

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP INVASIVE SPECIES SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 Year In Review



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We humbly acknowledge that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including the people who call this home, whose ancestors cared for this land with stewardship and protocols of respect – **Sinixt, Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and Syilx (Okanagan)**.

With gratitude we reflect on our relationship with the land, conscious of how we live and work. We are all responsible to do better in our relationships and in honoring the land.

WHO ARE WE?

The Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society (CSISS) is a non-profit charitable society founded in April 2013 by a group of individuals and organizational representatives who recognized the need for a coordinated regional approach to the growing threat of invasive species in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD).

VISION

The environment, economy and society of the Columbia Shuswap region are stewarded from the adverse impacts of invasive species.

MISSION

CSISS facilitates the prevention, reduction and management of invasive species through collaboration, coordination and engagement.

STRATEGIC PLAN



CSISS aims to **strengthen the prevention, reduction, and management of invasive species** across the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. CSISS and its partners respond to threats from **invasive plants, animals, and diseases**, as well as challenges linked to **climate change and natural disturbances**.

CSISS will specifically focus efforts on work with **Indigenous partners** to advance **reconciliation efforts**, as well as ensure programs are adapting and mitigating to a **changing climate**.

CSISS will continue to examine threats and opportunities including **new technologies, socio-economic changes, citizen science, changing regulations, land management planning, national and provincial biodiversity efforts, and funding opportunities**.

OUR TEAM

Staff 2025

Laura Gaster

Acting Executive Director

Jess Booth

Communications and Engagement Manager

Nolan Novotny

Acting Field Operations Coordinator

Marlee Verleih

Acting Senior Field Technician

Emma Wiebe

Field Technician

Bishop Carasquero

Program Assistant

Jessie Booker

Program Assistant

Robyn Hooper

Executive Director (on parental leave)

Board of Directors 2025

Peter Tarleton

CSISS Chair, Parks Canada

Erin Vieira

CSISS Vice Chair, Shuswap Watershed Council

Chris Cochran

CSISS Treasurer, Town of Golden

Laurel Corrigan

CSISS Finance Committee, Revelstoke Resident

John Braisher

Rancher and Golden Resident

Adam Croxall

BC Hydro

Chris Gill

Environmental Consultant and Shuswap Resident

Rob Dayringer

District of Sicamous

Jade Berrill

Outdoor Learning School and Store

Ash Warfe

Ministry of Forests

WHERE WE OPERATE

CSISS works throughout the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. Our operational area is divided into three Invasive Plant Management Areas: Salmon Arm, Revelstoke, and Golden.



COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration is central to our approach to **maximize efficiencies, ensure program sustainability, and secure joint funding**. CSISS works locally and across British Columbia with a variety of groups:

- National, Provincial and Local governments
- First Nations and Indigenous communities
- Invasive Species Council of British Columbia
- Regional invasive species organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Stewardship groups and non-governmental organizations

Strategic Direction 1:
Collaborate, coordinate, and engage a network of regional partners in invasive species programs



Photo: Golden Disc Golf Course, Wildsight community weed pull

PARTNERSHIPS

Our work in 2025 was strengthened by meaningful partnerships across the region. Through collaboration, shared learning, and active participation in committees and working groups, CSISS continued to build strong relationships that support invasive species prevention and community resilience.

19

Government Agencies

57

Non-profits

6

First Nations

161

Other Organizations

CSISS partnered with:

CSISS participated in:

3

Working Groups

2

Steering Committees

107

Partner meetings

5

Conferences and forums

CSISS attended:

COMMUNITY EVENTS & FARMER'S MARKETS

16 Community Events
693 Direct Interactions

10 Farmer's Markets
907 Direct Interactions

CSISS delivers events at key locations such as Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Revelstoke and Golden, while also prioritizing outreach to all rural communities throughout the CSRD. CSISS hosts and attends events at Provincial and National Parks, regional trail networks, Indigenous friendship centers and community spaces such as libraries, museums and community halls.



Photo: CSISS Information Booth at the Salmon Arm Farmers Market

6

Public Presentations & Workshops

160 Direct Interactions

4

Training for Industry

104 Direct Interactions

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS & TRAINING FOR INDUSTRY

CSISS's programs are made accessible to all residents and stakeholders in the CSRD and activities and resources are offered free of charge to participants. CSISS uses a wide variety of formats including interactive workshops, tactile displays, visual signage and audio recordings. Events are scheduled at different times of the day and week to increase attendance and reduce barriers.

