

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 Basin residents connect & engage
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- 26 Hydropower gates get new life
- 36 Communities add affordable housing

our trust

Stories of people and places in the Columbia Basin



Building Community

FALL 2023

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FALL 2023

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ourtrust.org/magazinesurvey



Columbia
Basin **trust**



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Cover Photo:
Resident Robyn
Hooper and son attend
a community meeting.
Photo: Keri Knapp

This year's issue of *Our Trust* magazine was printed by Warren's Waterless Printing, Canada's first and only waterless printer. It is printed on Enviro 100 paper, which contains 100% post-consumer fibre, is EcoLogo, is Processed Chlorine Free, and is certified and manufactured in Canada using biogas energy with vegetable-based inks.



OUR PRODUCTION-PROCESS DECISIONS RESULTED IN SAVING:



49 METRIC
TONS OF
WOOD
320 TREES



91 M³ WORLD
EQ. OF WATER
954 10-MINUTE
SHOWERS IN
NORTH AMERICA



20,835 KG CO₂
83,030 KM
DRIVEN BY CAR



558 GJ
2,578,989
60W LIGHT
BULBS FOR
ONE HOUR



103 KG NMVOC
(Non-methane volatile
organic compounds)
102,465 KM DRIVEN
BY CAR

Message from the Chair and CEO



EVERY YEAR we're excited to deliver this magazine to residents throughout the Columbia Basin—all to celebrate the amazing accomplishments that are taking place around the region. This year is no exception. However, one thing really stands out: meeting with so many of you in person!

We chatted during community visits. We greeted residents at not one, but three symposia. We also had several online conversations and other virtual discussions. For the first time in several years, we were able to reunite with you in in-depth ways. It reminded us just how much connection matters as we sought your input to renew the Columbia Basin Management Plan. Read all about the Our Trust, Our Future engagement process on page 10.

Since the Trust was formed in 1995, we've been focused on supporting your efforts to make the Basin the kind of place we all want to live, work and grow old in. So much has changed over the years, but this enduring commitment to work together, as one region, will always be with us.

The new Columbia Basin Management Plan will be finalized later this year and will guide the next chapter of how we support your efforts to improve social, economic and environmental well-being in the region. We're looking forward to seeing where this new plan takes us, but in the meantime, we'd like to highlight some of your incredible work over the past year.

We're proud to have partnered with non-profits, businesses, local governments, First Nations and others on 2,700 projects. Congratulations! This represents on-the-ground actions that positively affect people's everyday lives, the communities we call home and the natural landscapes that surround us.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in shaping their communities and the Basin—and to everyone who is helping envision our next phase of growth. Each voice and step counts, no matter how seemingly small.

Staff and Board members of the Trust—and the Trust itself—rely on your participation, and we're proud to support your successes. We have no doubt that the future of the Basin will be just as impressive, and we look forward to discovering all that we can achieve together.

Jocelyn Carver

Chair, Board of Directors

Johnny Strilaeff

President and Chief Executive Officer

snapshots

A glimpse of community-led projects supported by the Trust



Lengthening the Grind

To access the highest trailheads in the Valemount Bike Park, the trail called CBT Munday Grind is the ideal choice.

The Valemount and Area Recreation Development Association (VARDA) recently increased the trail by 3.25 kilometres to connect it to another existing trail, plus completed additional improvements in the network like reworking worn-down features, adding gravel, doing erosion repair and purchasing equipment and storage. This is one of many Trust-supported projects in the Basin that focus on enhancing existing trail networks and strengthening amenities and trailhead features. VARDA's General Manager Curtis Pawliuk says, "The bike park is one of the most sought-after trail networks in BC and helps create an active, healthy community. This project will broaden the opportunities within the trail system while enhancing and protecting the opportunities that already exist."



Photos: Ruby Hogg

725 KMs
OF TRAILS
DEVELOPED,
ENHANCED
OR MAINTAINED
SINCE 2018

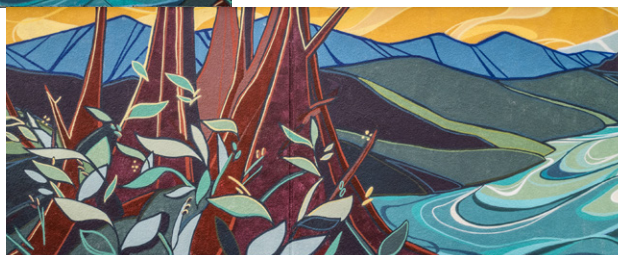
A playful mural highlights the surrounding environment

Inspired by the mountain peaks and valleys surrounding the Village of Salmo, Jessa Gilbert created a stunning mural, measuring roughly 3 x 22 metres, across the top of a local building that houses the Salmo Valley Youth & Community Centre. Spearheaded by the Salmo District Arts Council, the project was supported by the Trust and complements three other murals already on the building. The mural captures the natural surroundings in a "shift in time" abstract piece that delicately transitions from winter through summer. With snow-covered peaks of Kootenay Pass running off into a flowing



river, which then spills into the valley's soft green terrain. Representing the environment, this mural has become a point of pride for the youth and residents who frequent the centre.

695 ARTS
AND CULTURE
PROJECTS FUNDED
SINCE 2018



Photos: Andrew Bibby



river, which then spills into the valley's soft green terrain. Representing the environment, this mural has become a point of pride for the youth and residents who frequent the centre.



Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it Wildfire Response Coordinator, Brett Uphill

Photos: Max Webster

Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it enhances ability to fight wildfire

The Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it First Nation and community members in Grasmere are building a solid fire service that can defend the area from wildfire—boosted by the recent purchase of much-needed firefighting gear and equipment, supported by the Trust. Located in grasslands at the base of forested mountains, “We are in the thick of it, so to speak,” says Nasuʔkin Heidi Gravelle. Summers are hot, dry and windy. If a fire cut off the highway, the community would have no way of getting out and fire crews couldn’t easily get in. “The potential risk for devastation is huge because of our location.” The new equipment was used for the first time when a wildfire broke out in March 2023. Gravelle, who was on scene assisting, says “It is a reminder that although there may be snow on the mountaintops, it is scary dry out on the land below right now; we need to be aware and vigilant at all times to ensure safety of all!”



Basin Stories

READ ALL THE STORIES
OURTRUST.ORG/STORIES

136
WILDFIRE RISK-
MANAGEMENT
AND PUBLIC
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS
SUPPORTED
SINCE 2015

Arts, culture and history thrive in Kaslo

If you’re looking for a taste of arts, culture and history in Kaslo, the Langham Cultural Centre is the place to go. Over the years, the building—over 125 years old—has received several upgrades with Trust support, including new exterior paint, structural work and new lighting and sound systems. Langham programming has also benefited from Trust funding, such as special exhibitions and a summer music series. Plus, the final touches are happening on a new Japanese garden, including new fencing. All told, the building celebrates arts and culture and helps create a vibrant future in the community and beyond—both aspects valued by people across the region.



Photos: Jesse Schpakowski

MORE THAN **100**
COMMUNITY HALL AND THEATRE
UPGRADES SINCE 2018





1,296

NEW CHILD CARE
SPACES CREATED
ACROSS THE BASIN
SINCE 2017

Families in Elkford rejoice

What do you do with an empty, 520-square-metre municipal building? Liven it up with children! That's what the District of Elkford has done, by renovating its former municipal building to become the Elkford Childcare Centre and Community Hub. In addition to creating a multipurpose work-space for small businesses and non-profits, the project has added 30 full-time licensed child care spaces, overseen by the Elkford Women's Task Force Society. Projects like this help communities meet families' needs for quality, affordable child care; this positively affects the well-being of the families themselves, enables parents to work and helps Basin businesses attract and retain employees. And in Elkford, it adds child care options that are greatly needed.



