valley-bottom lakes and lush wetlands. This great river eventually swings south at Boat Encampment and continues south between the Monashee and Selkirk Mountain ranges in the West Kootenay and into the state of Washington at Waneta. Another important river, the Elk, begins its journey in the eastern Rocky Mountains and winds its way along towering cottonwoods to join the Kootenay immediately south of the small community of Baynes Lake.

The geographic diversity of the Kootenay landscape along with wide variations in climate has created conditions and habitats that support rare plant life, productive aquatic systems, and important populations of elk, deer, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mountain goat and moose. Such abundant wildlife naturally attracts predators and consequently, wide-ranging carnivores are still common in the Kootenay's. Additionally, over 270 species of birds make use of the region, many on their migratory travels along the Pacific flyway.

From a rare species perspective, the grasslands, dry forests, montane forests, scattered wetlands, and cottonwood habitats in the Kootenay region provide unique habitats that support rare species such as the American badger, Swainson's hawk, Northern leopard frog and Lewis' woodpecker.

However, the low elevation valleys of the Kootenay's, which provide some of the most important habitat for a wide spectrum of wildlife, continue to be developed and attract increased levels of human settlement. In turn, this creates additional pressures on the landscape and impacts wildlife habitat and biodiversity values. Fortunately, the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) along with The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) have worked for decades to conserve ecologically significant habitats within the region. As a result, dozens of properties have been secured and, when combined with properties conserved by other land trusts and agencies, have resulted in a significant area of the Kootenay landscape being conserved in perpetuity.

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-23, \$166,395 was invested into 23 NTBC and WLRS conservation property complexes in the Kootenay/Boundary region, to assist regional staff and partners in achieving management objectives.

The funding was used for a wide variety of operations and maintenance activities, the highlights of which are outlined below.

Project Highlights:

Project highlights for the Kootenay/Boundary region during the 2022-23 year, include:

- \$6,500 was directed to the **Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area** in the 2022-23 season. HCTF O&M contributions went towards the mowing/control of vegetation along water control dikes, management of water levels, invasive species removal, annual inspections, management of problem wildlife, and maintenance/management of water control structures.
- \$6,252 was invested into the **Elizabeth Lake** Conservation Complex in 2022-23. The majority of this funding was spent on the repair of a designated parking area, which a car had driven through in the fall of 2022. HCTF contributions went towards the purchase of new fencing material, and the NTBC crew, assisted by WLRS staff, rebuilt the fence. The city of Cranbrook also donated labour and machine time to support this project. Additionally, HCTF funding help support a large riparian restoration project, led by Keefer Ecological Services. This project has a focus on planting riparian vegetation around Elizabeth Lake, to enhance structure and stabilize the shoreline. Lastly, HCTF funding contributed towards invasive plant treatments, and infrastructure inventory on the property.
- \$18,743 of HCTF funding was invested into the **Grave Prairie (Big Ranch)** Conservation Complex in 2022-23. HCTF financial contributions went to support the large 5-year Big Ranch Ecosystem Enhancement Project (BREEP), which is primarily funded through a Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) Ecosystem Enhancement Program grant. The project proponents are the Sparwood and District Fish and Wildlife Association (SDFWA), who are working closely with NTBC and WLRS for project guidance, approval and professional support. Project highlights from 2022-23 BREEP were the creation of 4 wetlands basins with fish grade pond liners, a second application of fertilizer on approximately 100ha of grassland habitat, planting prescriptions for upland and riparian planting sites, invasive plants treatments, and monitoring of results from past projects. The overall contribution from the BREEP project was approximately \$250,000 in 2022-23.

Additional work in 2022-23 included significant repairs on enclosure fencing around aspen stands, boundary fence repair, and inventory of infrastructure on the property.