WEEDPULLS & YOUTH SESSIONS

15 Weed Pulls

330 Volunteer hours
113 Volunteers

Photo: SABNES Trail weedpull in collaboration with the Nature Trust of BC and volunteers



Hands on events like community weed pulls provide meaningful opportunities for individuals and youth to engage in environmental stewardship and feel empowered to act locally. Participants gain valuable education about local invasive species, their impacts on wildlife and ecosystems, and how to prevent their spread through responsible recreation and stewardship practices.

7

Youth Sessions

612 Direct Interactions

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

DO YOUR PART



Play, Clean, Go

REMOVE plants, animals, and mud from boots, gear, pets, and vehicle.

CLEAN your gear before entering and leaving a recreation site.

STAY on designated roads and trails.

- Mentioned at **45 events** with **1,590 individuals**



Plant Wise

Choose non-invasive plants. Know what's in your seed mix. Dispose of invasive plants with care.

- Mentioned at **32 events** with **1,046 individuals**
- **31 Garden Centers** visited
- **93 resources** distributed



DON'T LET IT LOOSE

Don't Let it Loose

Never release your plants or animals into the wild or dump aquariums or water garden debris into rivers, streams, lakes or storm sewers!

- Mentioned at **18 events** with **1,382 individuals**
- **3 Pet Stores** visited
- **40 resources** distributed



Buy Local Burn Local

Don't Move Firewood. Buy it Local. Burn it Local. Leave it Local.

- Mentioned at **3 events** with **88 individuals**.
- **12 Campgrounds** visited



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES OUTREACH

CSISS promotes the **Clean, Drain, Dry** and **Pull the Plug** messaging to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic invasive species. Through aquatic outreach booths, presentations, and partnerships with marinas and recreation groups, staff connect with watercraft owners and provide educational resources.



- 4 **Boat Launch Information Booths**
147 Direct Interactions
- 202 **Whirling Disease Survey Responses**
- 22 **Marinas & Campgrounds Visited**
- 29 **Aquatic Business & Organizations Contacted**
- 78 **Opportunistic Dock Interactions**

Photo: Mitten Lake

WHIRLING DISEASE

In 2025, CSISS partnered with the Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society, and the Province of B.C. to raise awareness about Whirling Disease, a disease affecting juvenile Salmonid fish, which may cause high mortality in fish populations, and disrupt aquatic ecosystems. Together we collaborated on a public webinar with 40 participants and conducted targeted surveys to assess awareness among the general public and aquatic-related industries (over 200 respondents).

Throughout the year, Whirling Disease education was integrated into community events, outreach to industry partners, and recreational boater engagement. CSISS shared provincial resources on prevention, Clean, Drain, Dry practices, Pull the Plug regulation, decontamination procedures, and expanded public awareness through social media, newsletters, and updated website materials.

Photo: Rainbow trout with whirling disease. Sascha Hallet, FishPathogens.net



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

PUBLICATIONS

CSISS NEWSLETTER 'INVASIVE INSIGHTS'

Newsletters Published 4

Newsletter Subscribers 688

**Newsletter Contacts
Growth Rate in 2025** 19.2%

IN THE MEDIA

- 6 Press Releases
- 33 Mentions in Media Articles
- 3 Radio Interviews
- 6 Podcasts

WEBSITE

9,839 Impressions*

CSISS maintains a professional website with accurate, science-based information with delivery targeted and tailored to various groups.

*From Jan 1, 2025 to Dec 1, 2025

WEBINARS

Protecting BC's Fish & Waterways: What Anglers & Boaters Need to Know About Whirling Disease.

With the Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society, Provincial invasive species specialist, and the British Columbia Wildlife Federation.

Alternative uses to Invasive Species - Summer Online Workshop Series - Salves and Tinctures.

With Columbia Basin Invasive Species groups and Ashta Funk

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

CSISS's online presence and following continues to grow using social media to raise awareness and inspire action on invasive species prevention and management.



Photo: Cedar Lake

SOCIAL MEDIA

INSTAGRAM

1,368 Followers
10,139 Accounts Reached *
45,515 Views *

FACEBOOK

975 Followers
73,270 Views*

YOUTUBE

10 Subscribers
273 Views*

*From Jan 1, 2025 to Nov 28, 2025

OVERALL STATS

By combining strong scientific messaging, inclusive delivery, and partnerships, CSISS's communications and engagement program has become an essential component of invasive species prevention and ecological resilience in the Columbia Shuswap region.

