



International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board- Draft Interim Status Report

August 27, 2025

Kootenai River near Bonners Ferry, Idaho

International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board

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Background

The International Joint Commission

Under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 (the Treaty), the governments of the United States and Canada established the basic principles for managing water-related issues along their shared international boundary. The Treaty established the International Joint Commission (IJC) as a permanent international organization to advise and assist the governments on a range of water management issues. Canada and the United States each appoint three IJC Commissioners. The Commissioners are appointed by the highest level of government in each country, by the Governor in Council in Canada and by the President with confirmation by the Senate in the United States. Commissioners swear an oath to faithfully and impartially perform their duties under the Treaty and work by consensus to find solutions that are in the best interest of both countries.

Canada and the United States created the IJC because they recognized that each country is affected by the other's actions in lake and river systems along the border. The two countries cooperate to manage these waters and to protect them for the benefit of today's citizens and future generations. The IJC has two main responsibilities: approving and setting conditions for projects affecting levels and flows at the boundary and, at the request of governments, investigating transboundary issues and recommending solutions. The IJC considers a wide range of water uses and interests in its work, including drinking water, commercial shipping, hydroelectric power generation, agriculture, ecosystem health, industry, fishing, recreational boating, and shoreline property.

Under Article IX of the Treaty, when asked to do so by the national governments, the IJC studies and recommends solutions to transboundary issues. These government requests are known as References. When the IJC receives a Reference from the governments, the Commission practice is to appoint a board with equal numbers of experts from each country. References to the IJC often focus on water quality or water quantity issues and on the development and use of shared water resources. IJC Reference recommendations to governments are not binding, but they are considered and often accepted by the Canadian and United States governments.

Elk-Kootenai/y Reference and Directive

On March 8, 2024, the International Joint Commission received a [Reference](#) under Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty from the Governments of the United States and Canada, in partnership with the Ktunaxa Nation^[1], asking the IJC to carry out certain actions to address the impacts of transboundary water pollution in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed. The Reference incorporates a Proposal (the Reference and Proposal are collectively referred to in this document as the "IJC Reference" or "Reference").

The Elk-Kootenai/y water pollution Reference is the first Reference to the IJC that the two federal governments developed in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous groups. The proposal, that accompanied the Reference, was agreed to and signed by Canada, the United States, and the transboundary Ktunaxa Nation¹. This is particularly important because of the geography and history of the watershed. The Elk-Kootenai/y watershed is defined in the Reference, and the Study Area includes "the Kootenai/y River flowing through Canada and the United States to its confluence with the Columbia River downstream in Canada, the Elk Subbasin, Koocanusa Reservoir, and Kootenay Lake." The entire watershed is in the unceded territory of the transboundary Ktunaxa Nation and is central to the Ktunaxa Creation Story.

The Proposal provided to the IJC reflects the concurrence of the United States, Canada, and the Ktunaxa Nation regarding the need for:

- collaborative governance to ensure more timely action to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Kootenai/y watershed in order to protect the people and species that depend on this vital river system;
- transparent and coordinated transboundary data and knowledge sharing, science, monitoring, and analysis to support a common understanding of pollution within the Kootenai/y watershed; and
- transparent reporting on progress; and

The IJC Reference requested the IJC to:

- assist in the establishment of a **Governance Body** comprised of the Governments of the United States, Canada, the Ktunaxa Nation, British Columbia, Idaho, and Montana (the "named governments"); and
- convene experts and knowledge holders in a **Study Board** to report and make recommendations to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Kootenai/y watershed.

While established by the same IJC reference, the work of the Governance Body and Study Board are separate. The Study Board will deliver its final report to the IJC in September 2026, and the IJC, after its own review and process, will share the recommendations and findings with governments and the Governance Body.

The IJC issued a Directive in September 2024, establishing the International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board (IEKWSB or Study Board) to assist in conducting the work pursuant to the Reference. The Directive specified the Study Board's duties, including minimum requirements and mechanisms of engagement; and deliverables;

¹For the purposes of this document, the Ktunaxa Nation is defined to include the six Tribal and First Nation governments: ʔa-kisq̓nuk, ʔaqam, yaqan nuʔkiy, Yaqit ʔa-knuq̓iʔit (Tobacco Plains Indian Band), Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Ksanka Band), and ʔaqanqmi (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho).

and also detailed Study organization and roles, including the roles of the IJC, Study Board, Co-chairs, Study Managers, Technical Working Groups, Council of Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Advisory Groups, and Independent Review Group. The Study Board was directed to make decisions by consensus, consistent with IJC guidance. The Directive also specified administrative procedures for the Study Board, including requirements for meetings, data management, record-keeping, and confidentiality of information.

Specifically, the Directive requests that the Study Board:

- 1) *Conduct transparent and coordinated transboundary data and knowledge sharing; share, synthesize, and analyze data and information to support a common understanding of pollution within the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed and the impacts of that pollution on people and species; and report and recommend in a transparent and publicly available format on the following matters:*
 - a) The best available observational data, scientific research, and Indigenous knowledge regarding influences on, sources of, status of, and trends in pollution in water and associated effects on ecosystem health, which could include but is not limited to fish and aquatic life, wildlife, human health, and cultural uses in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed;
 - b) Data and research gaps, assumptions and uncertainties including any factors affecting data accessibility and comparability, such as data types and collection and reporting methods relevant to improving understanding, measurement, and monitoring of the matters reviewed by the Study Board;
 - c) Recommendations for strengthening, coordinating, and prioritizing efforts on data sharing and transparency, science, monitoring and research, and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, and other next steps and recommended actions on the matters reviewed by the Study Board;
 - d) A synthesis of the available data and scientific information and a resulting understanding of the water quality issues in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed including contaminants of concern, areas, and water and ecological resources affected; and
 - e) Methods and procedures for ongoing monitoring and data analyses to further define the extent of pollution and identify trends in concentrations of contaminants in the watershed.
- 2) Report and make recommendations related to governance and decision-making that directly addresses, impacts or relates to the above request. The SB should also include information or considerations related to how governance and decision-making as it is currently structured creates challenges or opportunities in the potential implementation of study board recommendations.

The IJC's September 26, 2024 Directive establishing the Study asked the Study Board to "provide the Commission with an interim report by Friday, September 26, 2025 ...including, at a minimum, a summary of achievements, Study Board and working groups activities, independent peer review, communications/engagements with the public, Indigenous collaboration, study timeline and expenditures, looking forward, and issues requiring Commission advice and guidance." This report fulfills that requirement.

The Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed

The Kootenai/y watershed covers parts of southeastern British Columbia (BC), northwestern Montana (MT), and northern Idaho (ID), all of which are part of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa Territory) (Figure 1).

According to the Ktunaxa Creation Story, the Kootenai/y River is central to and woven into the heart of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The headwaters of the Kootenay River flow from the Ktunaxa land district of kyawaʔ ʔamakʔis (Land of the Spruce Goose; known as Kootenay National Park in southeastern British Columbia) and the ʔakisqnuq First Nation, before flowing south through ʔaknuqʔuʔamʔ ʔamakʔis (Land of the Eagle) and the First Nation of ʔaqam. From there it receives flows from the Elk River from qukin ʔamakʔis (Land of the Raven) and flows downstream through ʕamʔina ʔamakʔis (Land of the Wood Tick) and the First Nation of Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔiʔit.

