



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
AGENDA
Thursday, July 09, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

First Nations Acknowledgement

AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

July 9, 2026

Approve

MINUTES

Board Meeting Minutes - June 25, 2026

Page 6-24

Approve

DELEGATIONS

LEES AND ASSOCIATES - Megan Turnock, MSc., MLA, Consultant

1. Area G Parks and Trails Master Plan
2. Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Referrals

**Natasha Burgert, Planning Summer Student - High Ridge Wind
Investigative Use Licence Application Notice - Electoral Aras B
(Burns Lake Rrral), C (Fort St. James Rural), and D (Fraser Lake
Rural)**

Page 25-27

Recommendation

**Telkwa Wind Investigative Wind License Referral Response -
Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)**

Page 28-32

Receive

Other

**Cameron Kral, Planner - Parcel Frontage Exemption Application
PF E-01-26 - Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)**

Page 33-44

Recommendation

PARKS AND TRAILS

**Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator - Parks and
Trails Master Plan - Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)**

Page 45-142

Receive

**Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator - Parks and
Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)**

Page 143-239

Receive

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**Alex Eriksen, Director of Environmental Services - Purchase of a
New Dump Truck**

Page 240-241

Recommendation

ADMINISTRATION BYLAWS

Bylaw for Adoption

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - RDBN Pump
and Haul Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026
and RDBN Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal
Bylaw No. 2105, 2026**

Page 242-245

Recommendation

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - Southside
Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment
Bylaw No. 2114, 2026**

Page 246-249

Recommendation

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

**Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
- Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) Economic Development
Service Grant to the Village of Telkwa for Community Hall
Kitchen Upgrade Project**

Page 250

Recommendation

**Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
- Grant to Stelat'en First Nation for Marianne Louis Memorial
Hall Restoration Project - Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)**

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Recommendation

**Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
- Grant in Aid to Stuart Lake Golf Club - Electoral Area C (Fort St.
James Rural)**

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Recommendation

**Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator - Letter of
Support Request – College of New Caledonia**

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Recommendation

**Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator - Nechako
Valley Sporting Association – Resolution of Support Request**

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Recommendation

**Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator - Regional
Business Forum Report**

Page 257-259

Receive

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - 2020-2025
Agriculture Plan Audit**

Page 260-267

Discussion

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Directors' Remuneration Update

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Direction

Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services - Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organization - Final Reports

Page 293-301

Receive

**Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from the In-Camera Meeting**

Page 302-303

Receive

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE

Joint Advocacy Letter to the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

Page 304-306

Receive

City of Prince George - Northern Rural Homeowners Grant

Page 307-308

Receive

Northern Development Initiative - Grant Writing Support Approval Letter

Page 309

Receive

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

VERBAL REPORTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

RECEIPT OF VERBAL REPORTS

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT**VISION**

"A World of Opportunities
Within Our Region"

MISSION

"We Will Foster Social,
Environmental, and
Economic Opportunities
Within Our Diverse Region Through Effective
Leadership"

2022-2026 Strategic Plan

1. Relationships with First Nations
2. Advocacy with the Province
3. Housing Supply
4. Community and Economic Sustainability



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 25, 2026

Directors Present: Chair Mark Parker
 Gladys Atrill
 Shane Brien
 Leroy Dekens - left at 10:39 a.m., returned at 10:49 a.m., left at 11:05 a.m., returned at 11:10 a.m.
 Martin Elphee
 Judy Greenaway
 Clint Lambert - arrived at 10:22 a.m.
 Linda McGuire
 Shirley Moon
 Kevin Moutray
 Chris Newell
 Michael Riis-Christianson
 Stoney Stoltenberg
 Sarrah Storey - returned from lunch at 12:42 p.m.
 Henry Wiebe

Staff: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
 Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
 John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
 Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - left at 11:41 a.m.
 Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services
 Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services
 Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
 Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services - left at 11:31 a.m., returned at 11:34 a.m., left at 12:05 p.m.

Others: Merewyn Comeau, LD News - Black Press - via Zoom
 Joan Isac, Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations Lead, Pacific Northern Gas - left at 10:30 a.m.
 David Keir, Director, Business Development and Stakeholder Relations, Pacific Northern Gas - left at 10:30 a.m.

Ron Poole, Poole Consulting - arrived at 12:41 p.m.
Herb Pond, Steering Committee, RBA - via Zoom -
arrived at 12:50 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

First Nations Acknowledgement

AGENDA

June 25, 2026

2026-BM-448

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the Agenda for June 25, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Board Meeting Minutes - June 11, 2026

2026-BM-449

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Moon

That the Board Meeting Minutes for June 11, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Rural Services Committee Meeting Minutes - June 11, 2026

2026-BM-450

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Rural Services Committee Meeting Minutes for June 11, 2026 be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATIONS

PACIFIC NORTHERN GAS - David Keir, Director, Business Development and Stakeholder Relations and Joan Isac, Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations Lead

Re: 2025-2027 Revenue Requirement Application - BCUC Decision and PNG's Energy Efficiency Rebate Program

Chair Parker welcomed David Keir, Director, Business Development and Stakeholder Relations and Joan Isac, Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations Lead, Pacific Northern Gas (PNG).

Mr. Keir and Ms. Isac provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. Status Update

- Revenue Requirement Decision
- Pipeline Integrity Management
- Integrity Management Program
- Integrity Dig Work in Progress
- Right-of-way after Registration and Regrowth
- Automatic Metre Reading (Modernization)
- PNG.ca/Rebates
- Case Study: REALice Technology for community ice rinks
- Supporting Regional Economic Development
- Supporting Community Growth.

The following was discussed:

- Remote mines and industry rely on propane
 - Liquefaction of gas
 - PNG continues to assess possibilities including compressed natural gas (CNG)
 - Economics is dependent on transportation cost
 - Becoming more involved finding solutions to utilize natural gas in addressing the de-carbonization move from propane/diesel to natural gas
- Ms. Isac will follow up regarding the process of applying a patch to the pipeline

- Manual removal of trees on pipeline right-of-way
- BC Utilities Commission decision regarding the deferral of PNG's revenue requirement through to 2029 and increasing clientele
- Rebate program public education
- Automatic Metre Program
 - PNG comparison to BC Hydro Smart Metre Program
 - PNG Automatic Metre Program is not a time of use program
 - Data will create a more accurate reading of usage and billing.

Chair Parker thanked Mr. Keir and Ms. Isac for attending the meeting.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Referrals

Trevor Moffat, Planning Summer Student - Crown Land Referral 7410409 Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)

2026-BM-451

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 7410409.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Other

Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner - Special Events Licence Application SEL A-01-25 – Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

2026-BM-452

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Atrill

That the Board approve the issuance of Special Event Licence A-01-25 to allow a three-day secondary school reunion for up to 750 attendees at 1545 Highway 16 East.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services - Section 57 Notice on Title Process

2026-BM-453

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Elphee

That staff change their approach to the Section 57 notice on title process by submitting recommendations to the Board for the placement of notices on title as a routine first step where a non-compliance is noticed and compliance is not immediately obtained.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services - Budget 2027 Presentation on Affordable Housing

2026-BM-454

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Board receive the Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services' Budget 2027 Presentation on Affordable Housing memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION BYLAWS

Bylaw for First, Second and Third Reading

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2114, 2026

2026-BM-455

Moved by Director Lambert

Seconded by Director Moutray

That Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2114, 2026 be given first, second, and third reading this 25th day of June, 2026.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services - Committee Meeting Recommendations - June 11, 2026

2026-BM-456

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Greenaway

That the Board approve recommendations 1 and 2 as written.

Rural Services Committee Meeting – June 11, 2026

Recommendation 1:

Re: Grant Funding Review

That the Board direct staff to research RBA funding options for ownership/partnership possibilities for infrastructure owned by societies.

Recommendation 2:

Re: Community Hall Insurance

That the Board direct staff to explore pooled insurance for community halls within the region and bring forward a report at a future Board meeting.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Directors' Remuneration Update

Discussion

CAO Helgesen provided an overview of the Directors' Remuneration Update memorandum and supporting documentation along with neighbouring Regional Districts public SOFI reports.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Fair and equitable remuneration
- Recognizing the duties and responsibilities and increasing demands that elected officials are experiencing
- Travel costs for Directors traveling to events within the region but more than 100-200 km distances
 - Mileage reimbursements not fully accounting for vehicle wear
- Recognizing the challenges for small communities to provide equitable compensation packages in relation to larger local governments and Regional Districts
- Technology provided to all Directors, including municipal Directors to address security requirements
- Reviewing meal allowances for travel outside the RDBN
- Chair and Directors remuneration below the provincial median and needs review

- Third-party review process to assess remuneration and provide recommendations
 - Challenges to find qualified participants and coordinating the review process
 - Consideration of an independent review process
- Collaboration with other local governments to share data collection and compensation reviews
- Remuneration in relation to attracting diverse candidates, including younger residents, professionals, and those with families
- Factors impacting elected officials:
 - increasing workloads
 - downloading of responsibilities
 - mental health impacts
 - public scrutiny
 - absence of pension plans
- Consumer Price Index adjustments included in the current Bylaw
- Compensation appropriately reflecting the value and complexity of the role
- Mindful of taxpayer impacts
- Review remuneration relative to provincial medians and comparable regional districts
- Adjustments over time to ensure remuneration compensation does not fall further behind the provincial average
- Cost analysis including remuneration increase scenarios and tax implications
- Bringing forward the Directors' Remuneration Bylaw for consideration in August 2026.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Appointment of a Director to the Chinook Community Forest Board

2026-BM-457

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That Mr. Bill Miller be appointed to the Chinook Community Forest Board effective at the next Chinook AGM for a period of 4 years.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services- Grant in Aid for Royal Canadian Legion Branch 63 Smithers - Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

2026-BM-458

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Atrill

That the Board approve a Regional Grant in Aid of \$13,388 from the Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) allocation to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 63 Smithers for a Veterans Crosswalk project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services- Grant in Aid for Ootsa Lake Bible Camp Geothermal Heating Project - Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural) and E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)

2026-BM-459

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Board approve a Regional Grant in Aid of \$10,000 split 50/50 between the Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural) and E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) allocations for a geothermal heating system project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Build Communities Strong Fund, Community Stream Grant to District of Fort St. James for Cottonwood Marina Upgrade Project - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

2026-BM-460

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Elphee

1. That the Board authorize contributing up to \$50,000 of Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Build Communities Strong Fund allocation monies to the District of Fort St. James for a Recreation Infrastructure project at Cottonwood Marina, and;

(participants/weighted/majority)

2. That the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$50,000 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Build Communities Strong Fund, Community Stream Grant to District of Fort St. James for Fort Forum Upgrade Project - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

2026-BM-461

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Elphee

1) That the Board authorize contributing up to \$50,000 of Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) Build Communities Strong Fund allocation monies to the District of Fort St. James for a Recreation Infrastructure project at the Fort Forum Arena, and;

(participants/weighted/majority)

2) That the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$50,000 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services and Kia Nitchie First Nations Liaison - Grant to Saik'uz First Nation for Community Garden Project - Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)

2026-BM-462

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Storey

1) That the Board approve a \$1,000 Regional Grant in Aid from the Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) allocation to Saik'uz First Nation, and;

2) That the Board approve a \$7,000 grant to Saik'uz First Nation from the RDBN's allocation of Northwest BC Regional Funding (RBA) for the Community Garden Project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Cameron Hart, Community Development Coordinator - Business Facade Improvement Program Guide Update

2026-BM-463

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the Board approve the amendments to the Business Facade Improvement Program Guide to include permanent signage on the applicant property.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Cameron Hart, Community Development Coordinator - Business Facade Improvement Program Application – Tatalrose Corner Store

Director Lambert removed himself from the meeting at 11:38 a.m. due to a conflict of interest regarding a business interest in Tatalrose Corner Store.

2026-BM-464

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Newell

That the Board approve a \$5,000 grant to Tatalrose Corner Store & Custom Meats through the 2026 Business Facade Improvement Program.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Lambert returned at 11:39 a.m.

Cameron Hart, Community Development Coordinator - 2025 Annual Report**2026-BM-465**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director McGuire

That the Board approve the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako 2025 Annual Report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief - Bill M214 – Firefighters Health Act**2026-BM-466**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Moutray

That staff draft a letter to the Honourable David Eby outlining the RDBN's concerns regarding Bill M214-Firefighters Health Act.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George - 9-1-1 Call Answer Repatriation Project Update**

2026-BM-467

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Board receive the Administration Correspondence from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George regarding 9-1-1 Call Answer Repatriation Project Update.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Regional District of Okanagan-Smilkameen - National Economic Infrastructure Priority West Coast Corridor Resiliency Partnership**2026-BM-468**

Moved by Director Brien

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Board receive the Administration Correspondence from the Regional District of Okanagan-Smilkameen regarding National Economic Infrastructure Priority West Coast Corridor Resiliency Partnership.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Atrill spoke of considering a similar initiative in northern B.C. and Chair Parker noted the inclusion of CN Rail.

Community Farmland Trust - Request for Endorsement and Partnership Support**2026-BM-469**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Moon

That the Board receive the Administration Correspondence from the Community Farmland Trust regarding Request for Endorsement and Partnership Support.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding staff providing a response noting the RDBN's interest in hearing if land within the RDBN is identified and keeping the Board apprised of the project's progression.

Union of B.C. Municipalities - 2025 CEPF: Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) Exercise and Evacuation Workshop**2026-BM-470**

Moved by Director Dekens

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Board receive the Administration Correspondence from the Union of B.C. Municipalities - 2025 CEPF: Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) Exercise and Evacuation Workshop.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VERBAL REPORTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Village of Granisle - Director McGuire

- Father's Day Fishing Derby was successful, with an 8.4 lb winning char by a Burns Lake resident
- Mall remediation is progressing and hopefully by the end of summer the commercial property space will be completed and can be advertised and marketed
- Moving in a positive direction regarding the water issues, awaiting Northern Health's guidance on the most recent results
- Hired a new Grant Writer working remotely
- Planning for Canada Day celebrations is underway, although securing vendors for a mid-week event is challenging.

Village of Burns Lake - Director Wiebe

- Construction of previously burned buildings is underway
- The proposed Tim Horton's build is currently on hold.

Village of Telkwa - Director Dekens

- Construction of a new water line on Highway 16 will begin July 6 to be completed in September
- Road maintenance work is ongoing
- Paving of Phase 3 of the Cycle 16 Trail is commencing and Phase 4 will follow completion of the water line project.

Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) - Director Lambert

- Attended a community meeting at Wisteria Hall with Rio Tinto and discussed future plans
- Lightening caused wildfires started yesterday and this morning on the Southside

with resources and response efforts ongoing.

Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural - Director Greenaway

- Nak'azdli Whut'en, the District of Fort St. James, and Electoral Area C have jointly hired Jamie Fraser, Healthcare Attraction position for Fort St. James and area. She has been in the position for a couple of weeks and will focus on attracting healthcare professions to the community
- Attended a meeting with Northern Health, along with Chair Parker and CAO Helgesen to discuss impacts to healthcare from work camps and industrial development
- Received a letter from Pinche Lake residents regarding woodlot logging activities in the area
 - Brought forward environmental and biodiversity concerns
 - Will send a letter to the concerned residents and forward the information to the District Manager, Stuart-Nechako, Ministry of Forests.

Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) - Director Newell

- Ministry of Forests conducted grading work on the Morice-Owen Forest Service Road recently
- Expressed condolences and the impacts of a recent loss of a young person in the community from illicit drugs
- Brought forward concerns with licensees moving harvested timber out of the region.

Town of Smithers - Director Atrill

- Council approved moving forward with the HEART (Homeless Encampment Action Response Team) and HEARTH (Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing) program with 25 interim, year-round shelter with a pathway toward permanent supportive housing proposed to be operational by November 2026 with the goal of closing the temporary shelter
- On June 17th the Town of Smithers presented the Freedom of the Municipality to Chief Timberwolf, Mabel Forsythe, Gitdumden (Bear Clan), this is the first time the honour has been bestowed upon a woman and an indigenous person
 - The ceremony took place at Town Hall with a well attended event at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre with a short film showcasing Chief Timberwolf's contributions

Thursday, June 25, 2026

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- Community 2 Community (C2C) forum at Glenwood Hall followed on June 18th
- Town of Smithers and Office of the Wet'suwet'en hired Tyler McCreary for the Wet'suwet'en Ambassador position.

District of Houston - Director Brien

- Summer construction and infrastructure projects are moving forward with the support of grant funding
 - Bike/walking path being developed along Mountain View
 - Bymac Park upgrades was awarded to a local contractor through the competitive bid process
 - Indigenous partnered projects
 - Friendship Centre
 - Daycare Facility
 - 40-unit housing project
 - Recruiting a new CAO
- On going forestry sector financial challenges of a \$1.2 M shortfall in property taxes from the Canfor Sawmill closure
 - District created a transition reserve fund when West Fraser closed its sawmill in the community which has helped to offset the transition budget shortfall from the more recent closure of the Canfor sawmill
 - A small amount of the budget shortfall has been relieved by RBA and other grant funds
 - Hired Bloom Centre for Municipal Education, an Alberta consulting company to develop a plan to transition the economy.

Break for lunch at 12:05 p.m.

Returned at 12:41 p.m.

Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) - Director Moon

- Cattle prices remain strong
- Concerns regarding feed shortages and pasture conditions
- Current conditions may potentially increase livestock sales and feeding challenges.

Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) - Director Stoltenberg

- Attended Keeping-it-Rural Conference in Kelowna
 - Received information regarding renewable energy initiatives, including solar and a vehicle mounted systems road condition monitoring technology
- Father's Day Fishing Derby at Tyhee Lake was well attended and successful.

Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural) Director Riis-Christianson

- Attended a virtual information session with the Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Health regarding recruitment and retention
 - Noted the work being completed by the Village of Burns Lake and Areas B and E regarding recruitment of physicians
 - Discussed working with UBCM to create a data bank of information
 - Main issue facing recruitment and retention of medical professionals is the lack of available housing.

District of Vanderhoof - Director Moutray

- 100 year Centennial Celebration July 4-5
 - VIP Invitations - those wanting to attend may reach out to Mayor Moutray.
- RCMP
 - Staffing position shortage
 - Brought forward concerns to the Province
 - Traffic RCMP members were diverted to assist during the FIFA games
- Health Career Access Program (HCAP)
 - Received notification that the HCAP has been canceled at the Collage of New Caledonia due to a lack of registrants
 - Impact to staffing levels with the need for Care Aids.
- Canfor Sawmill closure
 - Concerns brought forward that since the closure under Harvest License A18157 there has been just under 490,000m³ of timber that has been transported elsewhere
- Discussion with provincial representatives regarding youth employment rates and labour force challenges.

