



KOOCANUSA Recreation

KOOCANUSA RECREATION STRATEGY

March 2017



www.koocanusarecreation.ca

The Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee supports Crown Land recreation that maintains the ecological integrity, cultural values, aesthetic appeal and economic value of the Koocanusa area for current and future users.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND	4
1.1 What has been accomplished to date?	7
1.2 Developing the Strategy	9
1.3 Community Engagement Results (2017)	10
2. IMPORTANT VALUES IN KOOCANUSA	11
2.1 Archeological Values	11
2.2 Ktunaxa Cultural Resources	11
2.3 Grasslands and Open Forests	11
2.4 Species and Ecosystems at Risk	12
2.5 Range and Agriculture Values	12
2.6 Sensitive Riparian, Shoreline, and Drawdown Zone areas	12
2.7 Aesthetic Values	13
2.8 Recreation Values	13
3. RECREATION ISSUES AND IMPACTS IN KOOCANUSA	14
4. MANAGING RECREATION ACROSS KOOCANUSA	15
4.1 Vision	15
4.2 Guiding Principles	15
4.3 KooCANUSA Recreation Management Strategies	16
5. MANAGING RECREATION IN DORR-GRASMERE	18
5.1 Background	18
5.2 Current Status of Recreation in Dorr-Grasmere	18
5.3 Dorr-Grasmere Recreation Management Strategies	19
6. IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS	22
7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	23
8. APPENDIX A: MAP - SENSITIVE GRASSLANDS	24
9. APPENDIX B: MAP - SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK	25
10. APPENDIX C: MAP - RANGE AND AGRICULTURE	26
11. APPENDIX D: MAP - DORR-GRASMERE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA	27

1. BACKGROUND

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 led 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 this Recreation Management Strategy.

The Koocanusa area encompasses 560 square kilometres extending from Wardner in the North to the United States border in the south (Figure 1). The 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, wildlife viewing and off-road vehicle use. It is also an area of traditional use for First Nations and falls within the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation. Crown land in the area is extensive, and existing tenures include grazing, trapping, timber harvesting and guiding.

In recent years, local residents and stakeholders have expressed significant concern about the growing impacts of Crown land recreation in the Koocanusa area. Most recreational issues and impacts are the result of relatively easy access to open forest and grasslands and few access controls. Recreation issues identified by residents, stakeholders and recreation users are summarized in Section 3. To help address these community concerns, a multi-agency steering committee, the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee, (KRSC) was established to identify and implement recreation management solutions.



In recent years, local residents and stakeholders have expressed significant concern about the growing impacts of Crown land recreation in the Koocanusa area.



Seeking to build on previous planning efforts, such as the Koocanusa Official Community Plan (2014) and the Cranbrook West Recreation Management Strategy (2005), the Koocanusa Recreation Management Initiative is a process to improve management of recreation across the Koocanusa. Since 2014, the KRSC has focused on reducing the impacts of recreation activities across the Koocanusa area to address public concern over recreation uses and behaviours, which are summarized in the section below – “What has been accomplished to date?”

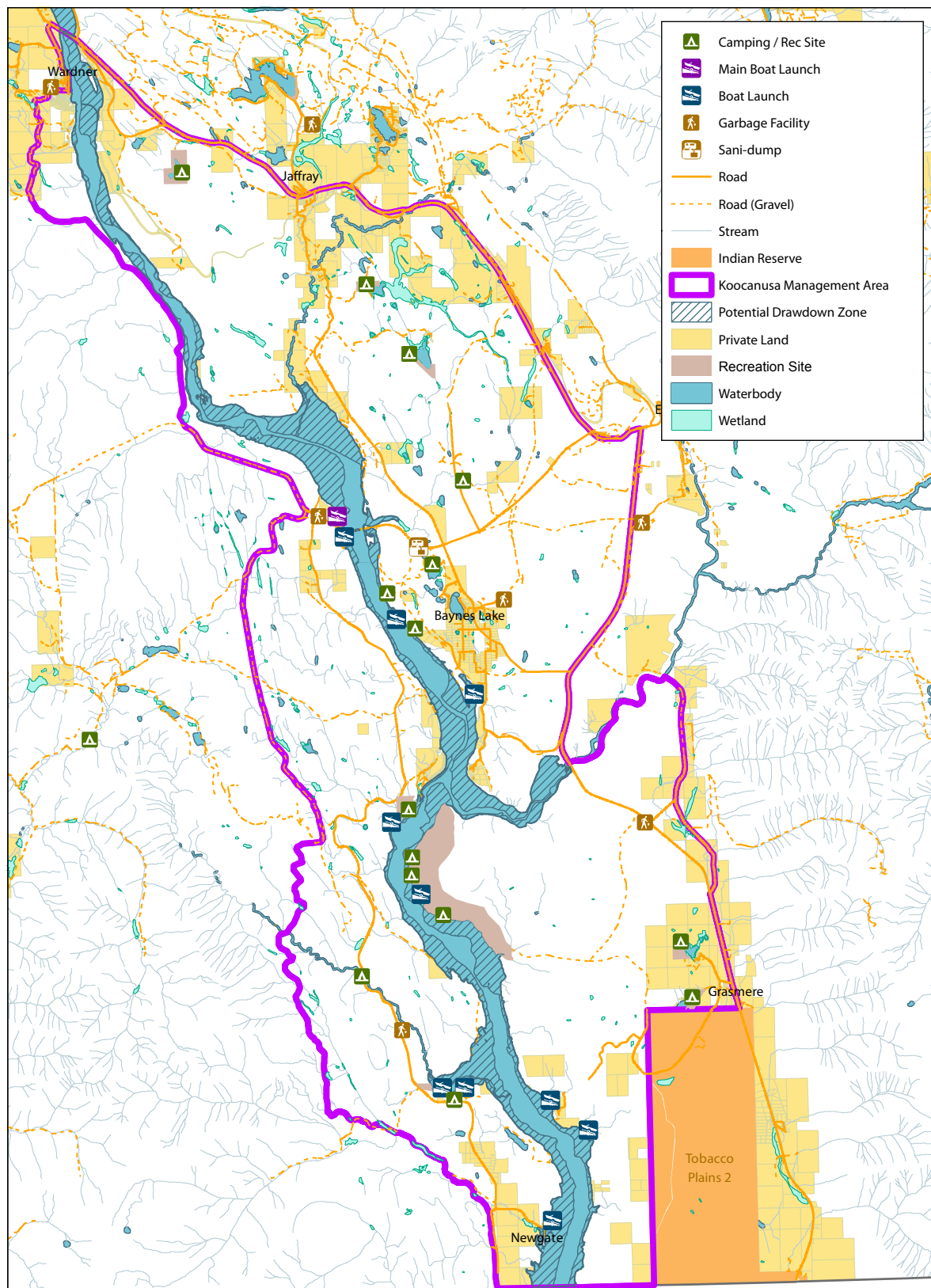
In 2014, the KRSC commissioned a Situational Analysis, which recommended how to better manage recreation on Crown land and ensure protection of ecological integrity, cultural values, aesthetic appeal and economic value of the area for current and future users. In fall 2015, the Koocanusa Recreation Public Advisory Group (KRPAG) was formed to provide local input into the development of a recreation strategy for the area. KRPAG members, consisting primarily of local residents and recreation users in the Koocanusa, have provided valuable local input and perspectives on current recreation use and impacts, and on options for future management direction.

