COLUMBIA SHUSWAP INVASIVE SPECIES SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 Year In Review

CSISS
Columbia Shuswap
Invasive Species Society



Photo: Bush Harbor, Kinbasket Reservoir

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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.

Photo: White Lake

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.



Photo: Cedar Lake

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

Photo: Sunnyside Trail, Revelstoke



Photo: Sicamous Creek Trails

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

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

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



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.

CSISS partnered with:

- **19** Government Agencies
- **57** Non-profits
- **6** First Nations
- **161** Other Organizations

CSISS participated in:

- **3** Working Groups
- **2** Steering Committees

CSISS attended:

- **107** Partner meetings
- **5** Conferences and forums

Photo: Mabel Lake

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

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS & TRAINING FOR INDUSTRY



Photo: Blackwater Recreation Site

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 colaberation 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**

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

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

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 Subcribers	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

Photo: Himalayan balsam

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.

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

Photo: Cedar Lake

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

Strategic Direction 2: Take action on invasive species regionally

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.

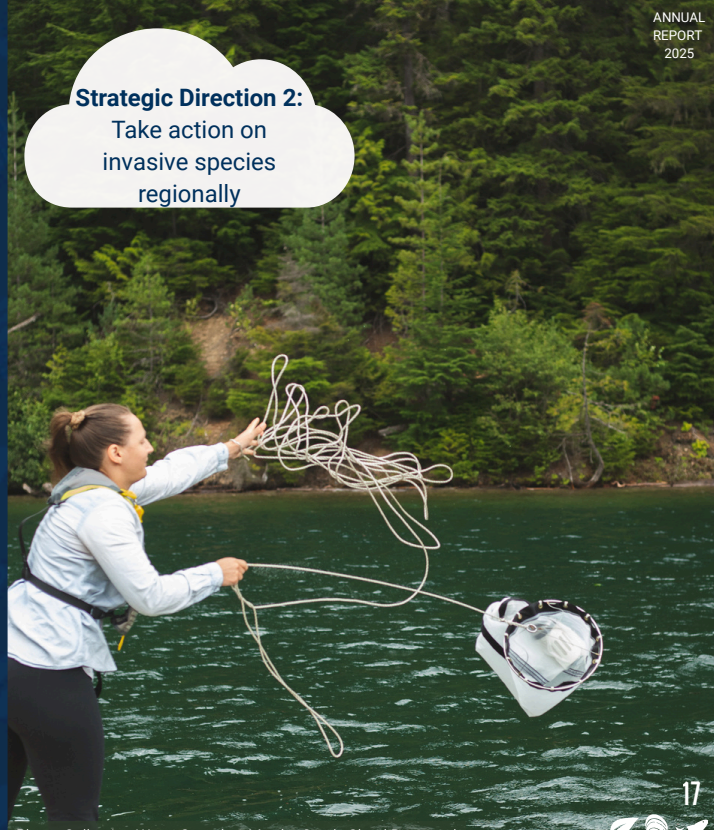


Photo: Collecting Water Samples. Martha Creek. Shoal Raymond.

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



Photo: Mechanical Treatment Salmon Arm

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.

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

84,688 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.

Photo: Invasive Plant Survey in Glacier National Park.

TERRESTRIAL FIELD PROGRAM

TREATMENTS & MONITORING

1,745 M^2 Mechanically treated across **83** sites

28,689 M^2 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 M^2 of six priority species inventoried

3552 M^2 of priority invasive plants treated

3 Weed-pulls

31 Volunteers

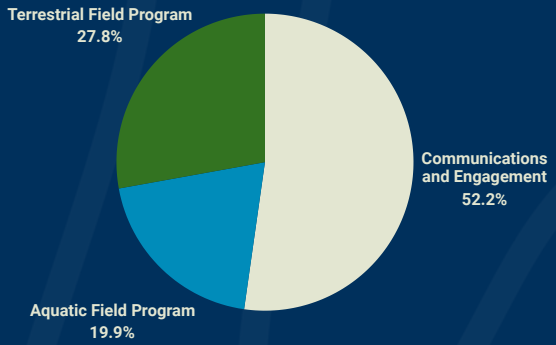
Photo: Okanagan Nation Alliance Staff member treating invasive plants, Revelstoke Reach.

FINANCIALS

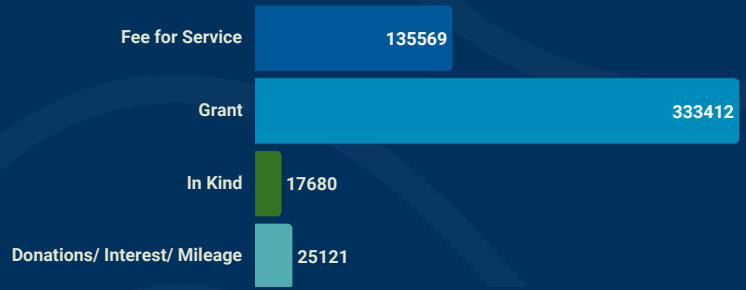
Strategic Direction 3:
Operate a sustainable organization

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
- Splatsin 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



Photo: Kinbasket Lake



Photo: Mechanical Treatment at Little White Lake

CONNECT WITH US

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