District of Fort St. James - Director Elphee

- Apollo Forest Products mill operations have increased to five days per week following a recent curtailment

- Three year of the five year water connection project completed
- Completion of Spirit Square upgrades and the acquisition of an adjacent property.

Village of Fraser Lake - Director Storey

- Work to focus on a Community Waterfront Development Plan
- Hotel development announcement was made during National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations
- Participating in the recruitment of a new Executive Director for UBCM.

Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) - Chair Parker

- Signed protocol agreement with Saik'uz First Nation at the end of May
- Attended the following:
 - Rio Tinto meeting at Wisteria
 - Surgeon release in Vanderhoof
 - Approximately 900 students in attendance
 - Opportunity to interact with community members
 - Ministry of Forest regarding the European Union regulations regarding deforestation and the impacts to the agriculture landowners
 - Attended a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) meeting
 - Follow up with provincial and federal representatives to provide an understanding of impacts to local agriculture landowners and Canada's low risk of deforestation
 - Northern Health to discuss camps and industrial pressures on health care in the region
 - Will attend a future Board meeting as a delegation
 - Met with the new UNBC President
- Thanked Director Atrill for presenting on behalf of the Regional District to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services on the provincial Budget 2027 Consultation regarding affordable housing.

RECEIPT OF VERBAL REPORTS

2026-BM-471

Moved by Director McGuire

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Board receive the various Directors' verbal reports.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Provincial Update

Director Moutray brought forward concerns regarding the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship inconsistencies between information regarding drought conditions and wildfire danger ratings in the region. Current drought assessments may not accurately reflect agricultural conditions and local soil moisture levels across the region.

Chair Parker mentioned the research being conducted by UNBC that uses soil moisture sensors in agricultural fields and the data is being uploaded and mapped to provide more accurate measurements of on the ground conditions. Sensors have been installed in Chair Parker's fields.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Possibility of expanding monitoring locations
- Significant difference in soil conditions across the area
- Challenges with different ministry's arriving at differing conclusions with similar information.
 - Level 1 drought conditions with extreme wildfire danger ratings.

2026-BM-472

Moved by Director Moutray

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and BC Wildfire Service requesting clarification regarding the different ministries arriving at different conclusions for drought ratings and fire rating for the region with similar information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Recruitment and Retention

Director Newell brought forward the importance of encouraging Northern Health, Ministry of Education, RCMP and other agencies to purchase housing in rural communities to

encourage and attempt to eliminate housing as a barrier to recruitment and retention of professionals to rural communities. Director Riis-Christianson noted that housing is provided in some communities and recognized the Province canceling funding for community housing projects that may of helped ease the strain for housing in communities. Discussion took place regarding the challenges that still arise with housing being provided. The Board discussed possible advocacy initiatives.

Community Pastures

Director Moon noted that along with Chair Parker and Trevor Tapp, RDBN Agriculture Coordinator attended a meeting with the Ministry of Forests Range representatives in Vanderhoof to discuss challenges associated with community pastures and access for young farmers. Director Moon requested staff provide some time to research community pastures in other areas of the province and neighbouring Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

2026-BM-473

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Newell

That the Board direct staff to research community pastures and community pasture initiatives in other areas of the Province and the neighbouring Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan; and further, community fire buffers be considered for new range development to assist with fire mitigation.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

IN-CAMERA MOTION

2026-BM-474

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Dekens

That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c), and 90(2)(b) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to:

- Labour Relations
- Connectivity
- First Nations
- RBA

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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ADJOURNMENT

2026-BM-475

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Newell

That the meeting be adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Natasha Burgert, Planning Summer Student

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **High Ridge Wind Investigative Use Licence Application Notice, Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural), C (Fort St. James Rural), and D (Fraser Lake Rural)**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

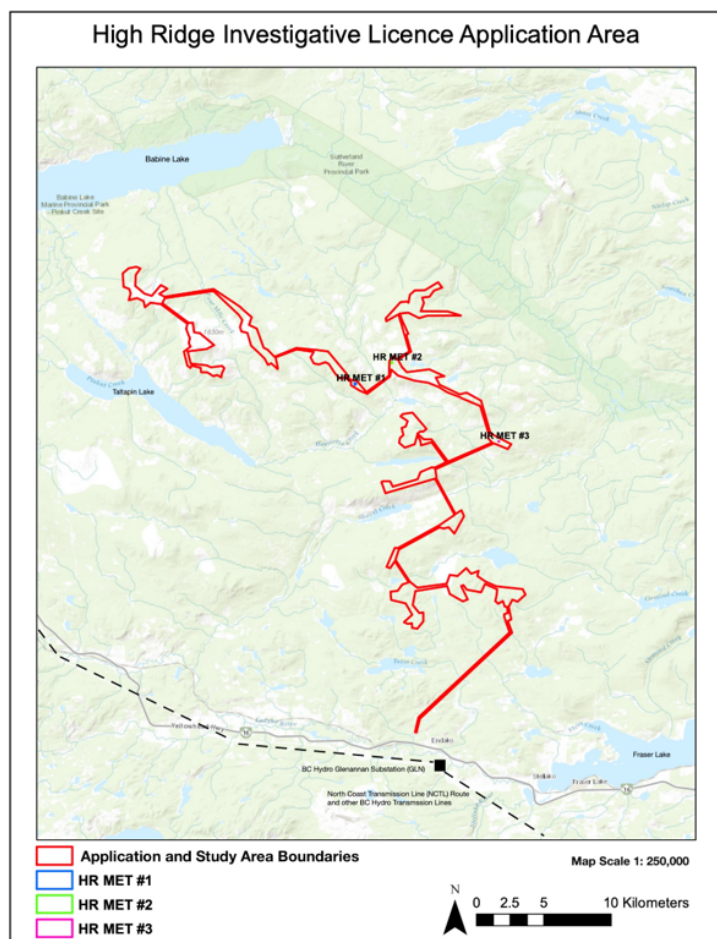
That the Board direct staff to provide the following comments to the applicant and the British Columbia Energy Regulator (BCER) in response to the notice for the High Ridge Investigative Use Licence (IUL) Application (ERAA #100123014).

The Regional District has concerns regarding the cumulative effects of wind farms and requests that the Province develop a strategy to manage the number and cumulative effects of wind farms in the region. The RDBN is concerned that the BC Hydro Call for Power process and the BCER approval process for selected projects is not adequate to protect community interests in the RDBN.

BACKGROUND:

186 Energy Inc. has sent the RDBN a notice of intent for a two-year Investigative Use License (IUL) through the BCER (ERAA #100123014) to undertake a feasibility study for the proposed High Ridge Wind Project. The application area encompasses approximately 4,746 hectares of Crown land located north of Fraser Lake and south of Babine Lake.

The purpose of this IUL is to evaluate the feasibility of a utility-scale wind farm situated within the boundaries of the application area. The investigative study is proposed for a term of two (2) years.



The application proposes to install at least one 60-metre tall wind monitoring mast (MET) to collect wind resource data for a minimum of one year. Up to three potential MET tower locations have been identified. The applicant indicates that the sites are accessible by existing forest service roads and do not require tree cutting or road building.

If feasible, the applicant estimates a potential generation capacity of 100 to 200 megawatts, consisting of approximately 18 to 35 wind turbines. Any future development would require separate regulatory approvals, consultation with affected First Nations and participation in a future BC Hydro procurement process.

BCER's role in permitting energy activities is defined under the Energy Resource Activities Act (ERAA) and includes regulatory responsibility for liquified natural gas (LNG), geothermal exploration, and new oil refineries. This role was expanded when the Renewable Energy Project (Streamlined Permitting) Act (the Act) came into effect July 2025.

The Act established the BCER as the primary permitting agency for the North Coast Transmission Line project, prescribed renewable energy projects, and transmission lines, creating a "single window" permitting process and Crown consultation to streamline the permitting process. This single window model means that when these types of projects require approval pursuant to the Forest Act, Heritage Conservation Act, Land Act, Environmental Management Act, or Water Sustainability Act, BCER is now designated as the primary permitting agency and regulator for the lifecycle of the project.

The Act also exempts land-based wind power projects and the North Coast Transmission Line project from the current provincial environmental assessment process under the Environmental Assessment Act, while leaving room for future project exemptions.

Below is a BCER Application Review Process diagram. The applicant's notice falls under the Pre-Application "Consultation & Notification or Rights Holder Engagement".

BCER's Renewable Energy Project Regulation (the Regulation) came into effect March 10, 2026 for new "high-output" wind and power projects to be permitted by the BCER pursuant to the Regulation. "High-output" solar and wind projects are those with a capacity of 5 or greater megawatts.

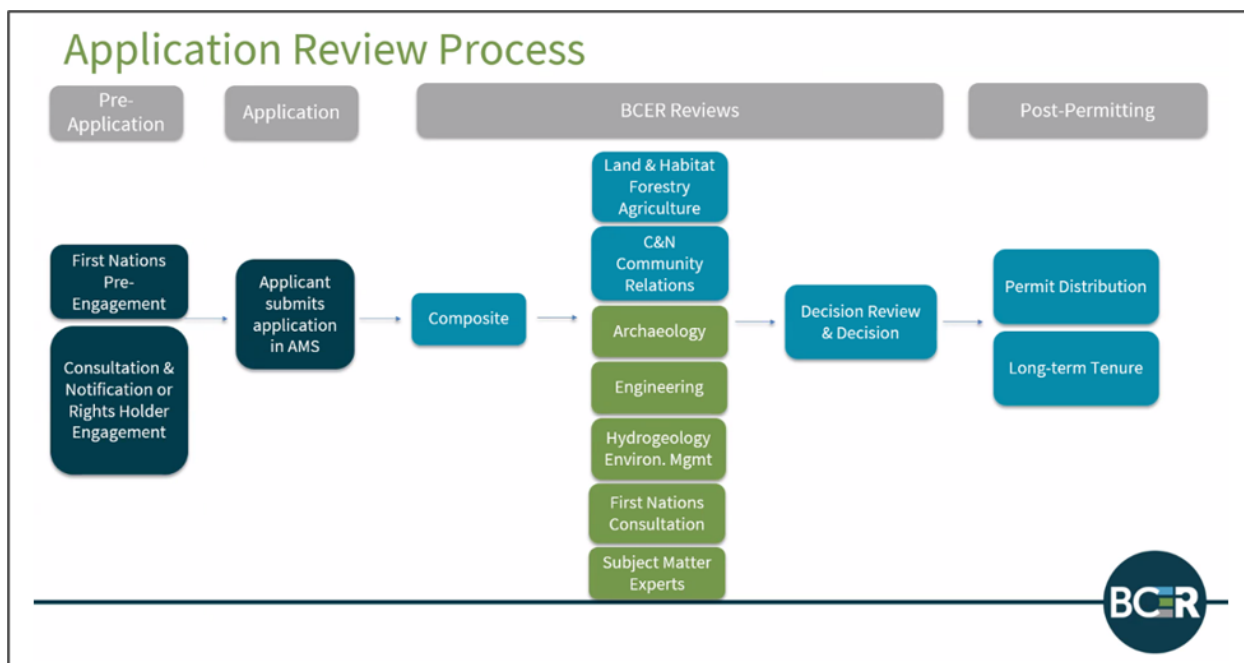


Figure 1: Application Review Process Diagram from BCER

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Investigative Plan – High Ridge Investigative Plan \(link\)](#)
- [Notification Letter – Application for an Investigative Use Licence \(link\)](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
2. Advocacy with the Province

186 Energy Inc.

Reply to RDBN Formal Response Regarding IUL Application New EERA 100123081

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
37 Third Avenue
PO Box 820
Burns Lake, BC. V0J 1E0.

Greetings;

Re: 186 Energy Inc. Investigative Use Licence EERA: 100123081

Thank you for your letter of June 12, 2026 and BCER Written Submission Form in respect to our application for the above captioned Investigative Use Licence (IUL) on BC Crown land situated to the east of the BC Hydro Telkwa Substation and the North Coast Transmission Line (NCTL) corridor.

Your letter notes that the June 11 meeting of the RDBN Board of Directors passed a resolution to provide the following response:

“The Regional District has concerns regarding the cumulative effects of wind farms and requests that the Province develop a strategy to manage the number and cumulative effects of wind farms in the region. The RDBN is concerned that the BC Hydro Call for Power process and the BCER approval process for selected projects is not adequate to protect community interest in the RDBN.”

The BCER requires that all Applicants must respond to all submissions received from recipients who were engaged through the formal consultation process.

The RDBN concerns and requests are correctly directed for consideration of the provincial government. Only the provincial government can engage on the referenced policies. Regardless of that circumstance, as the Applicant we appreciate this opportunity to provide some additional information to the RDBN on the BC wind power development process.

This letter may be considered as information.

The purpose of our IUL application is to undertake a **wind power feasibility study** within specific application boundaries. The proposed study described in our Investigative Plan and shared with the RDBN includes measuring the wind resource and undertaking various non-disturbance studies of other technical, environmental, engineering and land use characteristics. Our study is not an application for a Permit to build a wind project. If the study determines the site is unsuitable for a wind project, we will remove the monitoring station and leave the site untouched as we found it. We note the proposed 1 ha wind monitor (MET) sites within our Telkwa IUL application area are each situated more than 6 km from any known dwelling. There is no other land disturbance contemplated in the feasibility study.

If the study indicates a wind project may be feasible at the site, it does not necessarily mean a wind project will be constructed at the site. Advancing any IUP tenure to become a constructed wind project is a significant multi-year undertaking conditional on contracts, permits and consents. At a minimum, these include receiving an Electricity Purchase Agreement (EPA) from BC Hydro within a competitive power call (RFP) open to competing project bidders situated throughout the province. It would also be conditional on arranging First Nations consent and project co-ownership, obtaining the appropriate Crown land tenures, obtaining all permits and project financing, and the timely securing of major project components (turbines, transformers, conductors, etc.) necessary to achieve the contracted power delivery date.

With respect to general concerns about cumulative effects, our research indicates that less than 10% of wind IUL tenures issued on BC Crown land have resulted in actual wind projects that are built or building. Most built wind projects are located in two other regions of B.C. — the NE Peace River Region, and the BC Southern Interior. In the two recent BC Hydro power calls, only one of the twelve selected wind projects was located in the RDBN. In a similar way, only a fraction of the thousands of BC mineral claims on Crown land result in operational mines.

In respect to potential future land impacts, if a contemporary 100 to 200 MegaWatt (MW) wind project was built in future in our study application area, the expected direct land use by turbines would require less than approximately 200 hectares, or less than 5% of our proposed study area. This is a relatively small footprint compared to alternate power sources. For example, the footprint of wind turbines of 200 MW capacity is less than 1% of the flooded area of the 91,000 hectare Nechako reservoir. The total Nechako reservoir area if divided by Kemano Generating Station's 896 MW capacity, uses approximately 100 flooded hectares to power each 1 MW capacity. We can extrapolate that as 200 MW requires 20,000 flooded hectares. Any additional areas required for any transmission lines, access roads and other land use would depend any future layout plan informed by the feasibility study.

Development can bring significant benefits to First Nations and the RDBN generally

In the event our proposed feasibility study is successful, and a wind project is developed in future years, the project will provide significant economic and job creation benefits to the RDBN. If built to the two mentioned capacities, the regional investment in new clean energy infrastructure would be approximately \$300 to \$600 Million. The Project would create more than 200 construction jobs for 1 to 3 years, and up to another 10 to 15 local long-term careers in project operations and maintenance. Indirect and induced jobs would also be created to support local businesses and services, with a substantial regional economic benefit generated over the 30 year service life of the Project.

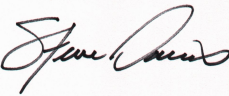
Notification Letters have been sent to all First Nations whose traditional territories are overlapped by the application area. Any future Project that may arise from a successful feasibility study will be co-owned by regional First Nations, bringing new wealth creation and other economic benefits to their communities, as well as the region and province generally.

In consideration of community interests broadly, the boundaries of the IUL study area have been drawn to avoid overlapping provincially mapped valued components. There is no overlap of Water Sustainability Act Features, Conservation Lands, ALR Lands, NGO Conservation Areas, Protected Areas, Parks or Regional Greenspaces. There is no overlap of designated Wildlife Habitat Areas, Management Areas, Habitat Features, Old Growth Management areas or Ungulate Winter Range Areas.

Additionally, Notification Letters have been sent to all Rights Holders whose tenures or territories are overlapped by portions of the application study area including holders of Trap Lines, Range Tenures, Guide Outfitter territories, Forestry tenures and Mineral claim tenures.

Thank you for providing an opportunity to share this information.

Yours truly,



Steve Davis. P. Eng.
Director
186 Energy Inc.



June 12, 2026

Steve Davis, P.Eng, Director
186 Energy Inc.
#4289 – 3151 Lakeshore Road
Kelowna, BC, V1W 3S9
Via email: svdavis@gmail.com

Dear Steve Davis:

186 Energy Inc. Investigative Use Licence ERRA: 100123081

At their June 11, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, the RDBN Board of Directors reviewed and discussed the proposed IUL project near Telkwa. The RDBN Board of Directors made a resolution to provide the following response to the IUL.

"The Regional District has concerns regarding the cumulative effects of wind farms and requests that the Province develop a strategy to manage the number and cumulative effects of wind farms in the region. The RDBN is concerned that the BC Hydro Call for Power process and the BCER approval process for selected projects is not adequate to protect community interests in the RDBN."

Attached is a BCER written submission form associated with the IUL ERRA: 100123081.

Sincerely,

Trevor Moffat
Planning Summer Student

cc: British Columbia Energy Regulator (writtensubmissions@bc-er.ca)
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Developmental Services, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (Jason.Llewellyn@rdbn.bc.ca)

Attachment: BCER Written Submission Form



WRITTEN SUBMISSION FORM

6534 – 100th Ave.
Fort St. John, BC
V1J 8C5

Phone: (250) 794-5200

Date Received

Uncontrolled copy once downloaded

Please note:

1. The British Columbia Energy Regulator (BCER) will forward this submission to the applicant, and will consider it before a decision is made on the application to which it relates.
2. If the BCER requires further clarification on your noted interests, you will be contacted by the Community Relations department.
3. If possible, attach a copy of the Invitation to Consult or Written Notification document that has been provided to you.
4. Refer to Section E for instructions on how to forward your written submission to the BCER.
5. For additional guidance on completing the written submission form, please contact the Community Relations department at 250-794-5200.