Photos: Nick Nault



6,369

HECTARES
OF TERRESTRIAL
HABITAT IMPROVED
SINCE 2017

Improving wintering grounds for elk

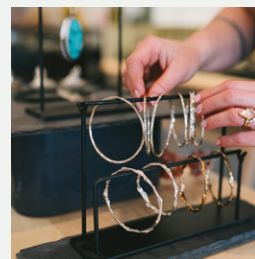
Too much snow and not enough food to graze on: that's what a five-year project in the upper Kicking Horse Canyon is addressing so Rocky Mountain elk can better use this location in the winter. The Golden District Rod and Gun Club—along with participation from Ktunaxa Nation Council Guardians and ʔakisq̓nuk enterprise Seven

Feathers Contracting & Consulting — is enhancing 112 hectares of south-facing slopes between Golden and Yoho National Park through actions like thinning and pruning immature trees. The project is being done with support of the Trust, which funds projects that have meaningful and measurable impacts in strengthening ecosystem health in the Basin.

A SPARKLING NEW CAREER FOR A YOUNG CREATIVE



82 RECENT
GRADS SUPPORTED
WITH CAREER
INTERNSHIPS
SINCE 2018



KAT CADEGAN is leading a thriving business in Revelstoke and a small team who hand-craft bespoke jewellery collections inspired by nature. Expanding into a storefront in 2021 brought big changes, and increased sales meant the need for accelerated production while keeping a consistently high standard of work. Fortunately, with help from the Trust's Career Internship Program, which provides up to 50 per cent of an intern's salary, over a seven-to-12-month term, to grow career-focused positions that lead to permanent employment. Cadegan was able to offer a year-long internship to Bronson Robishaw, a recent graduate. "By having the subsidy to take the pressure off, we could slow down and focus on what matters," Cadegan explains. That focus is on high-quality reproduction of original pieces. Cadegan recently made a large investment into casting equipment, so the business can do all reproduction in-house. "This opportunity is the direct result of having Bronson, and this area is going to be his wheelhouse."

Recent grad, Bronson Robishaw



A farm grows

Faced with the challenge of obtaining staff for seasonal work, Bent Plow Farm in Blewett was in search of a way to harvest the over-18,000 kilograms of organic food it might grow in a year. Trust support enabled it to hire an intern, who now has a permanent seasonal role. The Trust offers a range of supports to help businesses meet their workforce needs, whether this involves hiring a recent graduate, a student or an apprentice. The goal is to help create vibrant businesses that contribute to a resilient Basin economy. In cases like Bent Plow's, it also supports local food production. Owner Emma Sowiak says, "This internship program helped build and strengthen our business in a meaningful way, and I feel really grateful that we're able to improve food access in the region."

20

FOOD PRODUCER
CAREER INTERNSHIPS
SUPPORTED SINCE 2020



Intern Sarah Hudson, left, with Bent Plow Farm owners Scott Humphries and Emma Sowiak.



Photos: Kenton Doupe

OVER
340
NON-PROFITS
SUPPORTED
THROUGH
ADVISORY
PROGRAM
SINCE 2015



Chelsey Jones, LINKS Executive Director.

Photo: Jesse Schpakowski

Strengthening its LINKS

It's not easy being new. To maximize the capacity of its recently hired executive director, the Lardeau Valley Opportunity LINKS Society turned to the Trust's Non-profit Advisors Program, which helps non-profits improve organizational efficiency and navigate operational challenges. In LINKS' case, they received one-on-one mentorship for Executive Director Chelsey Jones, with the goal of enhancing her work-related proficiency, confidence and effectiveness. "It has had a huge impact on capacity-building and stabilizing my role at LINKS," she says. The non-profit also reinvigorated its strategic planning with new ideas and direction, plus created a solid work plan. Steps like these mean it's better poised than ever to link together people and groups in the Lardeau Valley, and continue to support and advance the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

A HALL BECOMES MORE WELCOMING FOR SENIORS

Built in 1951, the Wynndel Community Centre, frequently used by seniors, needed several upgrades to make it sustainable, safer, more accessible and more energy-efficient. The building is undergoing enhancements like new LED lighting, occupancy sensors and solar panels, plus a new roof over the ramp that leads into the hall, which is often covered in ice or snow. The Trust supports projects like these that benefit seniors and Indigenous elders and the places in which they gather. "The energy efficiency opportunities will pay themselves off over time in saved electricity and natural gas costs," said Margaret Durnin, Board member with the organization. "And now that they won't have to face shoveling off the ramp in winter, we expect that even more seniors will use the hall for different activities."



413
PROJECTS
THAT
ADDRESS
CLIMATE
RESILIENCE
SINCE 2015

Wynndel Community Centre

Photos: Andrew Bibby





Basin residents connect and engage

People share their vision for the region's future

This past spring, you may have shared your perspective about the future of the Basin with the Trust. If so, you were one of the many people who helped us collect more than 35,000 thoughts. Thank you!

The Trust was thrilled to be back in communities across the region to connect with residents. Engagement is at the core of how the Trust works as we continually seek input from the people of the Basin, and the 2023 Our Trust, Our Future engagement process was a great opportunity to do so.

Basin residents came together to discuss what kind of place they want to live in, work in and grow old in. How could their visions be achieved? Together, what could we do to realize an even better outlook for this incredible region?

The road to being
..becoming self-sustaining
Balance requires movement
To sustain movement requires
Sustenance..

To nurture our nature
Is intelligent..

For we are seeds sprouting
The truth of who we are
And we bring this to the
Table.. completing a circle

Our breeds, expressions,
Insight and correlation.
Are likely to invoke
Songs waiting to be written

Harmonies to remind us
How community sustains us
And how our spot at the table
Is unique in its placement

..the groundwork
of communication
..listening and speaking

can open us up to be and
to become, sustaining..

Poetry by Zaynab Mohammed



Doggone Brothers

"It really is all about connection. And that's connection to people, connection to community, connection to place."

BASIN RESIDENT



Bonnie Harvey, Ktunaxa Nation

WHY YOUR THOUGHTS MATTER

Caring about the perspectives of Basin residents is at the heart of who we are. In fact, the *Columbia Basin Trust Act* mandates us to include the people of the Basin in the development of the *Columbia Basin Management Plan*, which guides our work.

This year we are writing a new plan and have undertaken a community engagement process called *Our Trust, Our Future*. This is in addition to our ongoing engagement with Basin residents.



Symposium in Trail

HOW YOU SHARED YOUR IDEAS

In addition to the Trust's continuous engagement with Basin residents, the *Our Trust, Our Future* engagement process included in-person community open houses and facilitated sessions; several pop-up community events, including engagement with students at College of the Rockies and Selkirk College; three regional symposia; and a variety of online and virtual engagement options.

"What I love most about living in the Basin is the feeling of knowing that I am valued and that my opinions are important."

YOUTH BASIN RESIDENT

23 community meetings
(open houses/guided conversations)



11 pop-up events



10 Zoom meetings



3 symposia



One Basin Youth
Summit for **90** youth

engagement

SYMPOSIUM X 3

For the first time ever, we offered three symposia instead of one, held in May and June in Cranbrook, Trail and Golden. The goal was to enable as many Basin residents as possible to join these celebrations and conversations.

Pandemic aside, the Trust has historically held symposia every few years, starting back in the early 1990s before the Trust was even officially created. At these events, residents get together to discuss common interests and share diverse perspectives, all while honouring what makes this region great.



The last time we were able to gather at a symposium was in 2017, so it was exciting to meet again in person to celebrate all that the region had accomplished in the meantime. At this year's symposia, participants discussed the future of the region and what role the Trust may be able to play.



"Thank you for taking the time to consult and consider perspectives of the communities thoroughly."

BASIN RESIDENT

"What I love the most about the Columbia Basin is the rivers that connect us and the connection that we have to those rivers and to the land."

YOUTH BASIN RESIDENT



Photos: Maur Mere, Morgan Turner, Jesse Schpakowski, Lee Orr, Tyler Hadikin, Keri Knapp, Aidan Jones

The Trust visited 23 communities to engage with residents.





Enjoying lunch and the farmers' market at symposium in Golden.

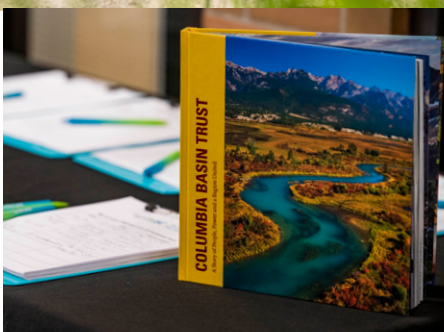
And let's not forget the fun!