Consultation with First Nations, residents and stakeholders over the past two years has provided the foundation for this Strategy. An extensive community engagement process was completed in early 2017 to gather feedback from local residents and stakeholders to help identify preferred options to improve management of recreation on Crown land across Koocanusa with a specific focus, initially, on Dorr-Grasmere area.

A cornerstone of these efforts will be stewardship and education campaigns that support responsible recreation use, and provide information to recreation users on how they can become better stewards of the area while still enjoying the area for its beauty and recreation opportunities.



Figure 1: Koocanusa Recreation Management Area¹



¹ The Potential Drawdown Zone is the area between the high and low water marks of the Koocanusa Reservoir.

1.1 What has been accomplished to date?

Several actions have been taken since 2014 to support improved management of recreation in the Koocanusa area. These actions focus primarily on enhancing stewardship by sharing information and educating recreation users.

Recreation users have information to make good stewardship decisions

- Implementation of the Koocanusa Recreation Steward program providing two seasonal auxiliary Natural Resource Officers dedicated to the Koocanusa area to support stewardship and education of Crown land recreation users in 2015 and 2016;
- Recreation guidelines developed for the Koocanusa area²;
- Koocanusa Recreation Guidelines and Map (brochure) distributed across the region in 2015 and 2016; and
- A dedicated website - www.koocanusarecreation.ca.

Management activities are guided by input from residents and stakeholders

- Public consultation in 2014/2015 to identify recreation issues and potential solutions, including a survey mailed to all residents of RDEK Area B (1172 surveys delivered, 290 completed);
- Meetings and interviews with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and visitors in summer 2014;
- Koocanusa Recreation Public Advisory Group formed in December 2015 to help guide development of this Strategy;
- Meetings and interviews with residents, stakeholders, and recreation users in the Dorr-Grasmere area to identify support for management options for the Dorr-Grasmere area; and
- Extensive community engagement in 2017 (see Section 1.3).



² See <http://koocanusarecreation.ca/recreation-guidelines>

Working with the Ktunaxa Nation and Tobacco Plains Indian Band

- Representatives from Ktunaxa Nation Council and Tobacco Plains Indian Band are actively involved in the Koocanusa Recreation Management Initiative, and have been since its inception.

Garbage and sanitation facilities are available in key locations to facilitate appropriate waste disposal by recreation users

- Installation of a seasonal garbage facility at Kikomun-Newgate Road;
- Placement of temporary garbage dumpsters in popular Crown land recreation areas, such as Dorr Road, on long weekends in the summer;
- New directional signage installed for the Dorr-Grasmere Transfer Station to improve awareness for recreation users; and
- Expansion of the sani-station/dump at Kikomun Creek Provincial Park.

Recreation management efforts are monitored and reviewed, and results are used to adjust management activities

- Installation of digital traffic counting devices that provide daily counts of the number of vehicles entering key access points around Koocanusa; and
- Koocanusa Recreation Stewards report, which provides a summary of trends, impacts, issues, and corrective actions undertaken during the summer recreation season.



1.2 Developing the Strategy

This Strategy is the product of public input, planning, events, and activities that have occurred since 2014 largely as a result of efforts by the KRSC. These efforts are summarized in the table below.

Date	Key milestones/events	Description
2014	Form the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee (KRSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLA Bill Bennett and Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson initiated the KRSC to help address Crown Land recreation issues and recommend actions to reduce the most significant impacts
	Conduct the Koocanusa Situational Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey local residents and recreational users; interview local businesses and non-profit organizations • Investigate the scope of recreation issues affecting Crown land, the current management situation related to each issue, and management gaps and challenges
2015	Complete the Situational Analysis Report and Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Koocanusa Area Situational Analysis and Recommendations for Crown Land Recreation, available at www.koocanusarecreation.ca • KRSC commits to begin implementing recommendations
	Form the Koocanusa Recreation Public Advisory Group (KRPAG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form the KRPAG to provide local input and perspectives on recreation management issues and approaches • Members consist primarily of local residents and recreation users in the Koocanusa area
2016	Develop the Koocanusa Resource Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a detailed resource inventory to identify important values across the landscape: cultural and archaeological, range and agriculture, and species and ecosystems • Resource inventory maps aid in identifying management options and approaches
	Focus on Dorr-Grasmere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose the Dorr-Grasmere area as the focus for initial management efforts • Complete a digital inventory of roads and trails, and all areas showing evidence of recreation camping and staging • Interview and meet with Dorr-Grasmere recreation and resource user groups and stakeholders
	Conduct Koocanusa field tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KRPAG and KRSC members visit several areas of Koocanusa, including the Dorr-Grasmere and west side of Koocanusa, to view first-hand many of the existing issues and impacts
2017	Community engagement (January - February)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite local and area residents and First Nations community members to review and provide feedback on Koocanusa Recreation Management Options
	Koocanusa Recreation Strategy (March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Koocanusa Recreation Strategy based on input received through community engagement

1.3 Community Engagement Results (2017)

Community engagement on recreation management in the Koocanusa area has been ongoing since 2014, and culminated in an extensive community engagement process which occurred from January 23 to February 17, 2017 and included four community open houses hosted in Grasmere, Jaffray, Cranbrook and Fernie, a meeting with Tobacco Plains Indian Band members, and an online survey that received 1,142 responses.