CONTACT INFORMATION

A

Name: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Address: 37 3rd avenue, PO Box 820

The proposed activity is: Investigative Use (Wind Project)

City, Province: Burns Lake, British Columbia

☐ On my land

Postal Code: V0J 1E0

☐ On nearby land

Phone: 250-692-1395

☐ On a tenure I hold

Email: planning@rdbn.bc.ca

☒ Other: Within the RDBN's LG boundaries

Estimated distance of proposed activity to your related interest such as house, barn, field etc.: Dwelling (m/km) 700 m

APPLICANT INFORMATION

B

Enter the name of the company applying for the proposed activity which has been identified in either the Invitation to Consult or Written Notification document. Include the name of the referral agent or the contact person for the applicant.

Applicant Name: 186 Energy Inc.

Contact Name for the Applicant: Steve Davis

Phone: 604-360-3816

Email: svdavis@gmail.com

PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION

C

Enter project information that has been provided in the Applicant's document. Check off the type of activity and whether the applicant is proposing a new, a revised or an amended activity. Please note the location of the activity and the project name included in the documentation.

Application Number (AA#): 100123081

Activity Type: Proposed wind energy feasibility study, known as Telkwa Wind Project.

☐ Well

☐ Pipeline

☐ Facility

☐ Road

☐ Water

☐ Geophysical

☒ Other:

Application Purpose: Investigative-Use License (IUL) application for wind energy resource activity

☒ New

☐ Revision

☐ Amendment

NTS or DLS Location of the activity: Not provided. Near McQuarrie Lake. 19km East of Telkwa, 7km North of Houston

Project Name: Telkwa Wind Project

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED INTERESTS		D
Ensure the interests you express are relevant to a proposed activity and that you include a clear description of how the proposed activity will directly impact you. If possible, provide a suggested approach to minimize the impact and reduce your concerns. Attach additional page(s) if needed.		
Item 1		
At their June 11, 2026 Regular Board Meeting, the RDBN Board of Directors made a resolution to provide the following response to the IUL.		
"The Regional District has concerns regarding the cumulative effects of wind farms and requests that the Province develop a strategy to manage the number and cumulative effects of wind farms in the region. The RDBN is concerned that the BC Hydro Call for Power process and the BCER approval process for selected projects is not adequate to protect community interests in the RDBN."		
Item 2		
Item 3		
BC ENERGY REGULATOR CONTACT INFORMATION		E
Please forward to: writtensubmissions@bc-er.ca		
OR		
The BCER's Fort St. John or Dawson Creek office.		
Fort St. John Address:	Dawson Creek Address:	
6534 – 100 th Ave. Fort St. John, BC V1J 8C5	#3, 1445 – 102 nd Ave. Dawson Creek, B.C.V1G 2E1 Fax: 250.795.2149	



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cameron Kral, Planner
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Parcel Frontage Exemption Application PF E-01-26 - Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board exempt proposed Lots B and C from the minimum 10 per cent perimeter parcel frontage requirement pursuant to Section 512 of the *Local Government Act* to permit a parcel frontage of no less than 6.5 per cent for proposed Lot B and 6.6 per cent for proposed Lot C, subject to the subdivision layout being in general compliance with the proposed plan attached to this report as Schedule A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

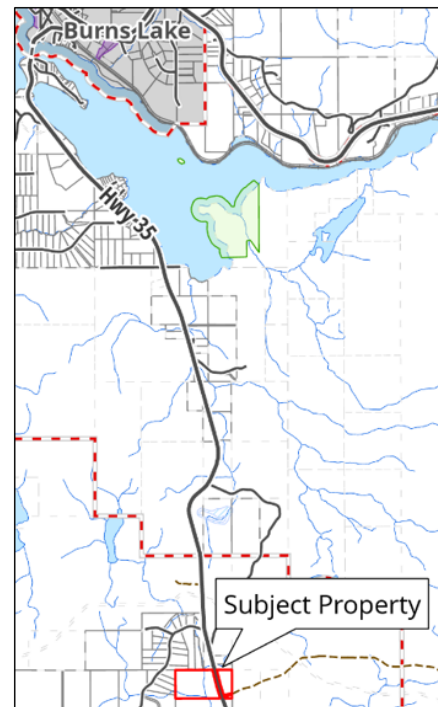
The applicant is requesting an exemption from Section 512(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act* which requires parcels created by subdivision that front a public road (highway) to have a minimum highway frontage of 10 per cent of the perimeter of each parcel.

The purpose of this request is to accommodate the subdivision of the property at 10373 Highway 35 into four lots of approximately 6.3 ha (Lot A), 6.0 ha (Lots B and C), and 11.0 ha (Lot D). Proposed Lots A and D comply with the statutory 10 per cent minimum highway frontage. However, proposed Lots B and C would have highway frontages of 6.5 per cent (93 m) and 6.6 per cent (92 m) respectively and require an exemption.

Planning staff have no concerns with the requested exemption based on the applicant's proposed subdivision layout. Staff recommend approval of a reduction of no less than 6.5 per cent for proposed Lot B and 6.6 per cent for proposed Lot C. These reductions will allow for some potential variations in parcel sizes pending a final survey of the property.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of Agent / Owner:	Rebecca Misener, Pure Resource Development Agency (Agent) Edward and Lorena Betemps (Owners)
Electoral Area:	Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)
Subject Property:	10373 Highway 35 , legally described as the North ½ of the West ½ of District Lot 5696, Range 5, Coast District, Except Plans 12236 and 7008 (PID 009-594-981)
Existing Parcel Size:	10373 Highway 35 ±29.3 ha (72.4 ac)
Proposed Parcel Sizes:	Lot A: ±6.3 ha (15.6 ac) Lot B: ±6.0 ha (14.8 ac) Lot C: ±6.0 ha (14.8 ac) Lot D: ±11.0 ha (27.2 ac)
Existing Hwy Frontage:	10373 Highway 35: ±31.9 per cent (1052 m)
Proposed Hwy Frontage:	Lot A: ±47.1 per cent (638 m) Lot B: 6.5 per cent (93 m) Lot C: 6.6 per cent (92 m) Lot D: ±13.8 per cent (209 m)
OCP Designation:	Rural Residential (RR) Designation in Burns Lake and Francois Lake (North Shore) Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1785, 2017 (the OCP)
Zoning:	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020 (the Zoning Bylaw)
Building Inspection:	Not within the Building Inspection Area
Fire Protection:	Not within a Fire Protection Area
Existing Land Uses:	Residential
Location:	Approximately 7.6 km south of the Village of Burns Lake



PROPOSAL

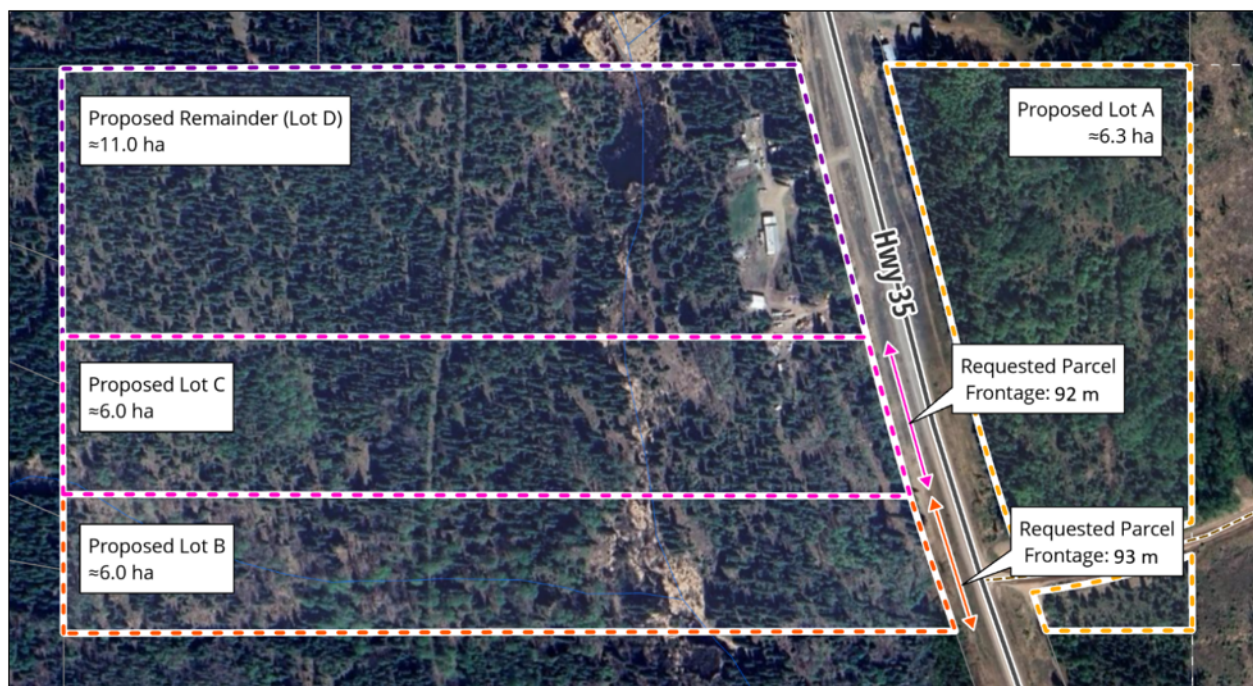
The applicant wishes to subdivide an approximately 29.3 ha parcel into four parcels (Lots A, B, C, and Lot D). The purpose of the subdivision is to create three new parcels while the owners continue to reside on proposed Lot D.

Section 512 of the *Local Government Act* requires each of the proposed parcels to have a road frontage of at least 10 per cent of the perimeter of each parcel, unless exempted by the RDBN Board. The applicant is requesting a reduced frontage for proposed Lot B at 6.5 per cent (93 m) and proposed Lot C at 6.6 per cent (92 m). Proposed Lots A and D meet the statutory frontage requirement and do not require exemptions.

The applicant provided the attached letter outlining the reasons for the request:

- All proposed parcels are adjacent to existing utilities and have direct access to Highway 16 and/or Seven Mile FSR.
- Proposed Lots B and C would each have 90 m or more of highway frontage along a straight section of Highway 16.

Requested Frontage Reductions



DISCUSSION

Parcel Frontage Reductions

Section 512(1) of the *Local Government Act* states:

- (1) If a parcel being created by a subdivision fronts on a highway, the minimum frontage on the highway must be the greater of*
 - (a) 10% of the perimeter of the lot that fronts on the highway, and*
 - (b) the minimum frontage that the local government may, by bylaw, provide.*
- (2) A local government may exempt a parcel from the statutory or bylaw minimum frontage provided for in subsection (1).*
- (3) As a limitation on section 299 [delegation of board authority] of this Act or section 154 [delegation of council authority] of the Community Charter, a local government may delegate its powers under subsection (2) only to an approving officer."*

The Board of Directors delegated the authority to exempt a parcel from the statutory 10 per cent highway frontage requirement to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit subdivision Approving Officer from 1986 to 2024. From April 12, 2024 onwards, any requests for parcel frontage exemptions must be approved by the RDBN Board of Directors.

Property Details

The subject property contains the owners' principal residence and three residential accessory buildings used for storage. The existing buildings and related infrastructure are located on proposed Lot D. The property is heavily treed and bisected by Highway 16. A small part of proposed Lot A is further bisected by Seven Mile FSR. Several water features are located on the subject property, including two seasonal streams, a creek, and pond (see Attachments for Site Visit Photos).

Official Community Plan

The subject property is designated Rural Residential (RR) pursuant to the OCP. The intent of the RR Designation is to provide opportunities for people to live in a rural setting while protecting and preserving the rural character of the area. Section 3.4.2 of the RR Designation contains the following policy relevant to the proposal:

- (1) Low to moderate density residential (fee simple and bare land strata) subdivisions, recreational and other unobtrusive uses will be permitted in the Rural Residential designation. Limited forms of agriculture may be permitted within the implementing zoning bylaw.*

Zoning

The subject property is zoned Large Holdings Zone (H2) pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw. Proposed Lots A, B, and C are below the H2 Zone's minimum parcel size requirement of 8.0 ha (19.77 ac) at subdivision. However, this requirement does not apply because the Provincial Approving Officer has determined that the subdivision qualifies under Section 514 of the *Local Government Act* "Subdivision to provide residence for a relative".

The H2 Zone does not specify a minimum parcel frontage requirement, and the proposed subdivision does not appear to affect any existing building setbacks.

Staff Comments

Planning staff have no concerns with the requested exemption based on the proposed subdivision. Staff recommend approval of a reduction of no less than 6.5 per cent for proposed Lot B and 6.6 per cent for proposed Lot C to account for potential variations in parcel sizes pending a final survey of the property.

REFERRAL RESPONSES

The RDBN Protective Services Department and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit have no concerns

ATTACHMENTS:

- Schedule A: Proposed Subdivision Layout
- Applicant Request Letter
- [Site Visit Photos](#) (Link)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable

Schedule A – Proposed Subdivision Layout PF E-01-26

Figure 1 – Proposed Subdivision Plan

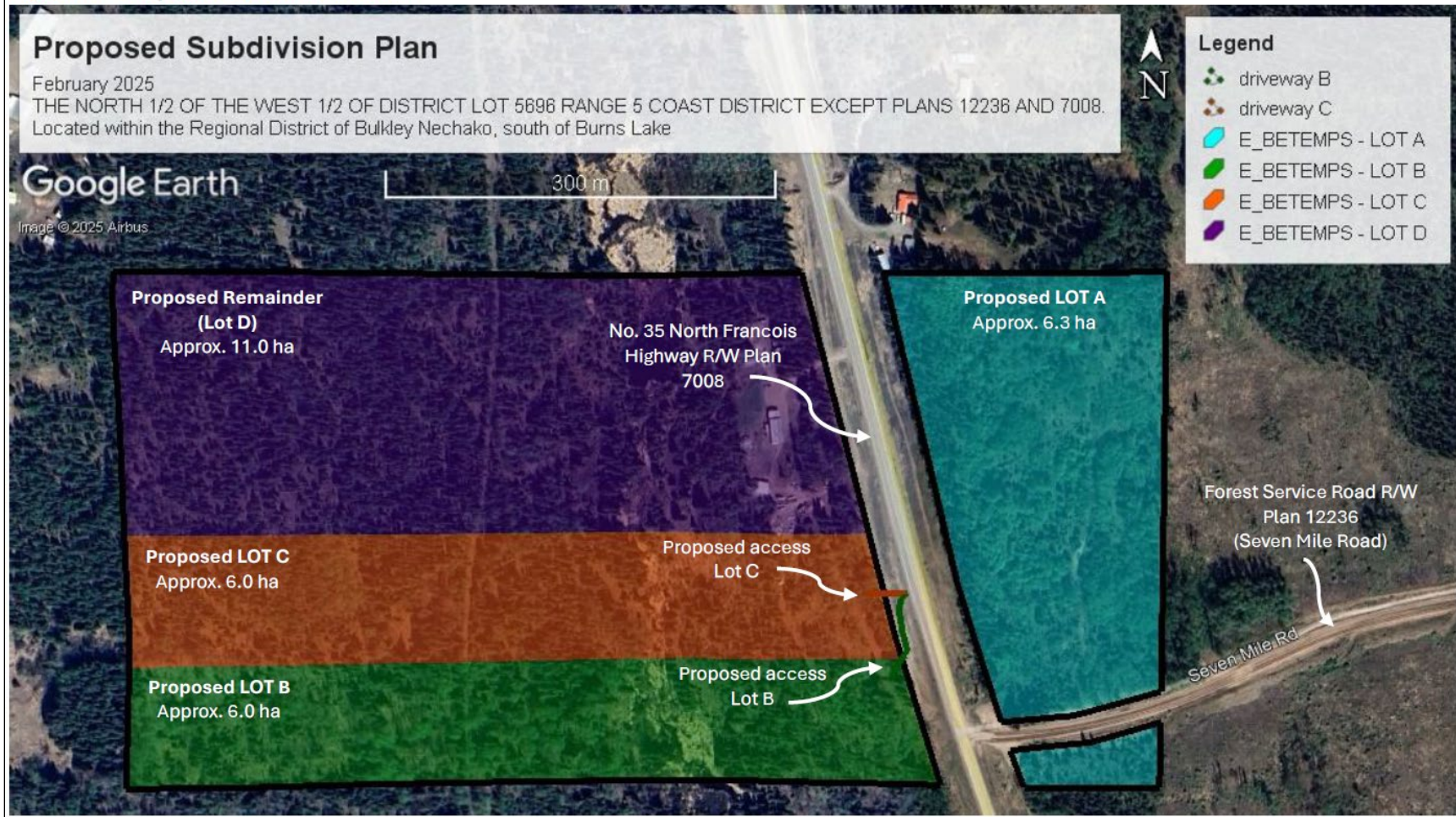


Figure 2 – Lot A dimension



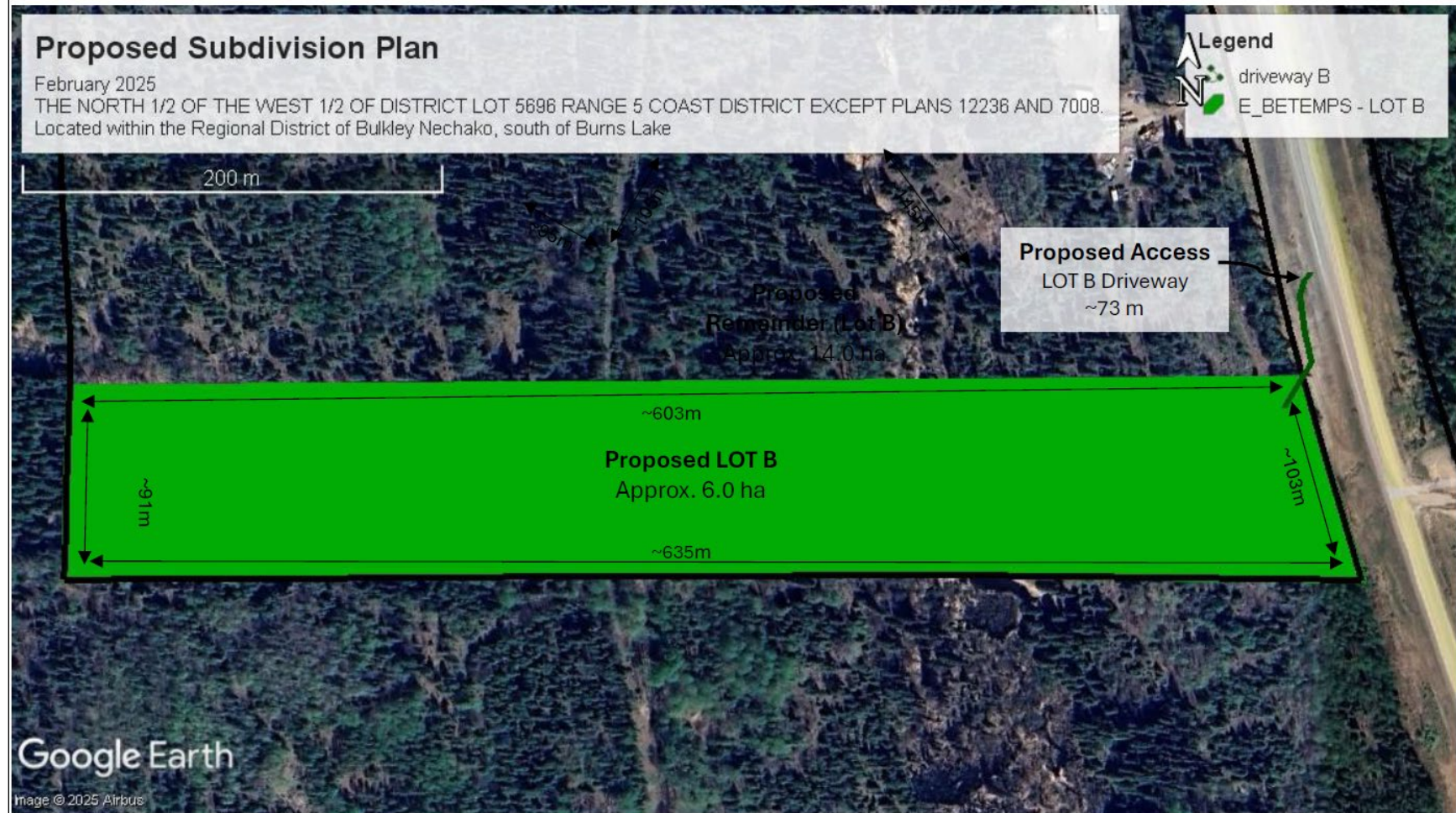
Figure 4 - Lot B dimension & access

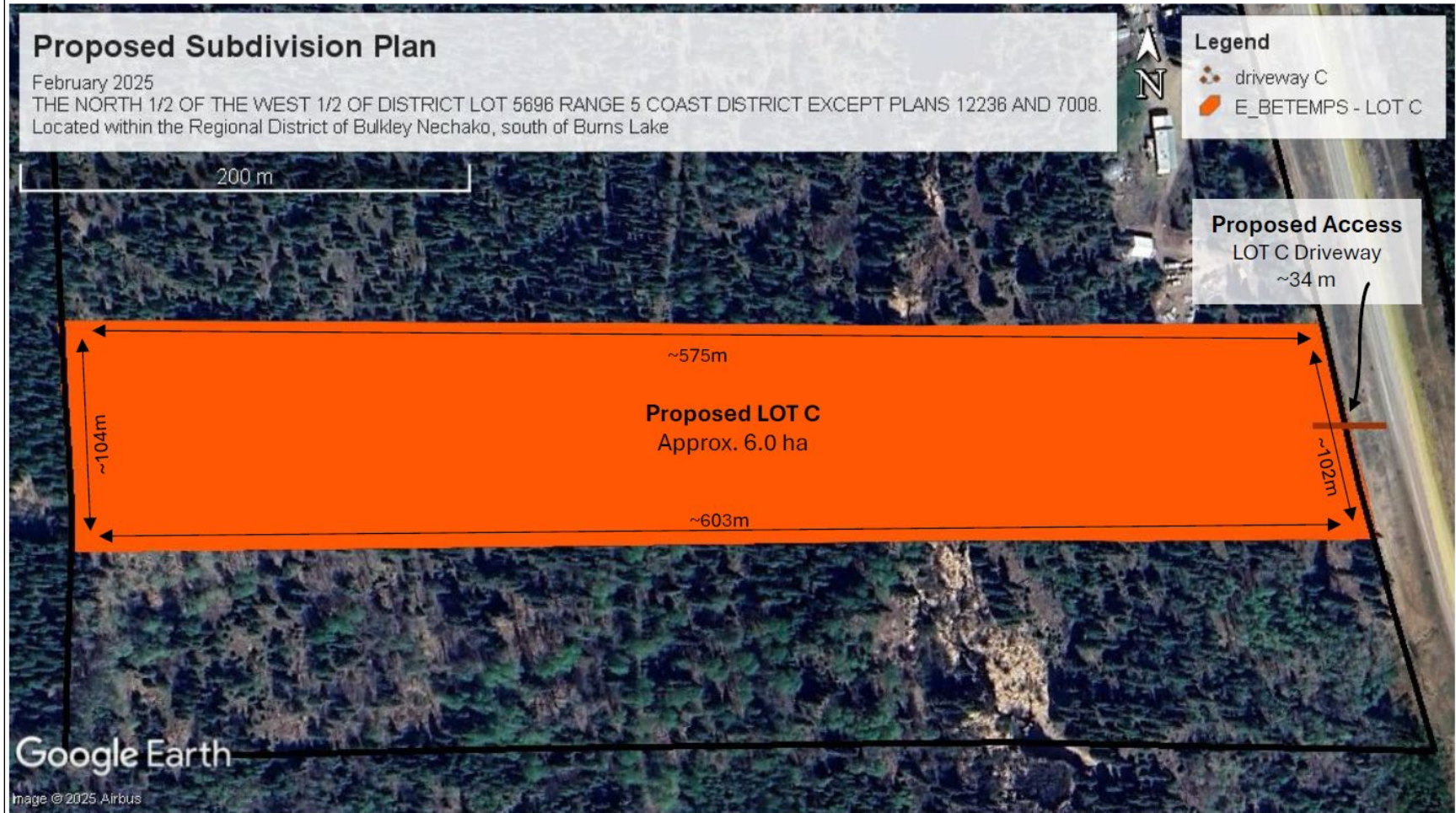
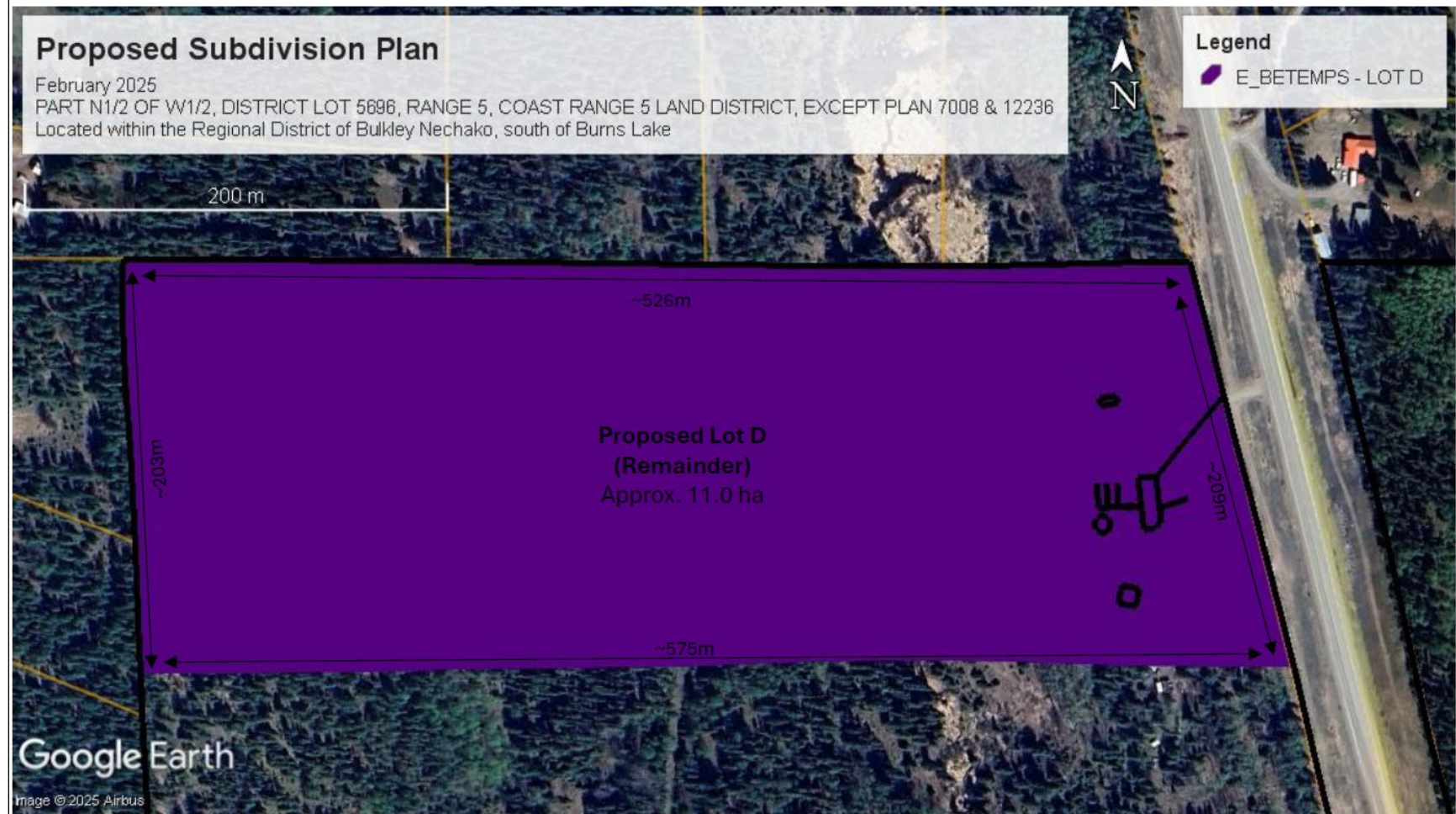
Figure 6 - Lot C dimension & access

Figure 9 – Lot D dimension



Pure Resource Development Agency

250-643-7363

info@pureresource.net

<https://brand.page/pureresource>

Date: April 28, 2026

PRDA File: BETEMPS_E_0001

MOTT File: 2026-01626

Rebecca Misener, RPF

PRDA Pure Resource Development Agency Corp.

10264 Pope Road

Smithers, BC V0J 2N1

Email: rebecca.misener@pureresource.net

Phone: [REDACTED]

To: Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Board of Directors
Planning Department
Email: planning@rdbn.bc.ca

Re: Request for Parcel Frontage Exemption – Edward and Lorena Betemps

Dear RDBN Board of Directors,

Edward and Lorena Betemps are requesting an exemption for parcel frontage (section 512 of the *Local Government Act*) along Highway 35 for a proposed subdivision of:

THE NORTH 1/2 OF THE WEST 1/2 OF DISTRICT LOT 5696 RANGE 5 COAST DISTRICT EXCEPT PLANS 12236 AND 7008. (PID 009-594-981)

Here forward shall be identified as “the property”.

I am acting as their agent and have attached a signed Letter of Agency. The property is currently the primary residence of the Betemps.

The property is located south of Burns Lake along HWY 35 within the RDBN and is zoned as Large Holdings (H2). The property does not fall within the Agricultural Land Reserve, and review of the provincial Integrated Land and Resource Registry does not appear to identify overlapping conflicting interests.

The proposal is to subdivide the property into 4 parcels, including the remainder Lot D where their residence is located (see Figure 1). The 3 new parcels (Lots A, B & C) are being created for their sons Travis Lee Betemps, David Betemps, and Rene Dean Betemps (Figures 8 to 10).

The Betemps are applying to utilize section 514 of the *Local Government Act* to allow for the creation of parcels for direct relation which are smaller than zoning minimums. H2 minimum parcel size is 8ha and lots A, B & C will be approximately 6ha (see Figures 2 to 7). It should be noted that the property directly borders H1 zoning (Small Holdings) along the North and West boundary where minimum parcel size is 2ha.

In this configuration all proposed lots are adjacent to existing utilities (BC Hydro and Telus) and have direct road access (HWY 35 and/or FSR Seven Mile Road). Lots B and C do not meet 10% of total parcel perimeter along the HWY 35; however, both have greater than 100m frontage and the highway is straight and slowly sloping in this location. Proposed driveway locations for Lot B and C are shown on Figure 1, 4 and 6.



The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) has completed their preliminary layout review of the proposal (see attached PRL dated April 8, 2026). Comments were provided by the RDBN regarding the subdivision on May 7, 2025 (Comment Sheet attached).

As per condition 2 of the PLR, the Betemps are requesting a parcel frontage exemption for proposed Lots B and C. A total of four lots have been proposed to create a family legacy, the design is efficient related to utility locations and road access. Lots B and C will maintain >100m frontage and are located along a straight, relatively flat section of HWY 35.

Please let me know if you need anything else, looking forward to your decision on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Misener, RPF
Agent acting on behalf of Edward and Lorena Betemps
PRDA Pure Resource Development Agency Corp.

Attachments:

- 1) Letter of Agency
- 2) Title Search Print
- 3) Statutory Right of Way 7008
- 4) Statutory Right of Way 12236
- 5) Proposed Subdivision Plan – Including figures 1 to 17
- 6) MOTT Preliminary Layout Review Letter (April 8, 2026)
- 7) RDBN Subdivision Referral Comment Sheet (May 7, 2025)

CC: Edward Betemps, via email: [REDACTED]



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board receive the attached "Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)".

BACKGROUND

This report presents the "Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) to the Board for consideration. The Plan is intended to serve as a long-term guiding document for the Regional District's provision of parks and trails services in Electoral Area G.

The Plan builds on the significant contributions of existing parks and recreation providers, including the District of Houston, the Village of Granisle, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), and local recreation organizations. Electoral Area G has a strong foundation of outdoor recreation opportunities, including access to lakes, rivers, mountains, trails, camping areas, and natural areas that are supported by community organizations, volunteers, and government partners.

In May 2025, Lees and Associates were awarded the contract to develop the plan. The consultant developed the Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) concurrently with the Electoral Area G plan, which allowed for project efficiencies and cost savings. Both plans are now completed and ready for consideration by the Board.

The project was funded by the Northern Capital Planning Grant and came in on budget.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a strategy and action plan for recreation, parks and trails in Electoral Area G which builds on the successes of existing outdoor recreation service providers, identifies the role of the Regional District in providing new and improved outdoor recreation services, and establishes a priority list of projects and tasks to be undertaken to meet community recreation needs over the next ten years.

The Plan was developed through a five-phase process from June 2025 through June 2026. The process included a review of existing parks and trails, engagement with stakeholders and the public, development of a draft Plan, a second round of engagement, and refinement of the final Plan. Engagement included outreach to local First Nations, community organizations, government agencies, the District of Houston, the Village of Granisle, recreation groups, and the public through interviews, meetings, online surveys, community events, and virtual engagement opportunities. The Plan's Appendix A - "What We Heard Report" outlines the engagement strategy and details the input received.

The key priorities identified by the community include expanding and enhancing parks and trails by improving connectivity, recreation opportunities, site amenities, partnerships with First Nations, and collaboration through a regional working group.

The Plan presents the following vision statement that supports the identified key priorities:

The RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** *The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, and recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experience for all.*
- **Create Safe Connections.** *The parks and trails system will support connections between residents and key recreation and community destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.*
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** *The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and well-being for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by maintaining and improving existing infrastructure and creating new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.*
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty and Unique Features.** *The parks and trails system will facilitate access to unique natural features and important community destinations and will contribute to a sense of place that attracts residents and visitors to the region.*
- **Support a Diversified Economy.** *The parks and trails system in Electoral Area G will support a vibrant economy and expansion of tourism by developing high-quality outdoor recreation amenities that enhance quality of life and attract residents and visitors to the region.*

Four goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trails:

Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area G

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity

Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation

Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails

Section 6 of the Plan contains recommendations to support these goals, including actions related to strengthening partnerships, improving service delivery, enhancing recreation access, supporting community organizations, and improving parks, trails, and user experiences.

The implementation plan in Section 7 identifies the recommendations along with their priority levels, timelines, resource requirements, and responsible partners. Implementation will occur incrementally as resources allow and may depend on partnerships, regulatory approvals, and external funding opportunities. The Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates support for the overall direction of the Plan but does not indicate a commitment regarding implementation of any aspect of the plan.

The Master Plan is intended to serve as a resource document for staff and the Board when developing annual work plans, prioritizing projects, pursuing funding opportunities and guiding future decisions for the Parks and Trails service in Electoral Area G.

ATTACHMENTS:

RDBN Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

FOR ELECTORAL AREA G (Houston/Granisle Rural)



2026

The development of this plan was guided by input from the following groups and individuals:

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Staff

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Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator



The Consulting Team

LEES
+
ASSOCIATES

Thank you to those residents and members of the public who shared their thoughts and ideas through the engagement process.

A photograph of a grassy field with mountains in the background. The foreground is filled with tall, green grass and some small white flowers. In the background, there are blue mountains under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The RDBN is located within the traditional territory of nearly 30 First Nations. These communities represent Dakelh, Nedut'en, Tse'khene and Wet'suwet'en people.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2020, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) established a vision for delivering outdoor recreation across the regional district and subsequently created a Parks and Trails Service Area and a Recreation Contribution Grant Service Area for Electoral Area G, the District of Houston, and the Village of Granisle, as well as three other service areas. This Parks and Trails Master Plan is the first step in implementing these services for Electoral Area G, providing a framework for investment over the next 10 years.

The Parks and Trails Master Plan (the Plan) was developed in five phases from June 2025 through June 2026. Initial phases focused on understanding the inventory of existing parks and trails provided by others and engaging with stakeholders and the public to understand values, gaps and challenges. This review showed a strong foundation of parks and trails provided by the District of Houston, Village of Granisle, BC Parks, and Recreation Sites and Trails BC. Community-led outdoor recreation organizations have championed substantial initiatives, such as the cross-country ski trail network at Morice Mountain and mountain biking at Mount Harry Davis, and continue to make significant contributions through community organizing, maintenance, fundraising, and expansion projects.

Across Electoral Area G, there are four-season trail networks for hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ORV riding, as well as park amenities that support camping and access to lakes and rivers for swimming, fishing, and boating. Camping and water-related activities like fishing and boating are most popular among those who participated. However, wildlife concerns, maintenance issues, and a lack of information were identified as barriers.

At the same time, several challenges and gaps emerged, including limited volunteer capacity, funding constraints, concerns about potential loss of access, and the complexity of the jurisdictional and regulatory landscape. Engagement results showed that community priorities included new trail connections, improved amenities, and better information and signage, and revealed opportunities to expand lake access, enhance existing trails and connections, and strengthen partnerships.

Combining the findings from the inventory and analysis, research on best practices, and community engagement, the Plan sets out an aspirational vision statement for parks and trails services and amenities over the next 10 years (2026-2036). The RDBN will contribute to parks and trails that build on community strengths, create safe connections, provide diverse and accessible recreation opportunities, celebrate the region's natural beauty, and support a diversified economy.

To help achieve the vision, a set of goals and recommendations was developed and is summarized on the following pages. The recommendations will be implemented incrementally as resources allow. Some initiatives will depend on external partnerships, regulatory approvals, and additional funding (i.e. grants). The Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.



VISION STATEMENT

The RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, and recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experience for all.
- **Create Safe Connections.** The parks and trails system will support connections between residents and key recreation and community destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and well-being for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by maintaining and improving existing infrastructure and creating new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty and Unique Features.** The parks and trails system will facilitate access to unique natural features and important community destinations and will contribute to a sense of place that attracts residents and visitors to the region.
- **Support a Diversified Economy.** The parks and trails system in Electoral Area G will support a vibrant economy and expansion of tourism by developing high-quality outdoor recreation amenities that enhance quality of life and attract residents and visitors to the region.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Four goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trails. Each goal is linked to a set of action-oriented recommendations to enhance parks and trails in Electoral Area G across a 10-year period from 2026 to 2036.

- **Goal 1:** Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area G
- **Goal 2:** Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity
- **Goal 3:** Increase access to outdoor recreation
- **Goal 4:** Enhance the user experience at parks and trails

A summary of the recommendations is provided on the following pages. Partnerships with other levels of government, First Nations, and community organizations will be critical to successful implementation. More information about resources required, partnerships, and collaboration is provided in the full Implementation Plan section of this report.

The Regional District Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation	Priority
Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area G		
1.1	Continue to engage with other levels of government and community organizations to prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships, direct acquisition, and management.	High
1.2	Establish service levels and management plans for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas.	High
1.3	Consider adding staff to support the implementation of parks and trails projects across the RDBN's four parks and trails service areas.	Medium
1.4	Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements for recreation and conservation and to address questions about the future use of recreation sites and provincial parks, specifically the Lamprey Creek Recreation Site which has been closed by the Province and where public access has been restricted due to First Nations use.	Medium
Goal 2: Strengthen Partnerships and Build Capacity		
2.1	Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.	High
2.2	Continue to implement the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that provides allocation of multi-year funding to recreation organizations.	High
2.3	Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN's capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations.	High
2.4	Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups who are actively engaged in maintaining parks and trails features within Electoral Area G.	High
Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation		
3.1	Work with the Village of Granisle and partners to explore the development of a multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing.	High

3.2	Work in partnership with the First Nations, BC Parks, RSTBC and the Houston Hikers to explore a potential canoe route in Old Man Lake Park.	Medium
3.3	Collaborate with BC Parks and RSTBC to establish a trail connection from Nadina Mountain Park to the Owen Lake recreation site.	Medium
3.4	Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads.	High
Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails		
4.1	Follow accessibility standards, such as the Universal Design Guide by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading trails.	Medium
4.2	Collaborate with the Houston Mountain Bike Association to establish a campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails.	Medium
4.3	Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.	Medium
4.4	Support the Houston Hikers in the enhancement and promotion of high-use trails as day hiking destinations.	Medium
4.5	Support the Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club and Houston Hikers in the maintenance and improvement of the abundant trails and amenities around Silverthorne Lake and the Morice Wilderness Area.	Medium
4.6	Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management.	High
4.7	Update the RDBN's website to provide more information about outdoor recreation destinations, parks, trails, and campgrounds.	Medium
4.8	Explore opportunities to develop a trail along the route of the historic Dominion Telegraph Line that falls within Electoral Area G.	Low

1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The RDBN lies within the north-central region of British Columbia between Prince George and Prince Rupert. The region's landscape is characterized by lakes, mountains, and expansive forests with diverse recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, fishing, climbing, skiing, hunting, paddling, camping, ATVing, and snowmobiling. Outdoor parks and trails within the region are essential to enhancing the well-being of residents and visitors alike, as well as bolstering the local economy through tourism. Residents in the region live in and around communities along the Highway 16 corridor, though smaller settlements are found throughout the region. The region's primary economic opportunities include agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

The RDBN is home to 14 First Nations alongside others with identified Aboriginal rights or title whose Nations have stewarded the lands since time immemorial and continue to have significant cultural values and interests.

The RDBN's *Parks and Outdoor Recreation Study* (2020) identified the need for a regional parks and trails service to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation in the region's rural areas and address gaps in the recreation services provided by volunteer clubs, municipalities, Recreation Sites & Trails BC, and BC Parks. In response to the 2020 study, the RDBN initiated the creation of four Parks and Trails Service Areas, including the District of Houston, Village of Granisle, and Electoral Area G. The RDBN also established four Recreation Contribution Service Areas that provide financial assistance to organizations offering recreational activities for residents and visitors. To facilitate the implementation of these services, the Regional District is developing Parks and Trails Master Plans for each service area. This plan is the first for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural).

1.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area G Parks and Trails Master Plan builds on the progress made by municipalities, community groups, and other parks and trail managers in providing outdoor recreation experiences in Electoral Area G. The plan sets out a community-driven Vision and Goals to guide the management of parks and trails in the region over the next 10 years, along with specific recommendations to enhance them in a coordinated, collaborative, and cost-effective way.

1.1.2 PLANNING AREA

The RDBN is within the unceded traditional territories of the Dakelh, Nedut'en, Tse'khene, and Witsuwit'en speaking peoples. There are 14 First Nations with communities in the RDBN, and many others with traditional territory. The First Nations with reserve communities in Electoral Area G include the Lake Babine Nation.

This plan focuses on Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural), the rural area surrounding the municipalities of the District of Houston and the Village of Granisle. There are several unincorporated communities, including Perow, Buck Flats, Kuldo, Smithers Landing, Topley, and Topley Landing. Lake Babine Nation has three communities within Electoral Area G including Fort Babine, Old Fort and Tachet.

The 2021 Census reported a population of 836 in Electoral Area G, just over 3,000 in the District of Houston, and 330 in the Village of Granisle. It is generally believed that the population of the rural areas is relatively stable at around 1,000 residents. An additional 1,000 people reside in the First Nations communities. The population of Electoral Area G accounts for approximately 2.2% of the total population of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

The average age for Electoral Area G is 46.6 years which is slightly higher than the RDBN (41.1) and BC (43.1). In general, there is a smaller percentage of children and youth under the age of 19, in comparison to RDBN and BC. There is a higher percentage of adults aged 50 and over than both RDBN and BC.



Figure 1: Electoral Area G boundary.

1.2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 – Review of Relevant Background Materials

The first phase included background research, reviewing relevant regional strategies and bylaws, and mapping the existing inventory of parks and trails in the region.

Phase 2 - Community Engagement Round 1

In the second phase, site visits, discussions with RDBN staff, and community engagement occurred. This involved outreach to local First Nations, interviewing interest-holders, a public in-person pop-up event, and a public online survey. These sessions aimed to introduce the community to the project, understand their values and priorities, and identify challenges and opportunities regarding parks and trails in the region. Findings from engagement activities were summarized in a Draft Engagement Summary.

Phase 3 - Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan

This phase involved developing the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan, including information gathered in the first two phases of the project and a draft vision, goals, and recommendations.

Phase 4 - Community Engagement Round 2

Phase 4 featured a second round of community engagement to report the draft plan's findings back to the community and collect feedback on the draft vision, goals, and recommendations. Round two of engagement included a second online survey and a virtual open house. Engagement findings from both rounds of engagement were summarized in a final engagement report, found in Appendix A.

Phase 5 - Final Parks and Trails Plan

Phase 5 of the project incorporated feedback from round 2 of community engagement into the draft plan to develop the final Parks and Trails Master Plan. The final Plan was presented to the Regional District's Board of Directors.



Figure 2: The project timeline for the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

1.2.1 RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The Electoral Area G Parks and Trails Master Plan is informed by the following RDBN strategic documents.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

The RDBN's Strategic Plan outlines the vision, mission, and priorities of the Regional District as it plans for future community growth between 2022 and 2026. The Plan outlines four strategic focus areas: relationships with First Nations, advocacy with the Province, housing supply, and community and economic sustainability.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: Park and trail planning and development present opportunities to implement the Plan's recommendations for collaborating with First Nations on areas of mutual interest. They also serve as opportunities to act on the recommendation to provide services to First Nations communities. Additionally, outdoor recreation-based tourism could help advance the goal of economic diversification in Electoral Area G.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – 2020

This study was part of the groundwork that led to the development of the Parks and Trails Service. It reviewed community demand for outdoor recreation across the Regional District and surveyed outdoor recreation clubs that operate in the region. It also gives an overview of regional district park services across British Columbia and their service-delivery strategies. The study presents potential strategies for the RDBN to provide park and recreation services to residents in rural regions of the Regional District.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: This study established the vision for delivering outdoor recreation in the region, where volunteer-based clubs continue to play a vital role in providing recreation experiences, backed by support and collaboration from the Regional District.

Bulkley-Nechako Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee - Accessibility Plan – 2024

The Accessibility Plan identifies barriers that people living with accessibility concerns experience in the RDBN. The plan includes recommendations to promote a more accessible built environment, including in parks, trails, and outdoor public spaces.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Accessibility Plan recommends the design or upgrading of recreation infrastructure to adhere to standards set out in the BC Parks Universal Design Guide Front-Country Parks.

RDBN Value of Tourism Report – 2017

The report identifies the value of tourism for communities across the RDBN in accordance with Tourism BC's Value of Tourism Model. The report summarizes the benefits of tourism in the RDBN and includes an estimate of tourism spending in the region. The report also contains a review of local planning documents related to tourism.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Report contains no specific recommendations relevant for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, but its findings demonstrate that infrastructure is in place to allow the RDBN to benefit from tourism, which is often driven by outdoor recreation in the region.

Parks And Trails Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1928, 2020

A bylaw to establish a parks and trails service for Electoral Area G.

Implications for this Plan: This bylaw authorizes the RDBN to establish, operate, and promote regional parks and trails, thereby supporting the implementation of recommendations in this Plan related to creating new parks and trails.

1.2.2 ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT

The role of the Regional District Parks and Trails Service is to establish, manage, and promote parks and trails, and by extension, support healthy and active living, foster community bonds through recreation, and enable individuals to enjoy the natural environment. It is the intention of the RDBN to complement and coordinate with the overall network of parks and trails in the region but not duplicate the services of other agencies in fulfilling its mandate. The general role of the park and trails system is to provide opportunities for the public to access and enjoy scenic and historically significant destinations for a range of year-round outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, biking, walking, boating, paddling, fishing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and swimming.

The RDBN intends to take a phased approach to the development of parks and trails, focusing first on providing access to day-use recreation areas, improving access to lakes and shorelines, and supporting the efforts of other government and non-governmental organizations in providing recreation services.

1.2.3 REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICES

In addition to the Parks and Trails Service and Recreation Contribution Service, the RDBN also does the following:

- **Grants in Aid:** The RDBN provides grants to community organizations through an application process which is reviewed by the RDBN Board. Grants may be used for cultural, charitable, sporting, recreational, service activities and special events for the purpose of benefiting the community.
- **Canada Community-Building Fund:** The federal government provides predictable, long-term funding for local governments to invest in infrastructure and capacity-building projects. The fund is administered through UBCM to the RDBN, which then makes decisions on its use locally. Local non-profit organizations can apply for support on a variety of community projects, including outdoor recreation capital projects. This would primarily fall under the Community Works Fund.
- **Transfers to Partner Municipalities for Recreation Services:** The RDBN can collect property taxes from rural residents by establishing a service area to contribute to the costs that municipalities incur for providing recreation services.

- **Grant Writing Support:** The RDBN has an economic development team with proposal writers on staff that can assist non-profit organizations with the grant writing process.¹

¹ Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – June 2020

2 CURRENT PARKS & TRAIL SYSTEM



2.1 THE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

Parks and trails play a crucial role in the region and are greatly appreciated by the community for providing recreational opportunities that enhance health and wellness. They serve as avenues for experiencing nature, engaging in outdoor activities, and safeguarding open spaces for the benefit of future generations.

Electoral Area G provides outdoor recreation opportunities year-round through an abundance of highly valued parks, trails, and natural areas. Highlights include the many lakes and rivers offering places for relaxing, fishing, and hunting and an extensive trails network provides activities including hiking, mountain biking, and riding off-road vehicles. Visitors seek out the area for fishing opportunities, backcountry lodges, and wilderness experiences, while residents enjoy the benefits of the independent lifestyle and easy access to cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and hiking. It's also a close drive to three extensive backcountry snowmobile areas.

Many recreation opportunities are provided by BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, the District of Houston, the Village of Granisle, and considerable effort is provided by volunteer-based outdoor recreation organizations including the Houston Hikers, Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club, Houston Snowmobile Club, and Houston Mountain Bike Association. The RDBN seeks to identify ways to support, enhance, and build upon the existing network of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities provided by partner organizations.

2.1.1 REGIONAL PLANNING

The RDBN's Parks and Trails Service is administered by the Regional District's Planning Department. In each of the four service areas, planning staff are responsible for overseeing the development of the Parks and Trails Service, coordinating with government and community recreation organizations, offering recreation services in the regional district, and administering planning and capital projects.

Each Parks and Trails Service Area has distinct outdoor recreation needs which present unique opportunities and challenges. A key challenge for the RDBN is how to balance resources and staff time across service areas. In 2025, 20% of staff time was dedicated to the Village of Granisle and the District of Houston/Electoral Area G. As the parks and trails service in each area grows, additional staff resources may be needed to address inequities.

Due to the geographic shape of Electoral Area G, some locations that are valued and highly used by Electoral Area G residents may actually be in Electoral Areas A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) or B (Burns Lake Rural). While this plan focuses only on the parks and trails service for Electoral Area G, there are opportunities for coordination between these three electoral areas.

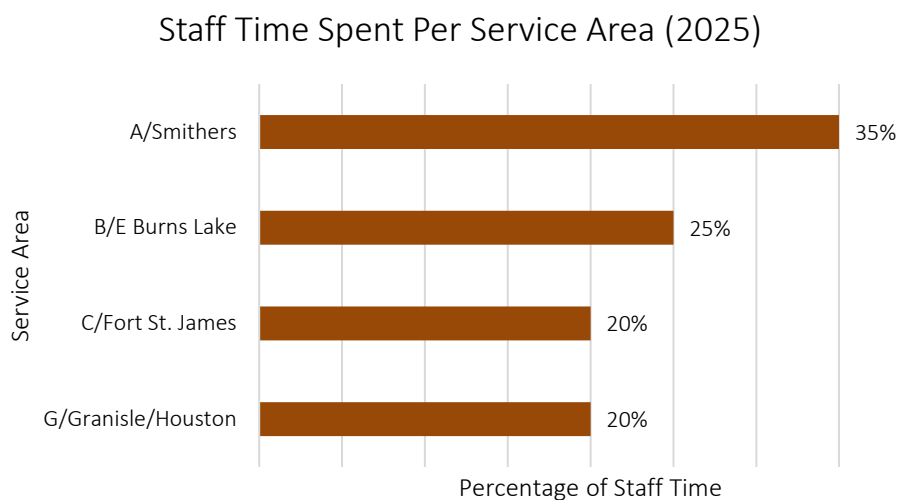


Figure 3: Percentage of Regional District staff time spent per service area in 2025.

2.1.2 PARKLAND ACQUISITION

The RDBN has the authority to establish and operate parks and recreation services as set out in *Part 10 of the Local Government Act*. The *Act* allows the RDBN to acquire land for parks and trails and pass regulatory bylaws with respect to managing those parks. With the RDBN's establishment of a parks function by bylaw, the following funding streams are the main sources of revenue:

- **Property Taxes:** Property taxes are the most common revenue stream for supporting a parks and recreation function.
- **Canada Community Building Fund and other Senior Government Grants:** The RDBN has access to various government grant programs to fund parks and recreation infrastructure. Typically, these programs do not provide funding for maintenance or operational costs.

Although not currently in use or commonly available, the following additional tools can be used to generate revenues for parks and recreation services, should opportunities arise:

- **Parkland or Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland at Time of Subdivision:** The *Act* gives the RDBN authority to require parkland dedication or cash in lieu of parkland dedication equivalent to the market value of 5% of the land at the time of subdivision.
- **Development Cost Charges (DCCs):** Through a Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw the RDBN may charge developers a fee at the time of development. DCCs for parks can be used for land acquisition and for specific improvements, such as trails and picnic areas.
- **Ecological gifts, bequests, life-estates, land donations:** The RDBN has the authority to accept ecological gifts of land. It can be a considerable tax benefit to a donor to have a land donation recognized as having "ecological significance" by Revenue Canada.

In each service area, there will be a separate **Parkland Reserve Fund**. Revenue collected within each service area will be used to cover the expenses for the capital, operational, and administrative aspects of the parks and trails service, specifically in that area.

2.1.3 OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

Various levels of government, contractors, and recreation organizations play a significant role in parks and recreation in the planning area, including:

- **First Nations** – First Nations in the region are important partners and land stewards, with Aboriginal title and rights that inform the planning, management, and provision of parks, trails, and recreation opportunities on reserve lands and within their traditional territories.
- **District of Houston** – The District of Houston owns and manages municipal parks, trails, and sidewalks within the District boundaries, supporting community organizations and public users of parks and trails. The District also manages some parks and trails outside the District boundary.
- **Village of Granisle** – The Village of Granisle owns and maintains several small municipal parks and trails. The Village also oversees a larger neighbourhood park and marina on Babine Lake which provides access to recreational boating and fishing opportunities.
- **Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC)**, their contractors, and partner recreation organizations are responsible for the operation and maintenance of trails and recreation sites on Crown and community forest lands. RSTBC has four partnership agreements.
- **BC Parks** – BC Parks holds tenure and manages provincial parks. Some are undeveloped designated park lands, while others have been improved with amenities like campsites, trails, and boat launches.

2.2 PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY

The following section provides an inventory of parks and trails within the study area. Currently, there are no parks or trails managed by the RDBN in Electoral Area G. The inventory focuses on sites managed by the District of Houston, Village of Granisle, RSTBC, and BC Parks and enables the RDBN to bridge existing gaps in the parks and trails system and explore opportunities to expand services. A map of the parks and trails are provided in Appendix B. A full parks and trails inventory list can be found in Appendix C.

2.2.1 RDBN PARKS AND TRAILS IN ELECTORAL AREA G

The Regional District collaborates with other recreation service providers to support the delivery of parks and trails in the area. The Houston, Topley, Granisle OCP (2011) identified the China Nose Trail, Houston Palisades Trail, Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club trail network, and the Houston Snowmobile Club trails for their high-value recreation opportunities.

The RDBN primarily supports outdoor recreation organizations such as the Houston Hikers and Houston Mountain Bike Association through the recreation contribution grant funding program. The Houston Mountain Bike Association recently received funding from the program to support trail maintenance for mountain biking and hiking trails on Mount Harry Davis.

2.2.2 MUNICIPALITIES

The District of Houston and Village of Granisle provide municipal parks, walking trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities, described in the following sections.

District of Houston

The District of Houston manages eleven parks and several local trails. A summary of parks and trails provided by the District are provided in Table 1 below, which includes two park areas outside the District boundaries on Crown lands, through partnership with RSTBC. There is also the Houston Community Forest with trails and a day-use area in a working forest.

Table 1: Summary of parks and trails managed by the District of Houston.

Park/Trail/Rec Site Name	Type	Amenities
Avalon Park	Park	Playground
By-Mac Park*	Park	9 unserviced campsites; a shelter; boat launch; picnic areas; outhouses
Four Seasons Park	Park	4 ball diamonds; rodeo grounds; riding area
Hagman Park	Park	Playground
Irrigation Lake*	Rec Site	Picnic area; fire pits; beach; change rooms; outhouses
Jamie Baxter Park	Park	Skateboard park; ball diamond; BMX track; playground; outhouses; picnic area
Nadina Park	Park	Swings; picnic area
Northside Park	Park	Ball diamond; outhouses; playground; picnic area; walking trails

Park/Trail/Rec Site Name	Type	Amenities
Northwood Picnic Site	Rec Site	Picnic areas; outhouse
Ruiter Heights Park	Park	Playground
Steelhead Park	Park	Walking trails; playground; dog run; picnic areas; fountains; flower gardens
Duck Pond Walking Trails	Trail	Platforms; benches; garbage cans; dock
Circle Pathway		7 km of trails that connect to the pathways along Buck Creek and the Bulkley River.
Bulkley River/Buck Creek Junction	Trail	Short trail along Buck Creek from the Visitor's Centre.
Buck Creek Drive	Trail	Trail along the dike of Buck Creek

**Note: These two parks are located outside municipal boundaries, within Electoral Area G, but are operated by the municipality.*

Village of Granisle

The Village of Granisle manages a Visitor's Centre with adjacent park, a lakefront park, and marina. The Village has developed a Granisle Downtown Revitalization Plan (2023) that leverages outdoor recreation assets like the lakefront and enhancing camping and trail opportunities to boost tourism. A summary of the parks and trails is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of parks and trails managed by the Village of Granisle.

Park/Trail/Rec Site Name	Type	Amenities
Granisle Memorial Park	Park	Seating, picnic tables, accessible pathway, horticultural planting beds, and band shell; adjacent to the Granisle Travel Information Centre
New Beach	Park	Beach access, day-use, outhouses, and camping
Whiskey Jack Trail/Eagle Way Trail	Trail	Perimeter trails around the Village
Lakeshore trail/Beach Trail	Trail	Lakeside trail connecting the marina to Lions Beach

Granisle Lions Club

The Granisle Lions Club maintains Granisle Lions Beach Park, located just outside of the Village and Red Bluff Provincial Park. The park provides 21 RV camping sites, a playground, beach access, and a dock. Social media posts note the sites are operated on a first-come, first-served basis, and visitors occupy the waterfront sites throughout the summer.

2.2.3 RECREATION SITES AND TRAILS BC

Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) manages 22 recreation sites and 529 km of trails within Electoral Area G. Due to the proximity of Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) to the west and B (Burns Lake Rural) to the east, residents of Area G frequently access recreation sites and trails beyond their electoral boundaries. This highlights the need for the RDBN to coordinate across electoral areas.

Recreation sites support a variety of outdoor recreation activities including camping, trails, and lakes access. While some sites rely on volunteer maintenance, RSTBC typically contracts maintenance services for sites with infrastructure present.

RSTBC has four partnership agreements with the Houston Mountain Bike Association, Houston Hikers Society, Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club, and Houston Snowmobile Club which authorize the trail organizations to maintain sites and trails and in the case of the Owen Hill Recreation Site, a fire lookout. New trails or other major recreational works on Crown land require a formal application to the RSTBC.

Recreation sites are summarized in Tables 3 and 4, with mapping provided in Appendix B.

Table 3: Summary of recreation site type.

Recreation Site Type	Amount of Feature
Recreational Trail	529 km
Recreation Sites	22 Sites

Table 4: RSTBC Sites in the Service Area.

Recreation Site Name
Aspen
Bairnsfather Creek
Chapman Lake
Dungate Meadows Cabin
Dungate Meadows Trails
Doris Lake
Helen Lake
Lamprey Creek (closed by the Province due to First Nations use)
Morin Lake
Mt. Harry Davis
Old Fort
Owen Flats
Owen Hill
Owen Lake
Paul Lake
Peacock Falls
Silverthorne Lake
Starvation Lake
Sunset Lake
Tanglechain Lake
Telkwa Mountain Trail
Telkwa Mountain Cabin

Mt. Harry Davis Mountain Bike Trails

The Houston Mountain Bike Association has developed a cohesive network of trails and is focused on building, maintaining, and promoting mountain biking in the Houston area.

Morice Mountain

The Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club maintains and manages a significant outdoor recreation hub offering trails, camping, and access to Silverthorne Lake. The club has expanded beyond cross-country skiing to support multi-sport and multi-season non-motorized activities including water sports, paddling, trail biking, hiking, running, camping, groomed cross-country skiing, ungroomed exploring, alpine cabin accommodation, snowshoeing, and fat biking.

Houston Hikers Society Trails

The Houston Hikers are a well-established outdoor recreation organization dedicated to promoting Houston and the surrounding area as hiking destinations for tourists and locals. The Houston Hikers maintain many kilometers of trails and have developed their capacity for trail building and maintenance with the goal of getting the existing trails up to a higher standard. The organization has been instrumental to provide local trail information, hosting a website with search options by activity and difficulty, as well as maps of some hikes that are georeferenced and useable on a smartphone with the Avenza maps application.

The RDBN has provided funding through the recreation contribution grant program, allowing the group to hire contractors to perform additional maintenance beyond the capacity of the volunteer base.

Recreation Sites with Camping

Within Area G, recreation sites offering camping are typically maintained by contractors, with some sites receiving a higher level of service. Northwest of Houston, Helen Lake is an example of a contractor-maintained site, featuring an accessible gravel trail, dock, and campsites. However, some camping recreation sites in Area G lack infrastructure and are user maintained.

Other RSTBC Trails

There are also many trails documented by RSTBC, including those maintained by the outdoor recreation organizations described above. However, maintenance is not necessarily consistent or to a specific standard and RSTBC has limited resources to keep trail data updated.

2.2.4 BC PARKS

BC Parks manages 148,676 hectares of parkland in Electoral Area G, however much of the parkland is remote and is not easily accessible, either located significant distances down forest service roads or boat access only. Some locations are easier to reach from communities outside Electoral Area G (Smithers, Burns Lake) and are therefore not considered recreation assets of Area G.

The Morice Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and associated government-to-government discussions with the Office of the Wet'suwet'en has resulted in the creation of seven new parks and protected areas in recent years. Most do not have amenities or facilities but do allow backcountry camping.

Table 5: BC Parks and Conservation Area summary.

BC Park or Conservation Area Name	Park Area (ha)	Front country camping	Boat Launch	Formal Trails	Day Use Area with Amenities	Backcountry Camping	Other Recreation
ATNA RIVER PARK	21,031					x	Access from Houston; adjacent to Morice Lake Park
MORICE LAKE PARK	52,498	x	x			x	Access from Houston; adjacent to Atna River and Neneikekh/Nanika-Kidprice Parks; backcountry cabin
NENEIKEKH/NANIK A-KIDPRICE PARK	17,015					x	Access from Houston via Lamprey Lake Recreation Site; four-lake canoe route; adjacent to Morice Lake Park
RED BLUFF PARK	156	x	x	x	x		Popular camping, fishing, boating area near Granisle
TOTAL Parkland with Amenities	90,700						
NADINA MOUNTAIN PARK				x			Trail doesn't receive regular maintenance; potential rock climbing on the granite spire
OLD MAN LAKE PARK			x	x			Formal trail to viewpoint completed in 2025
TOPLEY PARK							Management plan does not support recreation
BURNIE-SHEA PARK						x	Helicopter or floatplane access only
MORICE RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE						x	Only low-impact recreation is allowed; no facilities
BABINE RIVER CORRIDOR PARK			x				Access from Smithers

Parks and Trails Master Plan for RDBN Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)

BC Park or Conservation Area Name	Park Area (ha)	Front country camping	Boat Launch	Formal Trails	Day Use Area with Amenities	Backcountry Camping	Other Recreation
TORKELSEN LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE							Access from Smithers
RAINBOW ALLEY PARK							Boat access only, closest to Smithers
LONG ISLAND CONSERVANCY							Boat access only, Babine Lake
WILKINSON-WRIGHT BAY CONSERVANCY							Boat access only, Babine Lake
PORT ARTHUR CONSERVANCY							Boat access only, Babine Lake
SANCTUARY BAY CONSERVANCY							Boat access only, Babine Lake
BEAR ISLAND CONSERVANCY		x					Boat access on Babine Lake with camping road access
NORTH SPIT CONSERVANCY							Boat access only, Babine Lake
BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - SMITHERS LANDING SITE		x					Vehicle accessible campsites

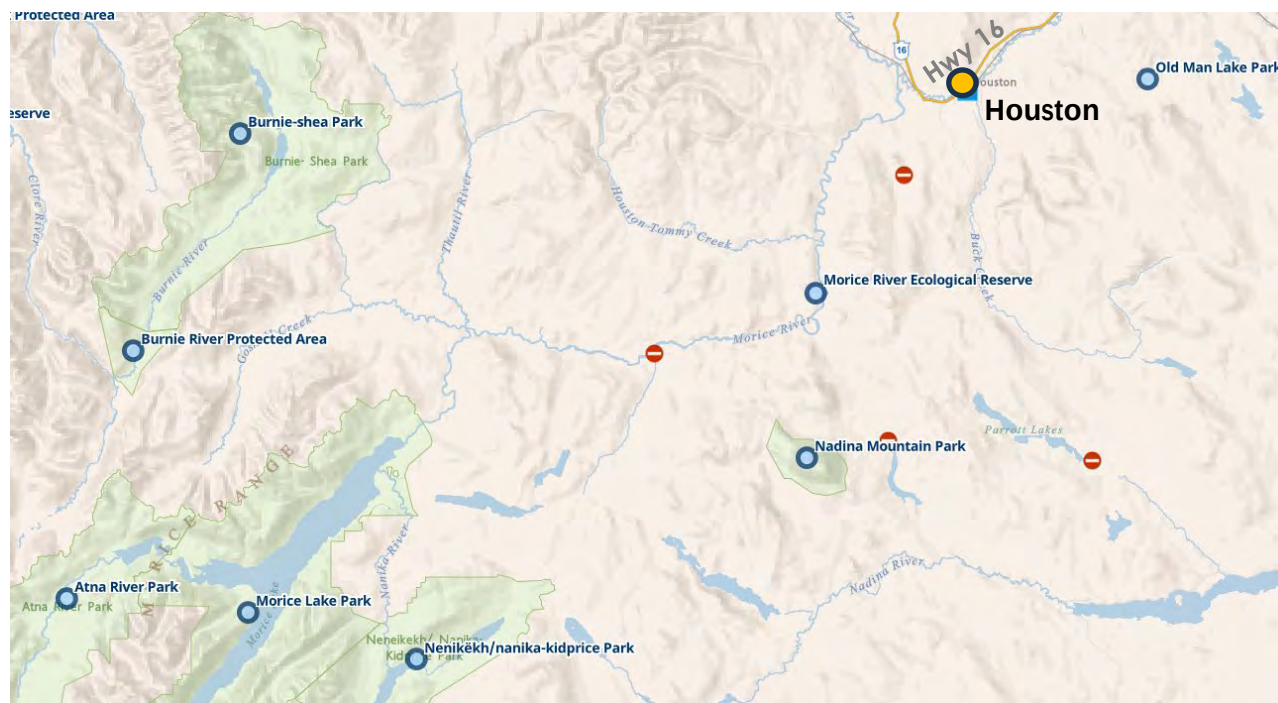


Figure 4: BC Parks and conservation areas south of Houston.

Morice Lake Park (Wet-zuhn-buhn)

Morice Lake Park boasts highly valuable ecosystems and wildlife habitat and offers canoeing, camping, and fishing opportunities. Located 84 kilometers from Houston, the park is user-maintained, pack-in-pack-out with 18 frontcountry campsites equipped with picnic tables, fire rings, and pit toilets, suitable for tents and small trailers. Backcountry camping is available along Morice Lake, though no facilities are provided. The site features portage trails between Morice Lake and Atna Lake. A gravel boat launch is located at the north end of the Morice Lake campsite. There is no formal day-use area.

Nadina Mountain Park

Nadina Mountain Park, located 42 kilometers southwest of Houston, provides access to Nadina Mountain via a single strenuous hiking trail. Wilderness camping is permitted; however, no facilities are available. An alternative route begins at Nadina Mountain Lodge on Owen Lake, offering a longer and more challenging ascent that passes Klate Lake and Base Lake before climbing steeply to the summit. This route has not been cleared for several years, making travel difficult. The park's primary conservation role is to protect an isolated granitic mountain and its associated natural values, including mountain goats, grizzly bears, lichen communities, and distinctive granitic spires.

During engagement, the connection between the Nadina Mountain Wilderness Lodge and Nadina Mountain was highlighted as a possible future trail improvement opportunity. As the park boundary encompasses the peak of the mountain only, trail improvement would require across-agency support as the bulk of the work would be outside the BC Park Boundary.

Nenikëkh /Nanika-Kidprice Park

Located within the traditional territory of Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Nenikëkh translates to canoe swerving against the current to make its way upstream. The park is located between the Sibola Mountain Range and the Morice Range and is a popular destination for multi-day canoeing, fishing, and marine-accessible camping containing a chain of four lakes and three portage trails. The western boundary of the park joins with Morice Lake Park including Nanika Falls and the lower Nanika River.

Old Man Lake Park

Old Man Lake Park includes Old Man Lake, Beaver Lake and a portion of McBreirie Lake and is located approximately 20 kilometers east of Houston with access via a forest service road. These lakes are valued for their ecologically rich wetlands, marsh fringe ecosystems, and rare grassland habitat that support migrating birds. Canoeing, hiking, and wildlife viewing are found in the park; however, the removal of dam infrastructure located outside the park boundary has resulted in lower water levels in the lake shifting the original canoe launch location.

In 2025, BC Parks partnered with the Houston Hikers Society and private landowners to rehabilitate the Old Man Lake portage route following damage from a 2023 wildfire. This work also re-established and rerouted the Beaver Lake Bluff trail, restoring access to a viewpoint while former skid trails provide additional informal viewpoints overlooking Beaver Lake and China Lake. Improvements have been made to the park including new signage and a gate installation to assist canoe transportation; a foot bridge is scheduled for installation in the fall of 2026.

During engagement, BC Parks noted collaboration between BC Parks, RSTBC, and the RDBN could help secure and improve access to the park and a non-motorized boat launch area. Since the dam has been removed, the canoe launch site is 100 meters further upstream from where the access road meets the waterway.

Red Bluff Park

Located just south of the Village of Granisle, between Granisle and Topley Landing, this park is located on the shore of Babine Lake and offers a variety of outdoor activities, including camping, swimming, fishing, boating, and a short 3 km trail. The front country campground features 27 reservable campsites along with additional non-reservable, vehicle-accessible sites. Visitors can also take advantage of a convenient boat launch and a day-use area for relaxing by the water. The park is packed with visitors in the warmer months.

Other Conservancies

There are many conservation areas along Babine Lake that lack facilities and are accessible by boat only.



Figure 4: BC Parks and conservation areas along Babine Lake.

2.3 OUTDOOR RECREATION SERVICES

The following section summarizes community recreation facilities and services provided by outdoor recreation service providers. The intention of this section is to provide a snapshot of the outdoor recreation services available in Electoral Area G and identify gaps and potential opportunities for the RDBN to address unmet needs in the planning area.

During the initial round of community engagement, participants emphasized the significance of having a wide range of outdoor recreational options, including activities like fishing, hiking, camping, swimming, cross-country skiing, ATV/snowmobiling, and mountain biking. Numerous outdoor recreation organizations actively contribute to the planning area's outdoor recreation. Additionally, land managers such as RSTBC, the District of Houston, the Village of Granisle and BC Parks, are vital contributors to ensuring access to outdoor recreation opportunities within the planning area.

Table 6 summarizes recreation facilities and services delivered by government entities, land managers, and outdoor recreation organizations. There were no significant gaps in the variety of services identified, but the engagement results indicated the challenges are related to quality, accessibility, and capacity of what is available.

Table 6: Community recreation facilities and services provided by outdoor recreation service providers.

Outdoor Recreation Service Providers	Campgrounds	Walking/ Hiking / Biking Trails	Skiing / Snowshoeing Trails	ATV / Snowmobiling Trails	Beach Access/ Beaches	Boat Launches/dock	Outdoor event space/ Fair Grounds
RDBN							
District of Houston	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Houston Community Forest		✓		✓			
Lions Club (Granisle)	✓				✓	✓	
Village of Granisle	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
BC Parks	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Recreation, Sites, and Trails BC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Community Recreation Organizations		✓	✓	✓			✓

2.3.1 COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE AREAS

Gaining insights into the provision of parkland and outdoor recreation amenities in each of the RDBN's parks and trails service areas will empower the RDBN to make informed decisions regarding the specific types of services and amenities required in each respective area. Table 7 is an inventory of the number of regional, provincial, and municipal parks by service area. Additionally, the table includes the number of recreational sites in each service area, recognizing their significance as integral components of the recreational landscape in RDBN.

Compared to the other Parks and Trails Service Areas in the RDBN, Electoral Area G has the highest number of provincial parks and the second-highest number of municipal parks; however, it is important to note that the provincial parks and recreation sites in the planning area are predominantly rustic sites with limited amenities and, in many cases, are remote and difficult to access. There is also concern that access to some recreation sites could be lost as forest service roads are decommissioned. Although outside the RDBN's jurisdiction, the RDBN continues to advocate to the Province for continued maintenance on important access roads.

Table 7 - Electoral Area parks opportunities compared to other RDBN service areas.

Service Areas in RDBN	RDBN Parks	Provincial Parks	Municipal Parks	Recreation Sites
Village of Burns Lake, Electoral Area B, and Electoral Area E	2	10	13	35
Town of Smithers and Electoral Area A	2	3	21	21
District of Fort St. James and Electoral Area C	0	9	7	26
District of Houston, Village of Granisle, and Electoral Area G	0	11	19	21

2.4 PARKLAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Parkland Needs Assessment involves an exploration of the gaps and opportunities within the parks and trails system that have been identified during the planning process. A benchmarking exercise was also conducted comparing the provision of parkland to comparable communities in BC.

There is no definitive way to determine whether a region has an adequate supply of parkland; it depends on the values, desires, and needs of the communities. However, several common metrics can be employed to gauge the adequacy of parkland, such as comparing with other regions, assessing the amount of parkland available per capita, and evaluating the proximity of parks to residents. The following section analyzes parkland averages to understand the inventory and distribution needs of the RDBN.

2.4.1 PARKLAND PER CAPITA ANALYSIS

Parkland area and population estimates were used to determine the amount of parkland in Electoral Area G per 1,000 residents. Since the establishment of the Parks and Trails Service in 2020, the RDBN has acquired approximately 43.5 hectares of parkland, resulting in an overall average of 1.2 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents in the RDBN. The RDBN has a below-average supply of parkland compared to similar regional districts. However, as the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service is newly established, this is anticipated to change over the next 10 years.

To meet the average of 2.8 hectares per 1,000 residents, 62.16 additional hectares are required throughout the RDBN. **Proportionally, Electoral Area G would need 3-4 hectares to meet this target.**

Table 8 - Parkland supply compared to similar Regional Districts.

Regional District	Population (2021)	Total Area of Regional Parks (ha)	Parkland (Ha) Per 1,000
Bulkley-Nechako	37,737	43.5	1.2
Thompson-Nicola	143,680	67	0.5
Peace River	61,532	72	1.2
Central Kootenay	62,509	86	1.4
East Kootenay	65,896	254	3.9
Fraser Fort-George	96,979	330	3.4
Central Okanagan	222,162	2,020	9.1
Average			2.8

3 COMMUNITY PROFILE



3.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Developing a community profile for RDBN's Electoral Area G is an important step towards understanding the community's present and future needs for parks and recreation. As of 2021, the planning area had a total population of 836, accounting for approximately 2.2% of the population of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. Based on 2021 Statistics Canada Census data, Electoral Area G experienced a 7.4% population decrease between 2016 and 2021. However, the Regional District believes that the census may have undercounted the population, suggesting that the actual decline might not be as significant, and the population has remained relatively stable throughout the planning area since 2011.

The primary population centers within the planning area are the District of Houston and the Village of Granisle. The area is home to several unincorporated communities in addition to these population centres, including Fort Babine, Kuldo, Tachet, Perow, Buck Flats, Old Fort, Smithers Landing, Topley, and Topley Landing. Since 2016, the population increased by 2.0% in the District of Houston and grew by 11.2% in the Village of Granisle. However, like in the rural areas, it is acknowledged by these communities that these estimates may be inaccurate, and it is believed that their populations have likely remained relatively unchanged since the 2011 census. An additional 1,000 people reside in the First Nations communities.

Table 9 – Current population from the 2021 Census.

	2021 Census Population	Population Density (per km ²)	Percent of Total Population
RDBN	37,737	0.5	100%
Electoral Area G	836	0.1	2.2%
District of Houston	3,052	41.9	8.1%
Village of Granisle	337	8.5	0.9%

Age distribution, household incomes, and industrial activities are pivotal demographic factors shaping the recommendations in this Master Plan. The Statistics Canada Census Reports (2021) unveil key characteristics about the planning areas:

Average Age

- Electoral Area G has an average age of 46.6, which is slightly higher than the RDBN (41.1) and British Columbia (43.1).

Household Incomes

- In 2020, the median annual household income in Electoral Area G was \$81,000, which is slightly lower than British Columbia and RDBN (both at \$85,000).

Key Industries

- According to the 2021 Census, the largest employment sectors are agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, followed by manufacturing and construction. The area is also rich in mineral resources.

These demographic trends underscore the necessity for the parks and trails system to adapt to accommodate an aging population, but also to attract and retain families. A robust parks and trails system is an important quality of life factor for existing and new businesses, as the local economy faces challenges from declines in mining and milling industries. Given the diverse range of household incomes in Electoral Area G, it is crucial to plan for low-cost recreation opportunities in the parks and trails system.

3.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.2.1 PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The volunteer community in the planning area, including an extensive network of community organizations and sport/interest groups, is actively engaged in the provision of recreation opportunities in Electoral Area G. Therefore, understanding the community's vision and goals for local parks and recreation is critical to the success of the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Through community engagement, significant challenges and opportunities were identified, providing key input that guided the recommendations included in this Master Plan.

3.2.2 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

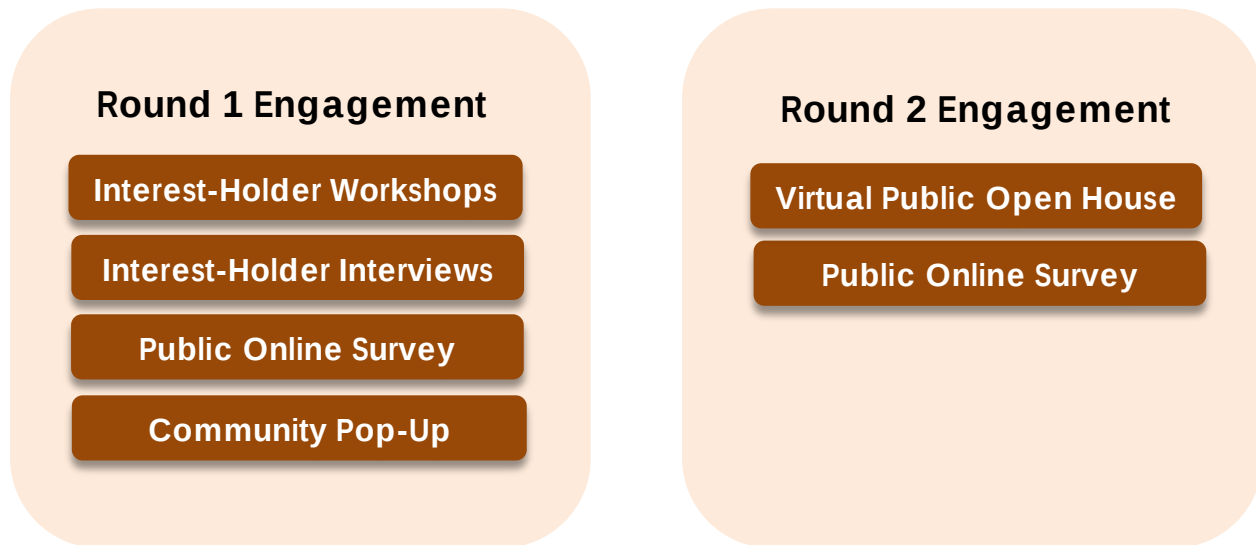
The RDBN invited sixteen First Nations that have indicated they have consultation interests within Electoral Area G to participate in individual rights-holder meetings. The invitation was also extended to participate in the public pop-ups and online surveys. There have been no requests for meetings to date.

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes the protection of culturally significant areas within the parks system. As further input is provided, it will be integrated into the decision-making process.

3.2.3 WHAT WE DID

The first round of community engagement, held in summer 2025, asked stakeholders and potential partners and the public to provide information about how they use parks and outdoor recreation facilities and programs within Electoral Area G. The feedback from the first round of engagement informed the vision and goals for the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan and helped to identify potential opportunities for the future parks and trails system.

The second round of engagement, held in early 2026, shared the results from the first round of engagement and asked for community feedback on draft vision, goals, and recommendations to inform the final Parks and Trails Master Plan. The following summarizes the engagement activities by phase. A detailed description of the engagement activities and findings is included in **Appendix A**.



3.2.4 WHO WE HEARD

Public consultation activities and participation numbers in both rounds of engagement included:

- 125 survey respondents in two online surveys
- Five (5) participants in the community workshops
- Six (6) participants in the virtual open house
- One (1) in-person pop-up event at the Houston Farmer's Market

3.2.5 COMMUNITY VALUES

In the first round of engagement, the community was asked what recreation opportunities they value and how they currently use parks and trails within RDBN Electoral Area G. The following are key findings informing the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Further results can be found in Appendix A.

- **Trail use** – More than three quarters of respondents use trails on a weekly basis.

- **Popular activities and recreation habits** - The community participates in diverse recreational activities, with the most popular among adults including hiking, walking, and snowshoeing with children finding hiking, ATV/snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, dog walking, and mountain biking as popular activities. Camping is a popular outdoor recreation activity as well as water-based activities.
- **Barriers to park and trail access** – Primary barriers to accessing parks and trails include wildlife concerns (28%), poor maintenance (26%), lack of information (20%), and being too busy (20%). Roughly a quarter of respondents don't face any barriers (28%).
- **Key destinations:** Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club is the most mentioned destination from participants followed by China Nose Mountain (not in Electoral Area G) and the Babine Lake hiking trails.
- **Trail networks and connections:** Respondents indicated the creation and management of new trail networks should be prioritized over the next 10 years.
- **Park priorities:** Respondents indicated campgrounds, environmental protection, opportunities to be active, connecting with nature, and more park amenities are the main park priorities.
- **Trail priorities:** Respondents indicated hiking and walking, trail signage, and improved trail connections to community amenities are their main priorities for trails and active transportation.
- **Tax increase** – More respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails improvements than those opposed (47% supportive compared to 29% opposed).
- **Additional comments** – Many respondents commented on the need for improved connectivity, maintenance, and more information, wayfinding, and signage.

3.2.6 KEY FINDINGS

Key themes were identified across engagement activities through both rounds of engagement, including challenges, opportunities, and priorities identified in community workshops and interviews, online surveys, the in-person pop-up event, the virtual open house, and additional feedback from organizations.

Overall, there was strong support for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, including 80% of online survey respondents supportive of the vision and 90% supportive of the goals.

Challenges

- Volunteer capacity and funding
- Potential loss of road access, specifically Palisades, Morice Lake Park, and Nadina Mountain access are a concern, as well as questions about future use of recreation sites and provincial parks, some of which are currently occupied by First Nations.
- Concerns about the level of maintenance and quality of trails and amenities
- Unmaintained and unsanctioned boat launches limit access
- Better information and signage are needed for trails

- Presence of wildlife can be a barrier to park and trail use

Opportunities

- Grow the trail network, such as a trail connecting Granisle to Topley Landing and a new trail along the Owen Connector.
- Establish a link between the Morice Mountain cabin and the Owen Lookout Cabin.
- Formalize boat launches and lake access to increase recreation opportunities.
- Improve partnerships and collaboration between community organizations and with the RDBN.
- Improve trail maintenance and management by establishing funding pathways to build capacity.
- Improve information, wayfinding, and education.

Priorities

- Expand trail networks to increase connectivity between communities and key destinations, such as a 10-kilometre trail linking Granisle to Topley Landing and a connection between Nadina Mountain Park and the Owen Lake Recreation Site.
- Plan and construct a trail along the historic Dominion Telegraph Line.
- Develop a three-lake canoe route incorporating Old Man Lake Park to enhance water recreation opportunities.
- Prioritize improvements to provincial recreation sites to support camping and day use, with a focus on Owen Lake, Silverthorne Lake, and Mount Harry Davis.
- Work with local First Nations to ensure ongoing communication and engagement is developed to support shared stewardship of public recreation sites, support cultural and ecological practices, and ensure clear communication.
- Establish a new campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails in collaboration with the Houston Mountain Bike Association.
- Establish a parks and trails working group to share resources and knowledge to support and improve parks and trails opportunities.

4 BENEFITS & TRENDS



4.1 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section presents research showing that parks and trails improve health and wellbeing, advance reconciliation, strengthen local ecosystems and the environment, and provide economic growth and tourism.

Health and wellbeing

Spending time in nature and participating in outdoor recreation reduces stress and promotes social connections. In 2023, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC³ (ORCBC) conducted a survey on outdoor recreation participation, highlighting the significance of outdoor recreation for creating positive social connections and preserving mental well-being during the winter. In the RDBN, the Houston Hikers, Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club, Houston Snowmobile Club, and Houston Mountain Bike Association are examples of organizations that spend considerable time and energy to provide recreation opportunities, fostering a sense of community through their commitment to outdoor recreation.



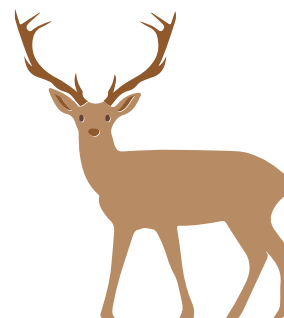
Reconciliation

The RDBN is located within the traditional territory of nearly 30 First Nations. These communities represent Dakelh, Nedut'en, Tse'khene, and Wet'suwet'en people. Addressing the impact of colonization on parks and trails is essential to building respectful relationships with First Nations to support governance on their traditional territories. One example is to support language revitalization programs by creating initiatives with local First Nations to introduce First Nations place naming for parks and trails. Listening and sharing, with consent, the stories of parks and trails in traditional territory through educational signage and materials connects the larger community. Practicing meaningful engagement and prioritizing First Nations' values and needs in park and trail development are crucial steps towards Reconciliation.



Environmental Benefits

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), parks and trails serve a vital role in conserving natural resources, providing wildlife habitat, safeguarding air and water quality, offsetting carbon emissions, and preserving open spaces for future generations. Engaging in stewardship and participating in volunteer activities within parks allow the public to actively contribute to preserving these spaces for the future while also increasing awareness of environmental issues at both local and global levels.



³ Lopez, X.D. (2023). The Impacts of Outdoor Recreation in Rural B.C. Communities. Outdoor Recreation Council of BC.

In the RDBN, parks can play a significant role in safeguarding essential ecosystems and natural features, such as rivers, lakes, spawning areas, and marshes. Their diverse and protected ecosystems serve as valuable habitat for a range of wildlife, including bears, moose, beavers, osprey, and many more.

Tourism

The RDBN's natural attractions are becoming increasingly popular with tourists seeking outdoor activities in rural areas. As interest grows, parks and trails in the area may become significant tourist destinations. Additionally, visitors are likely to stop in local communities to stock up on supplies before embarking on outdoor adventures, potentially boosting economic activity.



Economic Benefits

Parks and trails encourage people to get outside and move, contributing to long-term reductions in healthcare costs associated with the health burden of physical inactivity and associated chronic diseases. Research suggests that even a 10% increase in physical activity rates among Canadians could lead to a substantial \$150 million reduction in direct healthcare costs⁴.

Parks and trails serve as attractive destinations for both visitors and residents. The infrastructure of these parks and trails provides opportunities for generating revenue through various means, including venue rentals, events, educational programs, and interpretive activities. A 2020 study reveals that outdoor recreation in British Columbia contributes over 15 billion dollars in economic value to the residents of the province each year⁵.



4 Katzmarzyk, P.T. *The economic burden of physical inactivity in Canada*. 2000, November 28. Canadian Medical Association Journal, pp. 163(11):1435-40.

5 Smith, Patrick Lloyd. *The Economic Benefits of Recreation in Canada*. 2020, August 25. Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics, University of Saskatchewan. <https://plloydsmith.github.io/files/LloydSmith_RecCJE.pdf>

4.2 TRENDS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section examines key trends shaping parks and trails in Area G, including climate change, communication and wayfinding, recreation, accessibility, park use, and volunteer capacity.

Climate Change

Northern British Columbia is experiencing effects of climate change that contribute to wildfire risk, extreme weather events, and other changes that impact residents' health and community infrastructure. To adapt existing parks and plan for new parks, prioritizing strategies to address climate change in operational practices, maintenance considerations, and park acquisition is critical. The RDBN needs to understand how emergency access and wildfires might impact parks and trails infrastructure, incorporate FireSmart practices for buildings and key access points, and ensure forests and ecosystems are managed for human safety and ecosystem health.



Wayfinding

Interpretive signage and guided tours within parks can help educate park visitors to learn about the area they are exploring, providing a more profound and meaningful experience beyond just being present in the space. In discussions with stakeholders, the suggestion emerged that parks could benefit from an increased presence of interpretive panels, which offer valuable information to visitors.



Long Term Access and Resource Roads

Access to many important outdoor recreation locations is by resource roads that are currently maintained by those in the mining and forest industry. Outdoor recreation investment will need to be focused in areas where continued maintenance of access roads will continue in the long-term.

Recreation

Activities such as hiking, walking, snowshoeing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and fishing continue to increase in popularity in the RDBN. Trends in recreation activity highlight the importance of planning and managing for diverse use and potential conflicts associated with shared use of parks.

The Bulkley-Nechako area provides outstanding opportunities to view undisturbed wildlife in remote locations, a growing attraction across Northern BC. Wildlife viewing offers a flexible, equipment-light activity suitable for all ages. However, educating park visitors is crucial to ensuring public safety during wildlife viewing and to minimizing human-wildlife conflicts effectively.



Accessibility

With an aging population in the RDBN Area 'G', a growing number of individuals will face mobility challenges at a time when the significance of staying active and getting outdoors increases. In parks, providing a range of options that are safe and enjoyable for seniors and those with limited mobility are critical to increase the accessibility of parks and trails. These amenities can be used by people of all age groups, including parents with strollers and children.



The issue of accessibility extends beyond the younger and older demographics. According to the Canadian Survey on Disability Report, in 2022, 27% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older had one or more disabilities, ranging from mild to severe⁶. That percentage is up from 22% in 2017. These disabilities pose challenges in accessing parks and trails to the most vulnerable members of the community. Trails that are safe and easily accessible play a crucial role in encouraging and empowering children and youth to engage in physical activity.

