

Kootenai River Focus Watershed Coordination

Annual Report 2003 - 2004

February 2006

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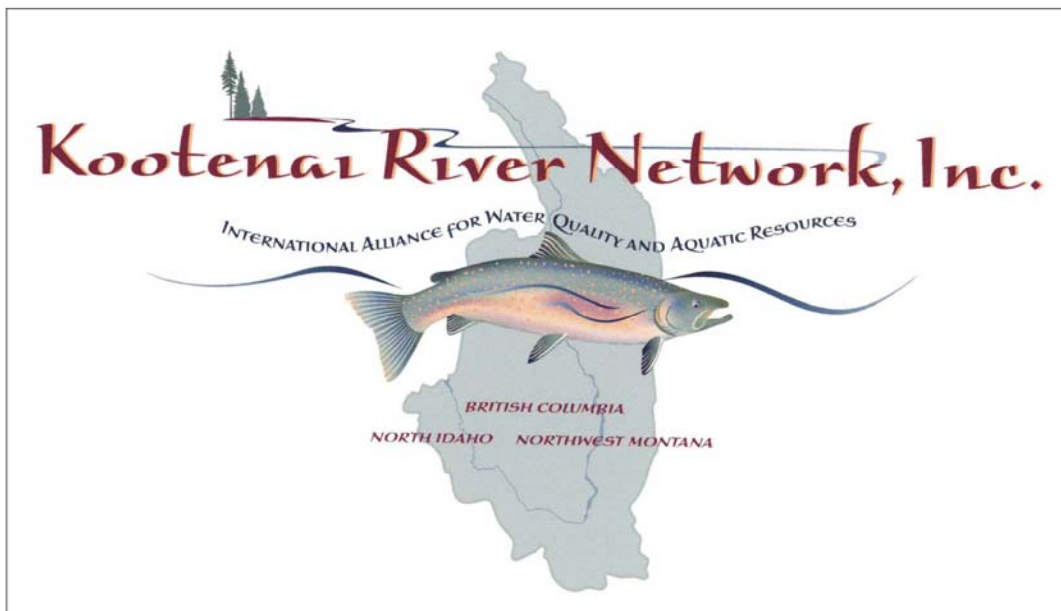


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FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION ANNUAL REPORT 2003– 2004

For the Period: June 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004

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For: BPA PROJECT NO. 96087200
FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION
CONTRACT NO. 9996

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KOOTENAI RIVER NETWORK FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION Annual Report 2003-2004

Overview

The Kootenai River Network (KRN) was contracted by the Bonneville Power Administration; PPA Project Number 96087200 for the period June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004 to provide Kootenai River basin watershed coordination services.

The prime focus of the KRN is coordinating activities and disseminating information related to watershed improvement and education and outreach with other interest groups in the Kootenai River basin. To this end, the KRN primarily focuses on maintaining communication networks among private and public watershed improvement groups in the Columbia River Basin. The KRN willingly shares its resources with these groups.

The 2003-2004 BPA contract extended the original Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks contract, which was transferred to the Kootenai River Network through a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2001. The KRN objectives of this contract were carried out through Watershed Coordinator position.

The highly successful Kootenai River Network Annual General Meeting in Bonners Ferry in May 2003 demonstrated the tremendous gains that the Kootenai River Network has made in trans-boundary networking of watershed issues and accomplishments. The Annual General Meeting included seventy five participants representing more than forty US and Canadian citizen groups, tribes, first nations, agencies, ministries, businesses and private land owners from Montana, British Columbia, Idaho and Alberta.

The International Restoration Tour in July 2004 featured the Grave Creek and Therriault Wetlands restoration projects in Montana and the Sand Creek and Wolf Creek restoration projects in British Columbia. The tour was attended by more than thirty people representing US and Canadian Federal and State/Provincial agencies, schools, colleges, conservation groups, private land owners, consultants, tribes, first nations, and politicians.

These exciting trans-boundary successes encouraged the KRN to establish half-time Watershed Coordinator positions in both the United States and Canada. In September 2004 Kim Laub was hired as US-Watershed Coordinator and Jim and Laura Duncan were hired as Canadian Watershed Coordinators.

The expanding influence of the Kootenai River Network throughout the entire Kootenai Basin encouraged the Board to increase its number of directors to seven by adding:

- Wayne Maahs, Senior Resource Forester – Plum Creek Logging Company
- Mike Malmberg, Professional Agrologist, Certified Professional Range Manager and farmer from Fort Steele, B.C.
- Darris Flannigan, Rancher – Grave Creek, Montana

To rejuvenate and revitalize the KRN, the Board conducted a strategic thinking and planning meeting in November 2004. All Board, staff and Advisory members participated in a combined effort to clearly define the goals of the KRN and to design ways of achieving those goals. Affirming and integrating board policy was a primary focus and it included writing accurate job descriptions for all KRN positions. KRN committee goals, the BPA contract and the Statement of Work plan were reviewed to establish future directions for a complex organization.

