

# STEWARDSHIP CIRCLES IN THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT

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## Stewardship Circles in the Crown of the Continent

### Background/Context

PPRI is a leader in regional collaboration research and facilitation. From experience, Matt McKinney, PPRI Director has found that “there is no single model for regional collaboration and that the most effective regional initiatives are “homegrown.” PPRI has, however, found some common principles or key ingredients that most effective regional initiatives seem to employ.

- **Principle # 1 – Catalyst:** People are most likely to work across boundaries where there is a compelling purpose, and people believe that they are more likely to achieve their needs and interests by working across boundaries than by acting independently.
- **Principle # 2 – Regional Fit:** The spatial scale of a regional initiative is most effectively determined by defining the region according to the problem (the so-called “problemshed”) and people’s interests.
- **Principle # 3 – Representation:** Engaging the right people is critical, and is most often determined by what a regional initiative is trying to achieve. In addition to involved key stakeholders, it is essential to rally around collaborative leaders – people and/or organizations that have the ability, credibility, and legitimacy to invite a broad cross-section of people to take ownership of a shared vision and values, work hard to bridge differences, and nourish networks of relationships.
- **Principle # 4 – Resources:** In addition to leadership and institutional capacity, it is critical to assemble financial and technical resources to support a regional initiative. Often, this is best done by multiple jurisdictions and sectors sharing resources.
- **Principle # 5 – Information:** Jointly developing knowledge and information are important to build a sense of regional identity, vision, and action plan.
- **Principle # 6 – Strategy:** Develop an explicit strategy of action that clarifies where you want to go (the end) and how to get there (the means to get there).
- **Principle # 7 – Implementation:** Once a strategy has been developed, the next challenge is to move from vision to action. The most effective regional efforts do this by communicating their message, linking their agenda to formal decision-making systems, and following through.
- **Principle # 8 – Evaluation:** Taking action is usually followed by evaluating what was accomplished. Are we reaching our goals? The idea here is to measure progress, learn as you, and adapt as needed.
- **Principle # 9 – Sustain:** In some cases, there may be a need to sustain regional collaboration. The challenge is to create an appropriate governing arrangement (which does not necessarily mean another layer of government).”

From research and practice, PPRI has also discovered that the most common response to regional issues tends to be ad hoc, bottom-up approaches. Over the years, citizens and leaders have experimented with a variety of regional approaches to land-use, natural resource, and environmental issues – including metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, charters and compacts, and regional governing bodies. While many examples of these more formal responses can be found, the dominant trend that is emerging revolves around informal networks, partnerships, and collaborative relationships. In some cases these ad hoc approaches address a single issue and then disband. In other cases, they adapt from issue-to-issue, and eventually mature into an appropriate organization.

### Crown of the Continent Demonstration Project

PPRI has been working in the Crown of the Continent as a demonstration area for regional stewardship on a large rural-landscape-scale. PPRI has identified individuals and organizations involved in stewardship work in the Crown. And, PPRI has focused attention on regional and sub-regional networking circles, that we are calling “stewardship circles.” These circles are composed of individuals and organizations that share common interests and believe that they are more likely to achieve their needs and interests by working together across boundaries. These groups are composed of collaborative leaders, people and organizations, which have the ability, credibility, and legitimacy to invite a broad cross-section of people to take ownership in their vision and values, vision and work.

Key regional stewardship circles identified in the Crown include: The Crown Managers Partnership (CMP); The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium (COCEEC); and The Geotourism MapGuide Project and Stewardship Council (MapGuide). Some other sub-regional stewardship circles working on issues involving the

Crown include Watershed Groups; Wildlife Groups; Private Land stewardship Groups; Elected Officials and Land Use Planners; and Business Community Circles.

By better understanding the work of Crown stewardship circles, PPRI felt it could help link people with common interests into a Crown Steering Committee that could build a common vision, regional strategy and collaborative stewardship action plan for the Crown. PPRI's intent was to work with existing circles to develop a regional-scale vision for sustaining and enhancing stewardship values within their area of interest. The circles would then come together at an annual forum to dovetail their visions into a unified future scenario for the Crown that included a regional strategy and action plan for sustaining and enhancing shared stewardship values and sense of regional identity within the Crown. Although funding has not been secured to work with the stewardship circles and to convene a major Crown conference, the information collected to date is contained in this report.

## **Stewardship Circle Summaries**

A summary analysis has been completed for five stewardship circles operating in the Crown of the Continent:

- Public Lands Stewardship Circle - The Crown Managers Partnership (CMP)
- Education Stewardship Circle - The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium (COCEEC)
- Geotourism Stewardship Circle - The Geotourism MapGuide Project and Stewardship Council
- Watersheds Stewardship Circle
- Wildlife Stewardship Circle

Each of these summaries focus on the purpose and members of the group; the geography, issues, species, and mandates they cover; issues and threats; activities they have undertaken, and organizational issues and opportunities for regional collaboration.

## Public Lands Stewardship Circle - The Crown Managers Partnership (CMP)

The **Crown of the Continent Managers Partnership (CMP)** stewardship circle, started in 2001, is a voluntary network of 21 participating agencies including representatives from the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, the state of Montana, federal governments, and First Nations. They work together to coordinate management across jurisdictions to maintain a healthy ecosystem in the Crown. Participants work to: Build awareness of common interests and issues in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem; Build relationships and opportunities for collaboration across mandates and borders, and; Identify collaborative work already underway and opportunities for further cooperation.

