

# owntrust

Stories of *people* and *places* in the Columbia Basin FALL 2021

**?aąam enhances biodiversity  
with ancestral techniques**

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**Improving accessibility  
and safety on the trails**

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**Laying the groundwork for  
a better digital future**

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*sizzling success*

**Mama's Dumplings offers pockets of joy**

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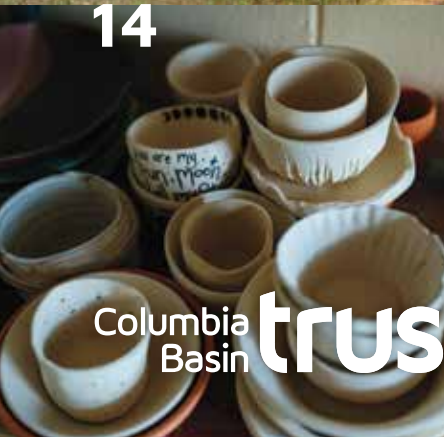
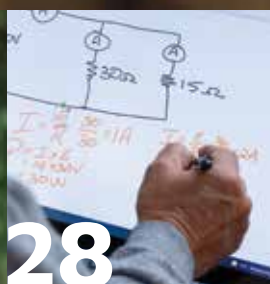
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Columbia Basin **trust**

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# Our thoughts

**We are so humbled by the resiliency, strength and the continued innovation and hard work shown by so many in the Columbia Basin during extraordinarily challenging times.**

As the pandemic has evolved and put obstacles in front of all of us, we've been able to navigate it and adapt by working together. This has made us truly appreciate the strength and power of a region coming together.

In 2020/21, the Trust supported over 2,400 community-led projects. To address needs created by the pandemic, we also increased our support to First Nations, Métis associations, food banks, local farmers' markets, food recovery programs, community social service agencies, child care operators, housing societies and hospices in the Basin.

Plus, we made progress on the six strategic priorities we introduced in fall 2020. This included adding programs focused on workforce development; helping small businesses acquire up-to-date technology; increasing access to locally produced food; building climate resiliency through alternative energy and affordable housing retrofits; and working with First Nations as they, for example, created and upgraded housing.

This magazine highlights only a fraction of these examples—often around the theme of *strength and renewal*. (And for details on our financial overview, see page 36.)

We've now completed our 26th year of operations. To check out how far we've come, visit **25years.ourtrust.org**. In addition to being able to read the book about our history, which we published in 2020, you can now listen to it as an audiobook.

**We thank you for your unceasing and profound efforts to lead the Basin toward a healthy future.**

Together, we have found alternative paths forward. We thank you—individuals, organizations and communities, as well as all the Trust's staff and Board members—for your unceasing and profound efforts to lead the Basin toward a healthy future.

Jocelyn Carver  
Chair, Board of Directors

Johnny Strilaeff  
President and Chief Executive Officer



Jocelyn Carver and Johnny Strilaeff.

What will next year bring? As the world has proven, it can be hard to make predictions. But we're sure that whatever comes, the spirit of resiliency in the Basin will continue.

We hope we can connect with you in person soon—and in the meantime continue to be available to you by phone, by email or virtually to support your aspirations.

# Snapshots

A glimpse of the projects the Trust is supporting in Basin communities

## Hot sauce proves a spicy hit

**Revelstoke's** Sarah Harper and Stu Smith have been creating heat with their own locally cultivated and produced hot sauces. Grown at their Track Street Growers farm, **Stoke the Fire hot sauces** were only available at the Revelstoke farmers' market. Now, with help from the Trust's **Basin Business Advisors (BBA)** program, they're selling in several stores in the region. This program provides free, one-to-one, confidential counselling and assessment services to businesses, including those focused on agriculture. The couple also increased their business skills, including understanding their costs of production, and used BBA advice to prepare to connect with even more retailers through the spring 2021 Basin Food & Buyers Expo. Harper says that the BBA process "completely transformed the business."

[ourtrust.org/bba](https://ourtrust.org/bba)

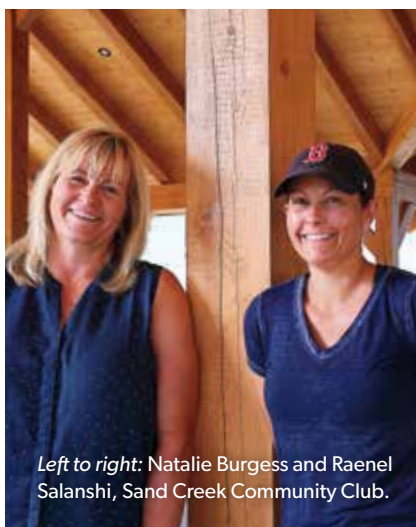


Left to right: Stu Smith and Sarah Harper, Owners, Stoke the Fire.

Full stories at

*Basin Stories*

[stories.ourtrust.org](https://stories.ourtrust.org)



Left to right: Natalie Burgess and Raenel Salanshi, Sand Creek Community Club.



## Extra reasons to linger at a community hub

Rain or shine, the people of Jaffray and surrounding areas can now enjoy a **timber-frame gazebo** at the **Jaffray Community Hall**—suitable for large community events, small family gatherings or outdoor classroom activities. New trees will provide shade on hot days, and hungry tummies can be satisfied at the new concession or by roasting hotdogs or marshmallows in the new firepit. There are new public washrooms, too. The **Sand Creek Community Club** undertook these improvements with support from the Trust's **Community Outdoor Revitalization Grants**. The goal was to make the heart of the community even more appealing and usable, while creating a vibrant outdoor space. Since 2019, this Trust program has committed about \$6.4 million to help communities enhance 35 spaces.

[ourtrust.org/corgnants](https://ourtrust.org/corgnants)





## Fernie reduces the housing crunch

In a community where affordable housing is hard to come by, **49 new affordable places to live** is significant. **Fernie Family Housing Society** is now constructing these new units, with move-in anticipated for spring 2022. The North End Court project includes a 35-unit apartment building and 14-unit townhouse complex. Located near schools and the hospital, the units come in a range of sizes, from one to three bedrooms, geared to families, seniors and individuals with low to moderate incomes. The project is proceeding with support from the Trust, in **partnership with BC Housing**. This collaboration has enabled the creation of hundreds of affordable housing units in the Basin in recent years. In 2020/21 alone, the Trust committed \$4.3 million to help create 161 affordable housing units in nine communities.

[ourtrust.org/housing](https://ourtrust.org/housing)

Full stories at

*Basin Stories*  
[stories.ourtrust.org](https://stories.ourtrust.org)

Left to right:  
Fred Comeau,  
Apprentice, and  
Meredith Hamstead,  
Co-owner,  
ThinkBright Homes.

## Building homes the thinkBright way

"We build houses for regular people," says Meredith Hamstead, co-owner of **Invermere's thinkBright Homes**. What the company doesn't do, though, is build its high-performance homes in the usual way. Rather than relying exclusively on experienced carpenters with established skills, the business is committed to **hiring apprentices**. "We pair apprentices with senior carpenters and we teach them our systems for achieving the highest levels of energy efficiency," Hamstead says. "It's easier to train than retrain. It's more productive." Its current apprentice is being paid for in part by the Trust's **School Works Apprentice Wage Subsidy**. Administered by College of the Rockies, this program helps organizations in the Basin hire apprentices in 20 trades, including carpentry.

[ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy](https://ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy)





Left to right: Judith Fernandez and Eric Larocque, Golden Food Bank Society.

## Growing community abundance

In Golden, the **Golden Food Bank** does the essential work of providing food hampers to people in need—and it also expands on its mandate by offering additional food-related programming to the community. To do this, it moved into a new location in early summer 2021, and then **renovated a kitchen**, particularly to add storage for more of the food it recovers from local grocery stores—like the 12,600 kilograms gathered in the first half of 2021 alone. The food bank also **built a garden** so it could continue to grow food of its own to place in the hampers, plus provide space for other growers. For these projects, it received support from the Trust's **Food Access and Recovery Grants**, which help organizations increase the access of affordable, quality, local food to people in the Basin—a strategic priority of the Trust.

[ourtrust.org/localfood](https://ourtrust.org/localfood)

## Historic powerhouse gets a new charge

In **Kimberley**, a 1924 mining powerhouse has been carefully restored back to its original glory, giving visitors to the **Sullivan Mine and Underground Mining Railway Interpretive Centre** a view into how the mines of yesteryear were powered. Preserved by the **Sullivan Mine and Railway Historical Society**, the project included restoring the 76-metre-long building's 34 sets of windows, which consist of 3,200 panes of glass. Other highlights are the updated exterior brickwork detail, as well as interior walls and flooring—all giving a new life to a classic space. The project was supported through the Trust's **Heritage Grants**.

