



Recreation

KOOCANUSA RECREATION STRATEGY

Summary

March 2017

The KooCANUSA area has become a regionally important tourism and recreation asset, attracting tens of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts for activities such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating and off-road vehicle use. The popularity of the area has led to a growing number of impacts:

- Damage to sensitive ecosystems and grasslands
- Disturbance to wildlife and wildlife habitat
- Unauthorized large events and gatherings
- Increased wildfire risks
- Effects on Aboriginal rights and traditional activities
- Impacts on local ranchers and other tenure holders
- Increased spread of invasive species
- Public health and safety

In 2014, MLA Bill Bennett hosted a meeting of agencies with the goal of creating a collaborative process to address the diverse concerns expressed by local residents and stakeholders about the growing impacts of recreation on Crown land in the KooCANUSA area. The results of that meeting lead to a partnership between the Regional District of East Kootenay, Ktunaxa Nation, Province of B.C. and Columbia Basin Trust to undertake an extensive public engagement process and the creation of the KooCANUSA Recreation Strategy. Community engagement culminated in 2017 with four community open houses hosted in Grasmere, Jaffray, Cranbrook and Fernie, a meeting with Tobacco Plains Indian Band members, and a recreation management options survey that was completed by 1,142 people.

Managing Recreation Across KooCANUSA

The KRSC will continue working towards sustainable recreation management across the KooCANUSA by implementing the following actions:

<p>Education and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install signage at key recreation access points. • Update, print and distribute the KooCANUSA Recreation Guidelines and Map (brochure). • Update the KooCANUSA Recreation website. • Continue to work with local partners, advisors and stewardship groups. • Continue to increase awareness and use of existing garbage and sanitation facilities. 	<p>Access Controls and Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the KooCANUSA Recreation Steward Program. • Continue to research and assess the need for a Crown land recreation user-pay system. • Continue to advocate for reciprocal enforcement agreements with adjacent jurisdictions. • Support the Ktunaxa Nation Council’s Guardian Watchmen Program.
<p>Recreation Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a recreation inventory to document the locations of existing roads, trails, camping sites and staging areas. 	<p>Ongoing supported actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage with Ktunaxa Nation, Tobacco Plains Indian Band, residents and stakeholders. • Provide opportunities for local stewardship groups. • Monitor recreation use, trends and impacts.

Vision

Crown land recreation use in the Kooacanusa area is respectful of important ecological, cultural and resource values and reflects widespread adoption of a good stewardship ethic among recreation users. Local stakeholders and stewardship groups play a key role in recreation management.

Managing Recreation in Dorr-Grasmere area

Dorr-Grasmere was identified as an area where current recreation use patterns are significantly impacting Crown land values, and where more specific management approaches will be implemented starting in 2017. Implementation of the new recreation management approach in Dorr-Grasmere will occur over two phases. The first phase will prepare the groundwork for designating vehicle-access camping areas, recreation trails, and parking and staging areas. The second phase will focus on completing the legal designations and operationalizing the management approach on the ground. The goal for Phase 1 is to make significant progress on the following actions in 2017:

Recreation Trails	Education and Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess recreation trails and identify “acceptable” trails for motorized and non-motorized users.• Begin installation of basic trail markers and signage indicating the location of acceptable trails.• Identify and actively work with local stewardship group(s).• Begin the process of re-routing or deactivating and reclaiming unsustainable trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop, print and distribute a simple recreation map for the Dorr-Grasmere area.• Install basic signage at key entry points indicating the location of vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas.• Educate recreation users about appropriate behaviour and direct them towards acceptable recreation trails, vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas.
Parking / Day-use	Vehicle-Access Camping
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify appropriate location(s) for day-use parking and staging areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm acceptable locations for vehicle-access Crown land camping areas.

Next steps

The Kooacanusa Recreation Strategy is a living document that will be updated on an ongoing basis to address changing conditions and trends. Local community perspectives and input are critical to the success of the initiative, and the KRSC will continue to engage with First Nations, residents and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the Strategy. Financial and resource commitments have been made by Columbia Basin Trust and the Province of B.C. to implement the management actions in the Strategy. The KRSC welcomes opportunities for partnership and coordinated efforts with local and regional organizations and stewardship groups.