

Backgrounder

An introduction to the
Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program
– Columbia Basin



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The Need – An Historical Overview

In 1962 the Provincial Government created a new Crown corporation – BC Hydro – to develop hydro-electric projects in the Peace and Columbia River regions. In the following decades, BC Hydro acted on behalf of the Provincial Government to design, build and operate several ambitious hydroelectric projects.

Construction of BC Hydro's dams and generating stations in the Canadian portion of the Columbia River Basin began in the 1960s with the Columbia River Treaty projects. Three Treaty dams were developed to provide water storage (flood prevention) and power generation for the United States.

Columbia River Treaty Dams built by BC Hydro:

- Duncan Dam (water storage)
- Hugh Keenleyside Dam (water storage)
- Mica Dam (powerhouse and water storage)

In addition to these dams constructed under the Treaty, BC Hydro operates other power facilities in the Columbia Basin – on behalf of the Provincial Government – including: Aberfeldie, Elko, Kootenay Canal, Revelstoke, Seven Mile, Spillimacheen, Walter Hardman and Whatshan.

Some impacts from dam construction, including flooding and the creation of reservoirs, were immediately evident, such as the Seven Mile dam development that flooded white-tailed deer habitat in the Pend d'Oreille Valley. Other impacts, such as the decline in lake productivity that occurred when nutrients became trapped upstream by dams, took several decades before becoming evident. By 1990, for example, kokanee stocks in the South Arm of Kootenay Lake were virtually non-existent.

The Solution

– Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program

Up until 1995 efforts to compensate for these fish and wildlife losses were being handled by a variety of locally-based compensation programs. In 1995 the Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) was created, amalgamating the existing Mica, Revelstoke, Hugh Keenleyside, Duncan and Seven Mile compensation programs. Compensation efforts around the smaller dams in the East Kootenay were also incorporated into this new, consolidated regional entity.

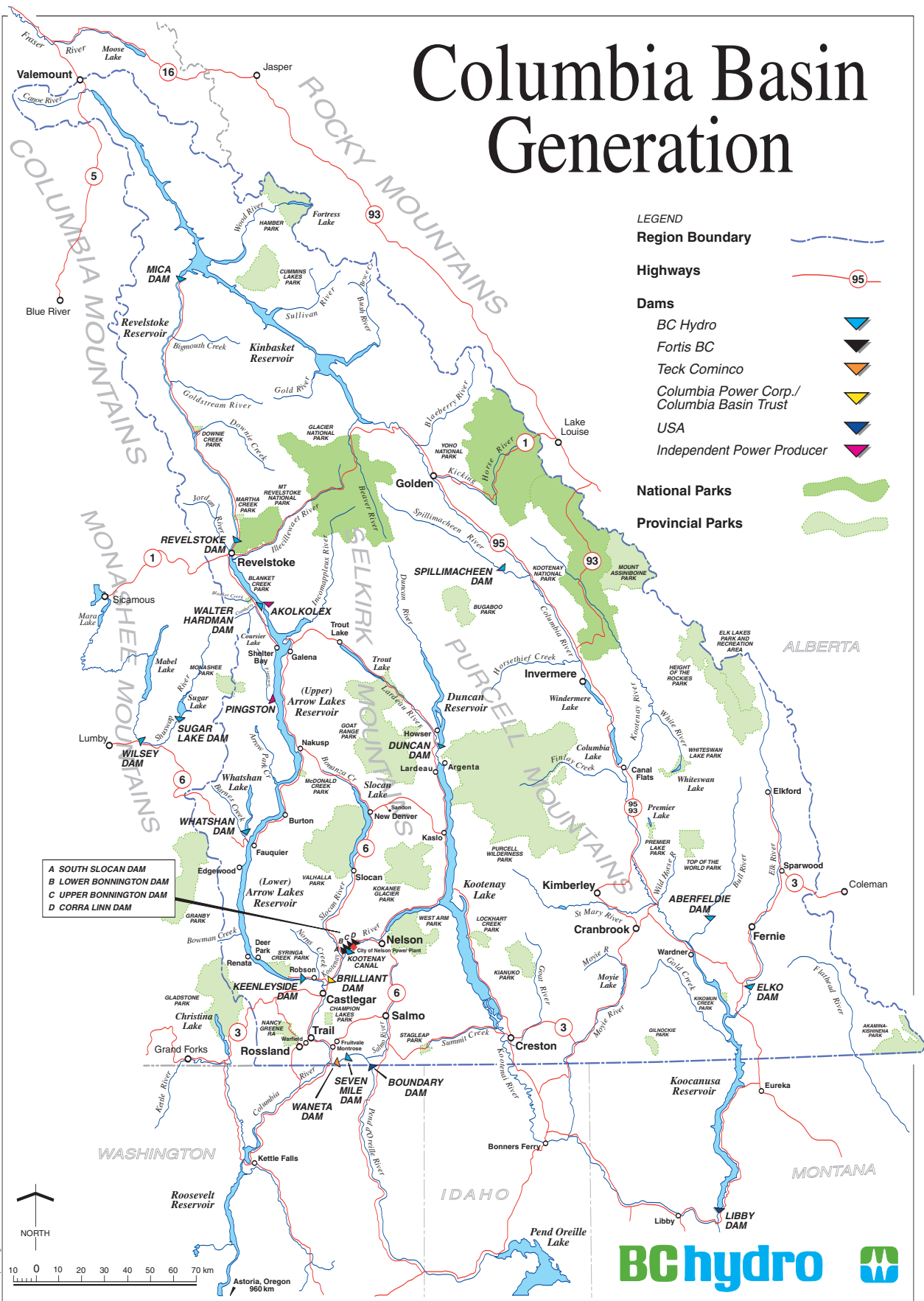
As part of its water license agreement, BC Hydro provides the FWCP with \$3.2 million each year (indexed for inflation) in perpetuity to deliver conservation and enhancement projects aimed at