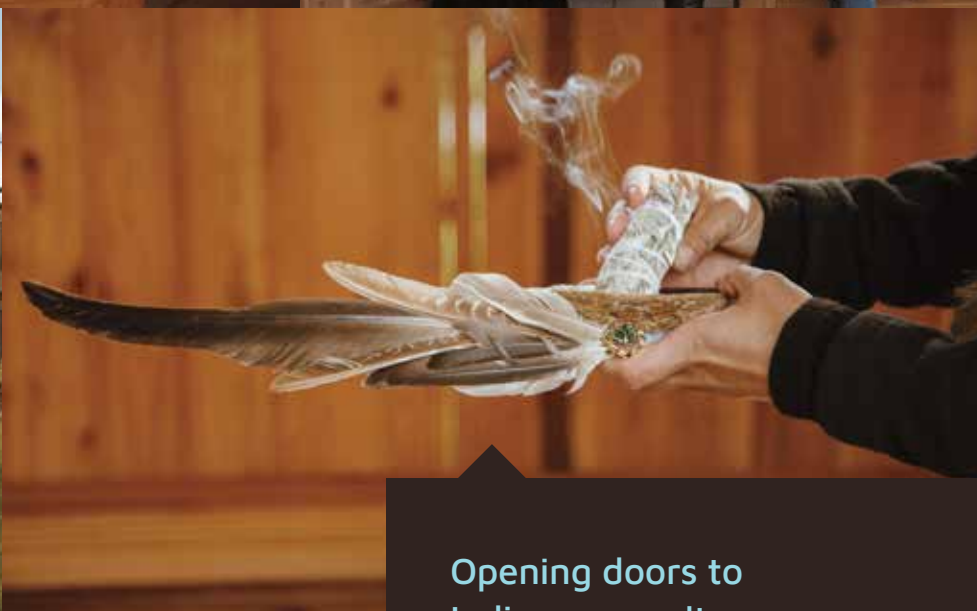
[ourtrust.org/heritage](https://ourtrust.org/heritage)







Left to right: Brittany Haugen, Trail and Salmo Early Intervention Coordinator, Circle of Indigenous Nations Society (COINS); Janet MacNeil, Executive Director, Trail Family and Individual Resource Centre Society; Jessica MacLeod, Family Connections Coordinator, COINS.



## Opening doors to Indigenous culture

In Trail, two organizations have come together to build a **dedicated ceremonial space** to promote inclusion and remove barriers for Indigenous-led ceremonial practices. Located outside the **Trail Family and Individual Resource Centre Society** on Columbia Avenue, a 12-by-12-foot enclosed gazebo is bringing visibility to Indigenous culture in the community. In October 2020, project partner **Circle of Indigenous Nations Society** blessed the space in a quiet unveiling, marking a memorable occasion for the community organizations and the families they serve. The project was guided by the identified need for an Indigenous-specific space for traditional ceremony in the area and supported with funds from the Trust's **Community Development Program**.

[ourtrust.org/cdp](https://ourtrust.org/cdp)



## Beautification under construction

"Improving quality of place is a very important part of developing a community," says Adrian Bergles, Chief Administrative Officer of the **Village of Canal Flats**. Committed to improving accessibility and overall aesthetic, Canal Flats turned to the Trust's **Community Outdoor Revitalization Grants**. With this support, it **built an outdoor covered pavilion and public washrooms**. These help make the park a more attractive gathering place, especially during events like Canal Days and the Flats Fest Music Festival. This is just the first step of a significant plan to enhance Canal Flats' downtown streetscape.

[ourtrust.org/corgants](https://ourtrust.org/corgants)



Connor Lane, co-op student, City of Rossland.



## Student collects essential data

If a water line leaks or a sewer backs up, municipal public works crews need to find the appropriate shutoff or cleanout as quickly as possible—even if there are mounds of snow on top. This requirement for precise information is one of the reasons the **City of Rossland hired a co-op student** in summer 2021, with support from the Trust's **School Works Co-op Wage Subsidy**. The program provides wage subsidies to Basin employers to help them hire post-secondary co-op students. In Rossland, the student's role was to scour the city's terrain with a GPS receiver to inventory its underground utility assets. The City will also be able to use this data to identify areas with reoccurring problems, which could indicate that the assets are dated and need upgrades.

[ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy](https://ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy)



## Om Organics naturally moves ahead

**Om Organic's** skincare products are in huge demand. Ever since the business started gaining a following and opened its storefront in **Invermere**, it has been steadily growing—quickly outgrowing its original space and hiring more staff. Owner Kari Asselin decided she wanted to take her business to an even higher level. She connected with the Trust's **Basin RevUp program**, which helps businesses that are poised for growth with **customized support, training and networking** so that they can achieve their potential. Asselin was able to better focus on her business's needs by learning new skills like financial literacy and using data to drive business decisions. The program also helped her pivot to a strong online presence during the pandemic. The results have been impressive, including a 900 per cent increase in online sales during this time.

[ourtrust.org/basinrevup](https://ourtrust.org/basinrevup)



Kari Asselin, Owner, Om Organics.



Left to right: Kari Asselin and Hannah Trescher, Om Organics.





# Reviving an ecosystem with ancestral techniques

ʔaḡam enhances biodiversity and reduces ʔa·kinḡuku risk in its territory

For generations, ʔa·kinḡuku—or fire—has played an important part in ecosystem renewal in the East Kootenay. In the community of ʔaḡam, it also has a significance that connects to a long history of stewardship of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

In 2019, ʔaḡam began implementing a five-year project to restore approximately 1,300 hectares of mature forest, open forest and open grassland—using prescribed burns and selective harvesting techniques—to improve biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk and enhance the overall health of this part of its traditional territory.

By thinning dense Douglas fir, the project aims to improve habitat for elk, deer and several rare and endangered species, including the flammulated owl, Lewis's woodpecker and little brown bat. Prescribed burning increases soil fertility and, in this ecosystem has the potential to aid the growth of rare plant species like scarlet gaura, prairie gold bean and hairstem ground smoke, which are native to the area.

ʔaḡam is located in an area of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa that often experienced low-intensity fires that consumed forest and grassland fuels and revitalized the ecosystem. The fires also thinned younger stands and increased the height of the forest canopy.

Reintroducing the practice of using fire in a controlled way to support ecosystem renewal and health connects back to forest and rangeland management practices that have been implemented in the region by communities like ʔaḡam

ʔa·kinḡuku  
Fire

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa  
Ktunaxa Territory

ʔaḡamnik  
People of ʔaḡam

Nasuʔkin  
Chief

John Brace, Registered Professional Forester, ʔaḡam.





Marty Williams, Board member, ʔaḡam Community Enterprises.

for generations. Historically, ʔaḡamnik held vast horse and cattle herds and maintained and stewarded large expanses of range. Cultural burning practices in the past were also used to influence the movement of elk herds in ʔaḡam.

“Grasslands were very important to the Ktunaxa way of life, and many in our region have been damaged, or lost entirely, in the last century,” says ʔaḡam’s Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre Jr. “This work is an important step for ʔaḡam in protecting the remaining grasslands we have left here.”

The current project—supported by the Trust’s Ecosystem Enhancement Program—reintroduces this practice. It also connects with and complements other wildlife corridors in the area and aligns with the ways other groups have been working to improve the ecology of the Rocky Mountain Trench.

Additionally, as part of this project—building on findings from ʔaḡam’s Heritage Management Plan, also supported in part by the Trust—several locations within the project boundary found potential for significant pre-contact archaeological features and deposits, and have been designated as no-work zones.

With completion of this project set for 2023, ʔaḡam plans to continue the use of cultural burning to help manage its reserve lands in perpetuity.

“We are returning this land to a state where the practice of burning can be revived by ʔaḡamnik, safely, to keep our lands healthy and protect our homes from wildfires,” said Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre Jr.



Left to right: Marty Williams, Board member, ʔaḡam Community Enterprises; John Brace, Registered Professional Forester, ʔaḡam; Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre Jr., ʔaḡam.




The Ecosystem Enhancement Program is a five-year, \$10-million initiative to help maintain and improve ecological health and native biodiversity in a variety of ecosystems, such as wetlands, fish habitat, forests and grasslands. Launched in 2017, it has supported 19 large-scale projects that will have a meaningful and measurable impact on ecosystem health in the Basin.

[ourtrust.org/eep](http://ourtrust.org/eep)







Nelson Youth Action Network participants paint a new mural on the city's recycling centre.

## Having fun with meaningful results

Nelson and area youth have many opportunities to thrive

**"I love the youth network because it brings together a variety of youth from all over the community who might not otherwise have met."**

NELSON YOUTH ACTION NETWORK PARTICIPANT

**At the Nelson and District Youth Centre, youth can climb, dance, shoot hoops or do tricks on their skateboards.** Since 1997, young people have been gathering under its roof to interact and have fun.

It's an impressive location—and lately, the activities available to this area's youth are extra impressive. That's because, for about five years, the Nelson Youth Action Network (NYAN) has been busy keeping youth even more engaged, supporting social connectivity and their physical and mental health.

Field trips to zipline or paddleboard. Workshops to learn first aid or to prepare to work for the first time. A monthly improv night. The range of NYAN activities is "awesome."

That's the term used by Samantha Maglio, NYAN Coordinator. Throughout 2020, about 245 youth aged 12 to 18 took advantage of this broad range of offerings.

Even with reduced or online options during the pandemic, the network has been essential. "It's given youth something to do," Maglio says. "It's been a way for them to be social."

NYAN is part of the Basin Youth Network. Launched in 2016 by the Trust, the Basin Youth Network helps communities in the region increase local activities and opportunities for youth, enabling them to learn new skills and engage more with each other and their communities. Every community's network looks different.

All of them, however, aim to let youth have a say about what goes on. In Nelson, Maglio uses surveys and focus groups, plus an oversight committee of both adults and youth. "Most of my programming is chosen by youth," she says.