Habitat, Restoration and Monitoring

Project updates:

Pipe Creek – near Libby, Montana

The Kootenai River Network and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks hired Water Consulting, Inc. to evaluate the feasibility of restoring approximately 0.8 miles of Pipe Creek. The project area includes approximately 4,500 feet of channel in Sections 29 and 30, Township 31 North, Range 31 West. Pipe Creek has been identified by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks as an important bull trout migratory corridor. Pipe Creek has been subject to residential and urban encroachments, removal of riparian vegetation, and channelization. Within the existing project area, Pipe Creek functions below its biological and geomorphic potential. Montana Department of Environmental Quality has identified East Fork - Pipe Creek as a water quality impaired stream. The assessment of the causes and sources of the impairment to Pipe Creek are yet to be determined.

Jim Dunnigan, MFWP and KRN Board Member, hosted a technical committee meeting on August 4, 2004. John Muhlfeld, River Design Group, explained the restoration process, the implications and constraints to the land owners on the Creek.

Granite and Cherry Creeks – near Libby, Montana

The Libby Area Conservation District is renewing efforts to contact landowners and move forward on restoration projects in areas identified as impaired according to the Montana DEQ 303d list. Previous efforts included a planning document by Water Consulting, Inc., which the Kootenai River Network partially funded. Stream restoration efforts will focus on erosion control and the potential for improving bull trout habitat. Next steps include contacting all related landowners to receive their permission to proceed with the project. Presently, interested partners are researching funding opportunities.

Grave Creek

During January 2004, the Kootenai River Network reviewed and approved the design proposal for the Grave Creek Phase II restoration project. In the design, approximately 4,300 feet of channel reconstruction will be completed downstream/adjacent to Phase I (completed in October 2002). The process of gathering all necessary permits has begun. Ground work on the project will begin in September 2004.

Therriault Creek wetlands project

After ten years of preparation, the project is finally under way! During May 2004 - 9,300 feet of on-the-ground stream restoration began. In the process, 55 acres of prior converted wetland will be restored. The River Design Group located in Whitefish, Montana, served as project leader as a new Rosgen "E4" type of channel has been constructed with extensive riparian plantings.

Phillips Creek

In January 2004 the Kootenai River Network began exploring the potential for establishing a trans-boundary restoration project on Phillips Creek, which flows across the Canadian-US border. During April and May 2004, the KRN carried out research and networking on this project. Phillips Creek contains bull trout as well as non-native fish. The Proudfoots (Canadian ranchers and land owners) irrigate freely from the creek for their ranch, but are keen to participate in restoration initiatives. Six local ranchers attended the Grave Creek annual meeting in summer 2003.

Sinclair Creek (East of Eureka)

A local landowner continued with a forest thinning project near the headwaters of Sinclair Creek to enhance grass production. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program purchased the seed for 880 acres of land.

Tobacco Valley Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

An aerial photo survey of the entire watershed was completed and will be used as reference to assess all the tributaries of the Tobacco River. Each tributary will be ranked and prioritized as to restoration needs.

Communication, Education and Outreach

Kootenai River Network Newsletter

Four quarterly full-colour four-page newsletters were produced and distributed widely within the Kootenai River basin.

Coordinated Resource Management Committee (Hawkins Creek, BC)

The Coordinated Resource Management Committee is a consortium of stakeholders in the Hawkins and Freeman Creek watersheds that is chaired by the BC Ministry of Forests. The KRN attended tour/meetings in July 2004 and October 2004.

International Restoration Tour – Montana and British Columbia

The July 17, 2003 tour featured the Grave Creek and Therriault Wetlands restoration projects in Montana and the Sand Creek and Wolf Creek restoration projects in British Columbia. It was attended by thirty people representing US and Canadian Federal and State/Provincial agencies, schools, colleges, conservation groups, private land owners, consultants, tribes, first nations, and politicians. We ended with a barbeque attended by sixty people at Jamieson's Ranch on the banks of the Kootenay River.

Joseph Creek Community Action Team – Cranbrook, BC

In November 2003 a number of interested people with long-standing involvement in Joseph Creek stewardship formed a steering committee to carry out restoration, education and outreach activities on the creek. Jim and Laura Duncan are coordinating the project which carried out two public meetings (January and March 2004), a presentation to Cranbrook City Council (April 2004) and a day of stewardship education (May 2004). In May 2004, the project was awarded an \$11,000 grant by the City of Cranbrook and the Regional District of the East Kootenay to carry out an education and outreach restoration project in the Kinsmen Park reach of Joseph Creek, which is in the middle of town.