- \$32,650 of HCTF funding was invested into the **Redfish Creek** Conservation Complex in 2022-23. Funding, inclusive of \$25,000 from T4W, was used to repair an eroding stream bank on Redfish creek, which posed a risk to local habitat values, as well as habitat values downstream. The project used engineered plans developed last cycle to complete the project. The project involved the removal of existing material, regrading of the slope, and the addition of geotextile fabric and protective rip-rap armouring rock on 25m of stream bank. NTBC staff partnered with Provincial Fisheries staff to acquire appropriate permitting, conduct fish salvage, and install preventative silt fencing during the project. The project took 5 days, and follow-up revegetation efforts are planned for Year 2.
- \$36,810 of HCTF funding was invested into the **Wasa Slough** Conservation Complex in 2022-23. Funding primarily went towards the construction of 1100m of wildlife friendly boundary fencing, inclusive of access gates and a MoTI permitted cattleguard. This project was made possible with a \$30,000 contribution from T4W. This project protected the conservation property from adjacent domestic livestock and motorized vehicle pressures that have frequented the property over the last decade. Additional to the new boundary fence, a pollinator meadow restoration project has been initiated for a spotted knapweed infested levee on the property. The project will mimic the successful project across the Kootenay River, at Bummers Flats. To compliment the HCTF funded projects, ECCC funding has allowed for the completion of a Habitat Enhancement Plan focused on forest thinning, with treatment planned for Year 2 and 3.

Conservation Outcomes:

The 2022-23 season led to the continuation and completion of many on-the-ground operation and maintenance activities on Kootenay region conservation lands. These activities included, but were not limited to; infrastructure inventory and maintenance, repair and replacement of range fencing, development of prescriptions/plans, as well as, habitat restoration, monitoring and inventory activities.

Approximately 29.5km of fenceline was assessed/repared/replaced by either the NTBC conservation crew or a contractor to reduce trespass of livestock and unauthorized motor vehicle use on sensitive conservation properties in 2022-23. Conservation property complex boundary signage was installed in key locations throughout the region to inform the public of land ownership and protect the important conservation values unique to each property.

NTBC and WLRS staff continue to apply for funding to supplement HCTF O&M funding on conservation lands in the Kootenay Region. 2022-23 was a very busy season, as the region

continued on with two large multi-year projects, inclusive of multiple partners (Wycliffe and Grave Prairie). Additional to these ongoing projects, the Kootenay region was also successful in securing funding for future restoration work at Columbia Lake (East and West) and Wasa Sloughs for the next few years.

Mechanical and chemical invasive plant treatments and re-seeding efforts were undertaken on many properties (approximately 9ha), intended to restore compromised ecosystems to native vegetative conditions. NTBC and WLRS continue to trial and assess innovative approaches to invasive plant management in region, including projects such as the Bummer Flats Pollinator Project, Wasa Slough Pollinator Project, and the conveyor belting trials at Bummer and Wasa.

Some funding was also invested into future conservation by undertaking important planning activities, including property assessments, infrastructure inventory, and invasive plant inventories. Results will assist in adapting work plans over the 3-year HCTF cycle on Kootenay/Boundary conservation properties, and ensuring management activities are meaningful and effective.

T4W funding in 2022-23 effectively helped to protect 30+ hectares of conservation lands. The installation of boundary fencing at Wasa Slough and the stream bank repair at Redfish Creek will allow habitats at these sites to recover and establish, since protection from recent threats (domestic livestock/ motorized trespass, erosion, etc.) is now in place.

A partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) was developed in 2022-23 with a focus on the restoration of Waldie Island, specifically to enhance habitat values for Great blue heron. ONA staff have taken the lead on project planning, and we are working together to gain a true sense of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge and First Nations significance of the site before finalizing any restoration plans. This has been a valuable partnership, and may very likely lead to other partnership projects on conservation lands, specifically in the West Kootenays.

Photographs



Figure 1: Marsden Face – Joint weed pull in Camas meadows with the Kootenay Native Plant Society



Figure 2: Installing a Wood duck box at the Wasa Slough



Figure 3: Native pollinator seed collection workshop – with KinSeed Ecologies



Figure 4: Repaired signage at Redfish Creek

Figure 5: Culvert replacement and gate install at Lot 881 – Duncan - Lardeau



Figure 6: Signage replacement – Walter Clough Wildlife Sanctuary.