Another goal is to get youth out into the community. For example, NYAN participants recently created a mural on the city's recycling centre, working with a local artist to design the artwork and then taking up paintbrushes themselves to make it happen.

Plus, the networks collaborate with other organizations to get a broad range involved. For NYAN, this has included the Nelson and District Arts Council (the mural), Nelson Boxing Club (an intro-to-boxing class) and Nelson Community Foods Centre (so youth could pick fruit and donate it to the food bank).

The networks also reach out to smaller neighbouring communities. In NYAN's case, regular visits to youth in Procter, Harrop and Balfour have resulted in activities like making sushi, tie-dying and performing science experiments.

Although new compared to the city's youth centre, NYAN plans to continue positively influencing youth for a long time to come. "I've watched tons of the kids grow immensely," Maglio says. "A lot's going on here. I feel like right now we're really flourishing."





## The future of the region

In addition to supporting community networks, the Basin Youth Network offers resources like workshops and toolkits on leadership, mindfulness and job readiness. It also aims to increase community-to-community interactions. For example, at the Leadership Summit, youth from across the region gather to develop their leadership skills and discover how to make a difference in their communities. In late November 2021, the Youth Climate Action Forum is bringing youth together virtually to educate and inspire them to take action. The Trust also supports youth education through scholarships and bursaries, and youth employment through wage subsidy programs and a partnership with JA British Columbia.

[ourtrust.org/youth](https://ourtrust.org/youth)

**"I've watched tons of the kids grow immensely. A lot's going on here. I feel like right now we're really flourishing."**

SAMANTHA MAGLIO, COORDINATOR,  
NELSON YOUTH ACTION NETWORK







Stefeni Wood of Kat Cadegan Jewellery creates in the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre.

## Heating up a historic arts space

An art centre's upgrades focus on energy savings and the environment

**At the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre, budding and professional artists can hone and showcase their talents in a maze of rooms. Over half a century old, this former RCMP station now provides plenty of space for creativity, but it hasn't been great on energy efficiency—an issue several improvements will address.**

Meghan Porath is the Executive Director. “Basically, our whole goal is to facilitate art in this community to showcase our incredible wealth of artists and to get people who are maybe tiptoeing into art just to try it out.”

This is done through four art gallery spaces, which host upwards of 25 artists a year, a pottery studio, a woodshop, several private artists' studios and a gift shop, plus activities like kids' camps and a range of workshops, from watercolour to traditional Indigenous beading. Over 350 people have purchased memberships, and, in the first half of 2021 alone, over 700 people had visited the galleries. The facility draws in locals, plus visitors passing through.





**“Columbia Basin Trust has been such an integral part of us being able to operate and showcase the incredible artists in our community.”**

MEGHAN PORATH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
REVELSTOKE VISUAL ARTS CENTRE



Meghan Porath, Executive Director, Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre.



Liette Foy, Kalika Jewelry Designs.



Bronson Rabishaw,  
Bench Jeweler,  
Kat Cadegan Jewellery.

To remain economically sustainable, however, building upgrades need to be made. These are being done with help from the Trust’s Energy Sustainability Grants. From 2018 to 2021, this program helped fund 59 projects to improve community-purpose buildings—from town halls to seniors’ centres—so they could increase energy efficiency and sustainability and reduce energy costs.

At the Revelstoke gallery, the plans include replacing the boiler and hot water tank, upgrading exterior doors and getting new windows. Currently, the heat is either on or off for the entire building—in the future, separate rooms should have their own controls.

“We’re really excited about these upgrades,” says Memory Uglene, Board member of the Revelstoke Visual Arts Society, which runs the centre. “We’re expecting quite a bit of savings.”

The spaces will be more comfortable for users—and the building will be more environmentally friendly. “That’s a huge pillar that we want to showcase,” Porath says. “We want to be as environmentally friendly as possible. I feel like this is a really giant step forward.”

By addressing energy efficiency in a building broadly used by community members, the project helps the Trust advance on its strategic priorities to promote climate resiliency and enhance community well-being—which it also does by encouraging participation in the arts.

The centre has also received other support from the Trust. During the pandemic, art openings had to be cancelled. Because meeting the artists is an essential way for people to connect with their work, the centre started offering videos of the artists working behind the scenes. The feedback was enthusiastic. Even with openings restarted, it will continue to make these videos, with support from the Trust.

“Columbia Basin Trust has been such an integral part of us being able to operate and showcase the incredible artists in our community,” Porath says. “Revelstoke is renowned for epic outdoor adventure, but our community has a vibrant arts and cultural sector as well.”



"It might sound like we just jump in a helicopter and go save people, but there's an awful lot that goes on in the background."

NANCY LORAAS, TREASURER,  
COLUMBIA VALLEY  
SEARCH AND RESCUE



## Volunteers set up for success

Columbia Valley Search and Rescue strengthens operations to match specialized rescue measures

**While mountain biking the Johnson Trail in 2020, a child** plunged off the edge of Toby Creek Canyon. Although she tumbled 150 feet down the steep and gravelly canyon wall, Columbia Valley Search and Rescue (CVSAR) was able to deploy a complex rope system and lift her to safety.

CVSAR gets calls to the canyon at least once a year, while also responding to land, lake and stream emergencies all over the Columbia Valley. The registered charity and non-profit organization averages 30 to 40 volunteers who work diligently beside other first responders (primarily the RCMP and BC Ambulance Service) to offer specialized rope, mountain, avalanche and swift water rescue services.

Watching her son Andrew Brennan participate in rescues with CVSAR for nearly a decade inspired Nancy Loraas to offer her facilitation and organizational skills to a strategic planning volunteer position. Attending regular Board meetings soon landed her in the Treasurer role as one of seven Board members. That's when the Board reached out to the Trust's Non-profit Advisors Program to get support with reviewing and improving

the business and financial side of their operations so other volunteers could focus on groundwork.

"We started to think, 'What about the next wave of volunteers?' At some point, there will be a changeover of volunteers and Board members, so we began to look at creating clear guidelines to set the organization up for success," explains Loraas.

With support from the Non-profit Advisors Program,

CVSAR was able to hire a consultant to help the organization develop rigorous internal financial systems, which are bringing clarity and accountability to the immense amount of crucial behind-the-scenes work. A complete review of its financial systems led to the development of a scalable, turn-key solution that meets current and future financial needs.

"Our budgets are complex and the Non-profit Advisors Program helped us to develop financial systems that will lead our organization securely into the future," says CVSAR President Scott Chaffey.

Now, a comprehensive treasurer's report is presented at monthly Board meetings. Inside, the dashboard provides a snapshot overview that includes important information like balances, payables and priorities, and budget versus actual expenditures. The Board is also currently finalizing financial policies and procedures that will guide current and future operations and streamline reporting obligations to CVSAR's funders.

Although CVSAR is based out of Windermere, trained members respond to calls from as far north as the Brisco area and as far south as Canal Flats, and from the Purcell Mountains on the west to the Rocky Mountains along the Alberta border on the east, a total of approximately 10,000 square kilometres. The area is mountainous, with steep walls of poor-quality rock unsuitable for technical climbing, and the numerous valleys are deep and home to fast-flowing creeks and rivers, some with class 5 rapids. The terrain, paired with a healthy appetite for outdoor recreation, means CVSAR services are high in demand.

"It might sound like we just jump in a helicopter and go save people, but there's an awful lot that goes on in the background," explains Loraas. "Search and rescue is full of people who are passionate about serving their community. Many people who join are already very experienced outdoors people, but there are positions available for any volunteer—I'm proof of that."

[ourtrust.org/npa](http://ourtrust.org/npa)

"The Non-profit  
Advisors program  
helped us to develop  
financial systems  
that will lead our  
organization securely  
into the future."

NANCY LORAAS, TREASURER,  
COLUMBIA VALLEY  
SEARCH AND RESCUE



# By the numbers

Through over 70 active programs and initiatives, we're addressing the priorities outlined in our 2020-22 Columbia Basin Management Plan. Here are some highlights from 2020/21.

[ourtrust.org/priorities](https://ourtrust.org/priorities)

**2,145**

BUSINESSES  
BENEFITING  
FROM BUY LOCAL  
INITIATIVES

**185 km**  
OF NEW FIBRE  
OPTIC CABLE

**161**

NEW AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING UNITS IN

**9**

COMMUNITIES

**80**

NEW YOUTH SPORT AND  
ACTIVITY PROJECTS AS  
PART OF BASIN PLAYS

**24**

FOOD ACCESS  
AND RECOVERY  
INITIATIVES

**18**

FARMERS' MARKETS  
RECEIVED WAGE  
SUBSIDIES TO OFFSET  
INCREASED COSTS  
ASSOCIATED WITH  
PROVINCIAL HEALTH  
PROTOCOLS

**116**

ARTS AND CULTURE  
PROJECTS SUPPORTED  
THROUGH THE COLUMBIA  
KOOTENAY CULTURAL  
ALLIANCE

**178**

NON-PROFITS  
ACQUIRED NEW  
TECHNOLOGY

**25**

NEW TRAIL  
ENHANCEMENT  
PROJECTS

**12**

TERRESTRIAL

**4**

WETLAND

**3**

AQUATIC

ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS TO DATE





**“The advisor was able to tell me what I was doing right and give me suggestions for how to improve and increase my revenue over time.”**

COCO SEITZ, OWNER,  
MAMA'S DUMPLINGS

## Mama's Dumplings offers pockets of joy

An East Kootenay business expands with help from programs that support small business, agriculture and food production

The sun glints off the sparkling clean, red and white food truck—out of which waft mouthwatering, savoury smells and the enticing sound of oil sizzling in a pan. Inside, the staff of Mama's Dumplings—a popular food truck serving traditional Northern Chinese fare—happily work away, chatting and laughing. The energy is enthusiastic and optimistic inside the mobile headquarters.