- 9** Requests for outreach presentations & meetings
- 2,888** Direct Interactions
- 3,200** Indirect Interactions
- 130,038** Total online & social media interactions

136,264 TOTAL INTERACTIONS IN 2025



Photo: Revelstoke Illecillewaet Greenbelt Community Speed Weed Event, showing CSISS staff and volunteers

AQUATIC FIELD PROGRAM

The aquatic field program is focused around early detection monitoring for invasive freshwater **zebra and quagga mussels** in **high priority waterbodies** across the CSRD. From May to October, CSISS staff completed sampling using plankton tow nets, deployed substrate samplers, and preserved and shipped samples to the designated lab. Invasive mussel sampling follows the Provincial Invasive Mussel Field Protocol.

Zebra and Quagga mussels are **not currently found in BC** but pose a significant risk to the environment, economy and social welfare. Both species reproduce rapidly and attach to surfaces using byssal threads, forming dense colonies that can clog waterpipes, damage watercraft, and negatively impact fish populations and aquatic ecosystems causing millions of dollars in environmental and economic damage annually.

Strategic Direction 2:
Take action on
invasive species
regionally

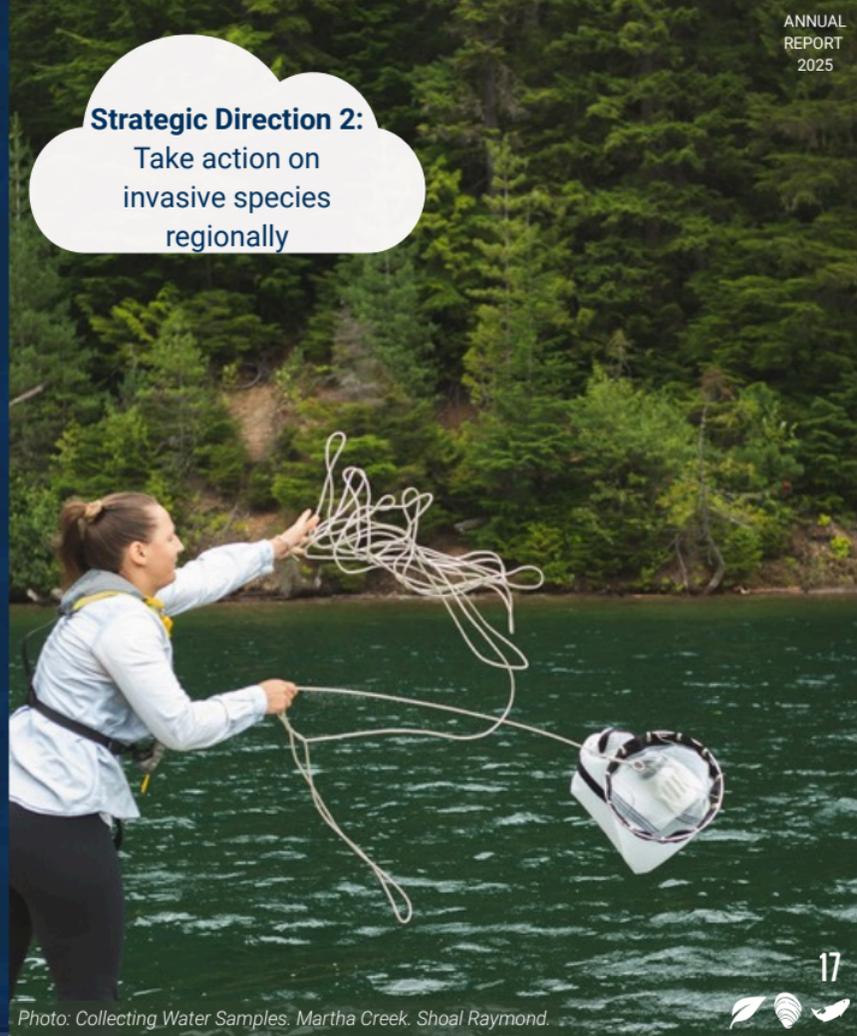


Photo: Collecting Water Samples. Martha Creek. Shoal Raymond.

AQUATIC FIELD PROGRAM

ZEBRA AND QUAGGA MUSSEL SAMPLING

- 204** Water samples collected
- 10** Substrate samplers deployed on 8 waterbodies
- 26** Sites sampled on 17 waterbodies

Shuswap waterbodies

- Mabel Lake
- Mara Lake
- White Lake
- Adams Lake
- Shuswap Lake
- Little Shuswap Lake

Revelstoke waterbodies

- Revelstoke Lake
- Kinbasket Lake
- Upper Arrow Lake
- Illecillewaet River

Golden waterbodies

- Nine Bay Lake
- Blackwater Lake
- Cedar Lake
- Mitten Lake
- Susan Lake
- Kicking Horse River
- Columbia River



Photos: Collecting Water Samples



Photo: A selection of water samples ready to be sent to the laboratory



TERRESTRIAL FIELD PROGRAM

The terrestrial field program involves **invasive plant inventory, treatment, monitoring, do not mow signage, and landowner outreach**. This year from May to October, CSISS visited known and new sites to inventory invasive plants and carry out management plans.