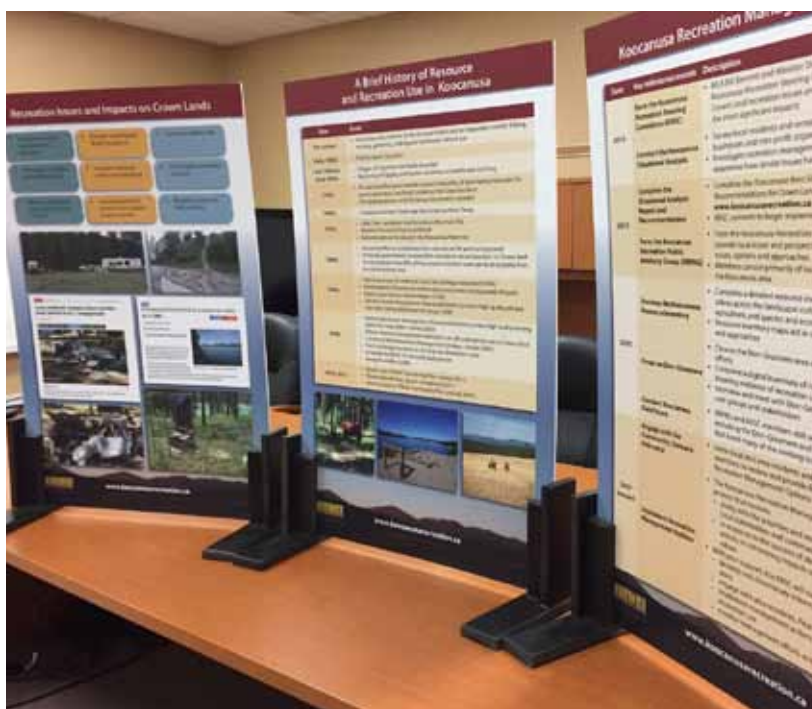
The following summarizes support for land-based recreation management actions across the Koocanusa area:

- The preferred sources for information about desired recreation behaviours are signage (87%), online channels (75%) and compliance and enforcement officials (67%);
- Respondents strongly support better signage about the location of garbage and sanitation facilities (78%) and increased enforcement of littering (77%);
- 70% agree or strongly agree with implementing a user-pay system that supports maintenance of recreation facilities in the Koocanusa area; and
- 76% agree or strongly agree with increasing recreation monitoring and enforcement in the Koocanusa area.

Support for management actions specific to the Dorr-Grasmere area are summarized below:

- 67% agree or strongly agree with allowing vehicle-access camping in designated areas only, and 19% disagree or strongly disagree;
- 51% support vehicle-access camping in designated areas on a year-round basis;
- 73% agree or strongly agree with allowing motorized recreation use on designated roads and trails only, and 17% disagree or strongly disagree;
- 80% agree or strongly agree with installing trail facilities (signage, bridges, berms) on designated trails;
- 59% support motorized recreation use on designated trails on a year-round basis; and
- 74% agree or strongly agree with designating day-use parking and staging areas.

More detailed survey results and analysis are available online at www.koocanusarecreation.ca



2. IMPORTANT VALUES IN KOOCANUSA

The Kootenai area contains many important values that have been documented and digitized to inform the recreation planning process.

2.1 Archeological Values

The Kootenai area has a rich cultural history extending back at least 10,000 years. There are registered archaeological sites in the Kootenai area, and sites that have been identified but not yet recorded. All archaeological sites and associated cultural resources are of great importance and value to the Ktunaxa, the local communities, and the general public and as such are a protected resource.



Archaeological sites that predate 1846 or represent significant events, activities, or individuals in the history of the Province are protected by the *BC Heritage Conservation Act*. Due to the large number of sites within the region, cultural resources are continuously being disturbed by increased use of the land and activities such as motorized vehicle use, camping outside of designated areas, timber harvesting, private development, and reservoir impacts (i.e. wave erosion, shoreline undercutting, post reservoir sediment deposition and debris management). Many archaeological sites were lost with the development of Libby Dam and creation of the reservoir.

2.2 Ktunaxa Cultural Resources

Cultural heritage can be defined as the study of the physical evidence of how and where past peoples lived. In addition to the physical remnants of the past, cultural resources can include sites such as places of spiritual significance, named locales, known travel routes and other places of cultural value regardless of the presence or absence of physical remains.

2.3 Grasslands and Open Forests

The grassland and open forest ecosystems in the Kootenai area support various wildlife and plant species that are not found in other ecosystem types. Many of these species are rare or threatened due to dwindling habitat supply. The grasslands in the Kootenai area also provide important winter range for a variety of ungulates including elk, moose, bighorn sheep and mule deer.

With fire suppression, the open forests have become 'in-filled', and much of the adjacent grasslands have been colonized by trees. Forage values are greatly affected by the change from open to closed forest condition. This reduces the carrying capacity for wild ungulates and domestic cattle, and concentrates the animals on an ever-decreasing land base. This concentration escalates competition for reduced range resources that can result in degradation of the remaining grassland values.

Grassland and open forest habitats in the Rocky Mountain Trench, including the Kootenai area, are threatened by factors such as invasive plants, human activities and forest encroachment. The Sensitive Grasslands map (Appendix A) depicts the extent of sensitive grasslands and Ungulate Winter Range in the Kootenai area.

2.4 Species and Ecosystems at Risk

The Koocanusa area contains sensitive and vulnerable species and ecosystems, including species and ecosystems at risk such as: long-billed curlew, American badger, spalding's campion, pinewood peavine, Lewis's woodpecker, painted turtle, and Montana larkspur.

Several approved and proposed wildlife habitat areas (WHAs) are present in the Koocanusa area. WHAs designate critical wildlife habitats in which activities such as recreation use, access and pesticide use are managed to limit impacts to a specific species. Thirty-five WHAs exist in the Koocanusa area to protect: Lewis's woodpecker, long-billed curlew, western screech owl, American badger, flammulated owl, antelope-brush/bluebunch wheatgrass, Douglas-fir/snowberry/balsamroot, Williamson's sapsucker, great blue heron and grizzly bear.