**Groups Working in the Crown:** There are 21 public agencies working across jurisdictions in the Crown. (See Attachment A).

Looking at the key agencies in CMP, there is a lot of variation in the geography, issues, and species. However, when they meet at CMP, they attempt to see Crown-wide.

By the geography they cover: Collectively, through CMP, the agencies cover all major public lands within the Crown's 10 million acres area in Southern Canada and Northern Montana. Their cooperative efforts focus Crown wide, but the individual member agency responsibilities focus on the lands within their own management control, such as Flathead National Forest or Waterton National Park.

By the issues they cover: CMP began by exploring ecosystem-based ways of collaboration on shared issues in the transboundary Crown of the Continent. Participants worked to build awareness of common interests and issues, shape relationships, and identify collaborative tasks for the future. The Cranbrook Forum resulted in a CMP workplan that outlined priorities and goals.

*Purpose:* The CMP seeks to improve the management of a large complex ecoregion containing multiple jurisdictions. This is accomplished by management agencies working together in the Crown of the Continent

*Goals:* The Crown of the Continent Managers Partnership seeks to:

- 1) build awareness of common interests and issues in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem
- 2) build relationships and opportunities for collaboration across mandates and borders
- 3) identify collaborative work already underway and opportunities for further cooperation

*CMP collaborative tasks include:*

- Addressing cumulative effects of human activities across the ecosystem
- Addressing increased public interest in how lands are managed and how decisions are reached
- Addressing increased recreational demands and increased visitation
- Collaborate in sharing data, standardizing assessment and monitoring methodologies
- Addressing the maintenance and sustainability of shared wildlife populations

Note, CMP is an information-sharing group, with no mandate for advocacy or Regional-wide land management action, so they can build awareness and relationships, and identify collaborative work, but have no authority to act as a regional public lands management authority.

By the species they cover: The CMP is a collection of 21 public agencies each with specific mandates associated with wildlife species located within their jurisdiction. Key wide-ranging carnivores in the Crown that the agencies are aware of include: Grizzly Bears, Wolves, Wolverines, lynx. Examples of other wildlife of cooperative management concern include elk, big horn sheep, deer.

By their government mandate, USFWS, USFS, Tribes, Glacier National Park, Waterton National Parks each manage public lands according to their mandates that include balancing wildlife populations/habitat protection with other interests such as recreation and resource extraction. There are no mandates to cooperate across jurisdictions Crown-wide. The CMP is strictly voluntary.

### **Public Land Management Issues and Threats:**

Key issues of concern to public land managers include: inadequate funding for public lands management, especially in the face of growing issues/demands such drought/climate change; fire frequency and urban/wildfire interface; recreational demands; and conflicts over logging. Development-urbanization of private adjacent to public lands

resulting in the fragmentation of habitat is making management of wildlife who habitat spans public-private lands difficult. The shift from a resource-based economy to a tourism-based economy is also an uneven and difficult transition for public agencies with “multiple uses” mandates that are often in conflict.

### **Activities of the Past 10 Years:**

*Summary:* The CMP and its work plan have evolved over time. Key activities have included completion a Map Delineating the Crown of the Continent and hosting of annual Forums on critical topics such as Fire, Water & Watersheds, and Wildlife. CMP developed a draft Crown-wide agency MOU that was subsequently refined and adopted between Alberta and Montana. A State of the Crown Report was published in 2005 and a CMP website went on-line in 2007. CMP developed a Concept Paper in 2002 and then a Strategic Plan in 2006 with a more defined work plan. Current projects include development of a metadata framework for coordinating data across the Crown; development of ecosystem health indicators; a Communications Plan; and a Crown Weeds Brochure.

*CMP Annual Forums* have been held starting in 2001 in Cranbrook, BC and alternating between Canada and the US; 2002 in Whitefish, MT; 2003 in Pincher Creek, AB; 2004 in Cranbrook, BC; 2005 in Kalispell, MT ; 2006 in Lethbridge, AB; 2007 in Cranbrook, BC; and 2008 in Somers, MT. This has been the backbone and most valued aspect of CMP- providing a forum for building awareness of the crown as a region, information sharing among agency partners regarding their work and how they manage public lands, and building relationships and trust across agencies/jurisdictions/countries.

*CMP Work Plan:* The Crown of the Continent Managers Partnership works collaboratively on the development of management tools, data management and science (research/inventory/ monitoring) at the ecosystem scale in cooperation with academic institutions. Each year the Steering Committee of the CMP develops an annual workplan based on the Goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. Workplan strategies are identified by the strategic focus they support: Improve Understanding, Raise Awareness, Promote Collaboration, and Build Organizational Strength. (See Attachment B for the 2006-2007 work plan).

### **Organizational Issues & Opportunities For Regional Collaboration**

The CMP voluntary network of mid-level public land management agency representatives are most comfortable functioning in their information sharing and awareness building and cooperative data management and science sharing mode. It is generally agreed that “advocacy” on issues is not an option. There is interest in acknowledging the CMP goals through MOUs, but no real interest in creating a more formal structured regional land management authority.

*Membership:* The CMP is voluntary, with no clear membership so some agencies attend by do not feel they are part of CMP, and even those that are leaders recognize the frailty of the voluntary framework.

*Mandate:* There is no high level government support for CMP, so the success of CMP is based on personal commitment by mid-level managers to promote the goals of the CMP.