Mechanical treatment was completed by CSISS staff, contractors, and volunteers. CSISS coordinated **spot application of chemical treatment for regional priority invasive plants** with a certified pesticide applicator, and **staff conducted herbicide monitoring** to ensure successful treatment at these sites. **Do not mow signs** were installed along roadways in the **Shuswap and Revelstoke region to prevent the spread of knotweed species**. Landowner outreach was completed when regional priority species were found on private properties.



Photo: Mechanical Treatment Salmon Arm



TERRESTRIAL FIELD PROGRAM

INVENTORIES

Regional priority invasive plants were found throughout the CSRD region. CSISS entered all invasive plant observations, treatments and monitoring records into the provincial InvasivesBC database.

1,204 Invasive plant surveys completed

834,688 M² Surveyed at **300** sites

69 Different invasive plant species surveyed

Including giant hogweed, wild chervil, cypress spurge, garlic mustard, giant knotweed, short fringed knapweed, tree of heaven and wild parsnip.



TERRESTRIAL FIELD PROGRAM

TREATMENTS & MONITORING

1,745 M² Mechanically treated across 83 sites

28,689 M² Chemically treated across 89 sites

50 Herbicide monitoring sites

8 Do Not Mow Signs installed for knotweed

- 3 City of Salmon Arm
- 5 Ministry Of Transport and Transit



Photo: White Lake

TERRESTRIAL FIELD PROGRAM

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

CSISS receives and responds to invasive species reports throughout the CSRD. Depending on the nature and priority of the report, CSISS may confirm the report by a site visit and provide **landowner outreach**. For **regional noxious** weed complaints, the CSRD may issue a noxious weed notification letter. For **provincial EDRR reports**, CSISS will immediately alert the Province of BC.

34	Requests for information
37	Invasive species reports
2	Noxious weed complaints
11	Landowner Regional EDRR visits
0	Provincial EDRR reports