- Amazing food created with local ingredients.
- Hillbilly music from the Doggone Brothers.
- Foot-stomping tunes from the Maritime Kitchen Party.
- Entertaining offerings by locals Lucas Myers and Claire Dibble.
- Indigenous language and culture presented by Bonnie Harvey, Ktunaxa Nation.
- Introspection and reflection from slam poet Zaynab Mohammed.

The Evening of Basin Culture this year was topped off by Canadian comic Rick Mercer, who delivered the keynote address! ■



Comedian Lucas Myers



"I have been engaging with the Columbia Basin Trust since before it was Columbia Basin Trust."

BASIN RESIDENT

DIG DEEPER



Video:
Our Trust,
Our Future
2023 (5 min)

<https://youtu.be/q9elzFFeIMk>



Video:
Forming the Trust
as told by its founding
directors (10 min)

<https://youtu.be/wk2noiGbg7w>



Animation:
The Trust's
story and how it
works (5 min).

<https://youtu.be/vkkEVkMlfJk>

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your continued engagement with the Trust. Follow the progress of the Columbia Basin Management Plan at:

ourtrust.org/future.

GROWING AS LEADERS

NINETY YOUTH ENJOY AND LEARN FROM A LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Photos: Tyler Zhao

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to attend the 2023 youth leadership summit in Kimberley. We learned about the Columbia Basin and what the Trust does, and I made new friends. I really enjoyed the Our Trust, Our Future exercise."

– **Sawyer Popovitch,**
Kimberley Youth Network

LAUGHTER, lively activities and moments of individual thought. At the 2023 Basin Youth Network Leadership Summit, these happened in abundance. The goal: to help youth absorb valuable life skills, plus express how they see the future of this region.

Ninety youth from around the Basin attended the event, which took place in Kimberley in May 2023 and was delivered by the Trust's Basin Youth Network. But why the focus on leadership?

Like all of the regional group's efforts, the summit is based on the needs and desires expressed by youth—and youth leadership has been the number one priority since the network began.

At the summit, youth get to grow their leadership skills, express opinions, find their voices, develop ideas and plan to take action in their communities. They also get to meet peers from other communities that they would not normally have the opportunity to connect and collaborate with. And although the topic is important, the organizers work hard to ensure that the event is fun and interactive, and there's learning through doing.

The 2023 event also included Our Trust, Our Future sessions. (See page 10 to learn more about this engagement process.) Here, the youth could tell the Trust what they think is important for the future of the Basin, and how they think the Trust could support these long-term goals.

Overall, the action-packed weekend was a success. Although the previous three summits organized by the Basin Youth Network have

"I enjoyed meeting new people from the region and hearing from all the speakers. Learning more about community development and the ways youth, like me, can influence the future was pretty cool. I also appreciated being asked to share my thoughts and opinions about the future of the Basin."

– **Anika Tiefenbach,**
Castlegar Youth Network

27



youth
networks
around
the Basin



KEEPING YOUTH ENGAGED

Throughout the Basin, youth have set their own priorities about what they want to achieve, and the Basin Youth Network is there to support them. For example, the network enables youth to connect and develop skills through programs like the leadership summit, a job readiness workshop and a mindfulness toolkit. It helps communities and others who work with youth to increase local activities and opportunities for youth. Plus, it supports local youth networks, currently in 27 communities. Want to learn more about your local youth network? Find the list here: ourtrust.org/byn

taken place every two years, the pandemic meant that a summit hadn't been held since 2018. Therefore, it was extra meaningful to bring people together for this in-person experience.

Now, the youth who attended in 2023 have returned home—and who knows what the impacts will be. Hopefully, the experience has inspired them to consider what they're passionate about in their communities and how they can help move things forward. ■

ourtrust.org/byn

"One word that I would use to describe the future of the Columbia Basin would be 'hopeful,' because it seems like there are going to be so many new and exciting opportunities, especially for youth in this area."

– Lydia Kalawsky,
Rossland Youth Action Network

Basin Youth Summit participants in Kimberley.



Impressively fast internet service

High-speed broadband zooms ahead in the Slocan Valley

“IT’S BY FAR THE BEST service I’ve ever had—and I’ve had a few.” Those are the words of Silverton resident Jason Clarke, speaking about the internet service he obtains through Columbia Wireless. He’s just one of many people living in the Slocan Valley—and elsewhere in the Basin—who are benefiting from the Trust’s expanded fibre-optic broadband network.

In fall 2022, the Trust completed the 125-kilometre expansion of its network up the Slocan Valley (from Playmor Junction to Shoreholme, just north of Nakusp). By early 2023, local internet service provider Columbia Wireless had connected to this network, vastly improving its capabilities.

While the Trust owns the fibre backbone, providers like Columbia Wireless can connect to the network at various locations called “points of presence.” Some providers run fibre to individual buildings to be able to give network speeds to customers; others, like Columbia Wireless, send out signals wirelessly through towers.

With Columbia Wireless, this new connection enabled it to recently launch its Air Optic service, which still uses wireless technology but “allows much faster speeds—fibre speeds—to be transmitted to the end client,” says Columbia Wireless Chief Executive Officer Ben Leslie. This service is ideal for communities like Silverton, New Denver and Slocan Park, which Columbia Wireless didn’t service before as it couldn’t compete with larger internet service providers.

At first, about 60 households tested the Air Optic service, including Clarke’s. As a programmer who works in the IT department of an international food distribution company, Clarke relies on high speeds as “that’s how I go to work.” Before, for example, his video meetings would frequently drop. Now, that’s no longer a problem. Having previously tried about three other providers, he claims that Air Optic is “head and shoulders above everything else”—and he loves keeping his dollars with a local company.

While Air Optic only services households that are fairly close together, Columbia Wireless’s more spread-out rural customers are also benefiting. With many eligible folks switching to Air Optic, the company’s older mountain-top

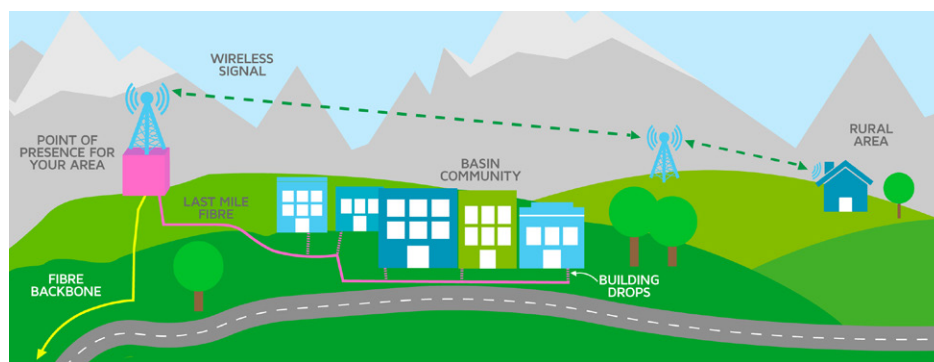
towers are facing less strain, which means that the speeds they offer to rural customers have improved, too.

Overall, Columbia Wireless has been able to expand into new markets—potentially growing its previous client base by about 30 per cent—while better servicing its existing clients, offering great reliability for everyone, and keeping costs down as it doesn’t have to string fibre to individual homes.

“Everyone benefits,” Leslie says. “This is kind of the start of Columbia Wireless 2.0. It’s going to be a big turning point for us.”

It’s equally wonderful for people who need fast, dependable internet, like Clarke. “Things are fantastic,” he says. ■

ourtrust.org/connectivity



How internet service providers like Columbia Wireless connect with the Trust’s fibre backbone to provide high-speed services to customers.

TWO EXPANSIONS CONTINUE

To help Basin residents and organizations meet the demands and desires of today's digitally driven world, the Trust is well on its way to adding two more expansions to its regional fibre optic network: one between Fruitvale and Nelson, and the other between Kimberley and Wasa. These are scheduled to be done by the end of 2023.