Figure 7: NTBC staff assessing and installing signage on the Columbia River Wetlands -
RCMP Flats parcel

Figure 8: Installing and assessing monitoring plots for the Bummers Flats Pollinator
Meadow Restoration Project.



Figure 9: Grizzly bear photographed with wildlife camera on NTBC's Conservation Property



Figure 10: Drone photograph of Columbia River Wetlands – RCMP Flats.



Figure 11: Photo of nearly completed stream bank repair project at Redfish Creek – Primarily funded through T4W.

Figure 12: Kootenay Conservation Land Manager discussing Conservation land acquisition with the crew – Hoodoos Wetlands parcel.



Figure 13: Sun Creek wetland enhancement and beaver relocation project.



Figure 14: Thinning sites being assessed after treatment by the Big Ranch Ecosystem Enhancement Project (BREEP) Steering Committee



Figure 15&16: New wildlife friendly fence constructed at Wasa Slough, through T4W funding.



Figure 17: NTBC Crew helping lay a fish-grade pond liner for the Big Ranch wetland enhancement project.



Figure 18&19: Redfish Creek streambank repair project – Fish salvage with BC Fisheries staff, and machine work along the creek – Primarily funded through T4W.



Cariboo Region

Region: Cariboo

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Cariboo Region is a diverse landscape, ranging from the Coastal Mountains, to the vast dry grasslands of the Chilcotin Plateau, to the interior rainforest of the Cariboo Mountains. There are three main rivers within the region include the Fraser, Chilcotin, and Quesnel Rivers. These varied terrains and conditions result in an equally varied diversity of fish and wildlife.

The Cariboo Region contains 7 Conservation Land complexes, administered regionally, including several properties owned by The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC).

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-23, \$9,027 was allocated to the 7 conservation land properties in the Cariboo, however there were significant in-kind contribution of regional staff and partners (in the amount of \$149,282) in achieving management objectives, including assessments, maintenance for safety and ecological integrity, and wildlife surveys.

Project Highlights:

\$1,144 was invested in the Chilcotin Lake & Marsh conservation area, with \$80,268 in-kind, to assess the property for safety and ecological concerns. The Wildfire Raven Crew cleared 1.54km of access road into Chilcotin Lake, regional staff checked and fixed as required 18.5km of log rail and wire fenceline, an in-house ecological values assessment was undertaken, property information signs were installed or repaired as needed, two large new signs were installation, a breeding bird survey was completed, and a flight was undertaken to confirm that fences were intact, gates were closed, and livestock were not present.

\$513 was invested in the Chilanko Marsh WMA conservation area, with \$34,092 in-kind, to assess the property for safety and ecological concerns. The Wildfire Raven Crew assessed and cleared ~4.54km of access road along the southern boundary of the conservation land, regional staff inspected and maintained as required, 3.64km of fenceline, an ecological values project was undertaken in-house, a breeding bird survey was completed, and a flight was undertaken to confirm the integrity of the fence, that gates were closed, and livestock were not present.

\$1080 was invested in the Dale Lake conservation area to complete a breeding bird survey, conduct a property assessment for safety and ecological concerns, and maintenance of property information signage.

\$2,220 was invested in Deer Park Ranch conservation land to complete breeding bird surveys.

\$769 was invested in the Hanceville conservation area, with an in-kind contribution of \$22,065, and T4W cash contribution of \$5,811. A building structural assessment was completed on three of the main buildings, a breeding bird survey was completed, and regional staff are working with the Tsilhqot'in National Gov't (TNG) to establish a pilot fish hatchery for chinook salmon on site.

\$740 was invested in the Knife Creek conservation area to complete a breeding bird survey.

\$2205 was invested in the Tautri Creek conservation area to complete a breeding bird survey, conduct a property assessment for safety and ecological concerns, and to maintain property information signage.

Conservation Outcomes:

The 2022-23 field season included several land management activities on Conservation Lands within the Cariboo Region.