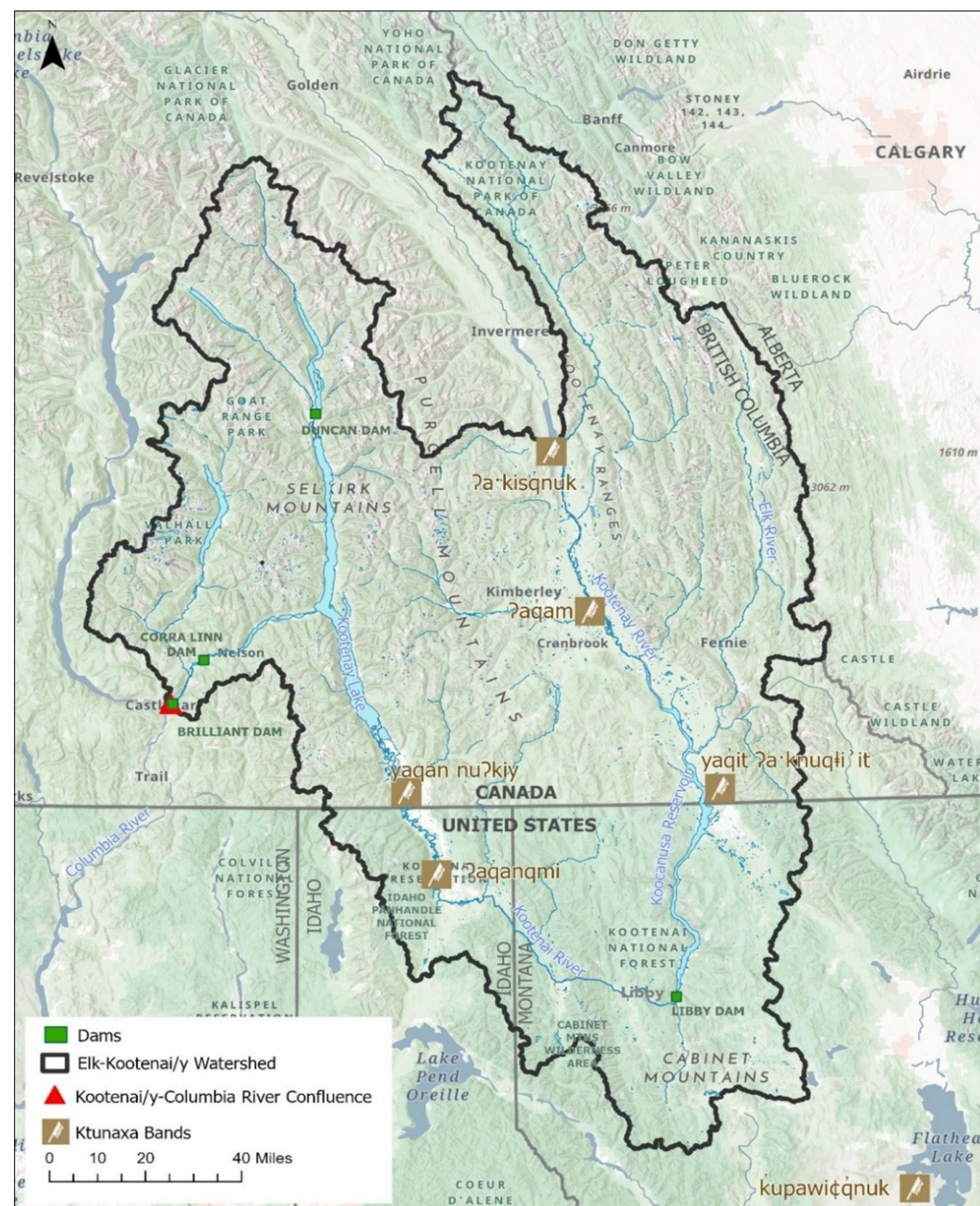


Figure 1. The Elk-Kootenai/y watershed (Study Area) within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

The river continues its journey through ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, entering Koochanusa Reservoir (a transboundary impoundment created by Libby Dam) before it crosses the international boundary between Canada and the United States, into Montana. Below Koochanusa Reservoir, the Kootenai River then flows through the Ktunaxa territories of k'upawicq̓nuk (Ksanka Band, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana) and ʔaq̓anq̓mi (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho near Bonners Ferry, Idaho) before turning north and crossing the international boundary back into Canada, flowing through the First Nation of yaq̓an nuʔkiy and into Kootenay Lake.

The Kootenai/y River watershed represents the third largest tributary of the Columbia River. Of the total watershed area of 49,987 km² (19,300 miles²), 37,555 km² (14,500 mi²; 75 percent of the watershed area) are in British Columbia, Canada, with 9,712 km² (3,750 mi²; 19 percent of the watershed) in Montana and 2,978 km² (1,150 mi²; 6 percent of the watershed) in Idaho in the United States (Figure 1). The Kootenai/y River is about 775 km (482 miles) long, with slightly more than one-third of its length in the United States (adapted from ICERB, 1959 and Knudson, 1994). The watershed is largely undeveloped,

with only 0.35 percent of the watershed having been developed, 0.6 percent in agricultural use and <0.25 percent being mined (Stickney et al., 2021; Table 1). Roughly 90 percent of the watershed is forested (Kootenai River Network 2025).

Study Progress

In the 11 months since the study began, the IJC and the Study Board have developed plans for completing the work assigned under the Directive including standing up various Advisory Groups, actively engaging in extensive public outreach, and identifying and tasking technical experts to complete a synthesis of all available data needed to inform the Board's work. The progress of the Board on specific parts of the study is described in the following sections. This section describes progress in establishing the Study Board, the initiation of engagements required for the Study, the development of the Plan of Study, and the development of this Interim Status Report. This section also summarizes the Study structure.



Study Organizational Structure

IEKWSB Study Organizational Structure

The Study Board has adopted the Study organizational structure shown in Figure 2. The following sections, largely summarizing information in the Directive, describe the various components of the Study structure.