When complete, internet service providers will be able to connect to the expanded network to provide services to homes. As well as bringing high-speed connectivity to underserved areas, households that already have high-speed service will see improved network performance and reduced internet downtime.

Additional funders include the federal Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (through its Broadband Fund), the provincial government (through its Connecting British Columbia program), the Regional District of Central Kootenay and the Regional District of East Kootenay.

Once these stretches are done, the Trust's fibre optic network in the region will be 1,285-kilometres long.



Laying fibre optic cable between Kimberley and Wasa.



Silverton



Ben Leslie, Columbia Wireless CEO



broadband
fibre to over

5,400
homes



ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS COMING

The Trust has another multi-year project that is just starting, and that will enhance access to high-quality internet across the Basin. The project is expected to bring broadband fibre to over 5,400 homes in the regional districts of Central Kootenay, Columbia Shuswap, Kootenay Boundary and East Kootenay. (See the link below to view the interactive map.)

Once the fibre is brought to the homes, residents can sign up with an internet service provider to receive high-speed service. The project will enable residents to access speeds that exceed the 50/10-megabits-per-second standard set by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

The \$82-million project is being funded by the federal government through the Universal Broadband Fund; the provincial government through the Connecting BC program; the regional districts of Central Kootenay, Columbia Shuswap, East Kootenay and Kootenay Boundary; and the Trust.

Next steps include design, permitting and procurement, and the project is scheduled to be completed by spring 2027.

See which areas of the Basin are included: ourtrust.org/fibremap

Groups take action on climate change

Projects focus on energy, wildfire and emergencies

There's little more glorious than enjoying the spectacular outdoors and delightful communities of the places we call home. People living in the Basin care deeply about the environment and the impacts of climate change. Therefore, the Trust has implemented a range of programs that help communities, First Nations, small- and medium-sized businesses and non-profit organizations become more climate resilient, keeping people and places safe while reducing their own contributions to climate change. Here are some of the projects undertaken over the past year.

ourtrust.org/climate resilience

MAXIMIZE ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Non-profits, communities, First Nations and small- and medium-sized businesses have taken steps like purchasing electric vehicles and doing energy retrofits on community-use buildings. Affordable rental housing groups have also upgraded their units to be more enviro-friendly and reduce costs, plus keep them comfortable for tenants.

MINIMIZE DANGER



Communities and First Nations are prioritizing the safety of their people and structures by taking preventative measures to reduce the threat and potential damage of wildfire. This includes prepping ahead in ways like purchasing equipment, training members and doing prescribed burns.*

*Funding partners for select Trust programs include the Province's Ministry of Forests and BC Wildfire Service.

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES



Residents need an emergency gathering space to shelter from hazards like intense heat. Emergency personnel need an operations base during disasters. To these ends, communities are preparing to cope with extreme events by ensuring that essential buildings are ready to spring into action.



The Trust has implemented a range of programs that help communities become more climate resilient, keeping people and places safe while reducing their own impact on climate change.



“These activities will support our low-cost housing mandate by keeping utility costs lower for residents, and provide a more environmentally friendly footprint for our building by taking advantage of the latest technologies.”

— **Gerald Panio**, Chair, Bluebell Manor Society in Riondel, which is installing solar panels on its five units of affordable rental housing for seniors.

“This project will improve energy efficiency and conservation and reduce our carbon footprint, helping us meet our climate action goals.”

— **Lisa Scott**, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of New Denver, which is completing energy-efficiency upgrades on Bosun Hall.

“Having dedicated, local staff completing a wide range of tasks will help develop more community FireSmart champions in these locations and will grow wildfire risk-reduction activities over time.”

— **Darcy Mooney**, Manager, Operations Management, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, which is hiring a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist and local FireSmart Representatives for Golden and Revelstoke.

“This procurement of equipment and training will improve our capacity and effectiveness, as well as safety, as we provide rapid, compassionate and professional services that keep our community safe.”

— **David Snyder**, volunteer, Fauquier Volunteer Fire Brigade, which is purchasing wildfire-fighting equipment and training its members.

“With these much-needed upgrades to our community hall, we will be able to provide a safe and dependable space for the people of Ymir.”

— **Tamara Rushforth**, Treasurer, Ymir Community Association, which is improving the Ymir Community Hall through activities like adding a backup generator and improving accessibility.

“One of the aims of the resiliency centre is to create a safe location during emergencies that the local population can access, but also a place where FireSmart education will take place.”

— **Stephan Martineau**, Manager, Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative, which is renovating Slocan Valley's Appledale Hall into a resiliency centre and treating the land around it to reduce wildfire risk.

Building resilience in ecosystems

A range of actions address wildfire risk and improve fish habitat in the Slocan Valley



THE SLOCAN VALLEY'S 340,000 hectares of land and water offers both beauty and incredible biodiversity. Home to countless species of flora and fauna, from mighty cedars to delicate wildflowers, and elusive grizzlies to soaring eagles, the vast ecosystem must remain balanced and resilient.

Located in the heart of the valley, the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFCo) manages approximately 16,000 ha of this space. It's also where it's implementing its Landscape-level Ecosystem, Resiliency, Enhancement and Climate Change Adaptation Project—a comprehensive name that encapsulates the enormous range of actions that SIFCo is taking.

Like many Basin residents, Stephan Martineau is hyper-aware of climate change challenges. As a founding director and Manager of SIFCo, he heads an environmental stewardship team of leaders in climate change adaptation, sustainable forestry practices, community resiliency, wildfire mitigation, ecosystem-based management and economic diversification.

"We use a landscape-level perspective to make the land we manage more resilient to change and more capable of adapting to what's coming our way," he says. "That means we plan at a large scale—35,000 acres rather than 200, for example—and since 2008, we've been proactive in our response to rapidly changing climate conditions in this bioregion."



With support from the Trust, SIFCo's current project is enhancing and restoring ecosystem values and wildlife corridors on hundreds of hectares of locally rare flora and fauna in the Winlaw and Trozzo Creek watersheds. The project has involved four prescribed burns from 2021 to 2023, plus has an upcoming aquatic habitat restoration component.

In these historically fire-maintained ecosystems, controlled fires reset the landscape to a pre-fire-suppression era, preserve soil and ecosystem structures, and create fuel breaks. SIFCo's approach to wildfire mitigation was tested during the 5,992-ha Trozzo Creek fire of 2021, when it played an important role in slowing the spread of the wildfire that threatened Slocan Valley communities.

SIFCo is also implementing aquatic action. This will help redirect rainbow trout and other species of fish from the increasingly warmer summer temperatures of the Slocan River to Winlaw Creek, where their populations have a higher likelihood of thriving.

"Winlaw Creek is well-suited for the creation of new pools and has a canopy to keep water cool longer in the summer season," Martineau explains.

SIFCo's various partnerships with organizations like the British Columbia Wildfire Service, Selkirk College and the University of British Columbia create province-wide synergy—and an opportunity to collaborate on proactively building local capacity when it comes to dealing with landscapes in transition.

Martineau is thrilled that this work closely aligns with a Trust program that focuses on maintaining and improving ecological health and native biodiversity in a variety of ecosystems.