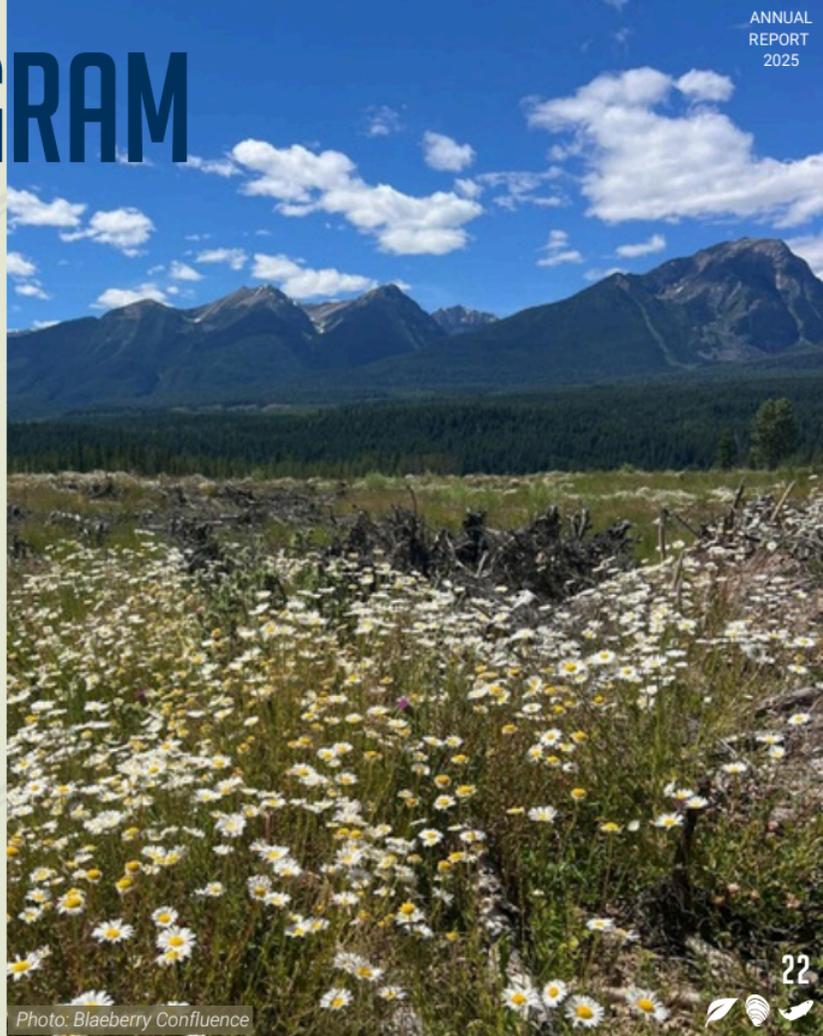


Photo: Blaeberry Confluence

PROJECT UPDATE

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMPENSATION PROGRAM: REVELSTOKE REACH

This project worked to enhance habitat quality by inventorying and treating priority invasive plants. Through this project we were able to build local capacity, strengthen partnerships, and raised public awareness about preventing invasive species spread to protect native biodiversity and ecosystems processes.



Photo: Revelstoke Reach Weedpull Volunteers



755 M² of six priority species inventoried

3552 M² of priority invasive plants treated

3 Weed-pulls

31 Volunteers

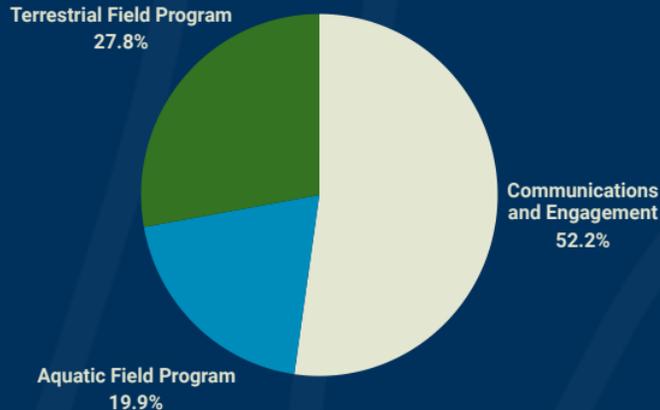
Photo: Okanagan Nation Alliance Staff member treating invasive plants, Revelstoke Reach.

FINANCIALS

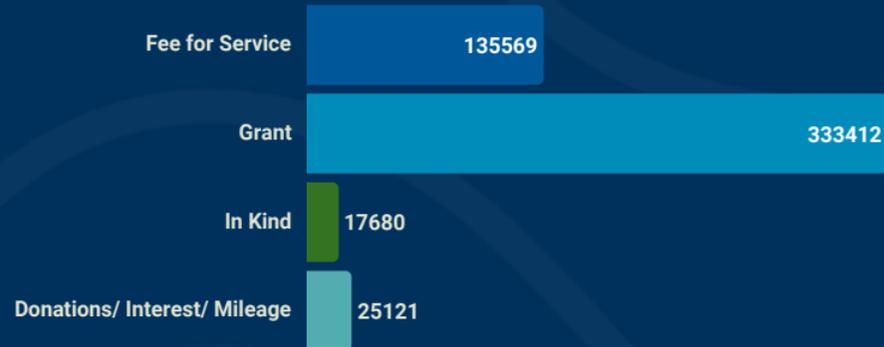
Strategic Direction 3:
Operate a sustainable
organization

In 2025, CSISS operated with a dedicated team of seven staff and the guidance of ten volunteer Board of Directors. We maintained a stable operating budget throughout the year, supported by a combination of longstanding funders and newly secured funding sources that enabled us to sustain and expand our programs across the Columbia Shuswap region. All activities were delivered in alignment with our detailed Annual Work Plan and long-term Strategic Plan, ensuring strong fiscal management and effective program delivery as we advanced our mission.

Total Revenue by Program



Total Revenue by Source



OUR FUNDERS

- Ministry of Forests (Coordination and Awareness Grant)
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- BC Parks
- BC Community Gaming Grant
- BC Hydro
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- Regional District of North Okanagan
- Spltasin Development Corporation
- City of Salmon Arm
- City of Revelstoke
- District of Sicamous
- Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
- Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program
- Canada Water Agency (Eco Action)
- Parks Canada
- Shuswap Watershed Council
- Nature Trust of BC
- Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (youth wage subsidy)
- Golden District Rod and Gun Club
- Tourism Revelstoke
- VIDEA

Thank you!

CONNECT WITH US



PHONE :

1-855-PUL-WEED (785-9333)



WEBSITE :

www.columbiashuswapinvasives.org



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Columbia Shuswap
Invasive Species Society