Coco Seitz, the business's owner and operator, has been running the food truck for the better part of a decade, feeding Cranbrook and the East Kootenay. More recently, the company has shifted, pivoted and, ultimately, accelerated, with support from the Trust.

Immigrating to the Basin from Jilin, China, in 2009, with a passion for food and the connections it creates, Seitz began cooking traditional recipes and sharing them with her friends and family. Her food's popularity and following grew and, in 2014, she opened Mama's Dumplings.

Now employing three full-time staff, the business boasts a wider market than ever before—including selling frozen products in Basin stores—and continues to expand into new territory.

The transformation began five years ago when Seitz reached out to Basin Business Advisors (BBA), a Trust program that provides free, one-to-one, confidential business counselling and assessment services.

“The advisor was able to tell me what I was doing right and give me suggestions for how to improve and increase my revenue over time,” Seitz says. “It's given me knowledge to become a smarter entrepreneur—not just focusing on what I do with my hands in the business, but looking down the road and doing financial planning for the future. I've learned how to have an entrepreneur's vision.”

For example, 80 per cent of the business's sales once came from the food truck and the rest from selling frozen products in stores. With guidance from BBA, Seitz shifted this so that half of the sales now come from the food truck and half from more-lucrative store sales. Mama's Dumplings are now available in 26 stores throughout the East and West Kootenays.

Coco Seitz, Owner, Mama's Dumplings.





Coco Seitz with family.



## Revitalizing businesses

The #BuyBasin Festival is just one of the Trust's initiatives that draws increased attention to businesses in the region: a total of 112 of them in spring 2021. Another example is the Buy Local Grants program, which helps organizations promote local businesses through campaigns and events. One recipient was the Castlegar Chamber of Commerce, which created the "Shop Where You Live" campaign at the end of 2020. This included social media marketing, city-wide branding, a retail map directory, community engagement initiatives and a robust marketing plan. Over 500 Castlegar businesses participated in the campaign. Together with the Holiday Buy Local Grants—which encourage Basin residents to source holiday gifts locally—and #BuyBasin Festival, 2,145 businesses have benefited from these business-focused supports in the region.

[ourtrust.org/buylocal](https://ourtrust.org/buylocal)

Stay tuned for the next  
#BuyBasin festival dates  
in 2022.

[ourtrust.org/buybasin](https://ourtrust.org/buybasin)

The Trust's Summer Works program—which helps Basin small businesses hire student employees during the summer season—was another helpful resource in 2020. The subsidy enabled Seitz to hire a youth for both food production and staffing the food truck at farmers' markets. With less cash flow during the pandemic, the wage subsidy was, according to Seitz, "a huge help when we needed it most." That employee returned in 2021 and became responsible for training other student staff.

Business renewal, and local food production and access, are both priorities of the Trust. Bolstering small businesses, regional employment and economic growth in the Basin are especially relevant while recovering from the challenges associated with the pandemic. Also, food producers and farmers play an important role in the region by creating employment, education and volunteer opportunities, and enhancing access to local foods.

Participating in the Basin Food & Buyers Expo has also been incredibly constructive for Seitz's business. This Trust-supported event—held in person in 2019 and virtually in 2021—was an opportunity for food producers, growers, chefs and grocers to gather, connect and reflect on the future of their industries. "The essence of the food expo is connecting people and producers to what they need," says Seitz, who spoke with

other attendees at the 2019 event about transportation challenges for food producers in the region.

Then, during 2021's virtual expo, she was able to launch her idea of buying a refrigerated van and offering an affordable delivery service between the East and West Kootenays. This would bring both her own and others' products to a greater number of stores. The idea was a hit—and Seitz has since made it a reality, called Advancit Logistics.

Seitz also participated in the spring 2021 virtual #BuyBasin Festival, an event hosted live on Facebook that showcased products and services from around the Basin. "In the coaching I received in preparation for the event, I was able to learn a lot about marketing on social media," she says.

Even with the abundant growth of her business, it's clear that Seitz is just getting started. She's currently working toward offering Mama's Dumplings in storefronts in other provinces. She also plans to expand into a larger food production space, and introduce additional food trucks across BC within the next five years—bringing Mama's Dumplings' fantastic fare to more foodies than ever.

[ourtrust.org/bba](https://ourtrust.org/bba)

[ourtrust.org/summerworks](https://ourtrust.org/summerworks)





Sparwood's Lunch Loop trail network.

## A focus on the outdoors

The Trust's Trail Enhancement Grants support projects that rehabilitate, enhance or develop recreational trails to provide greater and safer access to recreational opportunities. In 2020/21, community groups across the Basin undertook 25 new projects, supported by nearly \$500,000 from the Trust.

[ourtrust.org/trailgrants](https://ourtrust.org/trailgrants)

# Improving accessibility and safety on the trails

Projects make it more enjoyable than ever to get outside

**The Basin is renowned for its network of hiking, biking, horseback riding and Nordic ski trails.** With more people staying local and exploring their surroundings, many of the projects supported by the Trust's Trail Enhancement Grants aim to get residents into nature to support community well-being—a priority of the Trust. In addition to creating new trails, these projects focus on activities like repairing damaged trails, increasing accessibility for a variety of users, addressing environmental issues, incorporating Indigenous cultural or heritage values, and repairing or adding trail infrastructure and amenities.





Lettrari Loop near Kaslo.



Ka Papa Cedars trail on Kootenay Pass.

### LUNCH LOOP OFFERS TRAIL ACCESS CLOSE TO TOWN

Since 2019, the Sparwood Trails Alliance Association has been improving and expanding a network of trails near the town called the Lunch Loop. Located close to the downtown core, schools and businesses, the trails offer options for all ages and skill levels. With a new access point and the additions of the Lunch Money and Smoko trails, the network offers convenient and accessible options for a walk, hike, ride, snowshoe or ski—right in town.

### REROUTE OF A LOCAL FAVOURITE

The Lettrari Loop is a well-known and popular trail located near Kaslo. In 2020, the Kaslo Outdoor Recreation and Trails Society, Kaslo Mountain Bike Club, Village of Kaslo and Kaslo & District Community Forest Society oversaw a reroute to a portion of the loop, including building a new bridge, to bypass industrial traffic in the area. Other Kaslo-area trail work in 2020 included upgrades and additions to the No Brakes trail and completion of the Songbird Loop trail.

### AN INTERACTIVE TRAIL FOR ALL

Thirty-five kilometres west of Creston, on Kootenay Pass, is the 1.7-kilometre Ka Papa Cedars trail—*Ka Papa* in Ktunaxa means “my grandfather.” Built and maintained by the Trails for Creston Valley Society, with the first section completed in 2018, Ka Papa Cedars now also has nine new interpretive signs that guide you through towering old-growth cedars and a rich forest floor, providing historical, environmental and cultural education to enhance your experience.



# Coming home

## Kenpesq't continues to expand community housing options

**Floyd Sam enjoys working in his yard in the community** he loves. "It's really good to be here," the Kenpesq't community member says (also known as Shuswap Band). After living in many other places over the years, he recently moved into a one-bedroom, 736-square-foot duplex, one of eight new units completed in Kenpesq't, near Invermere, in 2021.

With a contemporary design and amenities inside, and a green space and decks outside, Sam appreciates the ability to create a home base he can cultivate. "It's finally my own place."

After firefighting for 20 years, based out of Cranbrook but working in remote locations, he moved back to Kenpesq't in February 2021 when the opportunity presented itself. Facing health challenges that changed his life and career path, Sam feels that coming home was a perfect fit. "I wasn't having enough time for myself before that happened," he says. "I really needed this time...it means I can live again."

Sam is just one of the people who has benefited from Kenpesq't's recent push for affordable housing. Since 2018, it has added four new two- and three-bedroom units in two duplexes, plus the eight one-bedroom units in four more duplexes—all supported in part by the Trust.

### NEW FOUNDATIONS

The number of new homes will increase again when five larger modular homes are delivered to the community—planned for summer 2021 but delayed due to the impacts of the wildfire season. Each home will be over 1,000 square feet, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. One will also have a full basement that adds two bedrooms and another bathroom, perfect for a large family.

This will bring the total to 17 new units since 2018—all also supported by the federal government through Indigenous Services Canada or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "It's nice to have people back in the community,"

**"It's really good to be here."**

FLOYD SAM, KENPESQ'T MEMBER



*Left to right: Michael Stevens, Kenpesq't member; Dolores Nicholas, Social Development and Housing Manager, Kenpesq't; Floyd Sam, Kenpesq't member.*



says Dolores Nicholas, Kenpesq't Social Development and Housing Manager. "They're thriving."

