

UPPER KOOTENAY ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PLAN (UKEEP) SUMMARY OF FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

This document was produced by the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) and is a summary of the findings of the *Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan (UKEEP) 5-Year Program Review*. The independent review was undertaken by LGL Limited Environmental Research Associates during the summer and fall of 2019. The full report is available [here](#).

BACKGROUND ON UKEEP

The [Upper Kootenay Ecosystem Enhancement Plan](#) (UKEEP) was a partnership between the FWCP and Columbia Basin Trust (The Trust) to conserve and enhance ecosystems in the Upper Kootenay River Watershed, including the Koocanusa Reservoir. The Trust provided \$3 million to the FWCP over five years, between 2014–2019, to implement and fund UKEEP projects. The FWCP delivered the projects through its existing project delivery mechanisms.

HOW WAS THE PLAN IMPLEMENTED?

The plan included five ecosystem-based Action Plans:

1. Lakes Action Plan
2. Streams Action Plan
3. Wetland and Riparian Areas Action Plan
4. Upland and Dryland Areas Action Plan
5. Species of Interest Action Plan

RESULTS

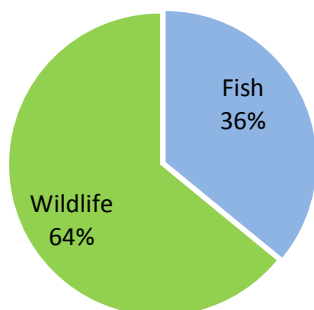
The independent review concluded that “Overall, the UKEEP program was very successful in reaching its goal to conserve, restore, and enhance fish, wildlife, and their habitats, and supported their sustainable use in the plan area.” Below is a summary of how the funds were allocated and the number of priorities addressed by the Action Plans.

Project investment (spent by October 31, 2019)

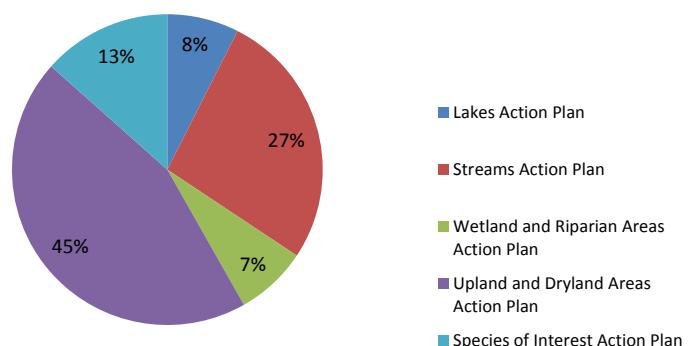
Total spent: \$2,836,065¹

- 89% project dollars
- 10% administration costs²
- 1% communications costs²

Projects funded 2014–2019 (total = 64)



Projects funded by Action Plan



¹ Several projects are still in progress and the remaining funds (approx. \$160K) are expected to be expended by March 31, 2020.

² These costs were associated with on-the-ground-delivery of the plan and included the development of the plan and the cost of the five-year review.

Breakdown by Action Plan

Lakes Action Plan

- All projects targeted the Kootanusa Reservoir.
- Six (33%) of the 18 actions were addressed, including 71% of the Priority 1 actions.
- Project types:
 - species-based – 60%
 - research and information acquisition – 40%

Project examples³: The production of an Upper Kootenay Burbot conservation strategy; an abundance and distribution assessment of Kootanusa Burbot; Kootanusa Kokanee enumeration; and the completion of foreshore inventory and mapping of Kootanusa Reservoir.

Streams Action Plan

- Projects targeted 12 of 15 priority streams (80%) and nine of 15 actions (60%), including 80% of the Priority 1 actions.
- Project types:
 - research and information acquisition – 39%
 - monitoring and evaluation – 28%
 - species-based – 22%
 - habitat-based – 11%
- Three focal fish species, Bull Trout, Kokanee, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout, were targeted.

Project examples³: The restoration of the connectivity of creek habitat; stream bank restoration; proposed wildlife habitat areas to support trout conservation; the assessment of hybridization levels of Westslope Cutthroat Trout with Rainbow Trout; and species-specific monitoring (e.g., Kokanee abundance, Bull Trout).

Wetland and Riparian Areas Action Plan

- Nine (41%) of 22 wetland actions were addressed, including 50% of Priority 1 actions.
- Project types:
 - habitat-based – 60%
 - research and information acquisition – 40%
- Wildlife species of interest targeted by wetland projects included six species of amphibian, including one recovery species (Northern Leopard Frog).

Project examples³: Two wetland restoration projects (approximately 18 hectares); ~38 hectares of invasive plant treatments; native plant additions; and a riparian habitat-assessment tool that assessed 33 wetlands.

Upland and Dryland Areas Action Plan

- Projects targeted 10 (53%) of 19 actions, including 82% of the Priority 1 actions.
- Project types:
 - species-based – 50%
 - habitat-based – 46%
 - monitoring and evaluation – 4%
- 17 upland-associated focal and inventory wildlife species and two recovery wildlife species (American Badger, Lewis' Woodpecker) were targeted.

Project examples³: Approximately 1,100 hectares of habitat restored (involving on-the-ground habitat actions such as ~300 hectares of land treated for invasive species, ~825 hectares of forest habitat thinned to open-range forest standards, and the planting of 5,300 Whitebark Pine seedlings); the development of ecosystem restoration plans that targeted Mule Deer and Long-billed Curlew; species-specific projects (e.g., remote camera wildlife monitoring, Mule Deer, Elk, and Bighorn Sheep studies); invasive species monitoring; and resolving access management issues.

³ For a more detailed description of the projects funded, [read the full report](#).

Species of Interest Action Plan

- Projects targeted 25 species (four fish, 21 wildlife): three recovery, 17 focal, and five inventory species.
- There were no priority actions for species of interest, however, 50% of projects were species-based and 50% were research and information acquisition.

Project examples³: Key investments were made for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Burbot, Kokanee, Mule Deer, Elk, Bighorn Sheep, amphibians (including Northern Leopard Frog), American Badger, Wolverine, Long-billed Curlew, and a two-year remote camera wildlife monitoring study, which targeted many medium and large mammal species (e.g., ungulates, carnivores).

LOOKING AHEAD

- Priorities identified in UKEEP were considered in the 2019 FWCP [Columbia Action Plan](#) updates, and many were reflected in these updated Action Plans.
- Recommendations included the development of species-specific projects and funding for lakes and wetland and riparian areas. Other suggestions were funding monitoring and evaluation projects, habitat-based projects for fish, and research and information-acquisition projects for wildlife. [Read the full report.](#)