

Signage for Lac du Bois Off-Road Vehicle Area Update

Grasslands, the rarest of BC's ecosystems, are home to 33% of BC's species at risk (SAR). These ecosystems, one of which is the Lac du Bois Protected Area, are susceptible to disturbance due to factors such as low precipitation levels and a high proportion of bare ground; external pressures such as climate change, urban development, forest encroachment, grazing, invasive species, and recreation have large impacts on these ecosystems and have all been recognized as issues concern for Lac du Bois.

The Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) area, directly south of the Lac du Bois Protected Area, but still within the lower to middle grasslands, is designated for use by ATVs and 4-wheel drive vehicles. Although outside of the protected area, the ORV area still contains sensitive ecosystems that are critical habitat for SAR. To protect and enhance critical habitat for SAR such as the Great Basin Spadefoot, Western Rattlesnake and a multitude of other native terrestrial and aquatic species in the ORV area, KNC secured funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Nature Trust of British Columbia and Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation to mitigate the negative impact of ORV activities.

Project Update

Funding for the ORV project is being used to establish fencing and educational signage in the ORV area as well as to develop a restoration plan to enhance critical habitat within the area of a degraded pond. So far, KNC has undertaken a variety of activities including:

- Water quality analysis;
- groundwater modeling;
- Surveys of vegetation and fauna;
- Collection of native seed;
- Landscape management plan design;
- Acquisition of knowledge for signage content.

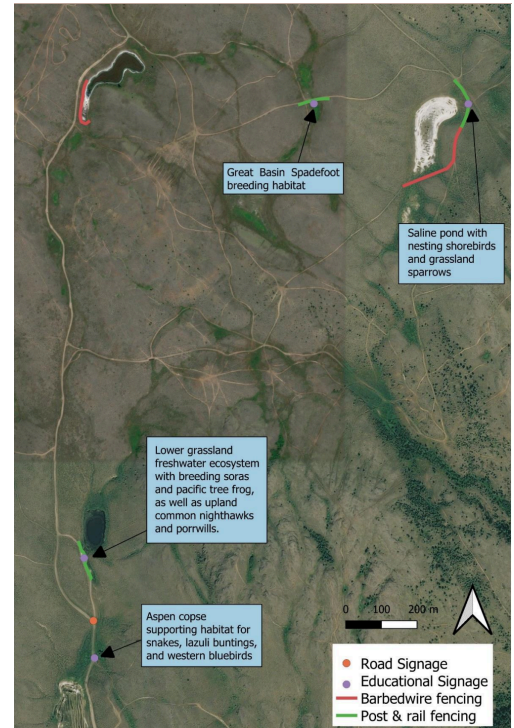
KNC is currently working on finalizing the design of signs for the ORV area and establishing fencing in the area, as seen in the map below. The signs, which are meant to educate recreational users about the SAR and sensitive ecosystems in the area, will cover four topics: Aspen Copse Habitat, Duck Pond, Great Basin Spadefoot Habitat and Saline Pond Habitat. As a physical barrier to prevent further damage to the habitats, fencing will be installed within the

Photos by Taylor Powrie



area. By the end of 2024, KNC is hoping to have both educational signage and fencing completed in the ORV area.

Map of habitat preservation and enhancement plan for the ORV designated area in Lac du Bois grasslands.



Heritage Canada Funds new KNC Project: *Thrive*

Through conversations with our members of our community and our partners, KNC has learned about the many barriers faced by youth from Indigenous, newcomer and immigrant communities with respect to experiential learning opportunities and accessing various community services. From unique barriers to systemic barriers, these youth are disproportionately missing out on learning opportunities that could increase their knowledge, build community and strengthen their sense of self identity. This has not only created disparities in enriching experiences for youth, but also resulted in missed opportunities for cross-cultural learning that would strengthen the fabric of Canadian society and our awareness of each other's unique identities.

To address these barriers, KNC created the *Thrive* program to encourage and engage with youth in diverse communities via rich learning experiences related to nature and food. After a successful history of running a youth environmental leadership program, hosting weekly field trips for newcomer and immigrant youth at Kamloops Immigrant Services (KIS), and completing the 'Everyone Eats' partnership project, KNC felt well-equipped to build upon the learning obtained, and move forward to addressing some of the challenges faced by youth in our community.

Thrive consists of a series of experiential learning events and opportunities based around unifying themes like food and time spent in nature, which will engage youth from diverse communities, particularly Indigenous youth and newcomer and immigrant youth. Participating in nature and cultural field trips, conferences and workshops, cultural dinners and more, will bring youth from diverse communities together to build knowledge while also building cross-cultural connections within our community. The ultimate goal of *Thrive* is to provide community groups valuable insights into how to address barriers and gaps where experiential learning opportunities do not yet exist and provide a space for people from different backgrounds to interact and learn from each other, celebrating and increasing awareness of Canada's cultural diversity.