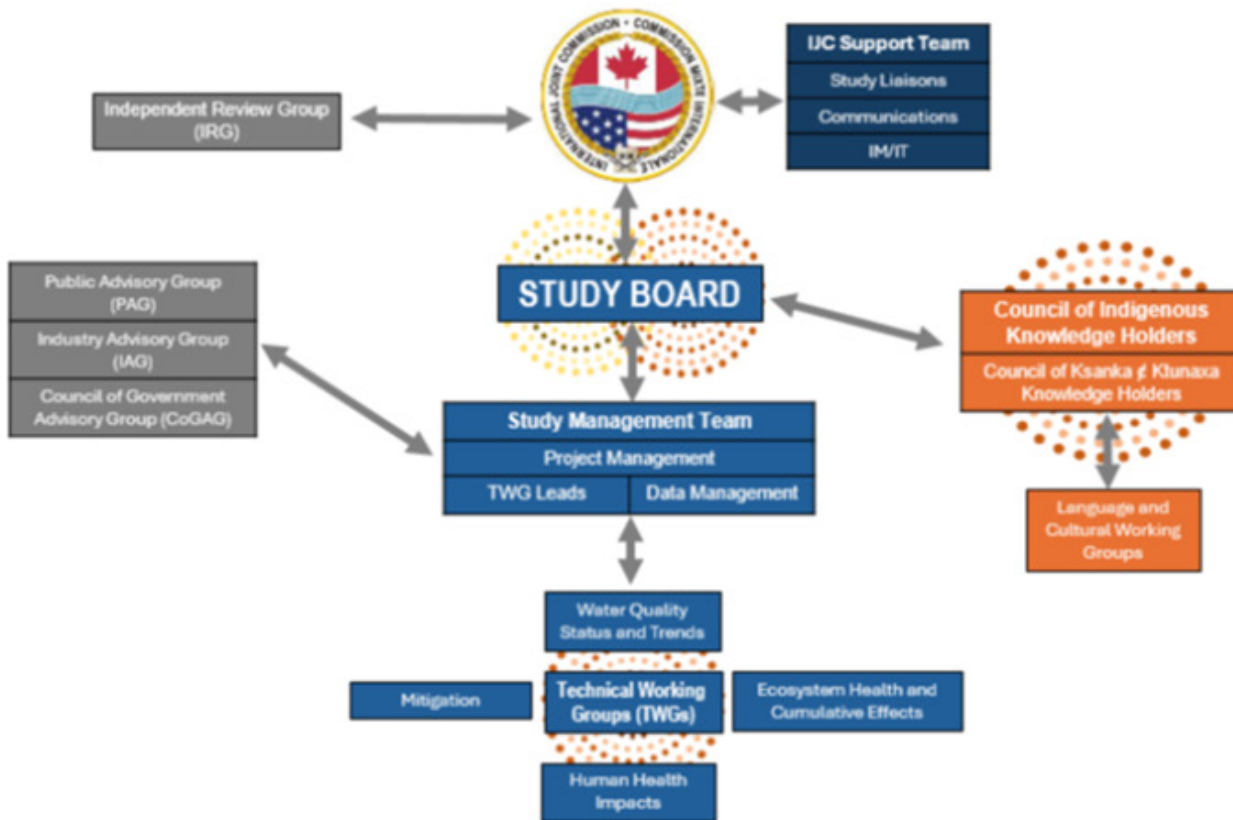


Figure 2. Study Structure for the International Elk-Kootenai/y watershed Study. The circle illustrations have been modified from Ryder et al. (2020) and depict the iterative nature of incorporating indigenous knowledge into the work done by the IEKWSB.

Study Board

In September 2024, the IJC appointed the International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board (Study Board) consistent with the 2024 Reference. The IJC directed the Study Board to develop the International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study by conducting transparent and coordinated transboundary data and knowledge sharing; sharing, synthesizing, and analyzing data and information to support a common understanding of pollution within the Kootenai/y watershed and the impacts of that pollution on people and species; and reporting results and making recommendations in a transparent and publicly available format.



IEKWSB members, SMT and IJC staff

The Study Board Co-chairs convene and preside at all meetings of the Study Board and jointly take a leadership role in planning and implementing the IEKWSB's mandate, including facilitating the Study Board's deliberations on its work, and securing consensus of the Study Board on its decisions, findings and recommendations.

Study Board members are charged with prioritizing the work of the Study Board to ensure that it will function effectively and efficiently, making best efforts to attend all meetings, being familiar with the contents of the Directive and the Reference to the IJC, and reviewing relevant information to ensure they are fully prepared to participate in meetings. The Study Board meets weekly to plan for and implement the Study.

The Study Board reports directly to the IJC but maintains objectivity and independence in conducting its work to report its findings and recommendations. The Study Board is separate and independent from the Governance Body, the responsibilities of which are also set out in the Reference (available here: <https://ijc.org/en/elk/reference>).

Council of Indigenous Knowledge Holders

As per the Directive, the Study Board regularly consults with a Council of Indigenous Knowledge Holders (CoIKH) comprised of members from Indigenous Nations (which may include Tribal, First Nation and Métis) throughout the entire Study, to ensure that knowledge relevant to the Reference is requested, shared, synthesized, analyzed, and fully considered in the work of the Study Board. To help with this engagement of information, knowledge, and ideas; at least one of the Study Board members sits on the CoIKH. Currently there is one active sub-Council, which is the Council of Ktunaxa ꞓ Ksanka Knowledge Holders. It is recognized that other sub-Councils may be formed as the Study proceeds.



yaqaan nu?kiy wetland restoration complex



Study Board and KTOI natural resource managers at ʔaʔanqmi

Council of Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka Knowledge Holders

Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka ʔaʔsmaknik (people) have occupied ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa for more than 10,000 years. Significant and ongoing impacts to the wuʔu ʔ ʔamak (water and lands) result in impacts to ʔaʔkxamís ʔapi qapsin. As part of the covenant made with the Creator, Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka continue to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves – the four legged, the winged, the ones who crawl on the ground and swim in the waters – in upholding the responsibility given by the Creator to safeguard ʔaʔkxamís ʔapi qapsin for future generations. This is part of the Ktunaxa role and responsibility throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, to steward wuʔu ʔ ʔamak ʔ ʔaʔkxamís ʔapi qapsin by continuing to honor relationships in the ways that have been taught generation upon generation.

The Ktunaxa First Nations and Tribes have appointed members to a Council of Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka Knowledge Holders (CoKKKH) to ensure that Ktunaxa knowledge is incorporated into the Study. At this time, representatives have been appointed by the communities of ʔupawicʔnuk, ʔaʔanqmi, ʔaʔam, and Yaʔit ʔaʔknuʔhiʔit. In recognition that they do not represent all Indigenous Peoples, the Council determined that their council should be called the Council of Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka Knowledge Holders.

The circular structure in Figure 2 reflects the iterative and connected nature of Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka knowledge, which is foundational to the Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka stewardship responsibility for ʔaʔkxamís ʔapi qapsin (All Living Things). The evolution of the final structure was reached through engagement with broader Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka knowledge holders through the fall of 2024 and early winter of 2025. The original structure for the Elk-Kootenai/y Study was drafted as a starting point by the IJC in the early fall of 2024. Discussions with and feedback from staff and Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka leaders resulted in an updated framework.

The final structure (Figure 2) was reached through the CoKKKH’s broader discussions with knowledge holder groups and was intended to recognize that Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka culture is all encompassing and that the structure needed to reflect that ʔaʔkxamís ʔapi qapsin (All Living Things) is the guiding principle of the Study. In response to seeing the TWGs as

separate boxes, it was recommended that there should be circles to show how all these things are interrelated, with Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka knowledge at the center to ground them. The circular structure is also intended to reflect the iterative nature of the Study, so that as the questions are developed and work begins there is opportunity to have Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka people brought in at the right place and time to help these groups do their work.

Ongoing work with the CoKKKH includes the incorporation of language, mapping, the inclusion of youth into the work, and developing the process for the sharing of Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka knowledge.

Study Board and Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka relationships

Efforts of the Study Board to include Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka knowledge have been guided by a principle of meeting early, often, and as deeply as possible with the CoKKKH. Initial meetings between the Study Board Co-chairs and the CoKKKH focused on building relationships, developing an understanding of the overall Study, finding space to build the foundation for the collaboration, and initiating the processes required to develop trust.

In addition to consulting with the CoKKKH, the Study Board has held their in-person meetings within the Ktunaxa ʔ Ksanka homelands to initiate relationships with the communities, to be on the land and water, and to acknowledge the importance of directly engaging the places for which they are tasked with making recommendations. The Study Board has participated in ongoing dialogue and discussions around culture and language, differing knowledge systems, and ways of understanding to seek opportunities for continued discussions and to learn about different perspectives and explore a range of issues associated with the reference.

