

LWMP Implementation

East Kootenay Integrated Lake Management Partnership

BACKGROUND

The East Kootenay Integrated Lake Management Partnership (EKILMP) was formed in early 2006 in response to concerns about fast paced development in the East Kootenay region. The aim of EKILMP is to protect lakes by producing ecologically based land use and development guidance documents and encouraging more integrated and coordinated approaches by all levels of government and developers. Lake Windermere was selected as the pilot project for the partnership. Three projects were completed for the lake as part of a Sensitive Habitat Inventory and Mapping (SHIM) process: Foreshore Inventory and Mapping (FIM), Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Assessment and Shoreline Management Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Habitat.

FORESHORE INVENTORY AND MAPPING (FIM)

The objective of the FIM project was to create a digital geo-referenced video of the shoreline of the lake. Documenting the shoreline provides an opportunity to collect information to assist in prioritizing critical areas for conservation and/or protection. An inventory of the types of habitat along the shoreline, land uses, level of disturbance, alteration and development around the lake was completed. This information provides baseline information when considering future development.

FISHERIES & WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The intent of the Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Assessment was the identification of Ecological Value rankings and recommendations of future actions to be undertaken to provide direction for opportunities for conservation and restoration. A habitat matrix was developed to rate the value of the habitat and facilitate the evaluation of the potential impact of future development proposals.

Findings from the Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Assessment:

- The habitat matrix utilized a weighting system to consider the physical, biophysical and human built elements to determine the existing ecological value of the foreshore. Generally, with increasing disturbance the ecological values and index ratings went down.
- Segments along the lakeshore were identified as having high potential for restoration or rehabilitation through the removal of structures and/or alteration to a more natural state within the foreshore. If disturbed areas were restored to their natural state:
 - High and very high ecological value areas could be increased by 15% (5 km); and
 - Moderate ecological value areas could be increased by 17% (6 km).

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Shoreline Management Guidelines are intended to be used as an initial step when reviewing, planning for, or prescribing alterations along the shoreline. The Guidelines were developed based on the information contained within the FIM and the Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Assessment reports. The Guidelines identify shoreline color zones, activity risk analysis and the process of proceeding with applications for works along the shoreline. The Guidelines are intended to result in cooperative management between all levels of government who have responsibility for approvals and permits and to provide direction to applicants when considering development along the foreshore.

EKILMP & LWMP IMPLEMENTATION

In conjunction with the Lake Windermere Management Plan (LWMP) the reports provide an overview of the current state of the lake. The information contained within the three reports will provide background information that can be utilized as the DOI and RDEK move forward. If work proceeds on the development of a new OCP Development Permit Area the information will be particularly important.

Open House August 2011