species impacted by the “footprint” of BC Hydro dams in the Canadian portion of the Columbia Basin. (i.e., footprint means the initial construction and impoundment impacts primarily associated with lost habitat).

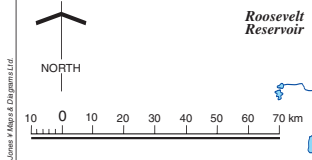
In 1995 the newly created FWCP consolidated efforts, resulting in a comprehensive and integrated approach towards fish and wildlife conservation and enhancement.

The FWCP is a joint initiative, separate from – but not independent of – BC Hydro, the Government of British Columbia (Ministry of Environment), and the Federal Government (Fisheries and Oceans Canada).

Columbia Basin Generation



A SOUTH SLOCAN DAM
 B LOWER BONNINGTON DAM
 C UPPER BONNINGTON DAM
 D CORRA LINN DAM



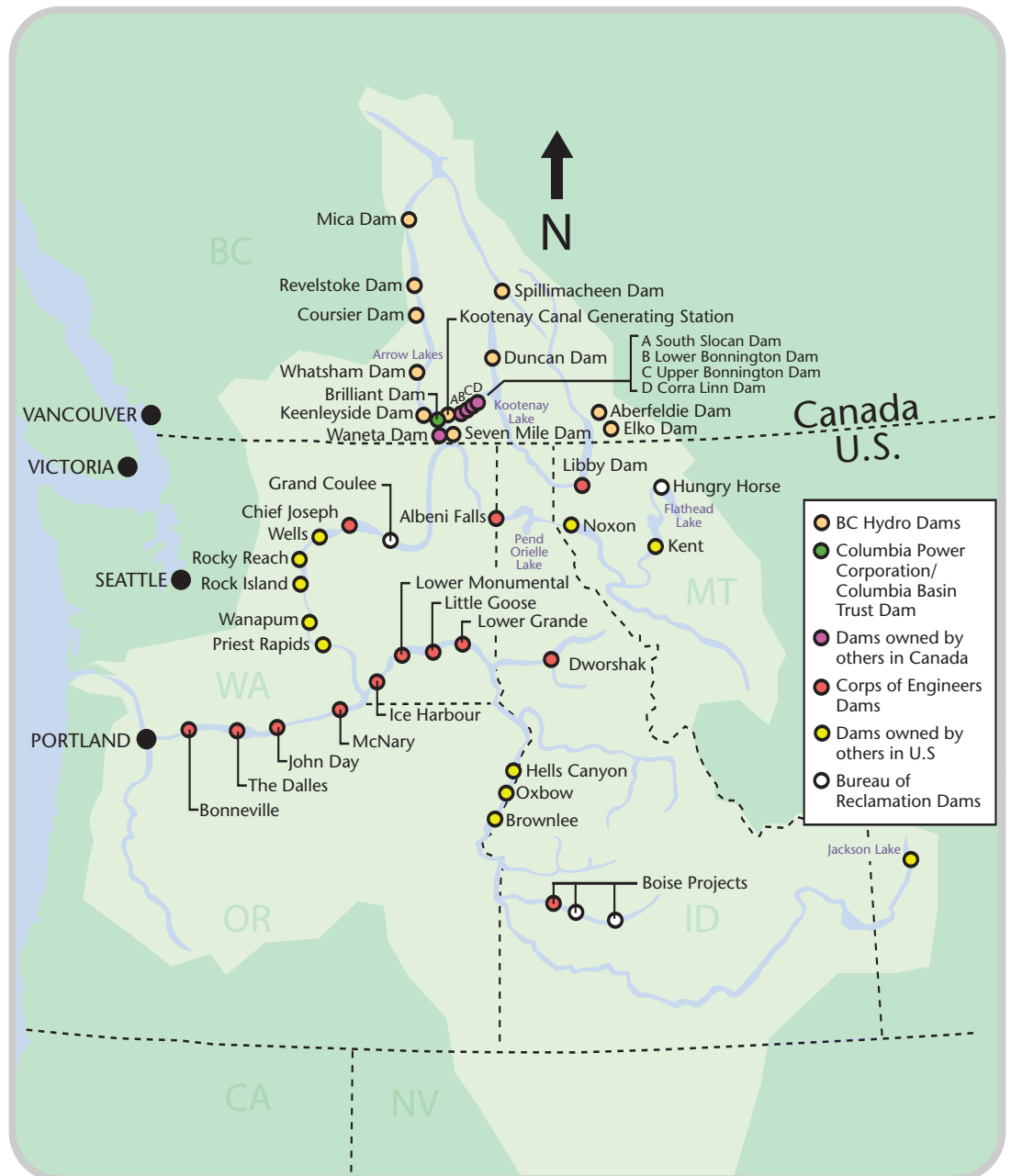
The Mandate

The Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program's (FWCP) mandate is to deliver projects to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations affected by BC Hydro dam "footprint" impacts throughout the Columbia River Basin in Canada.

Annual FWCP funding is used to fund and support fish and wildlife projects. Applications for funding are reviewed annually. Visit the FWCP website for complete information on project funding criteria, as well as small- and large-project funding applications. www.fwcp.ca

The work of the FWCP is guided by Policy and Steering Committees made up of Program Partners – BC Hydro, Ministry of Environment, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Public and First Nations representatives participate on the Steering Committee and help ensure the FWCP is aware of, and responding to public concerns and input. Fisheries and Wildlife Technical Committees provide additional biological expertise and guidance to the FWCP.

Columbia River Basin



The Results

Since its formation in 1995 the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) has worked diligently to identify, fund and deliver more than 600 projects that conserve and enhance impacted fish and wildlife habitat/populations. In its first ten years of existence, the FWCP has invested more than \$35 million in fish and wildlife projects within the Columbia Basin. Almost one-third of those projects focused on species at risk. These projects have been delivered by Compensation Program staff and a wide range of partners including First Nations, industrial partners, local communities and environmental groups.