Kootenay River as it enters Koocanusa Reservoir



Study Management Team

The Commission appointed a six-person Study Management Team (SMT) to assist the Study Board in delivering its mandate. The SMT members are not IEKWSB members, but they are charged with acting in the best interests of the Study Board in completing all their Study Board duties. SMT members are expected to serve the Board in the best interest of the watershed and in their personal and professional capacities, and not as representatives of their respective countries, communities, agencies, organizations, or any other interests and affiliations. The SMT works under the joint direction of the Study Board Co-chairs, participates in every Study Board meeting, and remains fully aware of the Study Board's ongoing work. The SMT maintains financial, travel, and other records as may be necessary to document the contributions of those involved in this work. The SMT also serves as a liaison between the Study Board and the Technical Working Groups (TWGs), provides logistical support, leads the Study Board's communications and engagement processes, and is responsible for knowledge and data management for the duration of the Study. SMT members serve as liaisons to each of the Study's Advisory Groups.

SMT members are assigned to accomplish specific tasks:

Project Management – The SMT keeps fully abreast of the work of the Advisory Groups, TWGs, and the ColKH; and serve as liaisons between the Study Board and those groups. The SMT members are responsible for the effective management of the Study Board's Plan of Study, communicating to the different groups the direction of the Study Board, and assisting in general administrative support (e.g., meeting set-up; travel; administrative and contract matters; coordination of various teams and tasks; maintenance of digital files and repositories including SharePoint file systems; meeting minutes, documentation of Study activities, distribution of Study products; and providing briefings to the Study Board on tasks and topics identified by the Study Board Co-chairs).

Technical Working Groups (TWG) – SMT members serve as Study Board Liaisons with TWGs and the ColKH. The SMT are a direct line of communication between the Study Board and the TWGs and provide guidance as directed by the Study Board and support to the TWGs. Specific tasks include:

- Reporting to the Study Board and IJC regarding TWG activities, progress and matters of potential concern;
- Assisting the direction of TWG work based on the Study Board's request for information;
- Supporting the development of and reviewing TWG documents;
- Attending TWG meetings to provide overall Study information;
- Coordinating TWG assignments, communication, and facilitating inter-TWG communication;
- Providing access to GIS support for TWGs as needed.

Data Management – SMT members work with TWGs to ensure their data storage and acquisition needs are met, including planning and implementing long-term archiving of Study products and associated datasets. Specifically, the SMT oversees data management, the Data Management Plan, and associated templates. This role includes ensuring that protocols for working with data gathered during the Study are followed. SMT members are also responsible for ensuring the management and stewardship of Indigenous knowledge and data as directed by Indigenous knowledge holders.



yaqan nu?kiy Wetland

SMT members meet three times per week – once as an SMT, once with the Co-chairs, and once with the entire Study Board.

Plan of Study

The Plan of Study (PoS) describes the Study Board's plan for conducting the study to the Commission according to the Directive. Per the Directive, the Plan of Study was due five months after receiving the Directive – March 26, 2025. The Study Board worked on the Plan of Study from September 2024 through February 2025 and delivered it to the Commission in advance of the deadline.

The Study Board released its draft Plan of Study which described how the Board would execute the IJC Directive on February 3rd 2025. Interested members of the public were invited to comment on the draft Plan through the public website or by email until February 17, 2025.

As part of the development of the Plan of Study, the Study Board held a public webinar on the draft Plan of Study on February 11, 2025. The agenda for the webinar included an overview of the Reference to the IJC; an introduction to the International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board; a discussion of the Study's organizational structure; a summary of the draft Plan of Study and overall project timeline; and a summary of the Study Board's plan and process for engagement and communications. Time was also provided for questions and comments. Specific questions for which the Study Board solicited input included:

- Are there aspects you consider central to the principal issues that you would like to be considered for inclusion?
- Are there specific questions related to the Study Board's directed task that you would like to be considered as the TWGs develop their approach?
- Is there any information you would like to share with the Study Board for their consideration (e.g., historical data, anecdotal information, knowledge of past/current/upcoming projects that could have a bearing on water quality in the watershed)?

The webinar was attended by 60 participants. In all, the Study Board received 180 comments on the draft Plan of Study during the February 3-17, 2025, open comment period, as summarized in Table 1.

Common Topics in the comments included:

- Language (16 comments)
- Timeline (7 comments)
- Data (13 comments)
- Inaccuracies (10 comments)
- Recommendations (10 comments)
- Scope and Scale (109 comments)
- Other (15 comments)

Comment Source	Number of:	
	Submissions	Comments
Public Advisory Group	4	22
Industry Advisory Group	3	40
Government & Council of Governments Advisory Group	8	32
Public	158	86
Total	173	180

There were also multiple comments expressing appreciation for the Study Board effort.

Table 1. Summary of public comments on Plan of Study

After the end of the public comment period, the Study Board convened an in-person meeting in Calgary, Alberta. During this February 2025 meeting, the Study Board reviewed and carefully considered each comment received. The wide range of comments received revealed the challenges inherent in the requirements of this Reference, while being responsive to public comments and advice. The Study Board engaged in intensive discussions and deliberations to ensure the comments were appropriately addressed. The Plan of Study was provided on schedule to the IJC, after the Study Board reviewed, addressed and/or incorporated all public, Advisory Groups, and CoKKKH comments (<https://www.ijc.org/en/ekwsb/iekwsb-plan-study>). The final Plan of Study was released publicly after IJC review and approval. The IJC supported the Plan of Study and transmitted it to the U.S. and Canadian governments to request funding for it. The Study Board also prepared and released a “[What We Heard](#)” document that summarized the comments received during the open comment period and described how the comments were incorporated into the final Plan of Study. This document will be attached as an Appendix to the final version of this interim report.

Advisory Groups

As per the Directive and Plan of Study, advisory groups were established to support the work of the Study Board. The advisory groups provide a forum for interested parties to learn about the ongoing activities and to offer their input, knowledge, insights and perspectives to the Study Board and TWGs. There are three advisory groups: a Public Advisory Group, an Industry Advisory Group and a Council of Governments Advisory Group that were appointed in early 2025. Considerable time and effort were dedicated to finding members for each, reaching far and wide for potential members to ensure all interested parties were given the opportunity to participate. The process was robust and included one-on-one conversations with potential candidates from Canada and the United States, suggestions from colleagues, and canvassing interested individuals during public outreach activities.

Public Advisory Group

Public Advisory Group (PAG) members were appointed by the IJC in consultation with the Study Board. Membership includes representation in the areas of environmental protection, recreation and conservation as well as interested public from various backgrounds.

Industry Advisory Group

Industry Advisory Group (IAG) members were appointed by the IJC in consultation with the Study Board. Individuals represent diverse industrial interests such as mining, hydroelectric power generation, fishing guiding, and forestry; all of which bring unique insights and perspectives to possible water management options being considered.

Council of Governments Advisory Group

The Council of Governments Advisory Group (CoGAG) members were appointed by the IJC in consultation with the Study Board. The CoGAG is a mechanism by which the Study Board can gain input from all levels of government (local, federal, state/provincial, Indigenous governments) at any point in the process, with a focus on input regarding the interim and final reports.



Engagement

The Study Board considers engagement a significant and important part of the Reference and as such has spent considerable time on engagement at multiple levels. Once the organizational structure was in place to implement the Directive, the Study Board and SMT focussed on ensuring that all advisory groups, the public, Indigenous partners and other interested parties in the watershed were aware of the initiative and had multiple opportunities to participate. The Study Board has prioritized engagement through a blend of working with different groups, getting their boots on the ground in the watershed, and understanding the issues and their impacts from a local / bottom-up perspective. The Study Board has actively listened and sought to understand and engage across perspectives.