Access Management Areas (AMAs) are designed to protect specific wildlife values. Three AMAs exist within the Koocanusa Recreation Management Area:

- Baynes Lake AMA for high quality nesting habitat for long-billed curlews;
- Galton Range AMA for high value winter range for mule deer, bighorn sheep and elk; and
- Linklater AMA for high quality elk and mule deer spring, fall and winter range

The Species and Ecosystems at risk map (Appendix B) shows the location of known sensitive species and ecosystems in the Koocanusa area.



2.5 Range and Agriculture Values

The Koocanusa area contains considerable high quality grazing and agricultural land. The vast majority of the area is within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Cattle grazing occurs from mid-May and can continue to mid-November. Impacts to this range from recreation and increased motor vehicle use is of significant concern due to increased potential for livestock displacement and harassment during grazing periods, direct forage loss from trail and road development and unregulated camping, and range degradation due to invasive plants.

The Range and Agriculture map (Appendix C) contains more detailed information about range and agriculture values in the Koocanusa area.

2.6 Sensitive Riparian, Shoreline, and Drawdown Zone areas

Similar to other reservoirs, the foreshore and riparian habitats generally associated with large natural lake ecosystems are absent in the Koocanusa area. The inconsistent water levels and wave action associated with the rising and receding water levels makes it difficult to establish and sustain productive riparian and foreshore vegetation or habitat.

There are four fish species of concern in the Koocanusa reservoir and its tributary streams: Kokanee salmon, bull trout, cutthroat trout and mountain whitefish. Low gradient areas of the reservoir drawdown zone such as Waldo Cove, Sandy Shores and Dorr Bay, as well as the inlet areas of tributary streams such as Gold Creek, Kikomun Creek, Sand Creek and the Elk River, provide important habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial species. The shallow seasonal bays along the shoreline provide warm waters that can be highly productive as forage areas for juvenile fish.

There are several elevated ridges and mounds in the drawdown zone that may either remain dry during full pool or receive relatively short periods of flooding, thereby allowing grassland communities to establish and sustain themselves. Many of these sites are located in the Waldo Cove, Sandy Shores, Kikomun Bridge and Dorr Bay areas. These ecosystems have potential value for long-billed curlew habitat and as forage for ungulates.

Many riparian habitats in the lower Kootenay River were lost with the construction of the Libby Dam and creation of the reservoir. In addition to the loss of habitat and impact on species diversity, this has placed additional pressure on remaining habitats along the reservoir as well as numerous wetland features within the Koocanusa area.



2.7 Aesthetic Values

Beyond the “use” value of the land for ranching, agriculture, recreation and wildlife, the land in the Koocanusa area holds intrinsic and aesthetic values. Aesthetic values include views, beauty, pristineness and the ability to enjoy peace and quiet while in nature. These values are very important to local residents and visitors to the area and are part of the reason many people choose to live and recreate in the Koocanusa area.

2.8 Recreation Values

Development of the Koocanusa Reservoir has created a regionally important tourism and recreation asset, attracting outdoor enthusiasts for activities such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, equestrian, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, ATV and dirt biking. The reservoir is one of the largest bodies of water in the region and the accessibility of the surrounding Crown land, the unique open grassland ecosystem, the warm and dry climate and attractive views has made the area a prime recreation destination.

The volume of visitors to the Koocanusa area has not been documented; however, anecdotal evidence suggests that over 100,000 visitors come to the area every summer, with up to 25,000 visitors on the busiest long weekends. Large areas of easily accessible Crown land are an attractive venue for large group gatherings and events that can attract hundreds or even thousands of people, as is the case for spring mud-bogging events.

3. RECREATION ISSUES AND IMPACTS IN KOOCANUSA

In recent years, local residents and stakeholders have expressed significant concern about the growing impacts of Crown land recreation in the Koocanusa area. Most recreational issues and impacts are the result of relatively easy access to open forest and grasslands and few access controls. Recreation issues identified by residents, stakeholders, and recreation users include:

Damage to sensitive ecosystems and grasslands, including important wetlands and grasslands for cattle and ungulate grazing

Disturbance to wildlife and wildlife habitat, including winter range for a variety of flora and fauna that are endangered or threatened in BC such as spalding's campion, Lewis' woodpecker and American badger

Effects on Aboriginal rights and traditional activities including but not limited to harvesting of plants and animals as well as disturbance and destruction, both intentional and inadvertent, of archaeological sites - which are protected under the Heritage Conservation Act and impacts to cultural materials

Random camping and illegal occupancy (for example camping beyond the 14-day Crown land camping limit) which is leading to localized impacts in high-use areas, such as litter, aesthetic and environmental impacts, noise disturbances and illegal cutting of trees

Unauthorized large events and gatherings resulting in increased garbage and human waste, noise disturbances, and public safety issues

An increase in the **spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species**

Increased wildfire risks related to uncontrolled access and illegal campfires, and potential evacuation difficulties due to the large number and dispersed nature of recreation users

Public health and safety concerns associated with the unsafe operation of motorized vehicles, irresponsible use of firearms, and an increase in belligerent behavior by some recreationists, with instances of property damage, trespassing and vandalism

Negative impacts on local ranchers as a result of damage to sensitive grazing lands, livestock at large due to gates being left open and fences being cut or damaged by recreation users



4. MANAGING RECREATION ACROSS KOOCANUSA

This section proposes a long-term vision and guiding principles for recreation management in the Koocanusa area. These guiding principles and vision were used in the drafting of the recreation strategy.

4.1 Vision

The following vision is intended to guide and inform Koocanusa recreation management efforts:

Crown land recreation use in the Koocanusa area enables residents and visitors to enjoy safe and sustainable recreation that respects important ecological, cultural and resource values and conserves what is unique, special and distinctive about the area. Local stakeholders and stewardship groups play a key role in recreation management.