Watershed Exchange (WE) - Hawkins, Freeman and Yaak Watersheds

Jim and Laura Duncan established a trans-boundary watershed exchange on the Hawkins, Freeman (BC) and the Yaak River (MT) watershed involving twenty four people from the following agencies and organizations:

- Kootenai River Network
- Yaak Valley Forest Council
- Kootenai National Forest
- Ministry of Forests – Nelson
- Water, Land and Air Protection
- Yahk Range Association
- Columbia-Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife
- Hawkins Creek Stewardship Committee
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Tembec Forest Industries
- Ministry of Forests – Cranbrook
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Panhandle National Forest

The Watershed Exchange held its first face-to-face meeting in Yahk, BC during January 2004. It was an all-day meeting featuring discussions about the three watersheds, which concluded that we must find methods of integrating watershed assessment methods and data exchange across the border. A sub-committee of six members was designated to explore and recommend watershed assessment procedures for creeks running across the US-Canadian border.

Kootenai River Network display

The KRN purchased a portable display unit and designed a display for use at conferences, workshops and meetings. During February 2004, the display was featured at the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Association meeting in Whitefish, Montana. The KRN display was also featured at the East Kootenay Environmental Society's Earth Day in April 2004 and the Wings Over the Rockies Children's Festival in May 2004.

KRN Rolling Rivers Stream Table handbook and brochure

During March 2004, we re-conditioned our stream table's outer shell with a protective layer of paint and made modifications to simplify presentations. A presenter's handbook and a training brochure were produced to insure exemplary presentations and to provide instructions for the care of the stream table for organizations and agencies who borrow the unit.

KRN Stream Table training workshop

In April 2004, nineteen people from thirteen organizations in Montana, Idaho and BC attended the KRN stream table presenter's workshop in Eureka, Montana. Dave Martin, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation provided the training, which featured him demonstrating with a class of students from Trego School. Dave also presented much useful information about care and maintenance of the stream table and setting up and breaking down presentations.

KRN Stream Table visits British Columbia for the first time

During April and May 2004, Jim and Laura Duncan toured the KRN stream table throughout the East Kootenay. The trailer was used at various events:

- a. Apr 24 – E.K.E.S. Earth Day in Marysville
- b. May 4 – Laird Elementary in Invermere – two grade four classes
- c. May 6 – Joseph Creek Stewardship day – Cranbrook four Grade 4/5 classes and a grade 11 class, as well as the public.
- d. May 8 – Wings Over the Rockies, Children's Festival – Invermere
- e. May 11 – Training for three interns in the Mark Creek Recovery program
- f. May 14 – McKim Middle School, Kimberley – three Grade 6 classes
- g. May 17 – Blarchmont Elementary, Kimberley – four grade 4 and 5 classes and the McKim Middle School Stream Team
- h. May 18 – Marysville Elementary, Kimberley two grade 4 and two grade 5 classes.
- i. May 19 Lindsay Park Elementary, Kimberley two grade 4 and five classes.

Eureka Riverwalk Kiosks

KRN is assisting Eureka Riverwalk in preparing for construction of several kiosks that will feature water and land management, conservation practices, historical water and land use, wildlife identification and wildlife conservation.

Grave Creek Kiosk

KRN is designing a three-panel kiosk featuring the restoration of Grave Creek. The completed project will be placed in a prominent location on the Flannigan Ranch property. The Flannigan's generously granted an easement for the kiosk.

Inventory of BC restoration projects on the Upper Kootenay River

Initial planning has begun for an inventory of projects on the upper Kootenay River. Historical and current projects will be documented and an inventory of potential projects will be completed so that they can be ranked by priority. The information will be documented in digital media so that it can integrate with the KRN digital mapping of the entire Kootenai River watershed.

Funding

DATE	GRANT	PROJECT	FUNDING
June 2003	EPA Section 319 Funding	Grave Creek TMDL Development	\$136,000
June 2003	USDA Rural Community Assistance Grant	Kootenai Falls Trails project	\$20,000
June 2003	Cinnabar Foundation, Helena MT	Kootenai Falls Trails project	\$5,000
August 2003	USFWS Private Stewardship Grant	Grave Creek Phase II Restoration	\$100,000
January 2004	USFWS FRIMA	Grave Creek Phase II Restoration	\$46,000
February 2004	EPA Section 319 Funding – Intent to award	Tobacco TMDL Development	\$90,432
February 2004	EPA Section 319 Funding – Intent to award	Grave Creek Phase II and Therriault Creek Restoration	\$70,800
May 2004	Regional District of the East Kootenay – Community Initiatives and Affected Areas – intent to award	Joseph Creek Community Action Plan – Restoration, education and outreach project	\$8,100
TOTAL			\$406,240