Nicholas mentions stories of members who, unable to find a stable residence in their home community, are forced to move in with family or find temporary, often-expensive housing that may be less than adequate. More housing stock, with reasonable rents, meets an identified need in Kenpesq't, and the larger modulars offer options for growing families to move into bigger spaces, opening up suites for others and enabling them "to join the community, too."

Michael Stevens, another Kenpesq't community member and one of Sam's neighbours, also wanted to be closer to home and part of the community he cares about. Even with a job offer elsewhere, he says his personal connection to Kenpesq't and being available to help his neighbours was an anchor in his decision. "I would rather stay here, in the community," he says. "They see me, and I want to be seen by the community, which works out perfect."

Stevens was able to move into his suite in March 2021 and work nearby. "I feel very fortunate that I can call a place home, where I can actually come home and relax and know that everything inside this place is mine. It's perfect."

**"It's nice to have people back in the community. They're thriving."**

DOLORES NICHOLAS, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING MANAGER, KENPESQ'T

## OPENING DOORS

Elsewhere in the community, energy retrofits and health and safety repairs are on the way for up to 19 existing units, with the Trust and other partners funding energy audits and repairs.

When possible, Nicholas says Kenpesq't has been using Basin-based builders, amidst a construction boom in the region that has caused its own set of challenges for many. In addition, these contractors aim to hire Band members to work alongside them, giving them experience they can use on future jobs.

She looks forward to more projects that will continue to increase the housing stock, supporting families, elders and young adults. "It's so important for our young adults to have their own place," she says. "If they have their own place, they learn responsibility."

Overall, she says that Kenpesq't is proud of what it has accomplished so far and sees many more opportunities ahead. "The community, and Chief and Council, appreciate what the Trust has helped us with achieving."

## High-quality housing options

The Trust's First Nations Housing Sustainability Initiative helps First Nations in the Basin enhance and increase their affordable rental housing. The collaboration began after the Trust heard from ʔakisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, Kenpesq't, Yaqa Nuʔkiy and Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓i'it that affordable housing is a challenge, and ways in which the Trust could support this work.

Launched in 2017, the initiative offers support in three areas: asset management and capacity building, energy retrofits and repairs, and new builds. So far, nearly 80 affordable units have been built or are under way, and over 200 additional homes have been assessed for energy retrofits and health and safety repairs, have been repaired or are in the queue.

Also, through the Trust-supported First Nations Asset Management Initiative, First Nations are working together to develop other innovative housing solutions, enhance their processes and capacity, and develop staff skill sets. BC Housing and Indigenous Services Canada are also supporting these housing initiatives.

Between the construction, ongoing asset management and administration of housing, these initiatives also build the skills of First Nations members and provide employment where possible—creating impact that goes beyond the buildings' four walls.

[ourtrust.org/firstnationshousing](https://ourtrust.org/firstnationshousing)





# Environmental education resource branches out

## Creating jobs with a cause

**On the black shelving units, well-labelled bins hold items** like field guides to butterflies and sturdy binoculars for kids. On a table, child-friendly hand magnifiers and weatherproof clipboards stack neatly, ready for packing and shipping. This is “HQ”: the Invermere headquarters of Canada’s Outdoor Learning Store, an environmental educator’s resource that started in the Columbia Basin but has since bloomed Canada-wide.

“We source things that you couldn’t pick up in your local store, and that are tried and tested by educators,” says Duncan Whittick, Executive Director of the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN). This organization runs the online, one-stop-shop for the equipment and materials that environmental educators need.

Due to the pandemic, which “launched outdoor learning into the forefront,” Whittick says, the store recently exploded from a small operation into a national one. He saw an opportunity to create jobs that would build skills while aiding the social enterprise’s growth—and so turned to the Trust.

### TWO GOALS IN ONE

To help promote employment during the pandemic—and help people build skills they can continue to use afterward—the Trust offers the Basin Job Experience Program. Through this, organizations and projects that are already being supported by other select Trust programs can obtain a wage subsidy to hire and train employees. By summer 2021, this program had helped 22 organizations create 41 positions. The organization or project benefits—and so do the employees.

Since 2002, CBEEN has connected the region’s environmental educators to information, networking and professional development opportunities—and resources like the equipment they need to teach students in the field. It also delivers the Wild Voices for Kids program, which has local experts deliver curriculum-linked programs to schools across the Basin. Overall, CBEEN encourages all people to discover and protect nature.



Chris O’Shaughnessy, employee,  
Canada’s Outdoor Learning Store.



### A SOLID TEAM

To meet the store's growing demand, in March 2021 CBEEN hired Chris O'Shaughnessy. Her role, she says, is "getting the goods out the door to the people"—something Whittick and his family had been squeezing in on weekends for multiple months.

O'Shaughnessy was relieved to get a job during the pandemic that didn't require up-close contact with customers. In addition, she has started training to become an education assistant. Knowing that resources like this store and CBEEN are available will help her in her career.

Then, in April 2021, Natt Forrest also came on board. In addition to fulfilling orders, she oversees the website and communications. "I wear a few hats," she says, "which is great."

Before the pandemic, Forrest had taught therapeutic movement and yoga and focused on applied ecopsychology, a topic in which she has a PhD. But without being able to get together in person with clients, and without the space to offer online services, "I had to, for the most part, pause my business," she says.

The store offered employment, plus fit with her mission to do work that matters. "To me, it has to be something that better our world."

Will the experience help her when she restarts her business? "Absolutely," she says.

### A CHAIN OF EFFECTS

Right now, store revenue is reinvested into the social enterprise to help with its growth. In the future, the profits will stream back into CBEEN's other programs and services. Whittick says that, through these earnings, and by providing environmental educators with resources to do their jobs well, the store is "ticking all these boxes for CBEEN, while at the same time filling this need for others."

However, according to Whittick, this popular asset may not have rooted as successfully as it has without the wage subsidy from the Trust. "We would have been so over-maxed if we didn't have that support," he says. "It has really allowed us to have a far smoother transition to this bigger social enterprise."

And as the store and its employees thrive, so does CBEEN. Overall, it's a win for the people in the Basin and the environment they love.

In addition to the Basin Job Experience Program, the Trust also offers several other wage subsidy programs.

[ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy](http://ourtrust.org/wagesubsidy)



Natt Forrest, employee, Canada's Outdoor Learning Store.







# Laying the groundwork for a better digital future

185 kilometres of new fibre optic cable extends a backbone network

## While out enjoying the Slocan Valley Rail Trail in summer

2021, you might have seen an unusual piece of equipment: a tractor-like vehicle mounted with a huge spool of cable. Its job: to dig a trench at the edge of the trail and place the cable in it, laying the necessary groundwork to help improve internet access for many businesses and residents in the Slocan Valley.

One of the Trust's priorities is to improve access to reliable, affordable, high-speed connectivity in the region, especially in underserved rural areas. People in the Basin have expressed that good connectivity is essential when it comes to education, employment, health care, entertainment and connecting with others.

Two new projects will add 185 kilometres of fibre optic cable in the region. With this new backbone in place, local internet service providers can gain access to this network at various points of presence along the route. This would enable them to greatly improve service to meet the current and future needs of local communities, businesses and residents.

In the Slocan Valley, the fibre installation project begins at Playmor Junction; runs up the Slocan Valley through Winlaw, Slocan and New Denver; heads northwest to Nakusp; and then stops at Shoreholme. In a second location—the

South Country—the project runs between Jaffray and the United States border at Roosville, including Yaqit 'a-knuq'it, Grasmere and Baynes Lake, plus an additional branch to Kragmont.

In some places, like along the Rail Trail, the cable is being buried underground. There are also two other installation methods being used: aerial and submarine. The aerial technique is used to install fibre optic cable on existing utility and communications poles. Where it makes sense, the cable is being laid under water, like in Slocan and Summit lakes. In the South Country, construction crews are undertaking mostly aerial and underground installations. All work is on track to finish by spring 2023.

The project is also being supported by the Province's Connecting British Columbia program, plus the regional districts of East Kootenay and Central Kootenay and the communities of Slocan, Silverton, New Denver and Nakusp.

Once it's completed, internet service providers can connect to this expanded backbone, and up to 6,400 households could ultimately benefit from improved high-speed connectivity.

[ourtrust.org/broadband](https://ourtrust.org/broadband)







# Colleges refresh, revise and renew

New programs, staff and support for students

**Investing in students in the Basin benefits the region**, as they contribute to our communities today and will become the people who live, work and play here tomorrow.

From helping these individuals shape their careers, to building the local workforce, to collaborating with communities as they address their needs, the Trust and the region's post-secondary institutions share many priorities.

That's why, in 2019, the Trust committed \$6 million over three years to Selkirk College and College of the Rockies. With this support, the colleges are developing ways to improve and grow their program offerings, plus enhance the quality, availability and uniqueness of the college experience for students.

The results so far have been broad. Some are behind the scenes. Others are more noticeable. Here is how these two institutions have added to or adjusted their offerings so students can renew and reach their aspirations.

Robin Hicks, Vice President, Academic and Applied Research, College of the Rockies.



## REFRESH THEIR OFFERINGS

When the pandemic “basically destroyed” Vince Mackie’s career in corporate events, the Vancouver resident decided it was time for a radical change: he enrolled in Selkirk College’s new Digital Fabrication & Design program.