Watershed Tours

To date, the Study Board has invested significant time in familiarizing themselves with the geography of the study, and on the land and water with the Ktunaxa communities and the people who live in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed. Specifically, the Study Board has conducted three watershed tours which included meetings with natural resource managers in Montana, Idaho and British Columbia. The Study Board visited sites of ecological and cultural significance, knowledge was shared, and the Study Board heard about water pollution issues and potential solutions. The Study Board traveled to the four Ktunaxa communities north of the border, ʔaǰam, ʔakisǰnuk, yaqan nuʔkiy, and Yaǰit ʔa·knuǰǰiʔit, and south of the border to ʔaǰanqmi with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI). This time in-person with five out of the six Ktunaxa communities on the land and water allowed the Study Board members to begin building relationships and improve their overall understanding of Ktunaxa ǰ Ksanka knowledge, language and worldview. The Study Board has been privileged to receive an introductory Ktunaxa language lesson and the in-person telling of the Ktunaxa Creation Story. Below are details about the watershed tours in November 2024 (Montana), June 2025 (British Columbia) and August 2025 (Idaho and British Columbia):

Abayance Bay Marina at Koocanusa Reservoir, Montana



yaqan nuʔkiy Wetland



During the November 2024 watershed tour in Montana the Study Board:

- toured the Koocanusa Reservoir and Kootenai River portion of the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed in Montana, including stops at Abayance Bay Marina (Rexford, MT), Libby Dam (Libby, MT) and Kootenai Falls. The tour in Montana served as an introduction to the watershed.
- heard from Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's (KTOI) member of the CoKKKH who presented about the condition of the Kootenai River in the U.S., shared the importance of Kootenai Falls to the Ktunaxa ǰ Ksanka, and river restoration efforts underway and completed by KTOI.
- heard from the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks on their research and on-going work in the basin.

During the June 2025 tour in British Columbia the Study Board:

- participated in a Ktunaxa language lesson so that they could learn to introduce themselves in Ktunaxa.
- visited an archaeological site and the Kootenay River with ʔaǰam to begin to understand the history of the basin.
- visited the Columbia River headwaters with ʔakisǰnuk to expand their understanding of the breadth of the watershed.
- toured Koocanusa Reservoir at Big Springs and the Elk River at HWY 93 with Yaǰit ʔa·knuǰǰiʔit.
- hosted a public listening session in Fernie, BC aimed at reviewing the objectives of the TWGs and seeking public input. The session was attended by 26 people.
- toured Elk Valley Resources coal mines to physically see the mining footprint and learn about water treatment facilities and technology.

During the August 2025 tour in Idaho and British Columbia the Study Board:

- listened to the telling of the Ktunaxa Creation Story, and participated in discussions on worldview, and relationship building through a dinner in ʔaʔanqmi (hosted by KTOI).
- held an in-person meeting of the TWG co-leads and the Study Board for introductions, discussion of IJC processes, and discussion of TWG workplans.
- hosted a public listening session on August 8 in Bonners Ferry, ID to inform the public of the work of the Study to date and to gather input and advice on the proposed workplans for each TWG. The session was attended by 29 participants.
- toured KTOI’s Twin Rivers Fish Hatchery and Kootenai River restoration sites to understand the breadth of work KTOI engages in and to see firsthand different impacts of pollution on the watershed.
- Experienced a custom boat tour by KTOI on the Kootenai River at ʔaʔanqmi which provided a unique on-the-river perspective.
- toured an ongoing wetland restoration project being done by yaqan nuʔkiy, where the Study Board heard about how the managers used Ktunaxa worldview as a basis for their comprehensive restoration plans.



Koocanusa Reservoir at Big Springs

International Joint Commission

The Study Board appeared at the IJC semi-annual meetings in Ottawa, Canada in October 2024 and Washington, D.C. in April 2025. The Study Board was also asked to appear virtually at the IJC Executive meeting in December 2024. During these appearances, the Study Board presented the Commission with study updates and progress reports, and had the opportunity to request guidance from the Commission.

Public Outreach

Outreach efforts by the board resulted in broad awareness of the study for people in the watershed, as well as high participation in Study Board meetings and webinars. In addition to the webinar on the Plan of Study, the Study Board has also hosted three listening sessions to obtain public feedback on the TWG objectives, one in Fernie, B.C. in June 2025 attended by 26 individuals, an online listening session in July 2025 which was attended by 35 individuals, and a third listening session held in-person in Bonners Ferry, ID in August 2025, attended by 29 individuals. The listening sessions included facilitated breakouts seeking input on priorities for each of the TWGs, including water pollutants of concern, priority study areas, data gaps, and reports and data the TWGs should be aware of. Comments were collated into groupings based on the facilitated questions and the relevant TWGs; Table 2 summarizes the input from the listening session which was provided to the TWGs for consideration.

Table 2. Summary of public comments on the TWG objectives

Comment source	Number of participants	Number of collated comments
Fernie, BC June 2025	26	65
Online, July 2025	35	32
Bonner’s Ferry, ID, August 2025	29	33
Total	90	130

Major themes in the collated comments from the listening sessions included:

- Stressors to be aware of (41 comments)
- Data sources (29 comments)
- Effects to be aware of (20 comments)
- General comments (10 comment)
- Desired outcomes (8 comments)
- Other (geographical, baselines, Valued Ecosystem Components, questions for SB, reporting recommendations: 22 comments)

Two “What We Heard” documents will be provided as Appendices in the final version of this report. The first summarizes comments received on the Plan of Study. The second document presents the priorities and comments shared at the three listening sessions.

Advisory Groups

Public Advisory Group (PAG)

The PAG's first meeting was in March 2025 and included introductions to the Study Board and each other and information about the Study and the role of the PAG. The group discussed the upcoming project schedule, review periods allocated to receive PAG input on deliverables and a process for communication with the public. The PAG was given the opportunity at the meeting to provide input into the Plan of Study.

The PAG's second meeting in June 2025 was focused on a review of the "What We Heard" document developed after the Study Board's public comment period for the Plan of Study in February. There was discussion around coordination of outreach materials with the IJC's Communications Committee, sharing perspectives on the issues in the watershed and questions related to data sources and sharing. Members were invited to attend the upcoming in-person listening sessions in the watershed and online. In addition, the PAG asked the Study Board for guidance as to questions they should ask of constituents and assistance in focusing communication with their communities.

Industry Advisory Group (IAG)

The IAG's first meeting was in March 2025 and included introductions to the SB and each other and an overview of the Study and the role of the IAG. The focus of the meeting was to provide feedback from the IAG on the Plan of Study for the Study Board to consider. In June 2025, the IAG met with the Study Board for a second time to provide input about the "What We Heard" document and review TWG progress, project timelines, and IAG expectations. The IAG members were interested in understanding the role and membership of the TWGs.

Council of Governments Advisory Group (CoGAG)

The CoGAG met with the Study Board in April 2025 to review progress of the study to date and to discuss the role of the CoGAG. A second CoGAG meeting was held in July 2025 to provide participants with an overview of the roles of the IJC, Study Board, and the CoGAG and to discuss opportunities for the CoGAG to provide feedback and advice during the Study.