Fence maintenance at Chilcotin Lake & Marshes, Chilanko Marsh WMA, and Knife Creek serves to protect sensitive habitat areas from inappropriate use. There is ~3.6 km of fence at Chilanko Marsh, ~19 km of fence at Chilcotin Lake & Marshes, and ~3.3 km at Knife Creek to maintain, for an estimated 1670 ha of wetland and upland habitat being protected. Assessments of the ecological attributes and issues specific to each property form the basis for activity planning for the following field seasons.

Photographs

Please include some photographs highlighting project work in your region.

1. Chilanko Marsh – Fences assessed and maintained to prevent livestock access. Signs installed and repaired.



Note grassland condition from livestock exclusion on right side of fence.



Vegetation growth inside the fenced area.

2. Chilcotin Lake and Marsh – Fences inspected and repaired for livestock exclusion. Signs repaired as needed. Two large public information signs installed at access points.



3. Tautri Creek – Infrastructure and property inspected. Forest understory continues to recover, post-wildfire in 2017.





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Skeena Region

Region: Skeena

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Skeena Region covers approximately one third of the province of British Columbia. It is a highly varied landscape, characterised by mountainous terrain, interspersed with large plateaus, a multitude of lakes and several of the province's largest rivers including the Skeena, the Nass and the Stikine.

The Skeena Region includes BC's North Coast from the Coast Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. This area is rich in biological diversity and noted for the Pacific Flyway, an important migration corridor for birds. Large rivers, such as the Nass and the Skeena, flow into the Pacific Ocean, providing critical estuarine habitats. The Skeena Region's extensive wilderness areas provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Both Black and Grizzly Bears occur here, and salmon are abundant in the major rivers and tributaries.

The Skeena Region contains 8 Conservation Land complexes, administered regionally, including a number of properties owned by The Nature Trust of British Columbia, a Wildlife Management Area, and a Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-23 \$27,435 was allocated to 7 properties in the Skeena, to assist regional staff and partners in achieving management objectives.

Project Highlights:

\$3,088 invested in the Alice Arm conservation area for property inspection and manual treatment of invasive plants, especially giant burdock in riparian areas (approximately 8 hectares).

\$1,069 invested in the Kitsumkalum Lake – Nelson River conservation area for property inspection, access and safety evaluation, maintenance of property signage, garbage removal, and monitoring for invasive plants.

\$3,981 invested in the Lakelse Lake – Mullers Bay conservation area for property inspection, access and safety evaluation, boundary sign maintenance, shoreline rubbish removal, and botanical survey contract.

\$1,069 invested in the Lakelse River conservation area for property inspection, maintenance of trail signs, garbage removal, and monitoring for invasive plants.

\$1,188 invested in the Nadina River Valley – Owen Lake conservation area for property inspection, garbage clean-up, invasive plant assessments, and sign maintenance.

\$2,000.00 invested in the Hubert Hill conservation area for invasive plant removal and monitoring, fence and Kiosk sign maintenance, and habitat restoration.

\$13,555.00 invested in the Todagin Wildlife Management Area for developing an ungulate flight path monitoring program in collaboration with the Tahltan Central Government and Nisga'a Lisims Government.

Conservation Outcomes:

The 2022-23 field season resulted in management of several Conservation Lands within the Skeena Region, including evaluation of ecological attributes and safety concerns, which guide activity planning for ongoing land management.

Informational signage, indicating property ownership and management partners, with contact information, was posted and maintained on properties where appropriate. This serves to demarcate boundaries to protect habitat values from inappropriate public usage, and to provide the public with the means to contact a land manager to discuss management concerns and issues. Invasive plant removal continues to be a focus at a number of the sites within the Skeena Region along with rubbish removal and fenceline maintenance. Todagin Wildlife Management Area did not have any on-the-ground restoration work but the flight monitoring tool will assist in highlighting future ungulate habitat enhancement areas and was a priority of the Tahltan Central Government and the Nisga'a Lisims Government.

In 2022-2023, approximately 10 hectares of conservation land was restored through various activities in the Skeena Region.

Photographs

1. Alice Arm – manual management of invasive plants (giant burdock) in riparian areas.



2. Lakelse Lake – Mullers Bay – Extensive rubbish removed from shoreline. Property is located on a popular recreation lake.