4.2 Guiding Principles

The following principles reflect both the approach to and desired outcomes of Koocanusa recreation management efforts:

1. Encourage sustainable recreation use in the Koocanusa area through improved information and education, and use regulation and enforcement only when education is clearly not effective.
2. Respect and safeguard Ktunaxa cultural and archaeological values and resources.
3. Reduce recreation impacts on and conflicts with existing tenured activities on Crown land.
4. Avoid additional tax burdens on local residents from recreation management measures, and develop recreation management approaches that are funded, at least in part, by recreation users.
5. Build on previous recreation management planning processes and seek collaboration with future planning processes.
6. Avoid measures that will result in relocating Koocanusa recreation management issues and conflicts to surrounding areas.
7. Engage residents and stakeholders in a manner that encourages respect for diverse beliefs and values.
8. Apply adaptive management approaches based on best available information that support flexible, integrated solutions and wise use of resources.
9. Encourage recreation management approaches that support local economic development and provide benefits to local residents, businesses, recreation users, First Nations, Local Governments and the Province of B.C.
10. Ensure that the development and maintenance of recreation facilities is conducted in accordance with accepted provincial guidelines and best management practices.

4.3 Koocanusa Recreation Management Strategies

Building on efforts to date, the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee (KRSC) will continue working towards sustainable recreation management across the Koocanusa by implementing actions to:

- Communicate information about appropriate recreation use and behaviour to recreation users;
- Minimize unsustainable impacts through enhancement of recreation facilities; and
- Reduce impacts through access controls and enforcement

In 2017 the KRSC will begin implementation of the actions identified below.

Management actions beyond 2017 are addressed in Section 6. The actions listed below are intended to apply broadly to the entire Koocanusa area. More specific management approaches have been identified for the Dorr-Grasmere area and are described in Section 5.

Education and Communication

Education and communication efforts in 2017 will emphasize sustainable and appropriate recreation use, and direct recreation users to appropriate trails, camping areas and other established recreation facilities. In 2017, the KRSC will:

- Install signage at key recreation access points to promote responsible behaviour in high-use areas, such as the access to Umbrella Breach and the west side of the reservoir near Newgate.
- Update, print and distribute the Koocanusa Recreation Guidelines and Map.
- Update the Koocanusa Recreation website with relevant and appropriate information.
- Submit press releases and advertisements (radio, newspaper, online, etc.) as needed to reinforce key messages and expectations for responsible recreation use.
- Continue to work with local partners, advisors and stewardship groups in the Koocanusa area to promote the guidelines for responsible recreation use.
- Continue to increase awareness and use of existing garbage and sanitation facilities.



Recreation Facilities

The focus in 2017 will be on completing a recreation inventory of the Koocanusa area to document and digitally record the locations of existing roads, trails, camping areas, staging areas, and other recreation infrastructure and facilities to inform recreation management planning. A recreation inventory was completed for the Dorr-Grasmere area in 2016.

Access Controls and Enforcement

In 2017, the KRSC will:

- Continue to support the Koocanusa Recreation Steward Program and investigate sustainable funding models to keep this program operational over the long-term.
- Continue to research and assess the need for a Crown land recreation user-pay system where recreation users, including those from outside the region, pay a fee to utilize and maintain recreation facilities (trails, camping, garbage, etc.) in the Koocanusa area.
- Continue to advocate for the development of reciprocal enforcement agreements with adjacent jurisdictions for payment of tickets issued for natural resource offences.
- Support the Ktunaxa Nation Council's Guardian Watchmen Program and coordination with the Koocanusa Recreation Steward program.

Ongoing supported actions

The KRSC will support the following recreation management actions on an ongoing basis:

- Engage with Ktunaxa Nation Council and members of the Tobacco Plains Indian Band to determine the most effective management approaches for addressing recreation issues.
- Engage with residents and stakeholders as needed to determine the most effective management approaches for addressing recreation issues.
- Support projects and organizations seeking to better understand values in the Koocanusa area, including sensitive habitats within the reservoir drawdown zone, and archaeological and cultural values across Koocanusa.
- Provide opportunities for local stewardship groups to be effective partners in recreation management.
- Monitor recreation use, trends and impacts.



5. MANAGING RECREATION IN DORR-GRASMERE

5.1 Background

The Dorr-Grasmere area is 127 square kilometres in size and defined as the area south of the Elk River, west of Elko-Grasmere Road and Highway 93, extending south to the US border, and west to approximately the low-water mark on the east shore of Kootenai Reservoir (see map at Appendix D). Dorr-Grasmere was identified as an area where current recreation use patterns are significantly impacting Crown land values to the point where these values are being severely degraded. This section introduces new recreation management approaches to deal with these issues in the Dorr-Grasmere area.



5.2 Current Status of Recreation in Dorr-Grasmere

Recreation roads & trails

- Unauthorized recreation trails continue to be developed and are causing damage to sensitive grasslands, and habitats for endangered or threatened species.
- A recreation trails inventory was completed for the Dorr-Grasmere area, identifying hundreds of kilometres of unauthorized trails that are used by all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes.
- One designated non-motorized trail (the Elk Rim Trail) exists in the Dorr-Grasmere area which is managed through a partnership agreement with a local stewardship group. Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users are problematic for the management of this trail for its designated use.
- Many truck-accessible roads exist in the area.

Vehicle-access camping & day-use

- There are three existing public recreation and camping sites in the Dorr-Grasmere area at Dorr (59 camp sites), Loon Lake (40 sites) and Edwards Lake (6 sites). Several private camping sites also exist in the area. Vehicle-access camping outside of designated areas is causing localized impacts, especially in high-use areas, notably litter, aesthetic and environmental impacts from overuse, and illegal cutting of trees.
- A recreation inventory was completed for the Dorr-Grasmere area, identifying at least 22 sites with evidence of unregulated Crown land camping and 12 additional sites with evidence of day-use parking.
- Camping activities on Crown land are currently guided by the *BC Land Use Policy* which allows a person to camp on Crown land in the same location for up to 14 consecutive calendar days.
- There are currently no areas designated for day-use parking or staging.

5.3 Dorr-Grasmere Recreation Management Strategies

Beginning in 2017, a new recreation management approach will be implemented in the Dorr-Grasmere area. The vision, to be implemented over several years, is a well-maintained network of recreation trails for motorized and non-motorized users that provide opportunities for all ages and abilities, and include loop trails and connections leading to and from points-of-interest, camping and parking areas. The trail network will be managed in partnership with recreation stewardship groups in the area. Vehicle-access camping and day-use parking areas will be designated and will facilitate access to the trail network while minimizing impacts to important Crown land values. This approach is intended to mitigate the growing number of recreation impacts in this area, while avoiding relocation of recreation issues and problems to adjacent areas.