The Trust support enabled the college to develop this two-year diploma, which launched in September 2020. Here, students learn high-tech ways to design and create products—for example by using 3D CAD (computer-aided design), 3D printing or CNC milling (computer numerical control).

“The program combines hands-on digital fabrication training with design-focused education,” says instructor Kailey Allan. “The goal is to prepare and inspire design-forward problem solvers and fabricators so they can respond to rapidly changing environments.”

Graduates will be able to work in sectors as varied as timber production, architectural design or even medicine—with many employers right here in the region. “Digital fabrication is being applied in every industry right now in some form or another,” says Allan. “That’s the beauty of this program: when students come out of it, they have the ability to choose.”

Student Christien Cleland, who previously worked in construction, particularly enjoys the CNC machines. “They seem like they have a lot of potential,” he says. As does his future. When pondering all the jobs that might lie ahead, he says, “It just seems like there are so many possibilities.”



Christien Cleland, Digital Fabrication & Design student, Selkirk College.

Through the Trust partnership, Selkirk College has also:

- introduced a Web Development program
- added staff to its Teaching & Learning Institute to provide additional training for instructors.



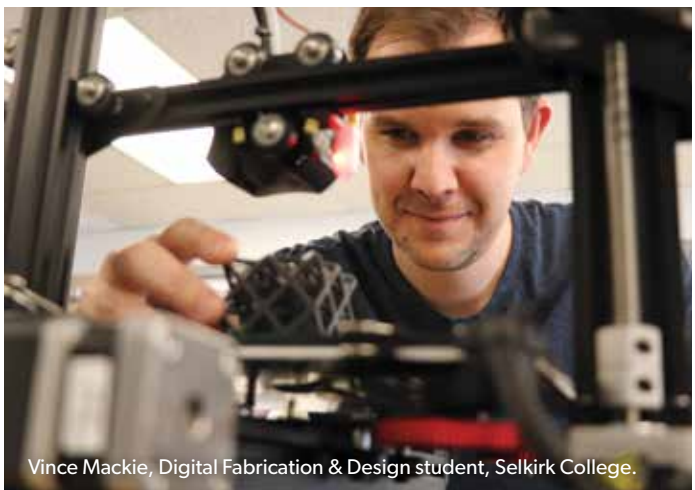
**“Having a chance to partner with Columbia Basin Trust means that the student experience is enhanced, programming stays relevant in our changing times and people are excited about what a post-secondary education can do for their future. Together, we are helping to change the lives of learners.”**

RHYS ANDREWS, VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION, SELKIRK COLLEGE

A good chunk of the program takes place in the Selkirk Technology Access Centre in Trail. This lab is the newest evolution of the former MIDAS lab (Metallurgical Industrial Development Acceleration and Studies), which the Trust helped launch in 2016 and which the college took over in spring 2020. Here, Mackie and Cleland gained even more hands-on experience doing co-op jobs in summer 2021.

In fall 2021, the program is welcoming a second instructor and even more students. “The technology that we teach is rapidly changing,” Allan says. The program will be continually refined to ensure it is “suited to the needs of industry.”

It also aims to suit the needs of its students. Even though his life has flipped, Mackie is enthusiastic. “I think I’m on a good path here,” he says. “I really do.”

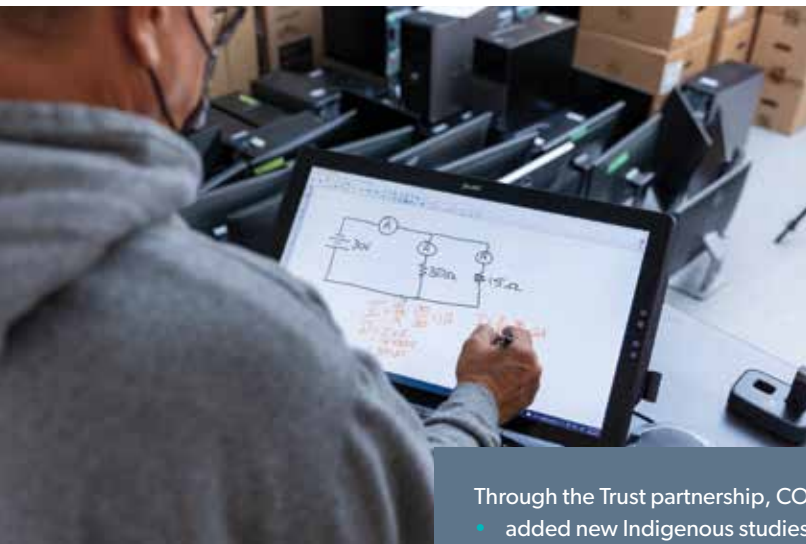


Vince Mackie, Digital Fabrication & Design student, Selkirk College.



**“We really value this partnership. It’s allowing us to do things that we would not otherwise have been able to do, to keep our staff and faculty engaged and excited about advancements in meeting students’ needs, and to enhance the quality and relevance of our education.”**

ROBIN HICKS, VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH, COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES



Through the Trust partnership, COTR has also:

- added new Indigenous studies courses
- increased its Environmental Science offerings.



#### REVISE THEIR DELIVERY

*Everyone go home!* In spring 2020, that was the gist of the message abruptly sent to post-secondary students, faculty and staff around the province, including College of the Rockies (COTR). While the adjustment was difficult for all students, it seemed like learning from home would be nearly impossible for those in extremely hands-on programs like the trades.

“And yet our faculty were incredibly creative and innovative and flexible in figuring out how to make that work,” says Robin Hicks, COTR’s Vice President of Academic and Applied Research.

While some learning still required mandatory in-class, small-group sessions, the theory components went online. And with the Trust funding, the college gave the faculty the tools they needed to replicate the classroom experience as much as possible.

This included creating six “broadcast rooms” at COTR’s Cranbrook campus: each complete with a camera on a tripod, a smart board and a “document camera” that focuses on a single document or object, all seen by students through Microsoft Teams. It also upgraded technology in other locations.

Kevin Szol, instructor of the electrician apprenticeship program, used one of these rooms. Rather than only seeing his face onscreen, “The students could actually watch me as if they were sitting in class,” he says. He could draw on the smart board and point out specific items. He could place a breaker, for example, under the document camera and students could observe its parts up close. Every now and then, he lightened the mood by turning the camera toward the window so they could all gaze outside.

Despite the distance, he says, “The technology helped us do what we do.”

Even after the pandemic, the college will continue embracing this innovative delivery method. And Szol himself plans to continue recording his classes—helpful if a student is ill or can’t attend due to weather. While he’s super grateful to see faces in person again this fall, this new technology “gives us choices.”





Martin Gislimberti,  
Coordinator, Valemount  
Entertainment Society.

**"The pandemic has made us embrace technologies that we would not have used in the past."**

MICHAEL PETERS,  
COORDINATOR, VALEMOUNT  
ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY



Michael Peters, Coordinator, Valemount Entertainment Society.

#### AN ABUNDANCE OF NEW TECH

In addition to the Valemount Entertainment Society, several other Valemount organizations also recently received Non-profit Tech Grants. Equipment purchased includes laptops for administrators and trail-use counters.

**Robson Valley Community Services Society**

**Valemount and Area Recreation Development Association**

**Valemount Children's Activity Society**

**Valemount Learning Society**

**Valemount Senior Citizens Housing Society**

## A community TV station expands the picture

New tech helps Valemount residents keep up to date on local events

It was a unique day at the Valemount airport. In early June 2021, instead of planes heading down the runway, there were teens in ballgowns and dark suits walking across an outdoor stage. From parked cars, family and friends honked in approval as each graduate received a high school diploma. As far as South Africa, even more family and friends watched the ceremony streamed live online—a technological milestone for the community.

"That's the kind of reach that we can now extend," says Michael Peters, Coordinator of the Valemount Entertainment Society, which runs the community TV station that covers local happenings.

When the pandemic hit, many events turned to online gatherings or greatly limited in-person attendance. How could the station step in to help fill this gap?

Support came through a Non-profit Tech Grant from the Trust. In 2021 alone, this program helped nearly 180 organizations in more than 40 Basin communities purchase technology to improve their operations and continue to deliver vital services.

In Valemount, the station acquired an encoder/switcher so it could do livestreaming, plus equipment like a web camera and microphone so it could record high-quality interviews over Zoom.

"It's been a blessing for us," Peters said.

To help community members create their own video content, the society also purchased camcorders and tripods that the public can sign out—plus it offers training and access to its studio.

The station intends to continue its live coverage for the foreseeable future. Council chambers, for example, can only fit about 10 spectators—but now and onwards, all folks interested in council meetings will be able to watch them in real time.

Although the pandemic has been difficult in many ways, "it's made us embrace technologies that we would not have used in the past," Peters says. For this community, it's been a rewarding shift.

[ourtrust.org/nonprofittech](http://ourtrust.org/nonprofittech)



# Generating returns

The Trust invests in the region's future

To generate the revenues it needs to fund programs and services that support the efforts of Basin residents, the Trust invests in three overarching categories:

- hydropower facilities
- private placements, which includes real estate investments and loans to Basin businesses
- market securities.

Our goal is to generate a predictable, sustainable and growing income stream, always keeping in mind the principles of a prudent investor and the balance between risk and returns.

[ourtrust.org/investments](https://ourtrust.org/investments)

Here's one example of how the Trust invests in Basin businesses.