Each year the FWCP funds a diverse range of projects, including the Fertilization Program in Kootenay Lake and the Arrow Lakes Reservoir – regarded as the largest lake restoration project in the world. This project has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of kokanee spawners – approaching historical, pre-dam levels. Increasing the number of kokanee benefits other species such as the large Gerrard rainbow trout, bull trout, bald eagles and grizzlies. In addition, it brings economic benefits to local communities by improving fishing and tourism opportunities.

The FWCP has also been involved in the acquisition and conservation of thousands of hectares of critical habitat and funded recovery efforts for a range of species including the white sturgeon, badger and Northern leopard frog. It has also helped restore ecosystems in the East and West Kootenay through prescribed burns, selective logging, slashing and other tactics so the habitat is better able to support species. Compensation Program staff helped relocate Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and have participated in efforts to relocate Mountain caribou. It has also funded numerous monitoring and inventory projects on a range of fish and wildlife species and by doing so has contributed significantly to the biological knowledge base in the region.

Use our online searchable database to review completed project reports and to learn more about the FWCP's work. www.fwcp.ca

The FWCP is making a difference by funding and delivering projects that will conserve and enhance fish and wildlife impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams in Canada's portion of the Columbia River Basin.

A Decade of Achievement

Since 1995 the FWCP has:

- Worked diligently since its formation to identify, fund and deliver more than 600 projects that conserve and enhance impacted fish and wildlife habitat/populations;
- Invested more than \$35 million in fish and wildlife projects in the Columbia Basin;
- Focused almost one-third of its efforts on species at risk;
- Worked with a wide range of partners, including First Nations, industrial partners, local communities and environmental groups to deliver projects;
- Funded a diverse range of projects, including the Fertilization Program in Kootenay Lake and the Arrow Lakes Reservoir. This is regarded as one of the largest successful lake restoration projects in the world and has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of kokanee spawners, approaching historical pre-dam levels;
- Increased the number of kokanee which benefits other species such as the large Gerrard rainbow trout, bull trout, bald eagles and grizzlies;
- Improved fishing opportunities, boosting economic benefits associated with enhanced tourism and recreation;
- Funded, and is currently involved in, recovery efforts for a range of endangered species including white sturgeon, badger and northern leopard frog;
- Been involved in the acquisition and conservation of more than 10,000 hectares of critical habitat in the East and West Kootenay;
- Helped restore ecosystems in the East and West Kootenay through prescribed burns, selective logging, slashing and other strategies so that the habitat is better able to support the diverse species that live in the area;
- Contributed significantly to the biological knowledge base in the region by funding numerous monitoring and inventory projects on a range of fish and wildlife species; and
- Made important biological discoveries that are helping conserve a range of species, including several that are at risk.

This Year's Approved Projects

In 2006 – 07 BC Hydro will provide \$4.3 million to the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program to fund conservation and enhancement projects. The funding will be shared between dozens of fish and wildlife projects – many aimed at species at risk including the upper Columbia white sturgeon in the West Kootenay and American badgers in the East Kootenay.

