
ELK RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2019 was a year of transition for the Elk River Alliance, with charitable status achieved and changes across the board and contractor base. Our scientific studies and community outreach continues to be successful, as we engage with stakeholders, increase our donor base and influence behaviours which impact the Elk River Watershed.

2020 looks to be another successful year for the Elk River Alliance as we finalise our restructuring, increase engagement with local communities and donors, and work to secure financial sustainability of the organisation. The Elk River Alliance Board and Contractors thank the community and our donors for their continuing support and generosity.

We couldn't do this work without you.

Steven Marlborough, Chair

YEAR END SUMMARY 2019

700+

NATIVE PLANT SAPPLINGS AND FORBS, AND OVER 500 LIVE STAKES HAVE BEEN PLANTED IN THE ELK VALLEY BY VOLUNTEERS

400+

COMMUNITY MEMBERS VOLUNTEERED WITH THE ELK RIVER ALLIANCE IN 2019

273

STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS DEVOTED 800 HOURS TO THE REMOVAL OF INVASIVE PLANTS AND PLANTING NATIVE VEGETATION ALONG RIPARIAN ZONES AND WETLANDS

288

IN-STREAM HOURS WERE PROVIDED TO THE COMMUNITY-BASED WATER MONITORING PROGRAM BY 23 VOLUNTEERS, 10 OF WHICH TOOK STREAMKEEPERS TRAINING

157

VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN CLEANING UP THE ELK RIVER SHORELINE, REMOVING OVER 50 GARBAGE BAGS OF REFUSE

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Community-Based Water Monitoring



We conducted low and high flow monitoring at Coal, Lizard, Alexander, and Boivin Creeks with the help of 10 Streamkeepers and 23 volunteers. In 2020 we will continue low flow monitoring on previously monitored creeks with the addition of Morrissey Creek. Funding permitted we will expand to include monthly monitoring to address specific issues within the watershed and temperature logging to help monitor temperature changes in fish bearing streams. In response to community concerns, a sedimentation study is planned for Coal Creek focusing on logging impacts.

Shoreline Cleanup



Despite the snowy weather, this year's cleanup saw an incredible turnout both on the day of and for succeeding days after from various Elk Valley schools conducting their own mini river cleanups, removing refuse and invasive plant species from key locations in the watershed. This year cigarette butts and single use plastics continued to be top offenders. In the spring of 2020, we will be rallying students again to hit the shoreline and remove additional garbage and invasive plants.

Hosmer Beavers



We worked with community volunteers to fence several large cottonwood trees to discourage felling by beavers, and have assessed the site for further mitigation measures. We will be working with residents to monitor beaver activity along the creek, preparing to take action should beavers move in, and will be fencing more trees in the summer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Steven Marlborough, Treasurer: Gary Walker, Senior Advisor: Lee-Anne Walker
Directors: Stella Swanson, Marie Wilfong, Carla Fraser, Matt Noseworthy, Alexa Hurdal, Margie Sutherland

Fish Research Initiative



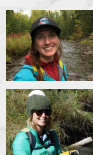
Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WCT) spawning surveys were completed on 4 tributaries of the Elk River and we worked with the community to address concerns for the species. We conducted habitat assessments on identified sites and developed restoration plans for high priority sites. Throughout our fieldwork season we had 59 volunteers contribute 150+ hours towards our WCT research efforts. In 2020, we will continue to develop plans to restore and/or enhance high priority WCT habitats, with hopes to begin work at some of these sites in our 2020 field season.

Elk River Map and Guide

Several changes to the Elk River Map and Guide were made including, improving the content and providing additional information about the Elk River. The map is for sale at many fishing shops and gear stores around town! In 2020 we will continue to offer the map and hopefully expand to new stores for its sale.



TEAM



Beth Millions
Program Manager



Ayla Bennett
Program Manager



Chad Hughes
Program Manager



Brett Elmslie
Project Coordinator



Liz Phillips
Bookkeeper



Stephanie Hirn
Administration



Stormwater Solutions



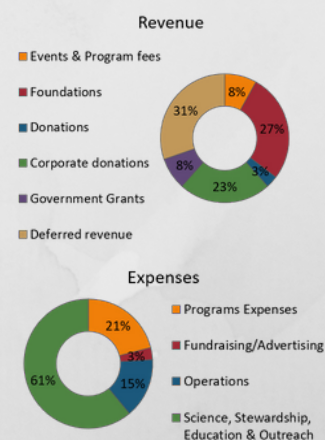
We completed one full day workshop for better stormwater management and one evening presentation covering the basics of rainwater capture. We worked with Fernie Secondary Students to conduct a cleanup of items being washed into our rivers and streams through stormwater, completed wetland plantings with Fernie Academy students, and installed two rain gardens complete with interpretive signs at the Eco-Garden and Fernie Family Garden. We are seeking funding to expand the project further in 2020 for greater education and stewardship opportunities.

Weeds Out of our Wetlands



With the help of many dedicated community volunteers and some hardworking students from FJM Elementary School, we completed our final year of this project. We conducted three weedpulls throughout the summer months, removed the tarps and weed barrier that were shading out the reed canary grass, planted over 300 native plants in the wetland, seeded the area with native grass seed and put up an exclusion fence to discourage foraging. In 2020 we will monitor the survival rates and vegetation growth in the wetland.

FINANCIALS



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Align Surveys Ltd. I BC Hydro I BC Parks I BC Rural Dividend Program I BC Wildlife Federation I Canadian Tire I Canyon Raft Company I City of Fernie I College of the Rockies I Columbia Basin Trust I Columbia Basin Watershed Network I Cows and Fish I Dickhout Family Foundation I District of Elkford I District of Sparwood I East Kootenay Invasive Species Council I Elk River Guiding Company Ltd. I Elkford ATV Club I Elkford Secondary School I Environment and Climate Change Canada I Fernie Brewing Company I Fernie Secondary School I Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program Columbia Basin I Foothills Silviculture Inc. I Frank J Mitchell Elementary School I GearHub Sports I Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation I Independent Grocer I Isabella Dicken Elementary School I Jon Bisset I Ktunaxa Nation Council I Lotie Environmental I MacHydro I Mainstreams I Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development I Mow and Snow I Nature Conservancy of Canada I Pacific Streamkeepers Federation I Patagonia I Regional District of East Kootenay I Rocky Mountain Landscape Bark I Save on Foods I Sparwood Secondary School I Swanson Environmental I Taylor MacDonald Construction Ltd. I TD Friends of the Environment Foundation I Teck I The Fur-Bearers of Alberta I The Fernie Academy I The Guides Hut I Tourism Fernie I University of Lethbridge I Valley Vitals I Vast Resource Solutions I WC Kitchen Family Foundation I Wildsight