Communications Committee

The Study Board established a Communications Committee to coordinate and execute communications and engagement from the Study Board to the public, advisory groups and all interested parties, and to ensure that communications were accurate and consistent. The Committee was also tasked with handling media outreach, posting activities on social media, generating and distributing press releases, updating the Study Board website and the development and distribution of communication materials to the public. The group is composed of SB, SMT and IJC team members. A variety of communication materials have been produced to ensure the public and advisory groups are well informed of all meetings and activities and the purpose of the Reference and Study. These include:

- press releases to announce major milestones
- regular announcements and updates to the Board website, including posting public documents
- Study Board meeting minutes
- posters to be used during in person public engagement events that introduce the IJC, the Reference and the objectives of the four TWGs
- postcards that feature photos of the watershed and direct the public to the Board website for more information
- biannual newsletter to keep the public and interested groups informed about Study progress, activities and opportunities to participate. The newsletter is distributed to a contact list of people who have requested to be updated about Study activities, and to attendees of in person meetings. There is a newsletter subscription button on the website
- brochures that explain the purpose of the listening sessions and that announce/remind of the timing and location of each
- social media posts announcing and reminding of the listening sessions
- production of the "What We Heard" document that compiles the input received on the Plan of Study into an easily digestible product
- promotional materials for public meetings and public comment periods
- Quick Guide Brochure that provides:
 - an introduction to the Reference and the Boundary Waters Treaty
 - acknowledgement of the six Ktunaxa Nations in the watershed
 - an introduction to the Study Board members and their duties
 - an outline of the timeline and deliverables
 - an overview of the Study area
 - an overview of the Study themes, the four TWGs and an organizational chart



Deep Creek, a tributary to the Kootenai River at ʔaʔanqmi

Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

A key area of work for the Study Board has been the establishment of four TWGs and ensuring they are supported for success through thorough understanding of the Plan of Study, Reference, Directive, the overall Study Board work and by developing effective workplans. The Study Board prepared guidance to ensure consistency across the TWG workplans and is iteratively conducting ongoing engagement with the TWGs. The TWGs will assist in carrying out the work under this Directive to "support a common understanding of pollution within the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed." This includes the impacts of that pollution on people and other species. The TWGs are focused on the following four topics:

- Water Quality Status and Trends
- Impacts to Human Health and Well-Being
- Impacts to Ecosystems, Including Cumulative Effects
- Mitigation



Ambush Rock at ʔaʔanqmi

Ktunaxa Ɂ Ksanka Knowledge is recognized as critical to the work of all TWGs through discussions, collaboration with and support from the CoKKKH and any other sub-Council of CoIKH should they be established.

The selection of potential TWG members began with suggestions by the Study Board, CoKKKH, IJC staff, SMT, government agencies, advisory groups, and the public. Selection criteria included:

- Expertise directly relevant to the Reference and the TWGs
- Scientific objectivity
- Networking and connections in area of expertise
- Proven track record of high productivity, working with large amounts of data in a short time frame
- Professional reputation
- Team player
- Strive for parity between Canada and the United States

The Study Board, supported by the SMT and the IJC, had extensive deliberations about the membership and leadership of the TWGs. The board discussed each TWG member to ensure that they can operate effectively in a collaborative and team setting; work within the constraints and complexity of the issues; and are aware of the timelines and the IJC process. The TWG members represent a wide selection of individuals from Ktunaxa Ɂ Ksanka, provincial/federal/state governments, relevant industry, academia and private consultants. TWG co-leads were appointed in June 2025 and the process to complete TWG membership is still underway. Upon appointment, TWGs set to work immediately and developed draft workplans that were submitted to the Study Board in July 2025.

To guide the TWGs, the Study Board prepared a framework to help the TWGs develop their workplans. This framework provided a consistent basis for prioritization and development of key questions designed to meet the objectives of each TWG. The framework also provided the basis for collaboration and integration across all the TWGs, as well as with the CoIKH. A draft conceptual model was developed as part of the guiding framework to serve as a tool for use in focusing and prioritizing the work of the TWGs. This model illustrated a general understanding of the linkages among sources of pollutants and other stressors, the pathways by which pollutants are transported, and the subsequent links to impacts on ʔa·kxamís Ɂapi qapsin. The model was meant to provide an initial, consistent starting point for use in identifying the critical linkages and key relationships which can lead to impacts.

The Study Board established principles and key themes for each of the TWGs. Each TWG was provided with three main objectives to be addressed in their workplans.

A priority of the TWGs is to review reports

and scientific articles that describe what is known about their respective components of the Study. Fulfilling the objectives in the Plan of Study also requires that data be collated from available databases, in addition to other sources from government agencies, Indigenous Nations and Tribes, industry, academia, community groups and non-government organizations. Data and information from non-Indigenous sources will be made publicly available as described in the Study’s Data Management Plan. Data and information from Indigenous sources will be managed as directed by the Indigenous sources providing the information.

No new field sampling or data collection will be conducted under the Plan of Study. Any new analyses of existing data will be prioritized through iterative discussions between the TWGs and the Study Board and may be limited owing to the Study’s time constraints. Through review of the gathered information and data, TWGs will describe areas of consensus, areas with divergence, and areas that represent gaps in understanding.

The Study Board and SMT will support the TWGs in cross-TWG collaboration. There will be overlap among TWGs; therefore, it is critical to ensure that work isn’t duplicated and that work of interest to multiple TWGs is shared in a timely manner. To begin this cross-collaboration the SB hosted all the TWG co-leads at an in-person meeting in August 2025, and all the draft workplans have been circulated among the TWGs.

The Study Board will continue to provide guidance for the TWGs developed in response to discussions with and questions from the TWGs, from input from the Advisory Groups and the public (via listening sessions and meetings), as well as dialogue with the CoKKKH. This is an iterative process which will ultimately result in final workplans which have been built upon a collaborative process, approved by the Study Board and aimed at achieving the TWG objectives. Summaries of the current iterations of the TWG workplans follow.

Water Quality Status and Trends TWG

The objectives of the Water Quality Status and Trends Technical Working Group (WQST TWG) are:

- **Objective 1.** Identify data sources, relevant peer reviewed science, industry, and government reporting for the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed as related to water quality and pollutants.
- **Objective 2.** Identify and describe the occurrence of basin-wide pollutants that persist beyond isolated or localized effects areas in the waters of the Elk and Kootenai/y Rivers, Koocanusa Reservoir, and Kootenay Lake. As time permits, this could include work to identify sources and trends in pollutant concentrations and loads where adequate data are available.
- **Objective 3.** Identify relationships between hydrologic and water quality data, including the identification of gaps in the data and research. Recommend procedures for: screening credible data; statistically describing and reporting on the status of pollutants in the Study Area including associated uncertainty; coordinating collection and analysis of existing data to fill gaps; and suggesting next steps (including methods and procedures for ongoing monitoring and data analysis).

The workplan for this TWG focuses on knowledge synthesis, using existing peer reviewed literature, government reporting, and high-quality, longer-term datasets, in tandem with iterative engagement with the CoKKKH. The primary aims of the WQST TWG are to improve understanding of the state of water pollution and determine the trajectory of water quality in the watershed.