## New owner keeps a Creston business running

The deal goes through with a loan from the Trust

**"When you're doing what you like to do, you don't really consider it hard work,"** says Leo Oren. In his case, he spends long days in his auto repair shop—West RightWay Vehicle Specialist in Creston—fixing and preventing mechanical problems.

"I love the community here, and I love the area," he says. "I love what I do."

Originally from Israel, Oren came to Canada about a dozen years ago. He spent time in a few locations, including Kelowna, but his hope was to settle into a small town and buy a property. Looking around, he saw an opportunity in Creston: a commercial garage listed for sale. The owner—who had already run the business for a few decades—was retiring.

Getting financing, however, was another issue. After hitches trying to obtain a loan from banks, Oren approached the Trust to support him in the purchase and start-up costs of his new business. "At the end of the day, it was Columbia Basin Trust that came through," Oren says, referring to its Investments program, which offers loans to Basin-based businesses, non-profits and social enterprises.

Now, Oren's garage has been serving the Creston community for over two and a half years. "Things are going well," he says, having worked on over 1,000 vehicles for about 700 customers. The pandemic halted business for a brief moment, but then it restarted pretty much as normal. "Automotive is something that everyone needs, regardless of a pandemic or not."



Leo Oren, Owner, West Rightway Vehicle Specialist.





Full stories at

*Basin Stories*

stories.ourtrust.org



Cloé Bayeur-Holland, Board member, Kaslo Community Fitness Co-op.



Cori Lauson, Board member, Kaslo Community Fitness Co-op.

Andrew Greene, member,  
Kaslo Community Fitness Co-op.

## Fitness is just the start

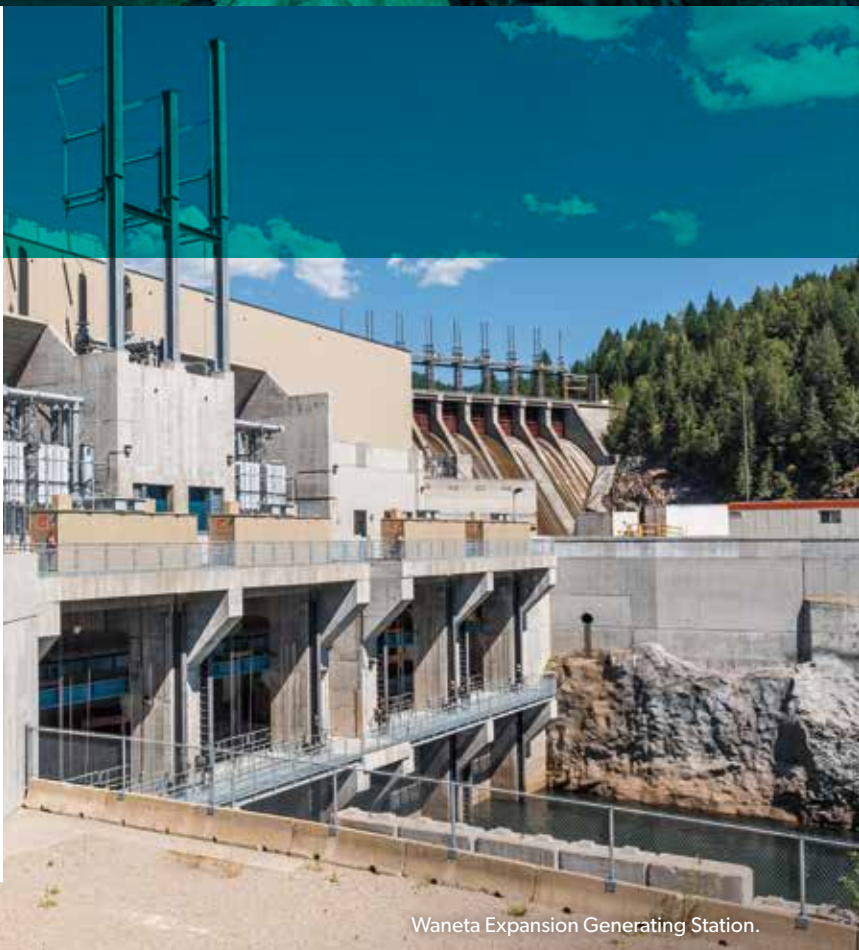
Whether they prefer treadmills or free weights, or do box jumps or burpees, members of the **Kaslo Community Fitness Co-op** love this well-equipped space. A couple of years ago, the gym's previous owners put the popular facility up for sale. To keep it from shutting down, users banded together to **purchase and run it as a co-op**. The proposal was supported with a loan from the Trust's **Impact Investment Fund**, which supports business opportunities that may not be able to obtain conventional financing but can demonstrate significant positive and measurable impacts in the community. Now, users of all ages and fitness levels visit the gym to boost physical health, which also supports mental health. Even people who don't work out have become members, recognizing that an asset like this adds to the community's overall quality of life.

[ourtrust.org/impact](https://ourtrust.org/impact)



# Hydropower investments *enrich* the lives of people in the Basin

Significant achievements managed in a difficult year



**Together with Columbia Power Corporation,** the Trust owns four hydropower facilities in the southwest Basin. Fifty per cent of the income generated from these facilities is used to deliver the programs and initiatives that support social, economic and environmental well-being in the Basin—including all the projects featured in this magazine—and 50 per cent goes to Columbia Power's shareholder, the Province of British Columbia.

The hydropower facilities saw significant achievements in what was a very difficult year impacted by COVID-19. In 2020/21, all four facilities saw a combined net income of \$143.2 million—a healthy financial performance in year-over-year numbers.

This was the third year the partners focused their efforts on increasing asset performance, reliability and profitability. In 2018, Columbia Power implemented a reliability-centered maintenance program at Arrow Lakes Generating Station, which optimizes operations and maintenance costs and increases the amount of time the station is available to generate power. The results have been outstanding, with 2020/21 yielding some of the highest availability in the station's 20 years of operation.

Waneta Expansion Generating Station.





Brilliant Expansion Generating Station.



### ARROW LAKES GENERATING STATION

Located 400 metres downstream from the existing Hugh Keenleyside Dam on Arrow Lakes Reservoir near Castlegar, this \$300-million project makes use of water that would otherwise be spilled. It generates enough power to supply 80,000 homes.

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### BRILLIANT EXPANSION GENERATING STATION

Located on the east bank of Kootenay River, downstream from Brilliant Dam, this \$245-million project makes use of water that would otherwise be spilled. It generates enough power to supply 50,000 homes.

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### BRILLIANT DAM AND GENERATING STATION

The Trust bought this dam from Teck (formerly Cominco) for \$130 million and performed \$100 million in improvements to extend its life and increase its capacity. It is located approximately eight kilometres from Castlegar on Kootenay River, and generates enough power to supply 100,000 homes.

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### WANETA EXPANSION GENERATING STATION

Located immediately downstream of Waneta Dam on Pend d'Oreille River near Trail, this \$900-million expansion was built in partnership with Fortis Inc. The Trust purchased Fortis' interest in the project in 2019. It generates enough power to supply 63,000 homes.

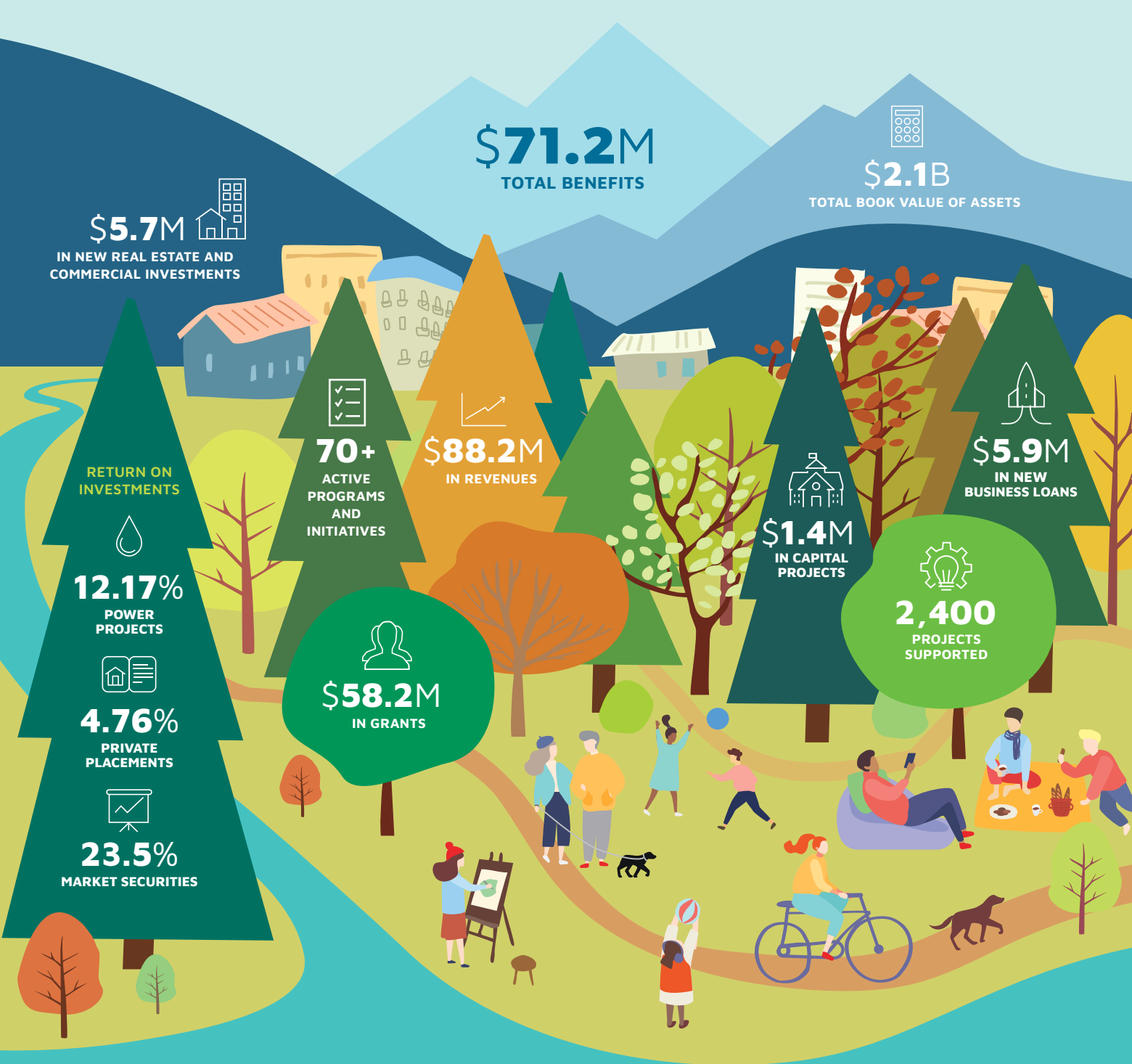
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Waneta Expansion Generating Station.







## Financial *overview*

A healthy financial position and reliable revenues create sustainable support for Basin communities

The Trust provided \$71.2 million in 2020/21 to support the efforts of Basin communities and residents. This included \$58.2 million in granting programs and initiatives, \$1.4 million in capital projects to support economic development and broadband infrastructure, \$5.9 million in business loans and \$5.7 million in real estate and commercial investments.

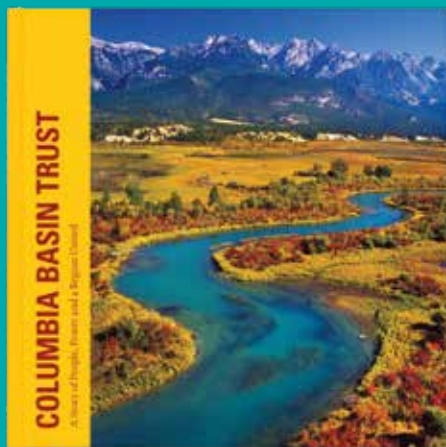
We gave financial support to over 2,400 projects through over 70 active programs and initiatives. Revenues rose to \$88.2 million thanks to the increased performance and reliability, along with other enhancements, of our hydropower facilities, jointly owned with Columbia Power Corporation.

[ourtrust.org/annualreport](https://ourtrust.org/annualreport)



# Supporting your efforts and ideas for over 25 years

We're here to support what the people of the Basin want to achieve. It's your input that guides how we work.



We take our lead from people and communities.

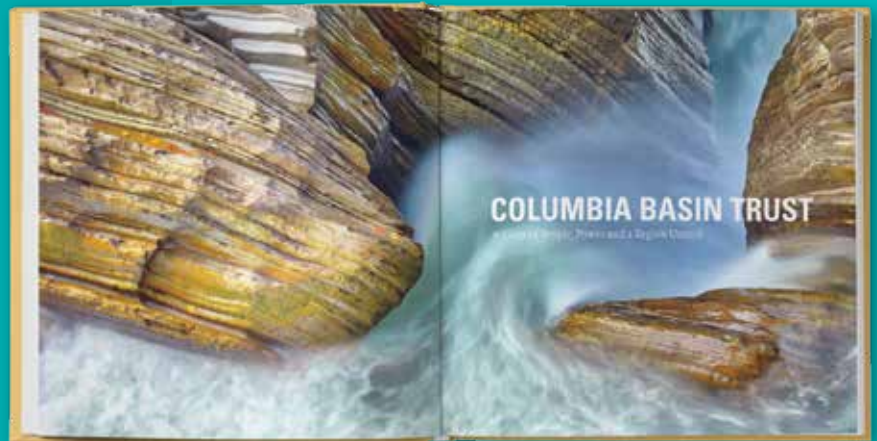
Whatever the situation calls for, we adapt our role: from providing resources, to bringing people together, to leading an entire initiative. The Trust is here to offer experience and support to all.

While our range of services, programs, initiatives and financial investments is extensive, our purpose is straightforward: we exist and act for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Basin—now and for generations to come.

To be effective in our work with communities, we remain flexible and use varied approaches—based on the needs of the situation, the participants involved and how we can be most effective—to respond to Basin priorities.

To mark the Trust's 25th anniversary in 2020, we created a book that celebrates the people and places of the Basin, a story of people, power and a region united. It is available in hard copy, and in ebook and audio formats. Find it at:

[25years.ourtrust.org](https://25years.ourtrust.org)



## Marking 25 years of Columbia Basin Trust

On July 22, 2021, Premier John Horgan, Minister Katrine Conroy and Nelson-Creston MLA Brittney Anderson were welcomed to the Trust's Castlegar office to celebrate our history. Premier Horgan and Minister Conroy shared personal reflections about, and connections to, the creation of the Trust.

*Left to right:* Johnny Strilaeff, President and CEO, Columbia Basin Trust; Jocelyn Carver, Chair, Board of Directors, Columbia Basin Trust; Premier John Horgan, Province of BC; Minister Katrine Conroy, Province of BC; Brittney Anderson, MLA Nelson-Creston, Province of BC.





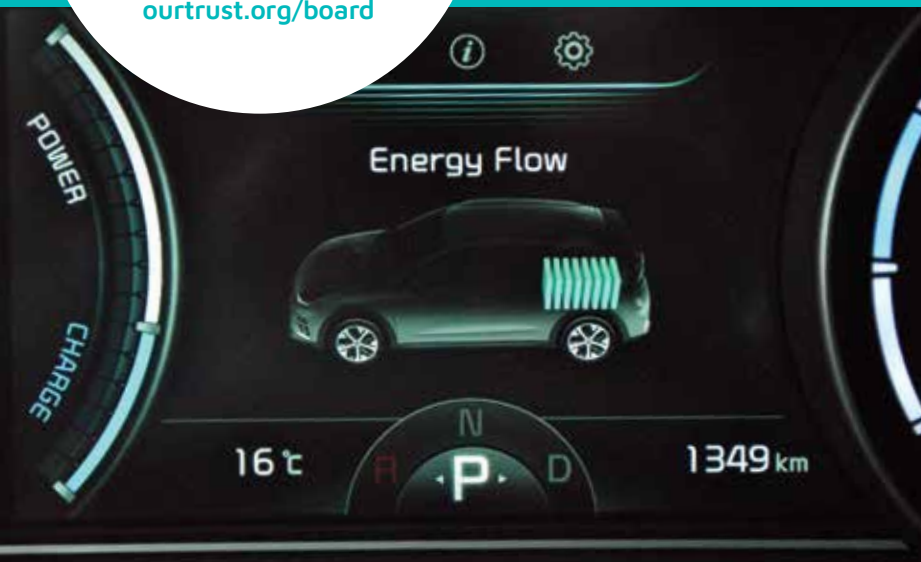
Columbia Basin Trust Board of Directors. *Left to right:* Don McCormick, Krista Turcasso, Corky Evans, Jocelyn Carver (Chair), Owen Torgerson, Carol Andrews, Bill van Yzerloo, David Raven (Vice-Chair), Murray McConnachie. *Missing:* Codie Morigeau, Ron Oszust, Aimee Watson.



### Our directors

The Trust is governed by a Board of Directors composed of 12 members who live in the Basin. Learn more about our Board and read highlights and meeting minutes at:

[ourtrust.org/board](https://ourtrust.org/board)



### Going electric

In fall 2021 the Trust replaced two internal combustion engine fleet vehicles with **two fully electric vehicles**. The environmentally friendly vehicles have a range of 385 kilometres on average, or 280 to 500 km depending on road conditions and the use of the heater, air conditioning and other features. The vehicles also have a regenerative braking system that charges the battery while slowing down.





## Columbia Basin Trust region

The Trust serves the region consisting of all the watersheds that flow into the Columbia River in Canada and operates in the traditional territories of the Ktunaxa, Lheidli T'enneh, Secwepemc, Sinixt and Syilx Nations.

### Map legend

- Incorporated Communities
- First Nations Communities
- ▼ Columbia River Treaty Dams
- Rivers
- ← Direction of Water Flow
- ..... Canada-USA Border

The area encompasses nearly 80,000 square kilometres in southeastern British Columbia and has a population of 165,000 people.

### Contact us

1.800.505.8998  
[info@ourtrust.org](mailto:info@ourtrust.org)



[ourtrust.org](http://ourtrust.org)





## *Basin Stories*

Remarkable stories of  
**people** and **places** in the  
Columbia Basin at  
[ourtrust.org/basinstories](https://ourtrust.org/basinstories)



@ #basinlife

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