

# Kootenai River Focus Watershed Coordination

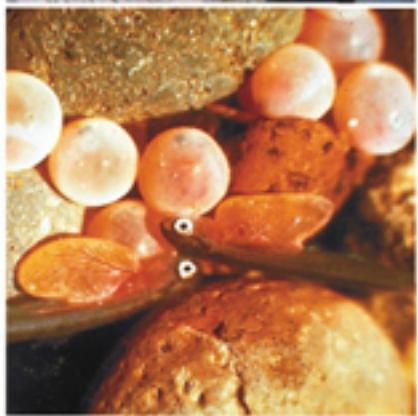
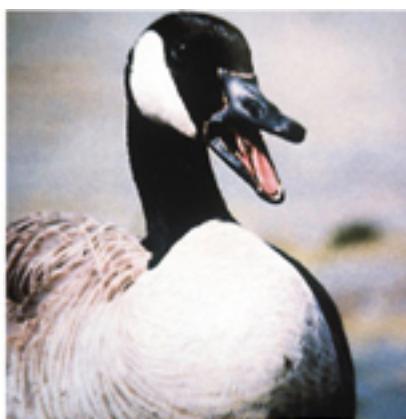
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Annual Report 2004 - 2005

July 2005

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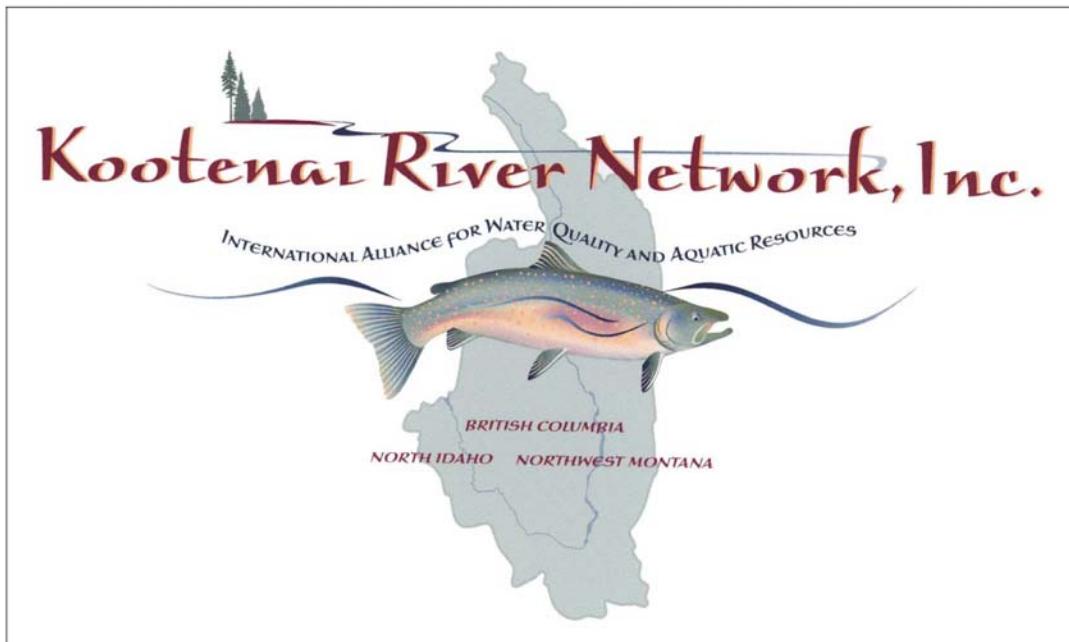


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## **FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION ANNUAL REPORT 2004– 2005**

For the Period: June 1, 2004 – May 31, 2005

By: Kootenai River Network  
P.O. Box 491  
Libby, MT 59923

For: BPA PROJECT NO. 1996-087-02  
FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION  
CONTRACT NO. 00009996

Funded by: Bonneville Power Administration  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
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# KOOTENAI RIVER NETWORK

## FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION

### Annual Report 2004-2005

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#### Overview

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The Kootenai River Network (KRN) was contracted by the Bonneville Power Administration; PPA Project Number 96087200 for the period June 1, 2004 to May 31, 2005 to provide Kootenai River basin watershed coordination services.

The prime focus of the KRN Watershed Coordination Program is coordinating projects and disseminating information related to watershed improvement and education and outreach with other interest groups in the Kootenai River basin. The KRN willingly shares its resources with these groups.

The 2004-2005 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 by one half-time Watershed Coordinator position in Montana-Idaho (Nancy Zapotocki) and one half-time Watershed Coordination team in British Columbia (Laura and Jim Duncan).

Nancy Zapotocki was hired as the KRN US Watershed Coordinator in July 2004. Her extensive work experience in outreach and education and watershed planning complements the Duncans in British Columbia.

To continue rejuvenating and revitalizing the KRN, the Board conducted a second retreat in November 2004. The first retreat took place in November 2003. Board and staff members combined efforts to define KRN goals and ways of achieving them. An Education and Outreach Plan formulated by the Watershed Coordinators was used to guide much of the discussions. The conclusions reached during the retreat specified four “flagship” projects for 2005-2006, to:

- Provide leadership and facilitation, and build on current work related to the TMDL plans and planning efforts on the United States side of the border.
- Continue facilitating trans-boundary British Columbia projects building on established work and applying the KRN model of project facilitation to other areas of the Kootenai basin.
- Finalize and implement the KRN Education and Outreach plan.
- Use GIS mapping to prioritize US and BC projects and prioritize education and outreach efforts.

Nancy coordinated the KRN GIS mapping project, which will integrate Kootenai River watershed data between and among groups and agencies in Idaho, Montana and British Columbia and assisted in defining Focus Areas and prioritizing restoration and outreach activities.

Laura and Jim have formed long-term partnerships with:

- Columbia-Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership
- Canadian Columbia Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission
- East Kootenay Conservation Program (a consortium of organizations focused primarily on stewardship and acquisition of private land holdings)
- Fourteen organizations in Cranbrook through the Joseph Creek Community Action Team.

The KRN established Kootenay River Network – BC as a registered Society and are pursuing charitable status for this sister organization. Having an organization in both the US and Canada will allow the KRN to apply for and to manage funds as well as to coordinate education and outreach workshops, seminars and tours with greater ease. The recent accomplishments by the Joseph Creek Community Action Team in Cranbrook demonstrate the significant trans-boundary abilities of the KRN.

On May 26, 2005, KRN received a prestigious Watershed Stewardship award from the Montana Watershed Coordination Council, which represents over 80 watershed groups in the State of Montana. The award was presented by Governor Brian Schweitzer in the rotunda of the State Capital building in Helena Montana.

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## Communication

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### Kootenai River Network Newsletter

Four Kootenai River Network full-colour four-page newsletters were produced and distributed widely within the Kootenai River basin; Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring.

### GIS Trans-boundary mapping project

The KRN GIS mapping project has embarked on a partnership with the Canadian Columbia Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission. This partnership will allow the KRN to achieve its trans-boundary objectives and will culminate in a user-friendly web-based digital map of the entire Kootenai River basin. The map will include several GIS layers designed to support education and outreach activities, as well as providing city and regional politicians with a wealth of map-based resource information to assist them in their decision-making.

## **KRN Website**

The KRN website has been overhauled to allow faster downloading and has been re-coded to meet W3C web standards and 508 Standards, Section 1194.22

The website has also been re-designed so that users can more easily find current information about the KRN.

## **KRN Production**

The KRN produced a multi-media slide show, which defines the Kootenai River Network as a key player in water quality and aquatic resources enhancement in the Kootenay-Kootenai River basin. It emphasizes the following themes:

- The Kootenai River as a system and awareness of the Kootenai basin as an integrated whole
- KRN restoration projects in the Kootenai basin
- The role of the KRN in the Kootenai watershed

## **KRN PowerPoint presentations**

- College of the Rockies Tourism program, Cranbrook – “Restoration and Stewardship – Facets of Tourism?”, by Jim and Laura Duncan
- Grave Creek Then and Now, by Rox Rogers
- Joseph Creek Community Action Team project in Cranbrook BC, by Jim Duncan
- KRN Watershed Program, by Nancy Zapotocki
- The Kootenai River Network and the Joseph Creek Community Action Team project at the Columbia Basin Trust Watershed Symposium in Castlegar BC, by Jim Duncan

## **KRN Brochure**

Nancy worked with Northwest Design to re-design the existing KRN brochure. Copies have been printed for distribution in future education-outreach and habitat improvement programs.

## **KRN Displays**

- BC Rivers Day celebration at Kinsmen Park, Cranbrook, September 26
- Living Lakes Conference in Invermere BC, September 26 – October 2
- College of the Rockies Tourism Program, March 19
- Montana Legislators with 15 other Montana Watershed groups to in Helena on April 18
- Columbia Basin Trust Watershed Symposium in Castlegar BC on May 27-28

## **KRN Broadsheets - Kits**

- KRN organization with Watershed Coordinator contact information.
- KRN Stream Trailer including: an explanation of how the stream trailer works, an outline of the educational content covered in presentations and information on booking presentations.
- KRN and Restoration Tour kit package for participants, which included KRN brochures, broadsheets, GIS base map and details about the Goat River and Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area restorations.

## **KRN Stream Trailer**

The KRN Stream Trailer was a big draw for people of all ages at the BC Rivers Day celebration of Joseph Creek at Kinsmen Park, Cranbrook in September 2004.

People from agencies and organizations have been contacting us about booking the KRN stream trailer all spring, but insurance and liability concerns need to be resolved before the trailer continues to be used in programs.

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## **Education and Outreach**

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### KOOTENAI RIVER NETWORK OUTREACH EDUCATION PLAN

The Watershed Coordinators developed an Outreach Education Plan, which has been approved by the Board of Directors. The plan outlines watershed program activities linked to KRN program priorities, restoration projects, and identified focus areas. The Watershed Coordinator's Outreach Plan will enable us to focus our program activities more effectively and will allow us to more easily monitor and evaluate our accomplishments.

The Watershed Coordinators have categorized their audiences, developed main messages for primary topics, delineated geographic program areas and identified additional prospective partners. The outreach plan has been prioritized in relationship to the restoration programs, focus areas and priorities as identified by the KRN.

The Watershed Coordinators incorporated their Education and Outreach plan in the new Bonneville Power Administration budgeting framework for the program year 2005-2006.

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## British Columbia Watershed Coordination

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### KRN Partnerships in British Columbia

The Kootenai River Network continues to raise its profile in British Columbia and has succeeded in establishing itself as an important player to a number of organizations working in environmental stewardship. Partnerships have been formed with the Columbia-Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership, the Canadian Columbia Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, the East Kootenay Conservation Program (a consortium of organizations focused primarily on stewardship and acquisition of private land holdings) and fourteen organizations in Cranbrook that make up the Joseph Creek Community Action Team.

### KRN-BC Granted legal status

Kootenay River Network - B.C. has been granted legal societal status in British Columbia and will be a very important vehicle in assisting the Kootenai River Network to realize its goals to improve communication among agencies and stewardship groups, to assist in the facilitation of habitat restoration projects throughout the Kootenay-Kootenai River watershed.

### College of the Rockies presentation

Jim and Laura presented “Restoration and Stewardship – Facets of Tourism?” to the Recreation-Tourism program at College of the Rockies in Cranbrook. They featured the role of the KRN in restoration projects such as the Joseph Creek Community Action Team project at Kinsmen Park in Cranbrook.

### University of Montana – Rural Sociology Graduate Student Tour

The tour included the Columbia Basin Trust, the Joseph Creek Community Action Team project at Kinsmen Park, and the fire interface strategies by the Kimberley Fire Department and the Kimberley Nature Park Society for six University of Montana graduate students in rural sociology on March 19.

### Joseph Creek Community Action Team (JCCAT) – Cranbrook, BC

In June 2004 the Regional District of the East Kootenay granted the Joseph Creek Community Action Team \$11,000 for the Joseph Creek Restoration project at Kinsmen Park in Cranbrook, BC. The money was used to fund BC Rivers Day civic celebrations about Joseph Creek in September 2004 and to commission a prescription for restoration work at Kinsmen Park.

JCCAT applied for seven grants in 2005 and have been awarded funding from four granters:

a. Tembec Forest Industries	\$10,000.00
b. Columbia Basin Trust	\$20,000.00
c. Environment Canada, Eco-Action	\$17,525.00
d. Regional District of East Kootenay	<u>\$11,530.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$59,055.00</u></b>

## **KRN Restoration Tour – Creston, British Columbia**

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, KRN hosted a site tour of the Goat River and the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area restoration projects. Twenty-one attendees from Montana, Idaho and BC were present at the tour. Kenton Andreashuk, Stewardship Coordinator, Columbia-Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership, guided us to several sites on the lower Goat River to view in-stream structures and riparian planting that has been completed by partnerships involving the Goat River Residents Association, the Lower Kootenay Indian Band, the City of Creston, and the Ministry of Highways Department.

After lunch at the Lower Kootenay Band Office, we were guided by Marc-Andre Beaucher – Acting Director of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area through part of their 7,000 hectare site. Marc-Andre showed us several of the ponds they drain and dredge to manage aquatic vegetation.

The most exciting facet of our tours is the opportunity for people to network and share techniques utilized for successful conservation and restoration projects. Local citizens of Creston were very thrilled to see the restoration work going on in their backyard. This in itself is a testimony for the importance of the KRN restoration tours.