The foundational task that is needed for the work plan is to identify pollutants that are not locally confined, and hence, that pose transboundary water quality concerns. Many documented water quality concerns are localized in nature. However, the focus of the WQST TWG will be on those pollutants that have broader basin-wide or transboundary effects. The main activities focus on:

1. *Focused Literature Review:* Review of regulatory documents, peer reviewed science and shared oral knowledge related to water quality in the Kootenai/y Basin, with an emphasis on transboundary contaminants.
2. *Data Compilation and Evaluation for Focus Areas:* Identify high-quality data sources related to the focus areas; compile a list of measured water quality parameters based on those sources; and evaluate locations with sufficient data to complete analysis and identify limitations of current monitoring.
3. *Analysis:* Identify trends and exceedances of state, provincial and federal regulatory criteria in the focus areas; prioritize contaminants to assess sources; and evaluate potential sources of the prioritized transboundary contaminants.
4. *Interpretation and Recommendations:* identify knowledge and data gaps; identify key sites for long-term monitoring and describe recommended monitoring practices; and identify emerging pollutants that warrant further study.

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery



Impacts to Human Health and Well Being TWG

The objectives of the Impacts to Human Health and Well Being TWG are:

- **Objective 1.** Identify known or suspected human-health hazards from currently identified pollutants in the Study Area. Expand this analysis to include any additional pollutants/constituents of concern identified by the Water Quality Status and Trends TWG.
- **Objective 2.** Assemble and review existing risk assessments and well-being studies and synthesize to report an assessment of risk using current information. Report on health and well-being including threats to health based on both western and cultural science.
- **Objective 3.** As discussed in the Plan of Study preamble, identify high-priority data gaps in health-related information needed to fully meet objectives 1 and 2 based on uncertainty analyses and provide recommendations on approaches to gather additional information to fill these gaps.

The work plan for this TWG will describe the current state of knowledge regarding environmental health studies and health risk assessments in the Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed to understand the potential health risks associated with water pollution for populations residing in and frequently accessing and using the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed, including members of the Ktunaxa Nation who are rights holders in the territory. The workplan will be guided by the One Health approach, recognized by the World Health Organization, which aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. Additionally, the CoKKKH are identifying processes to ensure that there are Ktunaxa & Ksanka scholars who are involved in the work to be done.

The foundational piece of work that is needed for the work plan is to identify i) existing human health risk assessments or related studies and ii) existing analyses of potential impacts to health and well-being, including analyses related to members of the Ktunaxa Nation. The main activities focus on:

1. *Refining the Work Plan Objectives* - Assemble preliminary demographic information (e.g. epidemiological data, chemical exposures, well-being data including physical, mental and emotional health, local experiences and concerns), identify data gaps, refine work plan objectives as needed.
2. *Conducting a Literature Search* - Develop literature search strategy; screen literature search results for relevant sources.
3. *Assembling, synthesizing and summarizing data, making report recommendations and identifying gaps* - Review of results of literature search and other identified sources of information; conceptual site model potential receptor summary; information summary in tables/formats to be determined.



yaqan nu?kiy wetland restoration complex

Impacts to Ecosystems, Including Cumulative Effects TWG

The objectives of the Impacts to Ecosystems, Including Cumulative Effects TWG are:

- **Objective 1.** Draft a conceptual model focusing on identified pollutants but also identifying other key linkages that need further study. Identify terrestrial and aquatic features that are affected or potentially affected by identified water pollutants and other stressors in the Study Area.
- **Objective 2.** Report on knowledge status of data for each component with respect to measured impacts attributable to water pollution.
- **Objective 3.** Identify high-priority data gaps in ecosystem impacts analyses (including cumulative effects) that would need to be filled to fully meet objectives 1 and 2 based on uncertainty analyses and recommend a set of prioritized studies to address gaps.

This TWG workplan will synthesize available data on the cumulative effects of water pollution on ecosystem health in the study area. The assessment will document linkages between ecosystem stressors and ecosystem health, identify data and knowledge gaps for some indicators of ecosystem health (e.g. native fish population status and trends, invertebrate biodiversity, habitat suitability) and/or ecological values (managed species, vibrant fishery, fish consumption). This synthesis will be further enhanced through iterative engagement with the CoKCKH and input of Indigenous ways of knowing and methodologies by Ktunaxa & Ksanaka and Indigenous Working Group members and advisors.



Kootenay River near Wasa, BC., Canada

A key priority for the work plan will be to identify terrestrial and aquatic features that are affected, or potentially affected, by identified water pollutants and other stressors and to identify data gaps to guide future research and monitoring studies. The work plan will consist of:

1. *Synthetic review of water pollution and associated effects on ecosystem health* – Peer reviewed and publicly available literature reviews, data and information compilation.
2. *Develop a focused conceptual model specific to this TWG* - Workshops, mapping exercises, expert/Indigenous consultation
3. *Develop and refine models of stressors, including cumulative effects, on ecological health* - Model development and iterative testing and/or gap identification
4. *Conduct uncertainty and gap analysis* - Indicator scoring, knowledge ranking, Indigenous input

Based on the synthetic review, a set of summary papers, presentations, and/or outreach products (e.g., story maps, videos, social media releases, blog posts, plain language summaries) will expand upon the empirically based conclusions to describe the current state of knowledge regarding environmental stressors impacting ecosystems within the study area.

Mitigation TWG

The objectives of the Mitigation TWG are:

- **Objective 1.** Identify, assemble and review available data and information about the extent to which mitigation and remediation efforts, including techniques (e.g., best management practices) and technologies related to water pollution from known sources (including forestry, industry, land development, mining, and other identified sources of stressors) in the Study Area have influenced, impacted sources of, altered the status of, or shifted the trends in water pollution in the Study Area. Identify data gaps in science, monitoring and research, or incorporation of Indigenous knowledge.
- **Objective 2.** Assess, from the data above, the extent to which mitigation and remediation efforts have influenced, impacted sources of, altered the status of, or shifted the trends in water pollution in the Study Area. Identify gaps in science, monitoring and research or incorporation of Indigenous knowledge related to this assessment, including through comparison with viable methods being used outside of the Study Area.
- **Objective 3.** Compile and examine the development, content and any inconsistencies between existing regulatory standards and guidelines for water pollutants in the Study Area, and assess if these inconsistencies have influenced, impacted sources of, altered the status of, or shifted the trends in water pollution in the Study Area.

This TWG workplan will study the extent to which mitigation and remediation efforts (including technologies and best management practices) related to water pollution from known sources have influenced, impacted sources of, altered the status of, or shifted the trends in water pollution in the Elk-Kootenai/y watershed. The foundational piece of work for this TWG will be to compile an overview, based on existing sources, of current water pollutants with cross-border effects for which mitigations being applied within the watershed will undergo further study by this TWG. This effort will be conducted in collaboration with the other TWGs. The TWG will gather existing knowledge and data from

Provincial, State, Federal, Indigenous and corporate entities, as well as from literature searches; assess the information and data; determine key activities and pollutants of potential concern with cross-border effects; and prioritize mitigation measures for activities and pollutants of potential concern with most immediate cross-border effects for further study and assessment.

The work plan will consist of:

- *Developing a focused source-mitigation specific conceptual model:* Refine work plan objectives and develop a focused mitigation model for pollutants/stressors
- *Developing a shared knowledge base:* Conduct literature searches and interviews
- *Developing synthesis products:* Prepare three workgroup sub-reports on major objectives.

Study Timelines

The Study Board’s activities in the first year of the Study are summarized in Figure 3.

The Study achieved the primary milestones of Year One (Plan of Study and the Interim Status Report). These milestones were met within the context of novel aspects of this Study, notably the historic involvement of the Ktunaxa Nation and the Study’s short two-year timeframe.

Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study

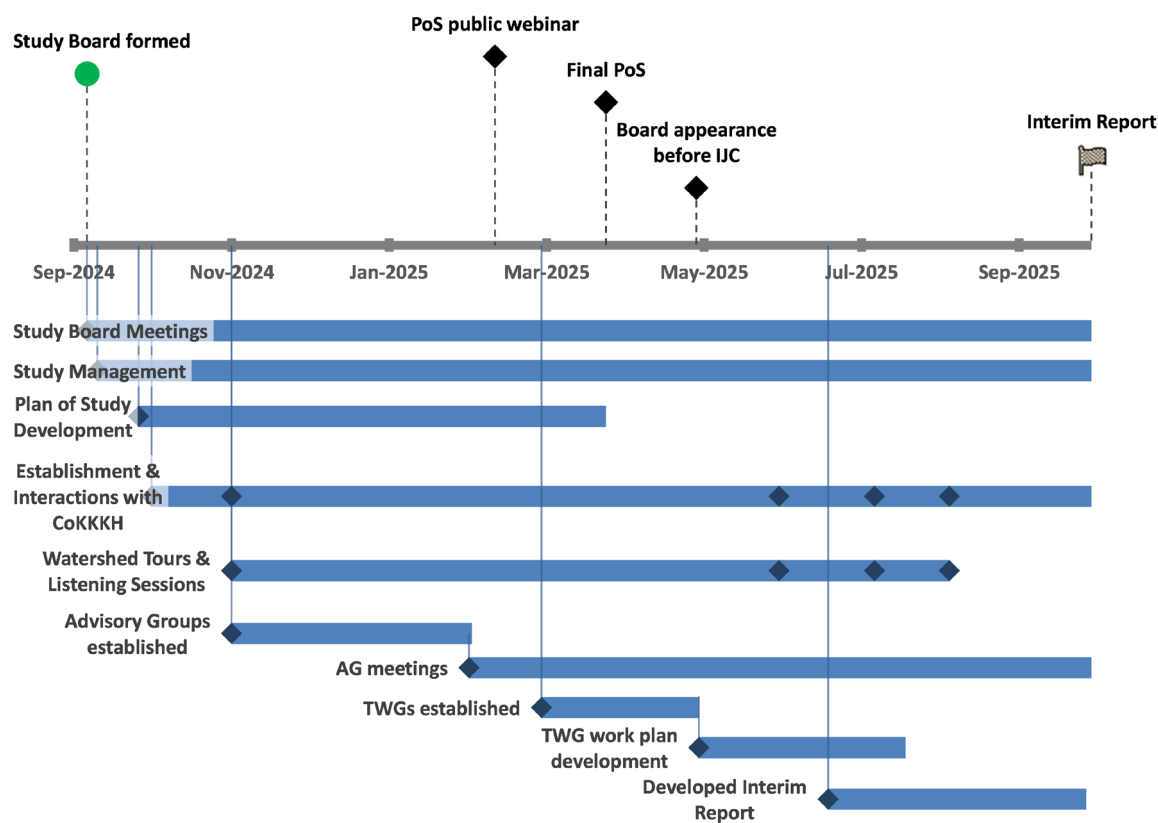


Figure 3. Summary of activities, September 2024 – September 2025



Bonnors Ferry, Idaho

Study Budget

The Study Board asked for a budget of \$4.9 million in the Plan of Study. The Commission concurred with the Plan of Study and transmitted the budget to U.S. and Canadian governments with a recommendation for full funding. Partial funding for the Study was received in July 2025 and the remainder is expected in Fall 2025. Expenditures are being tracked for both the Canadian and U.S. participants and activities. Tracking and discussion of the Study budget with the Board occurs at regular intervals as a standing agenda item during Study Board meetings. The SMT and Study Board Co-chairs will assemble all expenditure information into an overall budget and Gantt chart for the Study. These details will be included in the final report in September 2026.

To date, funding has been partially utilized to support Study Board, SMT and TWG contracts; travel and meeting expenses; and engagement materials and activities in support of the substantial amount of consultation needed to ensure all audiences are aware of the Reference and have had the opportunity to provide input into the Plan of Study and this Interim Status Report. Investment for Indigenous engagement and participants is paramount to this project, as is meaningful and frequent communication to the broad network of public, interested parties and advisory groups.

Independent Review Group (IRG)

The International Joint Commission set up an Independent Review Group with one co-chair from the U.S. and Canada. The co-chairs can involve external experts to assist with the review as needed. The IRG works directly with the IJC and is independent from the Study Board. The IRG reports will review the Interim and Final Study Board reports and will be made public.



To address these challenges and ensure completion of the Final Report by September 2026, the Study Board is prioritizing and focusing efforts. The Board notes that some topics will not be comprehensively reviewed and may be submitted as recommendations for future work in the final report. The Study Board proposes to continue discussions with the Commission on these challenges and seek clarity around the expectations on deliverables.

Looking Forward

The next year will be an intensive period of meetings, workplan implementation, data compilation, synthesis, and outreach. The Study Board will continue to meet regularly and monitor the work of the four TWGs as they move ahead on their key objectives and provide regular updates to the Study Board. The Study Board will synthesize reports from the TWGs and integrate information into a final report.

The nature of the Directive is unprecedented and in this respect the Study is progressing through ongoing collaboration with Ktunaxa & Ksanka Knowledge Holders. Work is continuing with the CoKKKH to develop processes based on mutual trust and respect to

achieve a truly reciprocal study partnership. Building and implementing these processes requires considerable time, communication and resources. The Study Board has leaned in and been met with reciprocal sharing with Ktunaxa & Ksanka people. Relationships, knowledge, language and worldview have all been emerging through the engagements to date. The Ktunaxa & Ksanka holistic approach and guiding principle of *ʔa·kxam̓is ɥapi qapsin* is different from the Western scientific approach to defining and understanding watershed pollution. It is essential that the Study Board continue to find ways of working reciprocally, engaging deeply, and building a foundation for continued partnership work at the end of this time-limited Reference. The Board is also looking forward to potentially working with other Indigenous Peoples under the umbrella of the CoKKH.

The Study Board is committed to continuing to deepen their understanding of the issues in the watershed by listening to interested parties and engaging in more watershed tours. The Study Board will continue to meet with the Advisory Groups, seeking their input on all stages of the project. In July 2026, a draft final report will be produced and made available for public comment. A final report will be submitted to the IJC by the end of September 2026.

Issues for Commission Awareness

To date, the Study Board has encountered two primary challenges:

1. The IJC Directive derived from the Reference charges the Study Board with a very broad task (i.e., water pollution within the entire Elk-Kootenai/y watershed). Given the size of the watershed, the complexity of the issues associated with water pollution within it, and the variability in volume of data and technical information available, the synthesis will prove challenging.
2. The broadness of the issue is exacerbated by the short timeline of two years. Recognizing it takes time to build relationships with communities throughout the large watershed, the short time frame limits public engagement and the meaningful and respectful incorporation of Ktunaxa & Ksanka Knowledge. Additionally, the compressed timeline has required that tasks that would normally be done in sequence must be completed concurrently.

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List of Acronyms

CoGAG - Council of Governments Advisory Group

CoIKH - Council of Indigenous Knowledge Holders

CoKKKH - Council of Ktunaxa & Ksanka Knowledge Holders

IAG – Industry Advisory Group

IEKWSB - International Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Study Board (Referred to as “Study Board” throughout)

IJC - International Joint Commission

KTOI – Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

IRG – Independent Review Group

PAG – Public Advisory Group

PoS – Plan of Study

SMT – Study Management Team

TWG – Technical Working Group