The KRSC will work towards implementation of management strategies in the Dorr-Grasmere area based on three core management goals:

1. Vehicle-access camping should occur in designated areas only;
2. Motorized recreation use should occur on designated roads and trails only; and
3. Day-use parking and staging areas for recreation users should be designated and facilitate access to the trail network.

This management approach is anticipated to yield important benefits, including:

- Improved health of grasslands and ecosystems for local wildlife populations, species at risk and ranching operations;
- Mitigation of potential impacts on Aboriginal rights and traditional use activities;
- Mitigation of impacts on highly sensitive areas with significant ecological or cultural values;
- Reduction in potential for conflicts with other Crown land users;
- Improved public health and safety; and
- Enhanced experience for responsible recreation users.

Implementation of the new recreation management approach will occur over two phases. The first phase will prepare the groundwork for designating vehicle-access camping areas, recreation trail networks, and parking and staging areas in the Dorr-Grasmere area. The second phase focuses on completing the designations and operationalizing the management approach on the ground. In accordance with the Strategy's guiding principles, the actions described under these phases may be adapted or adjusted to reflect any significant changes in recreation use and impacts in the future.

The information below provides a roadmap for implementing the new management approach in Dorr-Grasmere using a phased approach.



Phase 1: Setting the Foundation (Summer 2017)

As a result of the community input received during the community engagement process in 2017, the KRSC will begin immediately to lay the foundation for sustainable recreation use in the Dorr-Grasmere area. Prior to and throughout the summer of 2017, management efforts will focus on ensuring recreation users can easily access information regarding the location of appropriate recreation trails, camping areas, and parking and staging areas. The goal is to make significant progress on the following actions in 2017:

Recreation Trails

1. Continue to work with local partners, stewardship groups, and experts to assess recreation trails and identify “acceptable” trails for motorized and non-motorized users. Acceptable trails represent those that are “open” and encouraged for recreation use in 2017 because they avoid or minimize impacts to Crown land values. Several potential trail sections have already been identified and mapped by local stewardship groups.
2. Begin installation of basic trail markers and signage indicating the location of acceptable trails.
3. Begin establishing partnership agreements with local stewardship groups for the ongoing maintenance and management of trails.
4. Begin the process of re-routing or deactivating, reclaiming and restoring unsustainable trails in the Dorr-Grasmere area. Priority trails for re-routing or deactivation include those that:
 - Are too steep to be sustainable or are causing erosion;
 - Are redundant and lead to the same location; and
 - Traverse areas with exceptionally high value such as sensitive grasslands, habitat for species and ecosystems at risk, wetlands or important wildlife and livestock watering areas, Ktunaxa cultural or archaeological values or areas of high aesthetic value.

Vehicle-access Camping

5. Continue to work with local partners, stewardship groups and experts to confirm acceptable locations for vehicle-access Crown land camping areas. The goal is to identify locations that have been impacted historically by Crown land recreation activities, avoid sensitive areas and that provide easy access to potential recreation trails from the existing road network. These locations will be identified and communicated as preferred locations for vehicle-access camping.
6. Install basic signage indicating the location of acceptable vehicle-access camping areas.

Day-use parking and staging

7. Continue to work with local partners, stewardship groups and experts to identify appropriate location(s) for day-use parking and staging.
8. Install basic signage indicating the location of acceptable day-use parking and staging areas.

Education and Communication

9. Develop, print and distribute a simple recreation map for the Dorr-Grasmere area indicating the location of acceptable recreation trails, vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas.
10. Install basic signage at key entry points, vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas indicating the location of acceptable recreation trails, vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas.
11. The Kooacanusa Recreation Stewards will continue to educate recreation users about appropriate behaviour and direct users towards acceptable recreation trails, vehicle-access camping areas, and parking and staging areas.

Phase 2: Trail and Camping Area Designations

While Phase 1 focuses on education of users and the identification of appropriate recreation trails, vehicle-access camping, and parking and staging areas, the goal of Phase 2 is to formalize and legally designate those areas. Legal designation is an administrative requirement which gives authority to enforce rules and regulations within a particular area. In addition to the legal designation of trails and camping areas, the KRSC will continue to implement actions which commenced through phase 1, including: establishing partnership agreements with local stewardship groups; re-routing or deactivating, reclaiming and restoring unsustainable trails; updating, printing and distributing a Dorr-Grasmere recreation map; installing signage; and continued enforcement. The goal is to establish a well-maintained network of recreation trails with suitable vehicle-access camping, and parking and staging areas that support responsible recreation use.



6. IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Koocanusa Recreation Strategy will evolve along with the priorities and resources of participating agencies, local stakeholders and communities, and in response to the success of stewardship and management actions in minimizing impacts on Crown land values. This Strategy is a living document that will be updated on an ongoing basis to adapt to changing conditions. It is also intended to be locally supported, and developed in collaboration with local partners. The long-term goal is to develop a comprehensive and sustainable Recreation Strategy for all areas of the Koocanusa as needed and as resources allow.

The Koocanusa area contains important values, rights and interests for the Ktunaxa Nation. The Ktunaxa Nation is in the later stages of the treaty process and have various parcels in the Koocanusa area that have been offered to the Ktunaxa in that process. These parcels currently have restrictions on activities that may be permitted on them and there may be further changes to their uses if and when they move under Ktunaxa ownership and jurisdiction in the future.

Local community perspectives and input are critical to the success of this initiative. As such, the KRSC will continuously engage with First Nations, residents and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the Strategy.

KRSC members have made financial and resource commitments to support implementation of the management actions identified in this Strategy. In addition, existing grant programs and funding opportunities provide an avenue for local and regional organizations and stewardship groups to play a more significant role in recreation management in the Koocanusa area. The KRSC welcomes opportunities for such complementary and coordinated efforts.