3. Kitsumkalum Lake – Nelson River –Property assessed for ecological and safety concerns. Garbage removed. Signs maintained.



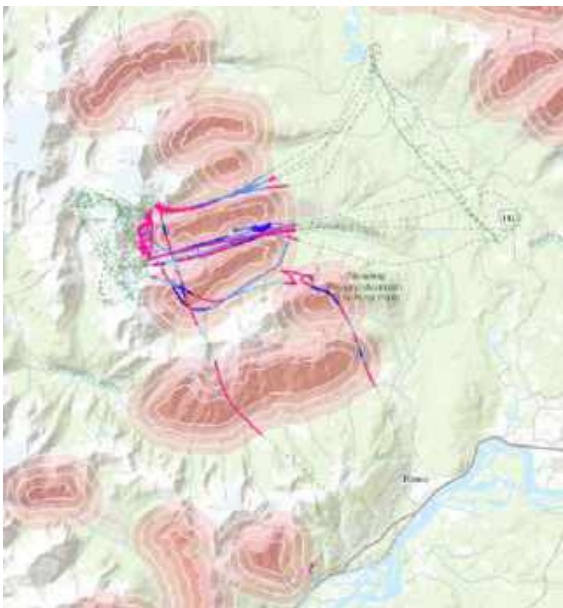
4. Nadina River Valley – Site inspected for safety and ecological concerns. Garbage removed. Signs maintained.



5. Tudin'ay (Hubert Hill) – Invasive plant species removal, fence & kiosk sign maintenance



6. Todagin Wildlife Management Area – example of mountain ungulate flight monitoring tool output





Omineca Region

Region: Omineca

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Omineca Region encompasses a large portion of northern British Columbia, with a diversity of landscapes ranging from the broad flat pine forests of the Central Plateau to the rugged peaks of the central Rocky Mountains. This Region includes the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies, Mount Robson (3954 m).

The Omineca Region encompasses the headwaters, or portions of the headwaters, of several provincially important rivers, including the: Frazer, Nechako, Pine, Finlay, Parsnip and Stuart. Within the drainages of these rivers lie several regionally important lakes and the province's largest reservoir, Williston Lake, which lies behind the W.A.C. Bennett Dam. The rivers and their tributaries provide spawning grounds for Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye Salmon. Arctic Grayling, White Sturgeon, Rainbow Trout, Bull Trout and Lake Trout, as well as several species of whitefish, suckers, minnows and Burbot, all live within the Omineca Regions lakes and streams. One of the highest valued recreational rainbow trout fisheries is in the Stellako River, which became the Omineca Regions first Wildlife Management Area in 2013.

Regionally important wetlands, such as those on the Hominka and in the Cranberry Marsh / Starratt WMA, provide much needed rest and refueling stops for migratory birds. Populations of American White Pelicans forage on some of the region's lakes and White Swans winter on several rivers. The northern extent of Sharptailed Grouse range occurs on southwest facing meadows in the southern portion of the region and in the agricultural lands local breeding groups of Long-billed Curlews and Sandhill cranes can be found in the spring.

The largest herds of Mountain Caribou left in the province reside in the mountains on the eastern side of the region, and in the north populations of Northern Caribou still roam. Throughout the Omineca region there are Moose, Grizzly bear, Black bear, Fisher, Marten, Lynx, Wolf, Mountain goat, and Mule deer, with local populations of Stone sheep, Elk, White-tailed deer, and Cougar where snowpacks are thinner. Rare plant associations, ecosystems and habitats are scattered across the Omineca bolstering regional biological diversity, including the northern extent of Whitebark pine and Douglas fir, and the largest population of Haller's Apple moss in the world, as well as most known locations of Crumpled Tar Paper Lichen.

Given the highly diverse and geographically large area that the Omineca region covers it contains relatively few Conservation Lands. Six conservation land are administered regionally, and they cover a small selection of the habitats that can be found in the region.

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-23, **\$35,159** was allocated to six conservation properties in the Omineca region, to assist regional staff and partners in achieving management objectives.

Project Highlights:

\$25,445.01 invested in the Cranberry Marsh / Starratt WMA, with an additional \$5,000 for information sign maintenance and gravel trail resurfacing contributed by the Village of Valemound. Ongoing activities include maintenance of signs, community and partner engagement, management planning, trail assessment, minor repair of trail infrastructure, invasive species management, and seasonal inspections. The footbridge manufactured in 2021, was installed by WLRS in spring 2022. In 2022, WLRS also administered a contract for the manufacture and transport of a second footbridge, based on designs developed under previous contract. Installation of the second footbridge will occur in spring/summer 2023.

WLRS and Nature Trust of British Columbia hosted a meeting in March with conservation partners, including the Village of Valemound and Simpcw Resources Group, to discuss WMA management planning and 2023 operational, educational, and enhancement activities. An event for school groups and community members was held in September, involving education and restoration activities (invasive species control and planting native species) at the canoe launch site. Staff from Simpcw Resources Group, WLRS, Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), and NorthWest Invasive Plant Council (NWIPC) participated.

\$4,145.86 invested in the Stellako River WMA for property inspections, signage maintenance, invasive species control, and garbage removal from public access points.

\$1,602.13 invested in the Joanne Lloyd property for invasive species control, infrastructure maintenance, and seasonal inspection. Communication with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) about highway upgrades and highway failure stabilization adjacent to property will continue as needed.

\$475.00 invested in the North Nechako Tyee conservation property, to conduct management and safety inspections, monitor for invasive species, and maintain informational signage.

\$2,134.90 invested in the Mount Robson Ranch property to assess property condition, needs, and public usage. Perimeter signage was inspected and maintained as required. Wildlife cameras installed during YR 2021-22 were monitored and reset to further information on wildlife usage.

\$0.00 invested in the Natasha Boyd property for seasonal inspection. Signage has been developed but acquiring images from community partners has not been completed. Anticipate completion

and installation of updated signage in 2023. Site visit was coupled with Mount Robson Ranch site visit.

Conservation Outcomes:

Maintenance of infrastructure, installation of signage, site inspections/visits and trail maintenance were undertaken by the Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC) and WLRS staff. Fisheries management continues to be a priority at the Stellako River WMA with increased effort from Government being spent.

WLRS, in partnership with the Village of Valemount, installed a previously manufactured footbridge on the cranberry marsh trail. Footbridge installation was assisted by staff support from the local wildfire crew from the Ministry of Forests. WLRS also contracted the manufacture and transport of materials for the replacement of a second footbridge along the walking trail, which is anticipated to be installed in spring/summer 2023.

Invasive plant management continues to be a focus in priority areas of concern and significant reductions of invasive plants have been achieved at Cranberry Marsh / Starratt WMA, Stellako WMA, and Joanne Lloyd. Implementing invasive plant management plans is ongoing, in conjunction with the NWIPC. In 2021-22 the cumulative area surveyed at Cranberry Marsh / Starratt WMA was 13.17 ha, with mechanical removals totalling 0.03 ha. At the Stellako WMA, 0.03 ha was surveyed, with mechanical removal totalling 0.001 ha. At the Joanne Lloyd site, 0.8 ha was surveyed, with no mechanical removal conducted.

An event for school groups and community members was held in September at Cranberry Marsh / Starratt WMA. The event was organized by Simpcw Resources Group, with staff and/or equipment support from WLRS, NTBC, DUC, Village of Valemount, and NWIPC. The event involved educational activities, as well as removal of Canada thistle at the canoe launch area and replacement planting with native species. In March, a meeting at the marsh was held with conservation partners to facilitate collaboration on management and restoration activities in the WMA in 2023 and beyond.

Also of note, in 2021 a slope failure on Highway 16 impacted the Cluculz Lake (Section 16) Conservation Land adjacent to the Joanne Lloyd property. Substantial works to mitigate impacts to the property were installed in the form of revegetation and sediment control. Needs for additional vegetation planting, repair and/or removal of remaining mitigation measures will be re-assessed in 2022/23.

Photographs

1. Cranberry / Starratt Marsh WMA – Trails and habitat assessed for safety and ecological integrity. Installed a footbridge manufactured during previous year. Restoring a degraded site by removing invasive plants and replacing them with native plants, with help from school children and community members. Onsite meeting with conservation partners to discuss management planning and 2023 operational, educational, and enhancement activities.



2. Stellako River WMA – Boundary signs installed and maintained. Rubbish removed from access points. Property inspected for safety and ecological issues.



3. Mount Robson Ranch – Property assessed for safety and ecological concerns. Property monitored for wildlife usage. Boundary signs maintained.





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Northeast Region

Region: Northeast

Ecological Significance of the Region:

The Northeast Region of British Columbia is located between the Rocky Mountain foothills and the Alberta Plains.

This region consists of the Peace River and Liard River drainages of the Arctic watershed, featuring plateaus, plains, prairies, and lowlands lying east of the Rocky Mountains. Areas at higher altitudes are poorly drained, resulting in extensive muskeg areas. The region is characterised by boreal forest with critical wetlands and lakes interspersed throughout.

Since the 1950's, the Northern Region has experienced rapid development of oil and natural gas resources, resulting in increased fragmentation of this landscape. A number of Class 1 wetlands provide critical habitat for numerous waterfowl.

Summary Statement of Regional Investment:

In 2022-23 \$62,700 was spent on 7 project areas in the Northeast, to assist regional staff and partners in achieving management objectives.

Project Highlights:

\$7,588 invested in the Boundary Lake conservation area for property assessment, maintenance and inspection of water control structures, and review of industrial plans and activities on site.

\$4,450 invested in the Comstock Marsh conservation area for property assessment and maintenance and inspection of water control structures. A trespass garbage dumping site was removed to the landfill.

\$4,461 invested in the Dunlevy Creek conservation area. The property was assessed for safety and ecological issues. Signage was maintained. Conifer seedling ingrowth was removed on 21 hectares of former hayfield, to maintain ungulate foraging habitat.

\$5,925 invested in the Fort St. John Potholes conservation area for property assessment, maintenance and inspection of water control structures, fence inspection, and property boundary signage.

\$6,925 invested in the McQueen Slough conservation area. The property was assessed for site safety and ecological issues. Water control structures were managed and maintained for optimal water levels. Invasive plants were monitored and treated as needed.

\$3,638 invested in the Worth Marsh conservation area for property inspections, maintenance of property signage, maintenance and inspections of the water control structure, and review of oil and gas industry activities adjacent to the conservation area. Canada thistle was removed from the water control structure area, and a large informational sign was installed.

\$25,000 in Together for Wildlife funding invested in drafting Management Direction Statement documents for Boundary Lake, Dunlevy Creek, and LaGuarde Creek conservation areas. These documents will provide background, goals, and objectives to guide land management on these conservation areas.

Conservation Outcomes:

The 2022-23 field season included a number of important land management activities on conservation lands in the Northeast Region, working to ensure that habitat values are maintained or enhanced, and that public access to these conservation lands is safe and appropriate.

Informational signage, indicating property ownership and management partners, with contact information, was posted and maintained where appropriate and required. This serves to demarcate boundaries to protect habitat values from inappropriate usage, and to provide the public with the means to contact a land manager to discuss management concerns and issues. Property assessments, including evaluation of the ecological attributes and issues specific to each property, form the basis for activity planning for the following field seasons.

Over 21 hectares of land at the Dunlevy Creek Conservation Area was kept clear of conifer seedlings, to maintain ungulate foraging habitat. Between the 7 conservation lands, approximately 4 hectares had invasive plant management occur this year.

Photographs

1. Worth Marsh – Water control structure inspected and beaver debris removed. Invasive plants manually removed. Large informational sign installed.



2. Dunlevy Creek –Conifer seedlings removed from 21 hectares to prevent ingrowth in ungulate forage area.



3. Comstock Slough –Rubbish removed from trespass dumping areas. Before/after.



4. Boundary Lake – Water control structures inspected and maintained. Large informational sign installed.