*Work Plan:* Common to many organizations, a limited number of members do most of the work, along with hires staff support. The organization started with some ambitious goals (define ecosystem health and coordinate activities to maintain the system) and have scaled back to first steps such as identify ecosystem health indicators and create a database that links to existing information.

*Staff Support:* Miistakis Institute provides staff support to CPM. The Institute is involved with CMP as a member of the Steering Committee and most recently as the CMP Secretariat and Project Manager. Secretariat roles include facilitating conference calls and Steering Committee meetings, organize annual forum, construct and maintain CMP webpage, generate additional CMP funds, generate educational/outreach materials. Furthermore Miistakis, with the CMP and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency support, is conducting a cumulative effects analysis for the Crown of the Continent. Some feel that funding is limiting factor. Others feel that the existing workplan and activities are at an adequate level. Originally, foundations provided key funding; now a limited number of agencies provide the build of the core funding.

*Jurisdictions and Regional Scale:* The fact that the Crown encompasses two nations and that the landscape is huge at 10 million acres in size, complicates CMP’s work, even as a forum for information exchange and understanding.

*Collaboration Opportunities:* Given the above constraints, it appears that CMP will continue to collaborate through information exchange, awareness building, and data/science information sharing; and that collaborate efforts will focus in these areas through the Website, annual forums, and publications. However, because of CMP, sub-groups

may be encouraged to partner and coordinate their on-the-ground management –examples include MOU between Alberta and MT; and cooperative fire-management after CMP Fire Forum that connected firefighting teams.

#### **ATTACHEMENT A: List of Public Agencies who Participate in CMP:**

The twenty-one participating agencies in the Crown of the Continent Managers Partnership include representatives from the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, the state of Montana, federal government and local aboriginal groups. The Miistakis Institute for the Rockies serves as secretariat for the Crown of the Continent Managers Partnership. The Miistakis Institute is a non-profit, charitable, affiliated institute of the University of Calgary that specializes in transboundary ecosystem issues.

The **CMP Steering Committee** meets on a regular basis to address priorities of the Crown Mangers' Forums.

Steering Committee membership includes:

Brace Hayden, Leigh Welling - Glacier National Park

Ian Dyson - Alberta Environment

Bill Dolan - Waterton Lakes National Park

Jimmy DeHerrera - U.S. Flathead National Forest

Roy Doore - U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Blackfeet Nations

Rich Moy - Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Wayne Stetski - B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

Mark Holston - Flathead Basin Commission

Mike Quinn - University of Calgary

Len Broberg - University of Montana

Danah Duke - Miistakis Institute for the Rockies

**Participating Agencies:** Canada, United States of America & First Nations

#### **First Nations**

Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council (KKTC) - mission is to promote the political goals and developmental needs of the Ktunaxa nation and Kinbasket people.

Blood (Kainai) Tribe- Land Management Department: The Blood Tribe Chief and Council in its authority, directs the operations of a Land Management Department that will perform the administration of duties on land matters and will improve the quality of life for all tribal members by ensuring that all lands are protected through proper land use and management, and yet never lose sight of our cultural beliefs and values as endorsed by elders under Kainaissini.

#### **Tribal Governments**

Blackfeet Tribe: The reservation is made up of 1.5 million acres and located in the northwestern part of Montana, that includes most of Glacier County. On the north it borders the province of Alberta. On the west it shares a border with Glacier National Park .

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes: The Flathead Indian Reservation (1,244,000 acres) is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The tribes consist of a confederation of Salish and Pend d'Oriettes Tribes and the Kootenai, as an individual tribe. The reservation is located in the western part of Montana on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. The tribal headquarters are in Pablo, MT.

#### **Government of Canada**

Parks Canada - protects and presents nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and fosters public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.

Waterton Lakes National Park - Waterton was Canada's 4th national park, the smallest in the Canadian Rockies. Its size has varied considerably over the years but its area is now 525 sq. km (203 sq. miles).

#### **Government of United States**

U.S. Forest Service - manages public lands in national forests and grasslands.

Flathead National Forest: The 2.3 million acres Flathead National Forest is bordered by Canada to the north, Glacier National Park on the north and east, Lolo National Forest to the south, Kootenai National Forest to the west and Lewis and Clark National Forest to the east.

Lewis & Clarke National Forest: The 1.8 million acres of the Lewis and Clark National Forest are scattered into seven separate mountain ranges. The Forest is situated in west central Montana. The boundaries spread eastward from the rugged, mountainous Continental Divide onto the plains

U.S. National Park Service: The NPS works with communities to preserve and care for neighborhood treasures. They work with teachers to create unique opportunities for students to learn about history at the real places where events unfolded.

Glacier National Park: Glacier preserves over 1,000,000 acres of forests, alpine meadows, and lakes. Its diverse habitats are home to over 70 species of mammals and over 260 species of birds.

U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: The mission of the service is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

U.S. Geological Survey: The USGS serves the Nation by providing reliable scientific information to: 1) describe and understand the Earth; 2) minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; 3) manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and 4) enhance and protect our quality of life.

### **Province of Alberta**

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development: has an important task – to manage the province’s natural resources, while still allowing for responsible economic development.

The divisions of the department of Sustainable Resource Development include the

Alberta Environment: manages the use of Alberta’s diverse landscapes to sustain a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and strong communities. They are committed to protecting the province’s air, land, and water. .

Alberta Parks and Protected Areas: As stewards of natural heritage, Alberta Community Development protects the province’s landscapes within a network of parks and protected areas. Many of these areas are tourism attractions, providing a range of outdoor recreation opportunities where Albertans and visitors to the province experience, enjoy and learn about the natural and cultural heritage.

### **Province of British Columbia**

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management: is the lead provincial agency responsible for planning, policies and resource information in support of the sustainable economic development of Crown land, water and resources. The ministry works to find a balance between economic development and environmental integrity. It also provides strategic direction to ensure that decisions about Crown land are sustainable, accountable and responsible.

The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of British Columbia’s environment. We provide leadership and support to help communities stay healthy, encourage recreational opportunities, contribute to a sustainable environment, and promote a strong and vibrant provincial economy.

Ministry of Forests: is the main agency responsible for the stewardship of 47 million hectares of provincial forestland. In addition, the ministry provides fire protection services for 84 million hectares.

### **State of Montana**

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will provide the leadership necessary to create programs to sustain diverse fish, wildlife and parks resources and the quality recreational opportunities that are essential to a high quality of life.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation: The department is responsible for sustaining and improving the benefits derived from water, soil, and rangeland; managing the State of Montana’s trust land resources to produce revenues for the trust beneficiaries; protecting Montana’s natural resources from wildland fires through regulation and partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies; promoting conservation of oil and gas and preventing their waste through regulation of exploration and production; and managing and assisting in the management of several grant and loan programs, including the renewable resource, reclamation and development, treasure state endowment, and wastewater revolving fund programs. The department is also responsible for promoting the stewardship of Montana’s water, soil, forest, and rangeland resources and for regulating forest practices.

Stillwater/Swan State Forest:

Flathead Basin Commission: The commission was created by the Montana Legislature to monitor and protect water quality in one of the state’s most important watersheds. The FBC is a uniquely structured non-regulatory organization that works to accomplish its important mandate in a consensus-building manner, stressing education,

cooperation, broadly based community involvement, partnerships with agencies and nonprofit groups, and the voluntary participation of basin residents.

#### **ATTACHMENT B: CMP WORK PLAN 2006-2008**

##### **Focus: Improve Understanding**

- Research approaches to determine how 'ecological health' is currently defined throughout the Crown and beyond (Oct 06 - Feb 07)
- Review and compile various indicator-based approaches currently being utilized in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem to measure ecosystem health (Oct 06 - Feb 07)
- Research approaches to setting targets and thresholds as they relate to indicators (Oct 06 - Feb 07)
- Convene a workshop of Crown of the Continent agencies to identify an appropriate approach to measuring ecosystem health in the COCE ( Apr 07)
- Define a "State of the Crown" report Table of Contents through a review process of other 'State Of' reports and recommend a model for the CMP (Oct 06 - Feb 07)
- Conduct a policy analysis to determine the compatibility of Crown agency mandates - focused on ecological health (TBD)
- Refine an ecologically defensible demarcation of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem boundary (Nov 07)

##### **Focus: Raise Awareness**

- Maintain CMP web site which includes authoritative and compelling info on issues, trends, management approaches, and research initiatives and findings (On-going)
- Develop a presentation based on the strategic plan for use by agencies to generate internal support ( Aug 06)

##### **Focus: Promote Collaboration**

- Host 2007 CMP Forum Mar 07
- Develop metadata framework for coordinating data across the COCE Jul 06 - Feb 07
- Support Invasive Species Working Group, and other working groups around issues / Forum themes On-going

##### **Focus: Build Organizational Strength**

- Develop tangible identity (logo and letterhead) for CMP Sep 06
- Maintain a stable system for funding the Partnership's work On-going
- Submit a proposal to the Lincoln Institute to host a clinic on regional land-use collaboration

## Education Stewardship Circle - The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium (COCEEC)

**Premise:** For the most part, the Crown of the Continent is a vibrant, functional ecosystem. It will remain so provided the people who treasure this place are willing to do three things: 1) make themselves aware of the ecological processes that govern this ecosystem and humankind's impact on those processes; 2) be concerned about maintaining the health of this ecosystem; 3) translate their concerns into beneficial actions.

**Mission:** The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium (COCEEC) strives to:

- Encourage and support coordination and cooperation among individuals, organizations, and agencies whose purpose is to educate and inform people of all ages and backgrounds about the human and natural resources of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem.
- Promote and enhance a sense of community among citizens of the region, a comprehensive view of the landscape, and an ethic centered on personal and community stewardship of the environment.
- Provide balanced educational leadership on emerging concepts of ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation for biological and economic sustainability.
- Encourage the development and dissemination of information and educational materials on the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem for presentation to diverse audiences in a variety of formal and informal settings and experiences.

**Groups Working in the Crown:** There are more than 20 education providers who participate in COCEEC. It was founded in 1995 to bring a bioregional focus to education in the Crown of the Continent. This group of educators and representatives of agencies and private organizations share goals and activities that involve education or interpretation of the cultural and biophysical attributes of the Crown ecosystem. The group meets semi-annually and represents the ecosystem from Waterton and Castle-Crown region in southern Alberta, Canada to Missoula, Montana. COCEEC has been active in supporting ecosystem-focused curriculum, workshops, and projects. (See Attachment A for List of Members)

Looking at COCEEC:

By the Geographic Location: COCEEC represents the ecosystem from the Waterton and Castle-Crown regions in southern Alberta to Missoula, Montana. Individual members focus their education outreach efforts within their specific sub-region.

By the issues they cover: COCEEC focuses on educational outreach and coordinating educational outreach about the human and natural resources of the Crown ecosystem.

By the species they cover: Covers all ecosystem issues and all species.

By their government mandate: COCEEC is a voluntary organization with no government mandates.

### **Education Issues and Threats**

The primary inhibiting factor is limited funds for education and outreach needed at the local, sub-region and region-wide level. As a voluntary group, composed of individuals and organizations that are providing ecosystem education outreach in their own communities, it takes a huge effort to voluntarily agree to produce region-wide products. Though they did this in the first couple of years, their current focus is on information exchange and support of subregional/local efforts and school programs.

### **Activities of the Past 10 Years**

In 1994 more than 20 education providers came together to form COCEEC. The group has since been active in developing ecosystem-focused curricula, workshops, and projects, including the following educational resources:

- *Crown of the Continent: Profile of a Treasured Landscape.* The Profile is a teachers' resource explaining all the resources of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. It can be used to develop and support curriculum related environmental education activities in your school, and in outdoor locations.

- *Map Without Boundaries*. The Map Without Boundaries depicts the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, which stretches from Missoula, Montana, in the south, to Kananaskis Country, Alberta, in the north.
- *Two classroom activities* have been developed using the Profile and the Map Without Boundaries: Crown History Jeopardy and Perspectives on Land Management.
- *Ecosystem Education Mini-Grants* to help carry out the COCEEC educational mission starting in 2006.
- *Host semi-annual COCEEC meetings* to exchange information and learn more about the Crown ecosystem and education projects underway.

### **Organizational Issues & Opportunities For Regional Collaboration**

COCEEC took a lead in producing the Crown Boundary Map and Profile Report. It could be asked to take a lead role in developing other outreach tools to build the sense of regional identity and brand the region. It is compatible with their goals shown below, however as a voluntary organization it has no funding or staff dedicated to crown-wide efforts.

Goal 1: Build learners AWARENESS of ecological principles related to their specific region of the ecosystem and its management.

Define the geographic location of the Crown of the Continent.

Describe the components and processes of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and why ecological integrity is important to the overall health of the ecosystem.

Discuss key issues that affect the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. Examples: land fragmentation, loss of habitat, exotic species.

Explain how human actions or inaction affect the ecosystem.

Describe how people living in an ecosystem can work to sustain a high quality of life for themselves while maintaining ecological diversity and health.

Goal 2: Assist learners in building their level of CONCERN for the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, by developing a sense of appreciation for the rich variety of interconnected life and the processes connecting the physical and biological components of the ecosystem.

Explain why people need to be concerned about maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

Goal 3: Utilizing knowledge and awareness of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, learners will strive to take voluntary ACTION in their communities for the benefit of the cultural and natural values of the ecosystem.

Suggested Actions:

Attend public meetings.

Attend classes/courses about the local ecosystem.

Make personal lifestyle changes that reflect the goals of sustainable agriculture, community, social, and economic development.

Volunteer in local schools.

Volunteer for local community events focused on natural resources.

Volunteer in a local nature center or community museum.

### **ATTACHEMENT A: COCEEC Members:**

Alberta Community Development, Parks and Protected Areas

Alberta Environment - Southern Region

Lex Blood

Boone and Crockett Conservation Education

Citizens for a Better Flathead

Flathead Lake Biological Station

Flathead National Forest

Flathead Valley Community College

The Glacier Institute

Glacier National Park

Glacier Natural History Association  
Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area  
Lewis and Clark National Forest - Rocky Mountain Ranger District  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Montana Natural History Center  
Montana Wilderness Association  
National Bison Range  
National Parks and Conservation Association  
The Nature Conservancy of Montana  
Rocky Mountain Research Station  
Swan Ecosystem Center  
Trail of the Great Bear  
UM School of Forestry  
U.S. Geological Survey - Glacier Field Station  
Waterton Lakes National Park

## Geotourism Stewardship Circle - The Geotourism MapGuide Project

Charter partners of the **Crown of the Continent Geotourism MapGuide Project** are National Geographic Society, National Parks Conservation Association, the Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Travel Montana, and the Southwest Alberta Geotourism Consortium. The printed MapGuide and its companion web site were completed and launched in March 2008. NPCA's Glacier Field Office, led by Steve Thompson, led the community-based mapping project and is coordinating the Crown of the Continent Stewardship Council. Carole Stark of the Chinook Institute is facilitating public involvement in Canadian communities.

The Project's guiding principles:

- Ensure high-quality visitor experience
- Highlight unique qualities of communities and the region
- Maintain region's appeal to residents and visitors
- Expand cross-border understanding
- Benefit local communities

The **Crown of the Continent Geotourism Stewardship Council** was created in 2007 to advise National Geographic during the development of the Crown of the Continent MapGuide. It includes community leaders, public land managers, food and hospitality sectors, native peoples, conservation and civic groups, landowner groups, historic preservation societies, artisans and artists, eco-tour operators, and others who support geotourism principles. The role of the stewardship council is evolving and expected to promote sustainable tourism practices, educate local communities and new residents about the Crown of the Continent, and support place-based stewardship initiatives.

**Groups Participating on MapGuide Stewardship Council:** There are over 70 individuals and organizations participating on the Council. Any group who represents business, community, conservation, educational, tribal or other interests can participate in the Crown of the Continent Stewardship Council if it endorses the geotourism principles and if representative(s) participate in council activities. Now that the MapGuide is complete, the Council is developing a more formal framework for ongoing activities and partner participation. Contact Steve Thompson, Project Coordinator. Phone: (406) 862-6793 or email: [sthompson@npca.org](mailto:sthompson@npca.org)

Looking at the MapGuide Project and Stewardship Council:

By the geography they cover: The MapGuide and Council represent the region and communities described as:

British Columbia: From Columbia Lake and the hydrologic divide between the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers southward along the Rocky Mountain Front to the Montana border and the area east of this region to the Continental Divide, including the Elk, Bull, and Flathead River watersheds and other minor tributaries.

Alberta: From the Highwood River watershed southward along the eastern slopes to the Montana border, including the Porcupine Hills, and generally west of Highway 2 to the Continental Divide.

Montana, west of the Continental Divide: From the Canadian border along the Rocky Mountain Trench to its southern terminus at Flathead Lake, generally following Highway 93, and the entirety of the Flathead and Blackfoot River watersheds, and all areas east to the Continental Divide.

Montana, east of the Continental Divide: From the Canadian border all areas west of Highway 89, bounded on the south by Highway 200 and all areas north and west to the Continental Divide.

By the interests they represent: Collectively, through the Council, the participants represent a wide array of business, community, education, tribal, public agency interests in the Crown associated with geotourism. Their cooperative efforts focus on the MapGuide, but individual members represent their sub-regional interests as well.

By the issues they cover: The MapGuide focuses on special places in the Crown of the Continent where Geotourism adds to sustainability principles by building on geographical character—"sense of place"—to create a type of tourism that emphasizes the distinctiveness of its locale, and that benefits visitor and resident alike.

By their government mandate: There are no government mandates for this voluntary partnership. However, all are guided by "geotourism principles" contained in the National Geographic MapGuide Charter.

### **Geotourism Issues & Threats:**

The Crown of the Continent economy has historically been resource extraction. Examples of conflicts between resource extraction and recreational tourism industries and conservation of intact ecosystems:

- New mining and drilling proposals and expansion of existing mines that might reduce water quality
- Divestiture of Corporate Timberlands for second homes fragmenting wildlife habitat

### **Activities**

The Council, a bi-national grassroots effort, worked with National Geographic to develop a regional MapGuide. The Council also promotes the tenets of geotourism and encourages stewardship of the region's sense of place and its natural, cultural and historic assets.

Activities have included:

- Ambassadors for the MapGuide project and the geotourism principles;
- Council and Subcommittee Meetings in 2007 and 2008 on Distribution and marketing; Community outreach Targeted stakeholder outreach; Education and stewardship; Sub-regional councils (e.g., Southwest Alberta, Elk Valley, Seeley-Swan); Feedback on site nominations received during the review and selection process; and Website development.

Products:

- *MapGuide Nominations Process Website Site*— in use in 2007 and early 2008
- *Crown of the Continent MapGuide* – published in March 08.
- *Interactive Crown MapGuide Website* – up and running March 08

### **Organizational Issues & Opportunities For Regional Collaboration**

It is anticipated that the MapGuide Stewardship Council will be maintained after initial publication of the MapGuide in early 2008. Expected functions include maintaining a dynamic web site and updating or reprinting the printed MapGuide, promoting sustainable tourism practices, educating local communities and new residents about the Crown of the Continent, and supporting place-based stewardship initiatives. Council participants have generally agreed that the Council will not take advocacy positions on issue pending before governmental bodies or elected officials.

At present there is no infrastructure funding to support core staff, although funds were raised to hire a Web Designer for the MapGuide Website. Likewise, the Stewardship Council is an informal voluntary group at present, though there has been discussion making it a not-for-profit organization. It has the potential to develop into a more formal Crown-Wide Council that could coordinate a wide variety of collaborative partnership efforts. For this to succeed, members would have to agree to expand its focus from "geotourism" to broader "stewardship" efforts that more partners could embrace. Some current members want to keep the existing Council focused on geotourism. So these issues would need to be sorted out.

## Watersheds Stewardship Circle

Many organizations are concerned with the health of area rivers and streams, as well as water quality and quantity, as a part of their work in the Crown. But only a limited number of groups focus exclusively or primarily on river health and water quality and quantity issues and there is no one watershed stewardship circle in the Crown of the Continent.

Three separate organizations do, however, coordinate watershed efforts at a statewide or province-wide level and have missions that focus heavily on the protection and restoration of rivers, streams and water quality. In addition, there are over 20 local watershed groups at the sub-regional watershed level within the Crown, and several municipal water quality districts that manage municipal water supplies in the Crown.

**Montana Watershed Coordination Council** serves as a statewide coordination network for Montana's natural resource agencies and private organizations and a forum for local watershed groups to help enhance, conserve, and protect natural resources and sustain the high quality of life in Montana for present and future generations. MWCC encourages local people to take a proactive, collaborative approach that will address natural resource issues and concerns.

**The Alberta Stewardship Network** provide Alberta's stewards with a network that facilitates information exchange, provides support, and recognizes the contribution of individuals, communities and organizations in advancing environmental stewardship on a watershed basis.

**Stewardship Centre for British Columbia** supports and advances stewardship activities in British Columbia by providing a centre for information exchange, communications and outreach, and by fostering partnerships and collaboration among those participating in stewardship in BC.

**Groups Working in the Crown:** There are several groups working on watershed efforts in the Crown (See Attachment A). Looking at the key watershed and water quality organizations:

- Local watershed groups focus primarily on protecting and restoring streams to maintain water quality and quantity
- City/county water quality districts are responsible for managing municipal water supplies
- State/provincial/tribal governments each manage water resources according to their mandates

### **Watershed Issues:**

Water Quality and Land Uses: Land uses in the early 1900s such as mining, timber, and agriculture were undertaken with little knowledge of the environmental impacts on water quality or quantity. In Montana, under the Clean Water Act, the state was required to restore degraded streams on the 303(d) list. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is an implementation tool under the Federal Clean Water Act to mandate and fund clean up of impaired streams. All watersheds within the Crown have completed or are working water quality restoration plans and/or stream restoration projects. In Alberta, the Bow River and Oldman River watershed groups, and Alberta Province, are working on stream restoration plans/projects as well. (British Columbia-unknown)

Water Quantity: Water has historically been in limited supply in the west, and in Montana lead to the Water Resources Act that set up a legal system for water rights claims. The over-appropriation of water, lead to the closure of certain basins-like the Blackfoot River. In others, like the Flathead, although there are substantial flows, future appropriations are questionable and management issues remain. Situation in BC/AB unknown...

### **Threats:**

- 1) Historic and current land use practices that degrade water quality and reduce instream flows.
- 2) New subdivision, development, and water uses that reduce groundwater quality and quantity and surface water flow.

### **Activities over the Past 10 Years:**

Watershed groups are a relatively new phenomenon on the landscape, where “grassroots” interests come together to form voluntary locally-based landowner-led efforts to conserve and restore rivers and streams, as well as upland areas. TMDL Program and Water Quality Restoration Plans have been a major activity of most watershed groups, as well as stream restoration projects with dominant funding from federal agencies; EPA, NRCS, and USFWS.

The Crown Managers Partnership, at the annual forum in Lethbridge in 2006, focused on watershed groups. It provided an opportunity for groups to brief Crown managers on watershed activities and to meet some of the watershed colleagues across the border.

The Blackfoot-Clearwater-Swan watershed groups have been meeting periodically for a couple of years to share information and look at ways to collaborate. So far, they are in the discussion stage only.

USFWS Partners of Fish and Wildlife convened a Partners for Conservation Meeting June 2007. They looked at ways to preserve the customs, character, and culture of the rural lifestyle by building partnerships with landowners, elected officials, government agencies, and funding sources. PFC provides assistance and connections for landowner-based groups to address resource use, expansion and development, habitat conservation, and restoration, and to help influence policies that encourage economic sustainability for communities and landowners. to explore ways to work cooperatively. This meeting involved folks within and outside the Crown, but was an attempt to look at needs and concerns of private landowner-based groups (which most watershed groups are). One of many ideas that emerged was to host an annual Landowner’s Resource Conference to address the myriad of questions that flood successful landowner groups.

### **Organizational Issues & Opportunities For Regional Collaboration**

There is no central watershed coordination mechanism across the Crown. And, indeed Crown waters flow into the Pacific, Gulf and Hudson Bay, so if regional collaboration might occur it would tend to be within large basins like the Columbia/Clark Fork River System (Flathead, Kootenia, Blackfoot, etc rivers in Crown) or the Missouri River System (Sun, Teton, Oldman River, Marias, Milk River, etc rivers in Crown) flow. There is no compelling reason to focus on water quality or quantity exclusively within the Crown except should funding be available to do so. Closest example was EPA targeted watershed funding that brought together the Blackfoot Challenge, the Flathead Basin Commission, the Tri-State Water Quality Council, and the Bitterroot Council to cooperate on a \$1 million grant for restoration projects to reduce nutrient loading in the Clark Fork-Pondera Basin

The MTWSCC host a major symposium every two years. There might be an opportunity to convene a session for watershed groups in the Crown to meet and discuss opportunities for regional collaboration.

### **ATTACHEMENT: List of Watershed Groups Working in the Crown:**

#### State/Province Wide

Alberta Stewardship Network Canada  
Stewardship Centre of British Columbia  
Montana Watershed Coordination Council

#### Local Watershed Groups US

East Kootenay Conservation Program  
Blackfoot Challenge  
Clearwater Resources Council  
Flathead Basin Commission  
Haskill Basin Watershed Council  
Kootenai River Network  
Marias River Watershed Group  
Sun Watershed Group  
Swan Ecosystem Center  
Swift Creek Watershed Group  
Teton Watershed Group

Alberta

Milk River Watershed Council Canada  
Oldman Watershed Council Canada  
South Porcupine Hills Steward Association

British Columbia-

Kootenay River Watershed Group  
(Others-unknown)

Local Water Quality Districts

Tri-State Water Quality Council

Government Agencies:

Tribes: Blackfoot Nations F&W; Blood Tribe Mgt, Confederated Salish-Kootenie Tribe; Ktunaxa Kinbaset Tribe  
MT/US: MT Department of Environmental Quality; MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; US  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Canada: Alberta Environment; B.C. Ministry of Environment

## Wildlife Stewardship Circle

**Wildlife Stewardship Circle:** Wildlife groups whose missions include the protection and restoration of wildlife populations, their habitat and the critical wildlife corridors within the Crown of the Continent.

**Groups Working in the Crown:** Many organizations are concerned with wildlife as a part of their work in the Crown, but only a few organizations focus exclusively or primarily on protecting and managing wildlife populations and their habitat. (See Attachment A for Key Wildlife Groups)

Looking at the key wildlife groups, there is a lot of variation in the geography, issues, and species:

By the geography they cover, some groups work region-wide (Y2Y), some sub-region (Wildsight, Blackfoot Challenge), and some local (Castle Crown Wilderness).

By the issues they cover, some work on taxa with landscape level life history requirements (Y2Y, Northwest Connections); some focus on specific issues like “wilderness” (Wilderness Society, Montana Wilderness Association (MWA), “endangered species” (USFWS), “biodiversity” (TNC). So work on on-the-ground management through collaborative conservation with private landowners (Blackfoot Challenge). Some work on advocacy issues (MWF).

By the species they cover, some work only on bears (Great Bear Foundation) while others look at conservation of habitats and biodiversity (Y2Y)

By their (legislative) government mandate, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Indian Tribes, Glacier National Park, Waterton National Parks each manage public lands according to their mandates that include balancing wildlife populations/habitat protection with other interests such as recreation and resource extraction.

### **Issues/Threats:**

- 1) Plum Creek Timber Company divestiture of lands followed by subdivision and development
- 2) Growth and development of private lands that fragment habitat and reduce functionality of wildlife corridors.
- 3) Oil and Gas development in southern Alberta that is destroying Grizzly Bear habitat? (This is a serious threat)
- 4) Human caused wildlife mortality on highways circling the Crown (Human-caused mortality for species like grizzlies also comes in several other forms e.g., poaching, mistaken-ID killing from black bear hunters, repeated conflicts leading to management removals etc.) I would not limit this to only wildlife mortality on highways.
- 5) Climate change and need to maintain landscape scale connectivity has been proposed as a way to possible allow species to adapt to changing environmental conditions induced from climate change.
- 6) Invasive species impact on health of habitat, especially grazing lands.

### **Activities over the Past 10 Years:**

Wildlife conservation activities in the Crown have often been undertaken through individual organization efforts, rather than cooperative cross-border partnerships. However, examples of cooperative work include:

- Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project, USGS, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center (there were many other partners involved in the DNA project (USFS, USFWS, MFWP, the tribes, landowners, etc.)

<http://www.nrmsc.usgs.gov/research/NCDEbeardna.htm> (is this technically cross boarder? It is definitely cross jurisdictional)

- The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, in their own words, is a network of over 290 U.S. and Canadian organizations, institutions, foundations, individuals and scientists, collectively representing more than one million voices for conservation. They recognize the value of working together to restore and maintain the unique natural heritage of the Yellowstone to Yukon ecoregion and the quality of life it offers. Throughout the region, Y2Y serves as a guide and connector. As a guide, Y2Y commissions scientific research and relies on the work of others to better understand the entire region’s landscapes and wildlife. As a connector, Y2Y links innovative conservation strategies to key individuals, ground-breaking science, and the necessary funding sources. Dating back to late 1993,

the initiative has rapidly grown from an initial core group of scientists and conservationists to having a staff of 13 based in Canmore, Alberta and Bozeman, Montana and a new office in Calgary, Alberta. <http://www.y2y.net>

- Wildlife conservation and or research efforts that involve some level of collaboration among participants in the Crown: U.S. Forest Service Lynx Study 2) the MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks Grizzly Bear Management Plan (Programmatic EIS)

### **Organizational Issues & Opportunities For Regional Collaboration**

The scientific research community is coming to recognize the need to undertake studies that cross jurisdictions, in part from lessons learned from the USGS Grizzly Bear DNA study that stopped at the Canadian Border.

The on-the-ground public-private land managers and habitat conservation organizations recognize that wildlife, especially large carnivores, travel between public and private lands and management jurisdictions and that cooperative management is critically needed.

A recent assessment of Y2Y highlighted questions about working at such a large scale, and suggested the need for on-the-ground implementation at smaller/local levels and the need for local buy-in to regional (top-down) visioning.

### **ATTACHEMENT A: List of Wildlife Groups Working in the Crown:**

#### Organizations that focus exclusively on wildlife:

Defenders of Wildlife

Great Bear Foundation

Keystone Conservation (formerly Predator Conservation Alliance) <http://www.keystoneconservation.us/>

Montana Wildlife Federation (Is this different than the National Wildlife Federation?)

Northwest Connections

Rocky Mountain Grizzly Centre

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Wildsight

Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada

Wildlife Society – Alberta Chapter

Yellowstone to Yukon <http://www.y2y.net/>

#### Organizations with a primary focus on wildlife/wildlife habitat:

Alberta Wilderness Association

American Wildlands <http://www.wildlands.org/>

Swan View Coalition

Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative

Wilderness Society

Blackfoot Challenge Wildlife Committee

Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society

Castle Crown Wilderness Association

Montana Wilderness Association

Nature Conservancy-Canada, US

North Fork Preservation Association

UM Rocky Mtn cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Yaak Valley Council

#### Government Agencies:

Tribes: Blackfoot Nations F&W; Blood Tribe Mgt, Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribe; Ktunaxa Kinbaset Tribe

MT/US: FWP; USFWS, USFS

Canada: Alberta F&G, B.C. Ministry of Environment

#### Land Trusts:

Nature Conservancy Canada  
The Nature Conservancy  
Trust for Public Lands  
South Alberta Land Trust Alliance  
Five Valleys Land Trust  
Flathead Land Trust

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Vital Ground