7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

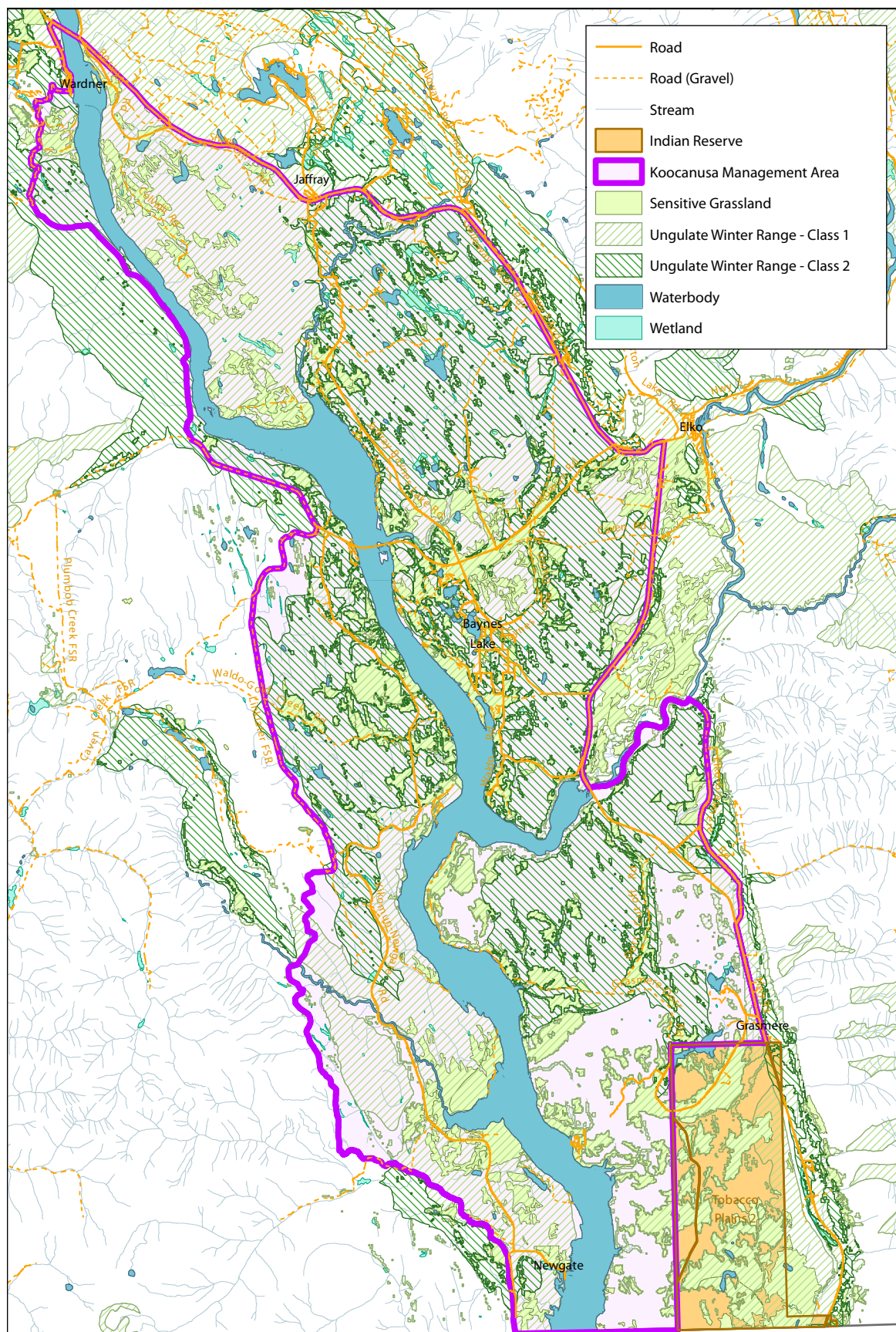
Monitoring and evaluation activities will provide insights into trends and patterns of recreation use, and the effectiveness of recreation management actions in reducing conflicts and impacts. Monitoring activities will ensure management actions are effective and continue to be supported by local residents and recreation users. Monitoring activities in 2017 will build on monitoring that occurred across Koocanusa in 2016 and include:

- Traffic counters installed at key recreation access points across Koocanusa;
- Annual reports and information provided by the Koocanusa Recreation Stewards on recreation trends, impacts, education, and enforcement activities;
- Qualitative reports from local partners, stewardship groups, and public advisors; and
- Recreation occupancy statistics and use rates at the Yaqakxaqlamki Boat Launch and recreation sites.