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## **Montana and Idaho Watershed Coordination**

### **MONTANA**

#### **Stream Trailer**

Nancy and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation planned a regional training workshop for Montana area teachers in the Kootenai watershed. Nancy presented the workshop concept to the Lincoln County Conservation District and received support for this training. Unfortunately, liability issues associated with outside organizations borrowing the KRN stream trailer and educational presentations have temporarily shelved this project.

#### **Grave Creek Kiosk**

Nancy met with US Forest Service to finalize the Grave Creek kiosk construction. Nancy researched and received quotes for the sign production and design, which the KRN Board approved. Northwest Digital Designs will complete the project. This design for the kiosk will serve as a standard interpretive sign, which will be duplicated for other tributaries in the Kootenai River watershed. The Forest Service will be a partner in the project by donating hours, rock and a wooden frame for the kiosk, and will produce a GIS map of the area for use on the sign.

## **GIS Mapping Project**

Nancy coordinated several meetings with the River Design Group to discuss the KRN- GIS mapping project. The GIS map layer data includes cities, geographic place names, land ownership, fisheries, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, focus areas, restoration project sites, and interpretive sites.

## **Montana Watershed Coordinating Council**

Nancy represented the KRN at the Annual Retreat and Quarterly meeting of the Montana Watershed Coordinating Council. This is an excellent forum for exchanging information on watershed efforts and outreach in Montana.

## **Eureka Riverwalk Interpretive Sign Committee**

Nancy represented the KRN at the Eureka Riverwalk Interpretive Sign Committee meeting and became an official member of this subcommittee. During the meeting, they reviewed and commented on current sign proposals. They agreed that the KRN, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Northwest Digital Designs in Eureka will design three natural history interpretive signs for the Eureka Riverwalk project. Nancy also coordinated with the Fish and Wildlife Service Outreach for use of available artwork. The designs were presented to the Riverwalk Board and were approved.

## IDAHO

Nancy Zapotocki has re-initiated a long-term relationship with the Idaho Kootenai Tribe, the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, and the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative in Bonners Ferry. Nancy has been well-received and the organizations are excited at the prospect of the KRN providing education and outreach assistance to their organizations.

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## **Habitat, Restoration and Monitoring**

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### PROJECT UPDATES

#### **Grave Creek – Phase II.**

The Grave Creek – Phase II stream restoration project began construction in October 2004. The project includes approximately 3,000 feet of channel restoration using natural channel design techniques. This is the second phase of a multi-year restoration effort to restore fisheries, riparian habitat and water quality in the Grave Creek drainage. BPA fish and wildlife mitigation funding is a contributor to the project in addition to other federal and private contributions primarily through submitted grants.

#### **Theriault Creek**

The Therriault Creek Meadows stream and wetland restoration project is a two-phased project. Phase I commenced in June 2004 and included construction and revegetation of the channel and floodway. A minor temporary diversion of water

inundated the channel for two growing seasons to facilitate rooting of trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, and sedge plugs.

Streamflow activation and shallow water wetland construction was completed in April, 2005. The two-phased approach to construction allowed for maximum survival of planted vegetation stock, and minimized the use of traditional bank stabilization structures.

The project restored approximately 9,300 feet of stream channel and restored 55 acres of abandoned wetlands adjacent to the restored and re-vegetated channel. Fisheries and vegetation monitoring is being conducted by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. Funding sources include a partnership between BPA, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) - Partners for Fish and Wildlife, FWS Private Stewardship Grant Program, Montana Future Fisheries and the Vredenburg Ranch. The project is a result of ten years in planning and landowner patience.

### **Phillips Creek**

The Phillips Creek restoration project is being considered as a trans-boundary demonstration project. Phillips Creek is located at the border between Montana and British Columbia. An initial stream assessment will need to be completed prior to restoration consideration.

### **Pipe Creek**

The funds to complete the final restoration design were transferred from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to the Kootenai River Network. The plan was completed by River Design Group late in the fall of 2004. One of the outstanding issues is an undersized bridge in the middle section of the proposed project. The County is not comfortable removing the bridge due to fire hazard issues (escape routes for the area). The only other two options are bridge replacement and bridge retro-fit. In a meeting with Rita Windom, County Commissioner, there was agreement that the best long-term solution would be bridge replacement. However, this is a costly endeavor. At this time the KRN is investigating other grants to help cover the cost of the bridge replacement.

### **Montana Department of Environmental Quality / TMDL**

The Kootenai River Network is a primary partner in the development of plans for the Montana Department of Environmental Quality – Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plans for the Grave Creek and Tobacco River drainages. The draft TMDL for Grave Creek will be completed this fall. The report will make recommendations for sediment reductions as well as improvements for fisheries and water quality.