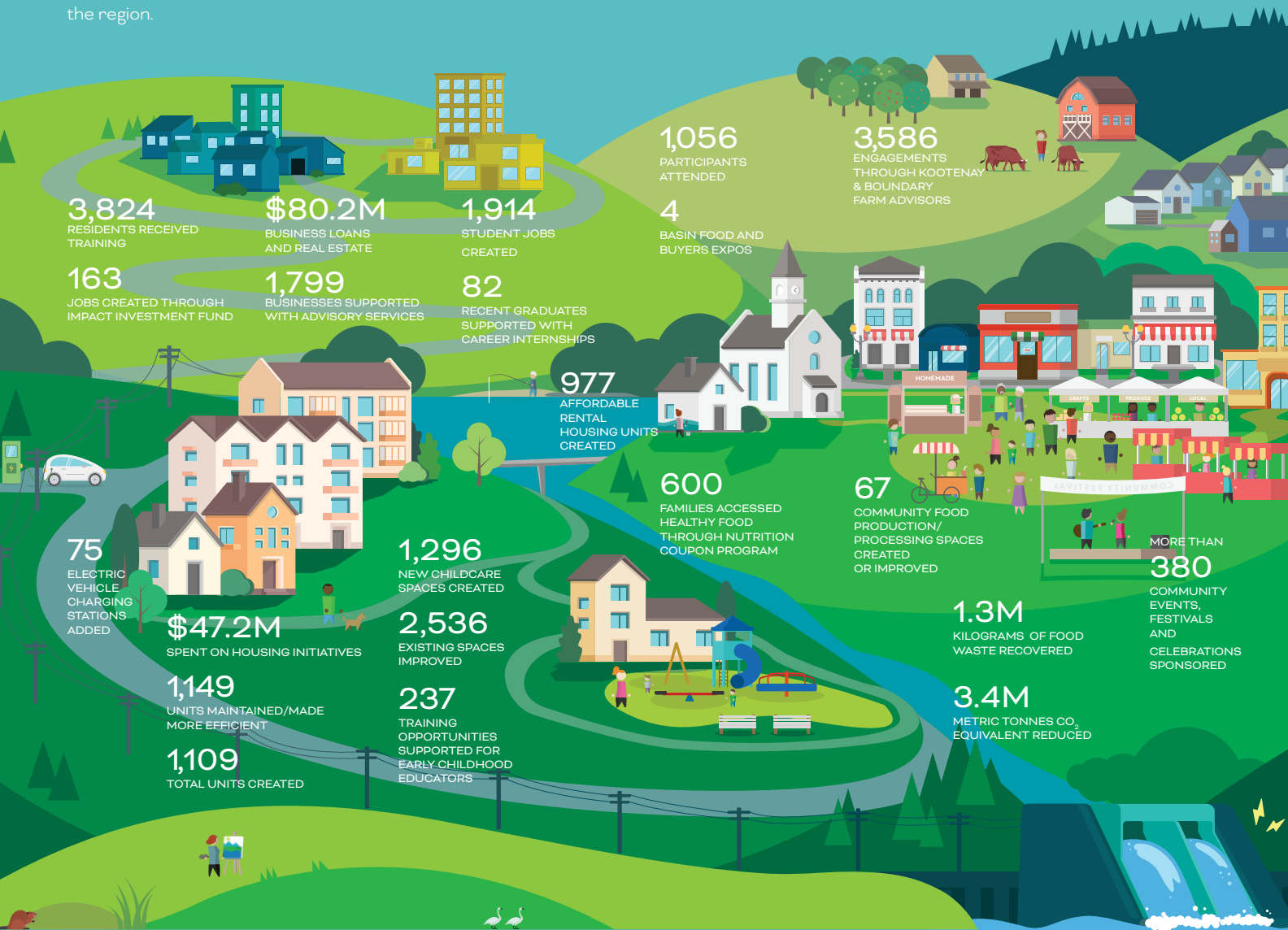
"I think we need to focus our attention specifically on large-scale impacts in a specific bio-region, such as the Slocan Valley, when we plan for adaptation," adds Martineau. "This is one of the programs that actually offers that possibility; it's great that it exists and it's a real benefit to Basin communities." ■

ourtrust.org/ecosystems



Look how far we've come together

Columbia Basin Trust works together with people, organizations and communities to support their efforts to create a legacy of social, economic and environmental well-being, now and for future generations. Since 2015, the Trust has provided \$530 million in total benefits to the region, including grants, capital investments and new commercial loans and real estate, and supported over 18,400 projects. The following graphic highlights some of the positive results seen across the region.







GENERATING RETURNS

To generate the revenues we need to fund programs and initiatives that support the efforts of Basin residents, the Trust has investments 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



A RECIPE FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

*A new owner means a sweet outlook
for an Invermere bakery*

THE ALLURING AROMAS

of fresh bread, doughnuts and artisanal pastries have been wafting through the town of Invermere since Quality Bakery opened in 1956.

Over the decades, the bakery has changed hands a couple of times, and been redubbed the Invermere Bakery.

Most recently, in 2021 it became the property of its now-current owner,

Theo Walta—a dream fulfilled with help from the Trust.

Originally from the Netherlands, the Invermere Bakery was the first place that Walta had worked in Canada, back in 1998. Now the baker and pastry chef saw this as a chance to return to the business and town he had loved. “After living and working in the Okanagan Valley for many years, I was inspired to buy the bakery partly because I love the Invermere community,” he says.

His second reason was that he hoped to own a business he could one day pass on to his son. “I’m not a spring chicken anymore, so I considered what I’d need to run a business into the future. Fortunately, my eldest son Travis was training as a baker, so I thought it could work if he ended up taking over.”

Financing from the Trust was the essential ingredient—offered to support the succession and sustainability of a long-standing Invermere business, while also creating income to go toward the Trust’s delivery



“If you put love into what you do... it’s easier to take on the challenges.”

“A bakery needs your heart behind it,” Walta says. “If you put love into what you do, it keeps you motivated every day, and then it’s easier to take on the challenges. I’m so blessed to have experienced production staff, as well as a customer-oriented retail team, who all put heart into their work. They inspire me to do whatever it takes to keep this business going.”

The whole family helps run the bakery: Walta’s wife takes care of administrative and accounting duties, his two younger sons lend a hand and Travis’s girlfriend manages the retail store. They’re currently working on becoming a gluten-free-certified facility because that’s the future of baking, according to Walta, and an integral part of putting his customers’ needs first.

“My biggest trophy is having customers come through my door,” says Walta. “There’s no better reward!” ■

ourtrust.org/investments

of benefits in the Basin. With funding in hand, Walta was able to buy the bakery, and Walta says the Trust’s “continued support and interest in the bakery has been so helpful.”

Now, his focus is on prioritizing strategic financial decisions while striking a balance between work, life and family. But passion and love for the trade are truly what pushes him forward.



ESSENTIAL G A T E S GET NEW LIFE

Preventative measures help hydropower operations continue to flow

PICTURE A GARDEN HOSE. If you've got a leak spraying water all over the place, you'd run back to the valve and turn the water off so you could deal with the problem. In a hydropower facility, a series of gates serve a similar purpose as a hose's valve. If something is happening in the facility and you need to shut off the flow of water, you'd roll down these gates—a move that protects other equipment in the facility and the people who need to go inside to fix and maintain it.

This important role is why “intake operating gates” need to be kept in tip-top shape. At Arrow Lakes Generating Station, its six gates are in the process of being refurbished—ensuring they can continue to do their vital job.

“It all goes to keeping the facility reliable and making sure that the critical equipment works when we need it to,” says Matthew Tonner, Senior Dam Safety Engineer at the Trust. “Specifically for the gates, it comes down to protecting the assets and protecting the people that work downstream of them.”

Located 400 metres from existing Hugh Keenleyside Dam on Arrow Lakes Reservoir near Castlegar, Arrow Lakes Generating Station makes use of water that would otherwise be spilled by the dam, generating enough power to supply 80,000 homes.

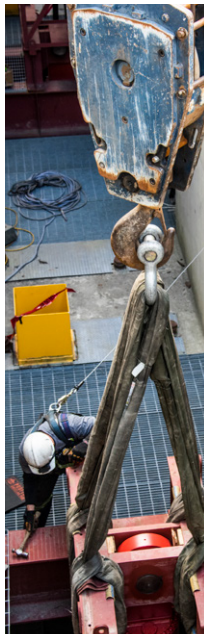
During annual inspections, staff noticed that its gates were starting to age. The biggest issue was the coating that covers the gates' underlying steel structure. It was degrading, which meant that water was able to access each gate, causing corrosion.

Fixing the six gates has been a multi-year process. First, the facility purchased one new gate. During an annual maintenance period, it replaced one of the six failing gates with this new one. The removed gate—which weighs many tonnes—was then sent to an enterprise in Quebec to be refurbished.



Arrow Lakes
Generating
Station
generates
enough power
to supply

80,000
homes.



During the next annual outage, the refurbished gate replaced yet another of the failing gates, and the cycle was repeated. All six gates should be refreshed by spring 2025.

Why not simply replace them instead of fixing them up? One reason is cost—refurbishing a gate costs about 60 per cent of what a new one does. Plus, most of the gate components can be reused, so this tactic minimizes waste.

Tonner says that the process has been “going smoothly. Three or four years ago, we had never removed a gate before, and now it's becoming a pretty standard operating procedure for the crew. They know what to do.”

Once this project is done, they won't need to do it again at Arrow Lakes Generating Station for two or three decades. Another facility may be on the horizon for a gate refurbishment—Brilliant Expansion Generating Station—but not for 10 years or so.

Planning ahead and preventing failures before they take place is a crucial step when it comes to ensuring that such facilities continue to function with minimal unplanned outages and costs. This is important because so many people benefit—not just from the electricity itself, but from the operations' broader positive effects.

Together with Columbia Power Corporation, the Trust owns four hydropower facilities. Columbia Power's half of the income streams back to the Province and therefore to all residents of BC. The Trust's half supports its work in the region, including the delivery of programs that strengthen well-being. Such impact provides a solid reason to make sure the facilities work as flawlessly as possible.

When it comes to stable operations, Tonner says, “Good maintenance programs are the best strategy you can have.” ■

ourtrust.org/hydropower

A CHOCOLATE SENSATION GETS A BUSINESS BOOST

Viva Cacao benefits from business advice

Viva Cacao owner Beth Campbell

Beth Campbell approached the Trust's Basin Business Advisor's, which offers free, one-to-one, confidential business counselling—to take her business to the next level.



THE SELECTIONS are almost overwhelming: orange quinoa crisp dark chocolate, peppermint and hemp vegan milk chocolate, Aztec spice drinking chocolate, cranberry ginger swirl chocolate bark. Those are only a few of the mouth-watering products available from Viva Cacao (pronounced VEE-va ka-COW), the brainchild of owner Beth Campbell.

Over the years, Campbell has found rising success with her chocolate. Based in Slocan, she knew she wanted to make her business even stronger. By putting in tons of ingenuity, hard work and time—and obtaining some advice through the Trust—she has taken her business to an even higher level.

A LONG-STANDING LOVE

The business's history began about a decade ago, although Campbell's journey started much sooner than that. "I always had a love for cooking and food," she says, crediting this passion to her mother.

While working as a baker, Campbell got intrigued by chocolate. First, she wanted to figure out how to recreate commercially available items at home. Second, she discovered "the dark side of the chocolate industry," as she calls it—the social injustices and rights violations seen in the making of conventional chocolate—and hoped to offer ethical alternatives.

The results are high-quality, delicious and nutrient-dense chocolate products backed by business practices that support social

justice and environmental sustainability. All the products are plant-based, using coconut sugar as a sweetener. In addition, "We have a focus on getting our ingredients through small farmers and co-operatives, and making sure they get a fair price."

CREATING A SOLID PRODUCT

At first, Campbell sold her handiwork at the local farmers' market. "People really liked it, so I kept going."

That's when she decided to notch up her business know-how. She approached the Trust's Basin Business Advisor's program (BBA), which delivers free, one-to-one, confidential business counselling and assessment services. This helped her undertake the steps needed to sell her product in grocery stores, including getting UPC codes, following the labelling requirements of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and tailoring her packaging specifically for the grocery store market—packaging that maintains her environmental standards as it's compostable.

A couple of years later, she realized a rebrand was in order, too. This meant abandoning the old name—Belicious—and introducing Viva Cacao, plus cost-sharing with the BBA program to hire a local designer to create a fresh look.

"It's been an incredible response about our packaging and how it looks," she says. Better yet, "I get great response from people about the product itself."

ONE STEP AT A TIME

It's no surprise that praise has been plentiful, considering the amount of effort that Campbell devotes. In addition, she now has the aid of two employees, who take care of most of the production. She herself can focus more on the business side, such as getting new sales accounts and marketing her chocolate.

Over the past few years, sales have more than doubled each year. Viva Cacao has spread into grocery stores throughout the Kootenays, in Vancouver, on Vancouver Island and even in Alberta. "We're trying to push all the way across-country, hopefully—little by little."

And the journey isn't over. To help it along, Campbell is continuing her business training through BBA. "I did a whole run of learning about how to read financial statements, and it was incredibly helpful—I learned so much from that." Next, she plans to concentrate on improving distribution.

The Trust is pleased it can help businesses like Campbell's to be resilient to recent challenges and able to adapt, expand their operations and employ Basin residents—and Campbell greatly appreciates the one-on-one time she has received from very knowledgeable people.

"I definitely wouldn't have as much understanding about how to run a business if it weren't for the help I received. I would not be where I am."

Our tastebuds are grateful that her passion has come this far. ■

vivacacao.ca
ourtrust.org/bba

A VIBRANT PARK, AN ACTIVE WONDERLAND

Golden expands a popular spot



“BIKERS CAN GO THERE, scooters can go there, rollerbladers can go there, skateboarders can go there. It’s such an inclusive space.” Jessie Oatway can’t say enough good things when it comes to describing the Golden Freeride Park. “It’s incredible.”

The park nearly tripled in size over the past year thanks to a major expansion. As a Board member of the Golden Skateboard Association, which oversaw the project, Oatway is thrilled with the results. “The park is so busy,” he says. “It’s awesome.”

Built in 2005, the original park was aimed at more confident users and could only safely accommodate one person at a time. “We really wanted to create more lines and a more multi-use space,” Oatway says. Now, beginners have room to learn, while advanced users can tackle trickier challenges.

The expansion—supported by the Trust, additional funders and a whole lot of local fundraising—was accomplished through a partnership with the Town of Golden. The Town owns the land, which is on the same block as many other recreation assets, such as the Mount 7 Rec Plex, tennis courts, an outdoor basketball court and a pump track—several of which have also received Trust support over the years.

“The freeride park expansion is really transforming this park block into a space that is open, accessible and used by a full spectrum of people,” says Jordan Petrovics, the Town’s Director of Recreation Services. “Activities that are free, that are outside, that are active, that aren’t formally structured—they encourage people to get out, be active and be social.”

The Trust has supported recreation projects like this one with the overall goal of promoting healthy, active lifestyles. This provides benefits to physical and mental well-being—plus a good dose of old-fashioned fun.

Golden’s freeride park is an excellent example of this support. “When school gets out,” Petrovics says, “there are well over 70 kids out there just rippin’ around and enjoying it.” ■

ourtrust.org/community

The Trust has supported recreation projects like this one with the overall goal of promoting healthy, active lifestyles. This provides benefits to physical and mental well-being—plus a good dose of old-fashioned fun.





Lucky Penny Garderie, Revelstoke



Purcell Preschool & Daycare, Kimberley

Strengthening the Basin's Early Childhood Educator workforce

Child care facilities increase access to safe, affordable care

WORKING WITH CHILDREN comes with daily reminders to slow down and appreciate the small pockets of joy in life: counting ladybugs on leaves, creating muddy masterpieces out of twigs and rocks, and singing out loud without restraint. But it's not all fun and games. Child care workers must also offer seemingly endless supplies of patience, kindness and energy, plus take on a multifaceted role that requires formal training and education.

Striking an affordable work-life balance can be difficult to achieve while working and studying at the same time. April Revitt knows this firsthand. She runs Lucky Penny Garderie, a child care facility in Revelstoke, plus struggled to complete her ECE training while working full time.

"Attending school on my own was really challenging because it's expensive and time-consuming," says Revitt. Fortunately, help came through a Trust program that provides a training wage and financial support to certified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and ECE Assistants as they upgrade their qualifications.

"The program took all those sharp edges off so I could commit my time to school 100 per cent," she says. "Otherwise, I think I'd still be chugging along one class at a time, and I definitely wouldn't have taken the leap to get my infant/toddler educator certificate."

The result: Revitt graduated with an ECE diploma in April 2023. So did one of her long-time employees, who is now opening

her own child care centre in the same neighbourhood.

This goes to show how a little Trust support can have big impacts when it comes to helping increase Basin residents' access to affordable, high-quality child care. As well, improved options help local businesses thrive, as parents are able to work knowing their children are safe and thriving.

Kimberley's Purcell Preschool & Daycare also made the most of the program when manager Cheryl Anderson enrolled seven staff across two intakes.

"It's so beneficial for staff to be able to upgrade their credentials, and it gives us way more flexibility as a business," says Anderson. "ECE training is expensive and you don't make a huge wage when you're done, so it's amazing to be able to work and do online schooling at the same time with this financial support."

One of Anderson's employees recently completed her ECE training. Baylie Migneault, another employee, has updated her certifications and is currently working toward getting her ECE diploma.

"The training wage program has been incredibly helpful in relieving the financial stress of obtaining these certificates," says Migneault. "The financial support has enabled so many people to achieve a range of specialized child care certifications, all of which our communities desperately need." ■

ourtrust.org/childcare



Improved child
care options help
local businesses
prosper, as parents
are able to work
knowing their
children are safe
and thriving.

Healthy, local, affordable food arrives on Basin tables

Projects across the Basin focus on local food production and access



Métis local harvest



Valemount Community Garden

SUMMER IS FOR DINING al fresco with loved ones against a backdrop of sunsets and birdsong. Gardens plump up with produce, and trees become heavy with ripe fruit. But not everyone has direct, affordable access to fresh, locally grown food, no matter the time of year.

Several successful projects are making a difference in Basin communities by creating or enhancing communal growing or processing spaces, welcoming knowledge-sharing opportunities for members of the public, and reducing food waste.

Local food production and access is important for residents, and investing in projects that help nourish a wider population, now and into the future, is crucial. The Trust offers initiatives that aim to bump up opportunities for people in the Basin to obtain wholesome, nutritious food.

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN BOOSTS FRESH MEAL PRODUCTION

The Healthy Kimberley Food Recovery Depot is installing a commercial kitchen in the Kimberley Health Centre to better process recovered food and to add a fresh-meal program alongside its free frozen-meal service. The new kitchen, added with support from the Trust, will increase the volume and efficiency of meal production and provide a welcoming community hub.

“All food and fresh ingredients will be on site so we can work more efficiently and explore new opportunities,” says Program Coordinator Shannon Duncan. “The depot is such a ripe ground for bringing people together around food, and offering regular workshops will be a great addition to our services. Our fast growth has created a need for a subsidized fresh-meal program for those unable to pay market prices.”

Seniors Helping Seniors is one of the non-profit organizations partnering with the depot to deliver recovered food to over 50 seniors on a weekly basis. “We delivered about 5,133 pounds of food from April 2022 to April 2023,” says Coordinator Cathy Korven. “The program has been so impactful and makes a huge difference—this food is being saved and made into nourishing meals for people that really need it.”

PARTAKING IN INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS

Golden's Métis Nation Columbia River Society acts as an advocate, voice, representative and protector of traditional Métis values. It also provides elders and Knowledge Keepers more opportunities to offer cultural teachings that preserve and celebrate their vibrant heritage in a welcoming social environment.

With Trust support, the society has increased its ability to practise and pass along



Kimberley volunteers Erin and Sue



North Kootenay Seniors Program



North Kootenay Seniors Program



67 community food production/
processing spaces created and/or improved

1.3M kilograms of food waste recovered

its culture through traditional ceremonies and workshops by purchasing whole buffalos and then processing each entire animal, from meat to hide. It also built gardens to grow a harvest it can share, ensuring a nutrient-rich diet for elders and others in the community.

"In addition to producing bison meat, we use every part of the animal in the ways of our ancestors," says Davene Dunn, an Elder with the society. "Sharing our traditions with the community is a huge step in understanding our history and for reconciliation, but we're also building something positive by teaching about our great culture."

MOBILE FOOD BANK REACHES RURAL AREA

Meadow Creek resident Tija Jansons has been using the Kaslo Community Services' (KCS) food cupboard for over 10 years.

"It has helped me through many hard times," she says. "The people at KCS have made a real, sustainable community food source that so many depend upon. It is my greatest hope that we may see more examples of community projects that aspire to be as beneficial as the food hub."

In addition to the food cupboard, the KCS's food security project includes a recovery program, which receives about 15,000 kilograms in food donations each year. With

Trust support, KCS has enhanced the ability of area residents to obtain affordable local food by purchasing processing equipment to extend the shelf life of recovered food and by establishing a mobile service that distributes it to a wider net of people.

"We've been running our food recovery program for seven years," says Food Security Coordinator Patrick Steiner. "The Trust's funding allowed us to buy kitchen equipment to preserve and process donated food and reduce waste, hire more staff and create a mobile food bank service to increase access for folks in the Meadow Creek area. As more and more people are facing an affordability crisis, we're ensuring they have food on their table every week."

IMPROVED KITCHEN ENABLES PROGRAMS TO EXPAND

Fernie's Salvation Army operates a busy food bank and food recovery/share program, both of which receive a weekly average of 300 to 350 visits. It gained support from the Trust to renovate a kitchen so it can expand programming to include cooking classes using recovered food, as well as provide weekly meals to people in need. These new opportunities will benefit locals by boosting social connection and increasing access to a wider array of healthy donated food.

"With the rising cost of food, and wages staying stagnant, it's very difficult for people to make ends meet. This program helps lower-income people access food they wouldn't be able to afford," says Major Rick Robins. "Having a certified kitchen to safely sort donated food, run cooking classes and host community dinners helps alleviate hunger. We're excited for what the future holds!"

NEW FOOD LITERACY HUB

Robson Valley Community Services, a Valemount-based organization dedicated to strengthening community through its programs and services, has undertaken a kitchen upgrade and expansion with support from the Trust. The updated space is now the home base for its food rescue program and other services.

"Through food literacy programs, people will gain knowledge that empowers them to grow, share and source out local food options," says Jana MacMaster, Acting Executive Director. "By collaborating with local experts and professionals, we can teach people the value of growing and consuming healthy, local food. We're grateful to be part of projects that facilitate community-focused outcomes."

The kitchen will be used in conjunction with the organization's garden to make meals or preserve provisions for its free pantry and school snack programs. ■

ourtrust.org/food

A focus on well-kept, energy-efficient homes

First Nations in the Basin upgrade and add affordable rental housing

SINCE
2017:

213

units being improved



102

units built or
being built



70

solar arrays
being installed



\$10.46 million

in Trust grants

\$33.79 million

in grants attracted
from other funders



Installing insulation in ʔaqam.

SINCE THE Trust's First Nations Housing Sustainability Initiative launched in 2017, First Nations communities in the Basin have made huge advances when it comes to creating and upgrading homes to provide affordable rental housing units that are welcoming, safe and energy-efficient for tenants. This includes significant progress in the communities of:

- ʔaqam
- ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation
- yaqan nukiy (Lower Kootenay Band)
- Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓fi'it (Tobacco Plains Indian Band)
- Shuswap Band

With Trust support, each community started by assessing its existing units, and then planning how to proceed with energy retrofits and health and safety repairs. Improvements have meant activities like adding roof insulation, updating ventilation systems and installing LED lighting. The communities have also constructed many new units, creating more space for members to call home. In addition, many of the newer homes have gained solar panels to reduce utility costs and help maintain affordability.

Through such work, there are more affordable rental housing options overall, energy costs decrease and the quality of existing units rises—along with their lifespan. Best of all, tenants enjoy much more comfortable places to live. ■



"Repairing older homes is one step in ensuring that ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation members can access adequate, suitable and affordable housing. Given the age of homes and deferred maintenance, however, there is still much to be done. You sometimes need to step back and reflect on what has been accomplished: many homes are now safer and warmer. That is a good start."

– **Dale Shudra**, Housing Manager,
ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation



Breaking ground in ʔakisq̓nuk.



yaqan nukiy

"The affordable housing repairs and upgrades in the community may on the most part not be visibly seen, but actually physically felt. This project affects all members, and has made a huge impact on daily living for community members. As one Lower Kootenay Band member described their feeling on the renovations, 'My house now feels like a home.' I think that says it all!"

– **Debbie Edge-Partington**,
Housing Coordinator, yaqan nukiy

"I am most proud of the community members that participated in the health and safety, structural and energy-efficiency inspections; these will allow the housing department to apply for the funding necessary to bring the homes back to good standards. Also, a grant from the Trust allowed Shuswap Band to install solar panels on 13 units; tenants are seeing a substantial decrease in their electricity bills."

– **Dolores Nicholas**,
Social Development/Housing/
Cultural Manager, Shuswap Band



Shuswap Band

"Affordable housing is not just about ensuring a roof over people's heads, it is about ensuring everyone has a place they can feel safe, secure and at home. The much-needed repairs and upgrades to affordable housing units in our community mean residents can better enjoy the security that affordable housing offers. Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓i'it First Nation and our entire community appreciate the support from Columbia Basin Trust to pursue this important work."

– **Nasuʔkin Heidi Gravelle**,
Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓i'it

affordable housing

Building to address a pressing need

Three communities add new affordable rental housing



FOR A COMMUNITY TO THRIVE, residents must be able to find affordable housing and feel secure where they live. That is why many Basin communities have prioritized reducing their housing shortages.

The following three affordable rental housing projects—in Cranbrook, Invermere and Revelstoke—are adding viable options in these communities, supported by the Trust and Province of BC.

OPENING DOORS TO A BETTER LIFE

In a partnership between the Trust, Province of BC, Aboriginal Housing Management Association and ʔaqantʔam Housing Society (AHS), 39 new homes for Indigenous families, elders and individuals have opened at the Chief Agnes McCoy Centre in Cranbrook.

The housing development was named in honour of the late Agnes McCoy, elected Chief and respected Elder from ʔaqam, who was one of the founders of AHS. This non-profit society for low-income Indigenous and non-Indigenous people oversees operations at the Chief Agnes McCoy Centre's three-storey building, which includes subsidized one-, two- and three-bedroom rentals.

"The 39-unit complex has provided low-income residents with a place to call home," says AHS Executive Director



\$47.2 million spent on housing initiatives

1,149 units made more efficient

1,109 total units created

Cecilia Teneese. "We're so grateful to have received the funds to support this project, because without it we wouldn't have such a beautiful facility."

Teneese notes AHS works with other agencies in Cranbrook to provide support and services for tenants to improve their quality of life and ensure their diverse needs are taken care of.

FARMHOUSE PROJECT ENHANCES A COMMUNITY

Thirty affordable rental units have become available for individuals, families and women and children fleeing domestic violence in Invermere. Named the Farmhouse, this initiative includes six townhouses with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom homes.

The Trust, Province of BC, District of Invermere and Family Dynamix Association (FDx) partnered to bring this dream to life. FDx manages the Farmhouse, plus offers a wide variety of education, counselling, advocacy and other supports to residents.

"The Trust's partnership with Family Dynamix on many initiatives has resulted in a significant positive impact in our community," says FDx Executive Director Pat Cope. "Safe and affordable housing is a right for all individuals to thrive."

Located near important amenities like schools and grocery stores, the Farmhouse is just one successful example of the positive impact affordable housing has on the overall well-being of a community.

ANOTHER STEP AHEAD

A new apartment building has opened in Revelstoke that offers secure housing with storage, parking and a community garden. Located on Humbert Street, the Bridge Creek apartment complex comprises 24 affordable one-bedroom rental units and helps address Revelstoke's housing crisis. The homes are the result of a partnership between the Trust, BC Housing, the City of Revelstoke and the Revelstoke Community Housing Society (RCHS), which owns and operates the building.

"The new complex provides much-needed homes and amenities for 30 residents," says RCHS Operations Manager Kira Wolf. "It's a great start and we're already planning the next housing project: an apartment complex with more two-bedroom units to address the needs of families in our community." ■

ourtrust.org/housing



**CHIEF AGNES MCCOY
CENTRE**
CRANBROOK

Photos: Tyler Zhao



THE FARMHOUSE
INVERMERE



Photos: Tracey Connery

BRIDGE CREEK
REVELSTOKE



Photos: Ken Knapp



affordable housing

STUDENT HOUSING SELKIRK COLLEGE

A place to lay their heads

STUDENTS AND THE REGION benefit as more student housing gets built. Some Selkirk College students will be able to add the fresh smell of paint and polished floors to the back-to-school aromas of fall leaves and crisp textbook pages.

New student housing is currently being installed at the college: 112 beds at its Castlegar Campus and 35 at its Nelson Silver King Campus. These modular units—added with support from the Trust—bump up the college's student housing options by 71 per cent. They should be fully ready to greet residents in September 2024.

For about a year, construction crews have been buzzing on site, including some college alumni now working in their trades—altogether creating an estimated 111 direct jobs and 59 indirect positions.

Where these units really make a difference, though, is with students. Golden's Emma Russell lived in Castlegar student housing while she studied rural pre-medicine, and knows the new units will be greatly appreciated.

"As a young student attending post-secondary for the first time from a rural community, having specialized housing on-campus eased my nerves during a very stressful time," she says. "Living on campus was essential for my ability to attend classes and labs, giving me the housing security I needed to focus on my studies. Adding more housing at Selkirk College will be beneficial for future students who will arrive to find others in the exact same situation, providing a community and support system unlike anything else."

In addition, knowing that comfortable, affordable and safe space is available opens up the Basin as an option when people are considering their futures. In the long term, these students may become part of the workforce for local businesses. It also frees up rental housing in the greater community, as fewer students grab places to live elsewhere in town.

Well-being will be further strengthened by the fact that the buildings will be inclusive. The aim is to make all students feel welcome, through assets like accessible units, family units and a spiritual space that incorporates Indigenous philosophies. In addition, the buildings will be highly energy efficient, including aspects like solar panels.

It's for these broad positive effects to individuals, communities, the economy and the environment that the Trust supports projects like these: ones that boost the region's stock of affordable rental housing, plus ones that help make the region's post-secondary institutions an attractive choice for residents.

Selkirk College's new modular units may be stacked together like Lego—but it's clear that their impacts will be anything but child's play. ■

ourtrust.org/housing



Construction at the Castlegar campus.

Photos: Bob Hall

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BENEFITS OF THE TRUST 2022/23

\$82.2M
total benefits

\$96M
in revenue

\$56.8M in
grants and initiatives

2,700 projects
supported

\$3.6M in
capital projects

62 active programs
and initiatives

\$15.7M in new
business loans

\$6.1M in new
real estate

\$2.1B total book
value of assets

RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

11.42%
Power Projects

4.01%
Private Placements

(4.39%)
Market Securities

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Basin communities and residents benefit from the Trust's steadfast investments

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

\$82.2 million— and over 2,700 projects— that's how much the Trust delivered in total benefits in 2022/23 to support the efforts of Basin communities, businesses and residents.

This includes \$56.8 million in programs and initiatives, \$6.1 million in new real estate, \$15.7 million in new business loans, and \$3.6 million in capital investments in areas such as broadband infrastructure and economic programs.

The Trust's revenues exceeded targets and totaled nearly \$96 million thanks to the performance of its investments, including the hydropower facilities it jointly owns with Columbia Power Corporation.

ourtrust.org/annualreport

Strengthening the Columbia Basin now and for future generations

The Trust supports efforts to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region

FROM PROVIDING resources, to bringing people together, to leading an entire initiative, Columbia Basin Trust is here to support what the people of the Basin want to achieve. 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.

Working together with you and your communities, we remain flexible and use varied approaches to respond to Basin priorities, based on the needs of the situation, the participants involved and how we can be most effective. To learn more about how the Trust was formed and how we work, watch this 5-minute animation.



<https://youtu.be/vkkEVkMlfJk>



Columbia Basin Trust staff, Rossland 2022

The Trust is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors who live in the Basin. Learn more about our Board and read highlights and meeting minutes at: ourtrust.org/board



Columbia Basin Trust Board of Directors.

Left to right: Betty Anne Marino, Don McCormick, Carol Andrews, Bill van Yzerloo, Krista Turcasso, Owen Torgerson, Jocelyn Carver (Chair), Corky Evans, Ron Oszust, David Raven (Vice-Chair) and Codie Morigeau. Missing: Aimee Watson.

Columbia Basin Trust Region

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



Map Legend

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

This map is a graphical representation and may not be to scale.




Contact Us
1.800.505.8998

info@ourtrust.org
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Columbia Basin **trust**



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