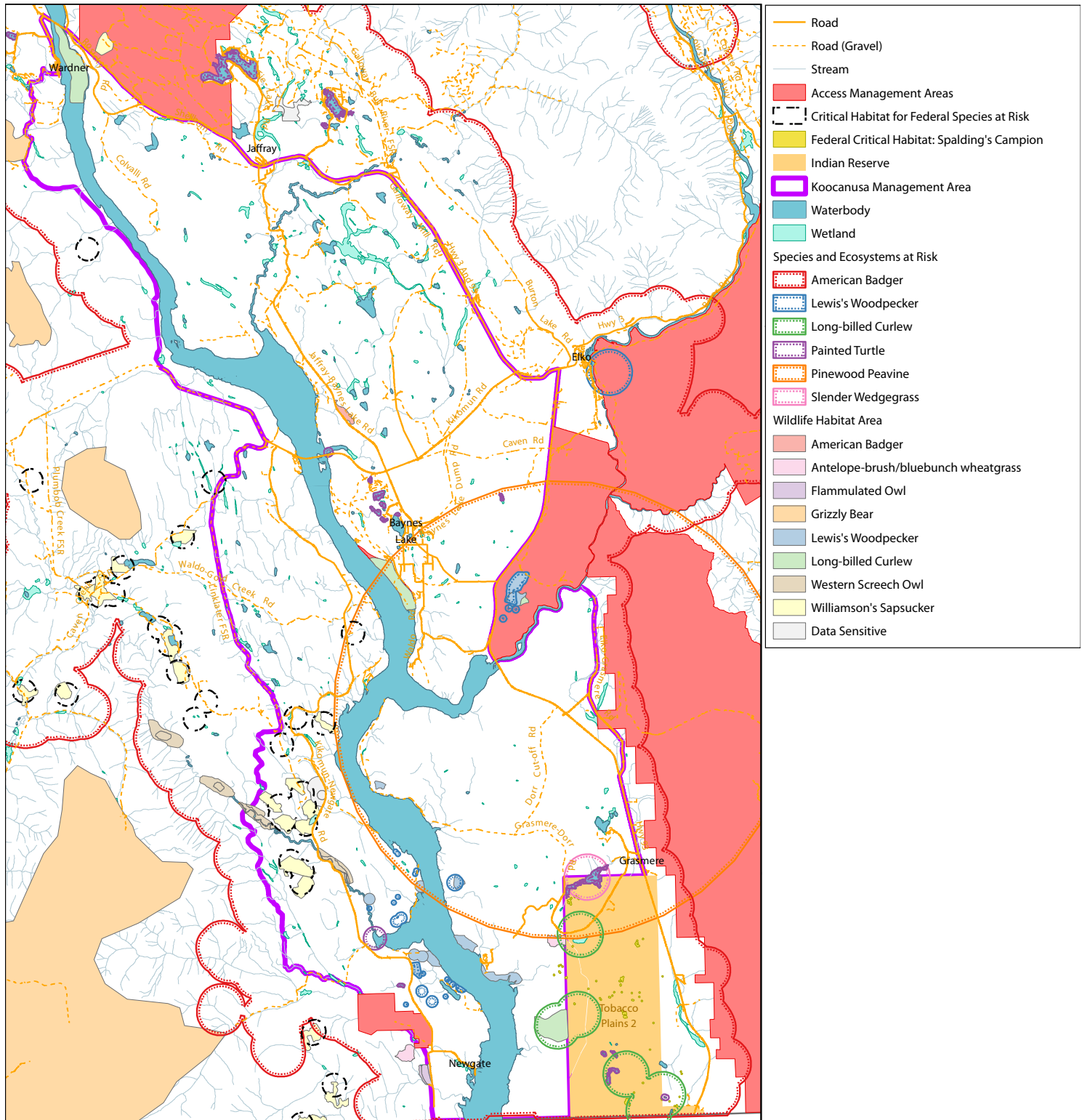
Potential future monitoring activities in the Dorr-Grasmere area, and across Koocanusa, will continue to be identified and implemented.



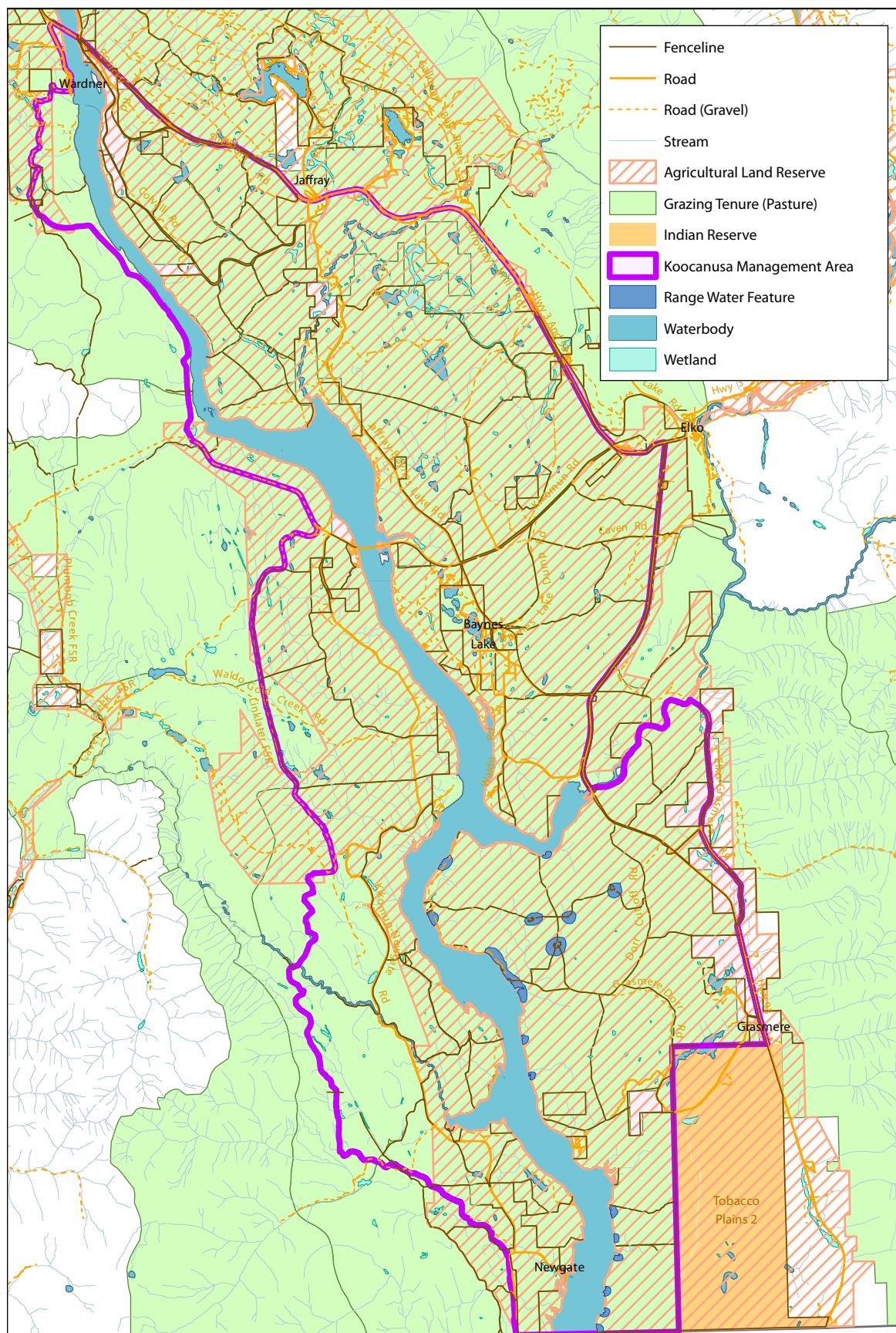
8 APPENDIX A: SENSITIVE GRASSLANDS



9 APPENDIX B: SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK



10 APPENDIX C: RANGE AND AGRICULTURE



11 APPENDIX D: DORR-GRASMERE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA