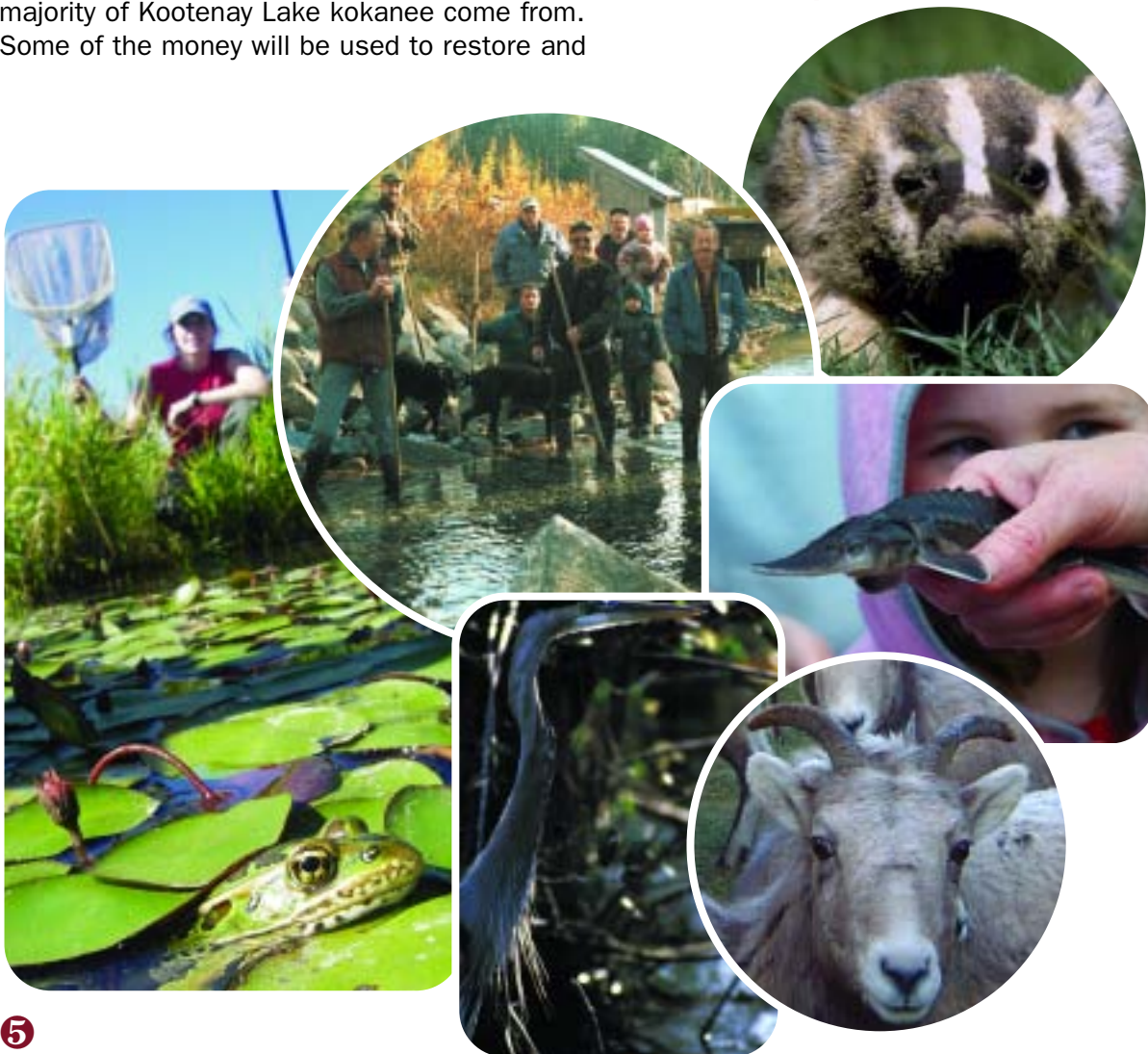
This year's funding will sustain major projects already underway, including the largest successful lake restoration project in the world - the Fertilization Program in Kootenay Lake and the Arrow Lakes Reservoir - and it will provide the money needed for many other fish and wildlife projects. For example, some of the money will be used to buy land in the Robson Valley and the East Kootenay so it can be set aside for conservation. Other funds will be used to maintain the Meadow Creek Spawning Channel which is where the majority of Kootenay Lake kokanee come from. Some of the money will be used to restore and

enhance habitats in the East and West Kootenay – which is critical to sustaining wildlife populations. Fisheries projects aimed at restoring local streams will also benefit from this funding.

“We are very committed to funding projects that will help fish and wildlife impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams in this region,” says BC Hydro's Kevin Conlin, Co-chair of the Compensation Program's Steering Committee. “Our partner, the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program will, deliver the projects for us.”

The FWCP is doing its part to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife in the Columbia Basin and is pleased to be working with so many other committed partners.

For a complete list of the projects funded by the Compensation Program in 2006 – 07 please visit www.fwcp.ca.





Fish & Wildlife Projects Funded in 2006 - 07

2006/07 Fish Projects

- 1 ALR Fertilization
- 2 Upper Columbia Sturgeon Hatchery
- 3 Hill Creek Spawning Channel
- 4 Meadow Creek Spawning Channel
- 5 Kootenay Lake Fertilization
- 6 BCH Dam Impacts (BW)
- 7 Camp Creek Kokanee Spawner Survey
- 8 FTC Travel and Meeting costs

(BW) – Basin Wide

2006/07 Wildlife Projects

- 1 West Kootenay Enhancement
- 2 East Kootenay Enhancement
- 3 Non Game Enhancement (BW)
- 4 Land Management Operations (BW)
- 5 Large Mammal Monitoring
- 6 Small Wildlife Projects (BW)
- 7 Land Acquisition (BW)
- 8 Caribou Recovery
- 9 BCH Dam Impacts (BW)
- 10 Bighorn Sheep Augmentation
- 11 Northern Leopard Frog Recovery
- 12 Townsend's Big-eared Bats
- 13 Yellow Warbler – Revelstoke
- 14 Small Wetland Restoration
- 15 Robson Valley Land Reserves
- 16 Wild Ungulate Foraging Levels

Robson Valley

Together with The Land Conservancy the Compensation Program will help fund the purchase of 157 acres that provide important winter range for moose and riparian habitat for fish.

Revelstoke

In the Revelstoke area, funds will be used for caribou recovery work including a cougar study that will improve the knowledge about the cougar's role in the predator / prey relationship within the Revelstoke caribou recovery area.

West Kootenay

In the West Kootenay a significant portion of the funding will pay for the Kootenay Lake / Arrow Lakes Reservoir Fertilization Program, viewed as one of the largest lake restoration programs in the world. The Compensation Program will also continue to fund the Hill Creek and Meadow Creek spawning channels.

Trail

In the Trail area, a portion of the funds will be used to support recovery efforts for the Upper Columbia white sturgeon, the largest freshwater fish in North America.

Invermere

In the Invermere area the Compensation Program will continue funding to support relocating badgers, which are red-listed (endangered) in B.C.

Rocky Mountain Trench

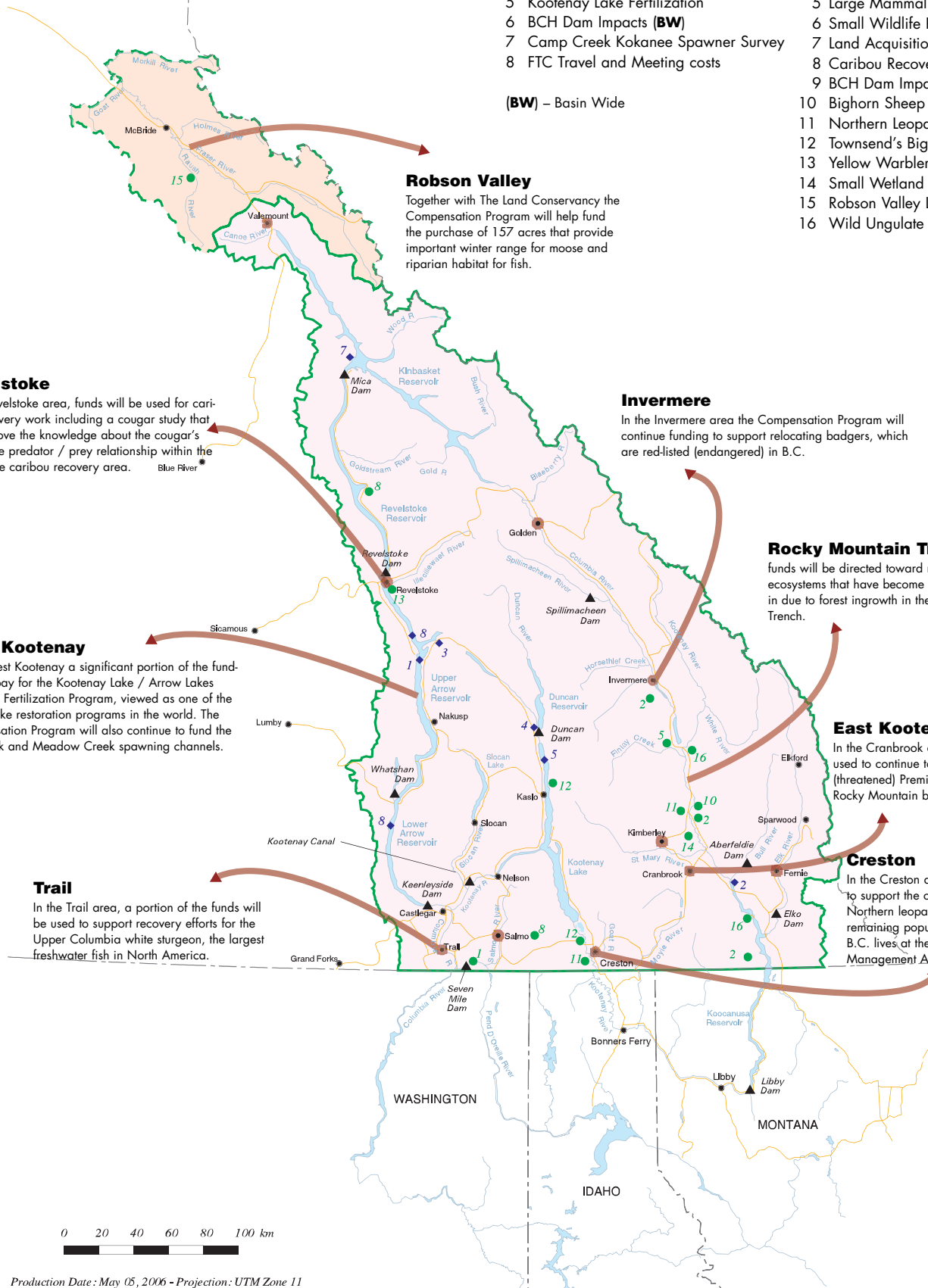
Some funds will be directed toward restoring grassland ecosystems that have become overgrown or closed in due to forest ingrowth in the Rocky Mountain Trench.

East Kootenay

In the Cranbrook area funding will be used to continue to support the blue-listed (threatened) Premier Ridge population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

Creston

In the Creston area, funds will be directed to support the continued recovery of the Northern leopard frog (NLF). The last remaining population of this species in B.C. lives at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.



Production Date: May 05, 2006 - Projection: UTM Zone 11

Funding Applications

If you have a fish or wildlife project that you feel merits funding, consider applying for project funding. The deadline for **Large Project funding applications** (more than \$10,000) is October 1st of every year. **Funding applications for Small Projects** (less than \$10,000) may be submitted throughout the year. However, all funding applications received by October 1st will be reviewed on a priority basis. Applications for Small Projects received after October 1st will be considered throughout the year, subject to remaining available funding

Funding applications from groups and individuals go through a two-step review and decision-making process to determine which projects will receive funding.

Program biologists and respective Fish or Wildlife Technical Committees evaluate proposed projects based on established Acceptability and Ranking Criteria; and

Technically sound projects are reviewed and receive financial approval from the FWCP Steering Committee.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the work of the Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program please contact us directly.

Get on our mailing list! Receive your free subscription to the Program Update newsletter and learn more about local efforts to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife.

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