Year-Round Park Use

The RDBN experiences winter weather conditions for approximately six months each year. Encouraging and embracing outdoor recreation during this period is essential to keep people active and engaged with parks throughout the entire year. By providing opportunities for these winter activities, parks can cater to a broader range of visitors and ensure that the enjoyment of outdoor spaces extends beyond the warmer months. The Houston Snowmobile Club is one example of a group in the RDBN that works hard to maintain the safety of trails for snowmobiling in the winter.



Volunteerism

The 2023 ORCBC study⁷ emphasized that volunteer retention can be challenging, with factors such as burnout and aging demographics contributing to this issue. Outdoor recreation clubs expressed that the burden of work falls on the same few volunteers consistently. The combination of an ageing volunteer base and a relatively small population presents difficulties in meeting a high level of trail maintenance. Providing support to build community capacity and volunteerism is crucial to sustaining a network of volunteers with shared priorities.



⁶ Statistics Canada. *A demographic, employment and income profile of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over in Canada, 2022*. 2024, May 28. <<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2024001-eng.htm>>

⁷ Ipsos. *Trails and Outdoor Recreation in BC*. 2023, June 2. <<https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/trails-and-outdoor-recreation-bc>>

5 VISION & GOALS



5.1 VISION

The RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, and recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experience for all.
- **Create Safe Connections.** The parks and trails system will support connections between residents and key recreation and community destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and well-being for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by maintaining and improving existing infrastructure and creating new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty and Unique Features.** The parks and trails system will facilitate access to unique natural features and important community destinations and will contribute to a sense of place that attracts residents and visitors to the region.
- **Support a Diversified Economy.** The parks and trails system in Electoral Area G will support a vibrant economy and expansion of tourism by developing high-quality outdoor recreation amenities that enhance quality of life and attract residents and visitors to the region.

5.2 GOALS

Four goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trails. Each goal is supported by specific recommendations to be accomplished over the next 10 years. These recommendations are outlined in the next section.

- Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area G
- Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity
- Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation
- Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails

6 RECOMMENDATIONS



The following section outlines key recommendations specific to each goal for Electoral Area G.

GOAL 1: ESTABLISH TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE IN ELECTORAL AREA G

This goal establishes a comprehensive approach to delivering parks and trails services in Electoral Area G. By providing a clear framework and consistent processes, this goal ensures the strategic allocation of resources for the parks and trails within Electoral Area G.

Recommendation 1.1

Continue to engage with other levels of government and community groups to identify and prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships or through direct acquisition and management.

This could take the form of a parks and trails “working group”. An example of this model is the Shuswap Trails Alliance, which brings together interest-holders across all sectors to one table for regular meetings to discuss, collaborate, coordinate, and share resources and knowledge. By bringing interest-holders together, the RDBN will help build community capacity and volunteerism and can also help identify ways to remove administrative burdens and increase collaboration toward shared priorities.

The members could be invited from First Nations, District of Houston, Village of Granisle, BC Parks, RSTBC, local outdoor recreation organizations, local stewardship organizations, local outdoor recreation businesses, youth representatives, etc.

Recommendation 1.2

Establish service levels for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas.

For parks, develop a park management plan for any future parks and update every five years. Management plans should consider maintenance levels, infrastructure development and upgrades, universal accessibility, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and invasive species management. Plans may also be informed by existing provincial park management plans.

For trails, once maintenance responsibilities are assumed, conduct regular trail inspections as described in the RDBN Parks and Trails Inspection and Maintenance Policy. This will help ensure trails are safe, well-maintained, and that appropriate resources and budget are allocated to maintenance.

First Nations consultation and archaeological assessments may be required for both parks and trails.

Recommendation 1.3

Consider adding staff to support the implementation of new parks and trails projects across the RDBN’s four parks and trails service areas and ensure equitable distribution of staff time between the service areas as the network of parks and trails grows.

Recommendation 1.4

Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements for recreation and conservation. There is also a need for consultation among the Province, RDBN, and First Nations regarding the future use of recreation sites and provincial parks, specifically the Lamprey Creek Recreation Site, which has been closed by the Province and where public access has been restricted due to First Nations use.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY

This goal emphasizes the importance of building robust partnerships and enhancing community capacity in the realm of parks and trails services. By fostering collaboration, providing financial support, and expanding land use agreements, this goal aims to build a stronger community foundation and ensure effective management and development of parks and trails services.

Recommendation 2.1

Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.

Recommendation 2.2

Continue the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that supports the RDBN in allocating multi-year funding to recreation organizations providing recreation services, such as regular maintenance of the snowmobile trail network. Continue to monitor the success of the program and adjust criteria for funding and reporting requirements as needed. Increase funding availability as resources allow, if needed.

Recommendation 2.3

Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN's capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations, such as grant writing and coordination between different levels of government.

Recommendation 2.4

Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups who are actively engaged in maintaining parks and trail features within Electoral Area G.

GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

This goal focuses on increasing access to outdoor recreation, particularly lakes and trails. By enhancing access, this goal aims to improve recreational opportunities while recognizing the significance of these natural assets. The recommendations below primarily arose during the first round of engagement.

Recommendation 3.1

Work with the Village of Granisle to explore the development of a multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing. This potential connection could provide active transportation options for residents and

visitors travelling between various destinations along Babine Lake. The proposed trail will cross multiple jurisdictional boundaries and the RDBN may have an important role in facilitating coordination.

A feasibility study for a 10 kilometer trail between Granisle and Topley Landing was completed in 2021. The Village of Granisle, the RDBN, and residents have expressed interest in the potential implementation of this trail. Further action would require coordination with BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, and private landowners. For example, non-motorized trail access would need to be accounted for in the BC Parks section of the trail in Red Bluff Provincial Park.

Consultation with Lake Babine Nation and residents of Tachet is needed. Topics for discussion may include the protection of sensitive ecological areas along the Fulton River and Babine Lake; the protection of important cultural and archaeological sites; opportunities to connect to Tachet; and opportunities to include First Nations recognition and art in signage and interpretive elements.

Recommendation 3.2

Work in partnership with First Nations, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, BC Parks, and the Houston Hikers to explore the potential of a canoe route in Old Man Lake Park to connect Old Man, Swans, and Elwin Lakes via designated portages. Engagement with First Nations will guide if and how connections between lakes are appropriate, with partners supporting future planning as directed.

Recommendation 3.3

Collaborate with BC Parks and RSTBC to establish a trail connection from Nadina Mountain Park to the Owen Lake recreation site. Consult with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation community Felix George No. 7 IR located adjacent to the recreation site north of Owen Lake before initiating this work. This would improve access to the Nadina Mountain climbing and hiking area.

Recommendation 3.4

Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads in the Electoral Area. Identifying key access routes will strengthen advocacy to the Ministry of Forests to keep key access roads open for outdoor recreation and tourism. Investment should be prioritized for parks and trails along access roads that are most likely to receive regular maintenance.

GOAL 4: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE AT PARKS AND TRAILS

This goal aims to improve overall user experience within Regional District parks and trails. By prioritizing accessibility, information availability, cultural inclusion, and amenity expansion, this goal aims to create an enriched and user-friendly parks and trails, enhancing community enjoyment and engagement.

Recommendation 4.1

Follow accessibility standards, such as the [Universal Design Guide](#) by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading parks and trails. Support organizations managing trails by providing guidance on accessibility improvements and identifying potential funding sources.

Recommendation 4.2

Collaborate with the Houston Mountain Bike Association to establish a campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails.

Recommendation 4.3

Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.

Recommendation 4.4

Support the Houston Hikers in the enhancement and promotion of high use trails as day hiking destinations. Enhancements could include priority trail upgrades, signage and wayfinding upgrades, improved support amenities such as benches or picnic tables, and interpretive elements.

Recommendation 4.5

Support the Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club and Houston Hikers in the maintenance and improvement of the abundant trails and amenities around Silverthorne Lake and the Morice Wilderness Area (RSTBC) to further enhance this area as a recreation hub.

Recommendation 4.6

Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management. Priority sites will include locations that improve public access to lakes and shorelines, offer unique viewpoints or natural features, and have a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recommendation 4.7

Update the RDBN's website to provide more information about outdoor recreation destinations, parks, trails, and campgrounds, including information about accessible features, safety, wayfinding, and amenities. Work with Houston Hikers who have done considerable work in this area.

Recommendation 4.8

Explore opportunities to develop a trail on Crown lands in Electoral Area G along the route of the historic Dominion Telegraph Line. The Dominion Telegraph Line operated from 1900 to 1936 and connected Quesnel to Dawson City and the section within the RDBN is also referred to as the Yukon Telegraph Line. In 2025, the RDBN Planning Department mapped portions of the line located on Crown lands and identified its route through the five electoral areas traversed by the line, including Electoral Area G.

Within the RDBN, the Electoral Area G line segment includes some of the longest continuous stretches on Crown land. Developing a trail could be a significant local and tourist asset and would support the 2016 Statement of Significance that recognizes the line as a Provincial Historic Place, Site, and Trail.

7 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



This Master Plan identifies recommendations to enhance parks and trails in Electoral Area G across a 10-year period from 2026 to 2036. The Board’s endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.

An implementation table on the following pages outlines recommended actions, prioritization levels, timelines, and required resources. Operational tasks are recommended to support staff work plans and departmental resources. Capital projects will be evaluated and integrated into budget planning, as subject to Board approval based on available resources and priorities.

RDBN’s partners will be responsible for implementing actions where they are the primary provider. Responsibilities for partners are highlighted in the implementation table for reference by the RDBN in discussions, monitoring, and assessing generated value from the RDBN’s investments. Aligning the objectives and priorities of community members and the RDBN will help improve their ability to meet community needs.

7.1 TIME FRAME

The table defines three time frames for implementation including:

- **Short term** – 0-5 years
- **Medium term** – 5-10 years
- **Long term** – 10+ years

Longer-term actions may be completed ahead of short-term actions depending on funding opportunities, partnerships, or other influencing factors. Actions will be sequenced as determined by the RDBN’s annual work plans to accommodate changing community needs and funding availability.

7.2 RESOURCES REQUIRED

Actions described in the implementation table come with associated costs including staff time, operational expenses, and/or capital investments. Resource requirements are categorized in the table as follows:

- **\$ - Low** – less than \$50,000
- **\$\$ - Medium** - \$50,000-\$100,000
- **\$\$\$ - High** – more than \$100,000

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
GOAL 1: ESTABLISH TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE IN ELECTORAL AREA G					
1.1	Continue to engage with other levels of government and community organizations to identify and prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships or through direct acquisition and management.	High	Ongoing	\$	- Community groups - RSTBC - BC Parks - First Nations - District of Houston - Village of Granisle
1.2	Establish service levels for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas. For future parks and trails, develop management plans and update the plans every five years. (see report for full recommendation details).	High	Medium	\$	
1.3	Consider adding staff to support the implementation of parks and trails projects in Electoral Area G and across the RDBN’s four parks and trails service areas.	Medium	Medium	\$\$-\$\$\$	
1.4	Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements for recreation and conservation and to address questions about the future use of recreation sites and provincial parks, specifically the Lamprey Creek Recreation Site which has been closed by the Province and where public access has been restricted due to First Nations use.	Medium	Long	\$	- BC Government - First Nations - Community groups
GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY					
2.1	Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.	High	Ongoing	\$	First Nations
2.2	Continue to implement the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that provides allocation of multi-year funding to recreation organizations providing recreation services.	High	Ongoing	\$\$	Community groups
2.3	Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN’s capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations, such as grant writing and coordination between different levels of government.	High	Short - Ongoing	\$	- Internal: RDBN grant writers - Outdoor recreation groups
2.4	Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups who are actively engaged in maintaining parks and trail features within Electoral Area G.	High	Short - Ongoing	\$	- Internal: RDBN grant writers - Outdoor recreation groups

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION					
3.1	Work with the Village of Granisle and partners to explore the development of a multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing.	High	Short term initiation Long term implementation	\$-\$\$\$* <i>*Dependent on project</i>	▪ Village of Granisle ▪ Ministry of Environment and Parks (BC Parks, RSTBC) ▪ Lake Babine Nation ▪ Ministry of Transportation and Transit
3.2	Work in partnership with the First Nations, BC Parks, RSTBC and the Houston Hikers to explore a potential canoe route in Old Man Lake Park to connect Old Man, Swans, and Elwin Lakes via designated portages.	Medium	Medium	\$\$	▪ First Nations ▪ RSTBC ▪ BC Parks ▪ Houston Hikers
3.3	Collaborate with BC Parks and RSTBC to establish a trail connection from Nadina Mountain Park to the Owen Lake recreation site. Consult with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation community Felix George No. 7 IR located adjacent to the recreation site north of Owen Lake before initiating this work. This would improve access to the Nadina Mountain climbing and hiking area.	Medium	Medium	\$\$	▪ BC Parks ▪ RSTBC ▪ First Nations
3.4	Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads. Identifying key access routes will strengthen advocacy to the Ministry of Forests to keep key access roads open for outdoor recreation and tourism.	High	Short	\$	▪ Province of BC
GOAL 4: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE AT PARKS AND TRAILS					
4.1	Follow accessibility standards, such as the Universal Design Guide by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading trails. Support organizations managing trails by providing guidance on accessibility improvements and identifying potential funding sources.	Medium	Medium	\$\$* <i>*Dependent on grant funding opportunities</i>	▪ Internal: RDBN Accessibility Committee
4.2	Collaborate with the Houston Mountain Bike Association to establish a campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails.	Medium	Long	\$\$* <i>*Dependent on joint funding opportunities</i>	▪ Houston Mountain Bike Association

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
4.3	Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.	Medium	Medium	\$-\$\$	First Nations
4.4	Support the Houston Hikers in the enhancement and promotion of high-use trails as day hiking destinations.	Medium	Medium	\$* <i>*Dependent on joint funding opportunities</i>	Houston Hikers
4.5	Support the Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club and Houston Hikers in the maintenance and improvement of the abundant trails and amenities around Silverthorne Lake and the Morice Wilderness Area (RSTBC) to further enhance this area as a recreation hub.	Medium	Medium	\$\$	- Houston Hikers - Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club - RSTBC
4.6	Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management.	High	Short	\$	RSTBC
4.7	Update the RDBN’s website to provide more information about outdoor recreation destinations, parks, trails, and campgrounds. Work with Houston Hikers who has done considerable work in this area.	Medium	Medium	\$	- Houston Hikers - BC Parks - RSTBC
4.8	Explore opportunities to develop a trail along the route of the historic Dominion Telegraph Line that fall within Electoral Area G.	Low	Short - Long	\$\$	Province of BC

APPENDIX A

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Regional District of Bulkley Nechako

Parks and Trails Master Plan

Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)

Engagement Summary

Prepared for:



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) is developing a Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural). The Plan will set strategic actions for parks and trails that reflect the region's unique character, culture, and geography.

Community input is key to the success of the Master Plan. Interest holders, rights holders, potential partners, and the public were invited to provide feedback on parks, trails, and recreation areas. Engagement aimed to understand community needs, identify challenges and opportunities, and develop strategies to improve coordination of park and trail operations.

To ensure the Plan reflects a community vision and a wide range of perspectives, engagement included outreach to the public and key rights and interest-holders, including outdoor clubs, community groups, and local First Nations communities. The Engagement Summary presents feedback received during two rounds of public engagement.

1.2 OVERALL PLANNING PROCESS

Five phases guided the Plan, including a background review, round 1 community engagement, preparation of the draft Plan, round 2 engagement, and development of the final Parks and Trails Master Plan (Figure 1). Two rounds of engagement included:

- **Round 1:** Stakeholder meetings and interviews, a public online survey, and a public pop-up event. Participants helped shape the vision and priorities for parks and trails.
- **Round 2:** A public online survey and virtual public open house. Participants provided feedback on the Draft Master Plan.

Engagement activities are described below including key findings and how the input was used to inform the final Master Plan.



Figure 1 – Project timeline

1.3 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes protecting culturally significant areas within the parks system. The RDBN invited sixteen First Nations within the RDBN's Electoral Area G to participate in individual rights holder meetings, as well as extending the invitation to participate in the public pop-ups and online surveys. There have been no meeting requests to date. However, as further input is offered in the future, it will be integrated into the decision-making process.

1.4 WHAT WE DID

OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

Public consultation activities included virtual interest-holder workshops, two public online surveys, a community pop-up event, and a virtual open house. Further details about each activity and a summary of results are provided below.

To encourage participation, a combination of phone calls, email invitations, newspaper advertisements, and social media posts were used. The RDBN website provided a landing page for all updates, information on how to participate, and links to the online surveys and virtual open house.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Round 1

Interest-holder Workshops and interviews

Four virtual workshops were held with a diverse set of interest-holders, including local and provincial government representatives, community organizations, land managers, youth, and education groups.

Engagement by the Numbers

125 participants in two online surveys

5 participants in the community workshops

6 participants in the virtual open house

1 pop-up event at the Houston Farmer's Market

Interviews with individual knowledge holders were also conducted. Participants included representatives from the following:

- Elected officials from the RDBN Electoral Area 'G', Village of Granisle, and District of Houston
- District of Houston Leisure Services Staff
- Houston Hikers
- Houston Mountain Bike Association
- Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) Staff
- BC Parks Staff

Representatives were introduced to the project through workshops and interviews and were asked about their organization's role in parks and trails. They were also asked to provide feedback on challenges and opportunities within parks and trails.

Round 1 Online Public Survey

Public input was gathered through an online survey posted on the Regional District's website. Results were collected through the online platform Survey Monkey and summarized in Section 2.1 of this report.

The first survey received 54 responses collected between August 15th to September 30th, 2025. Survey questions asked the community to reflect on their needs and aspirations for parks, trails, and recreation.

Round 1 Public Pop-Up Event

One in-person pop-up event was held at the Houston Farmer's Market on August 22nd, 2025 from 12:00-4:00 pm. Facilitators from the Regional District and LEES were present to gather feedback, guide conversation, and answer project questions.

The pop-up event introduced the project to the community and shared information about parks and trails in the planning area. Display boards prompted participants to share their vision for parks and trails, identify key locations they would like prioritized, and share important features and amenities. The pop-up event also encouraged participation in the first online survey.

Round 2

Virtual Open House

A virtual open house was held in March of 2026. Interest-holders from the first round of engagement were invited in addition to an open invite to members of the community via the RDBN's website. The open house included a presentation on the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan followed by a brief discussion providing space for questions and feedback on the Plan.

Round 2 Online Public Survey

Public input was gathered through a second online survey posted on the Regional District's website. The results were collected through the online platform Survey Monkey and are summarized in Section 2.2.

Survey responses for round 2 of engagement were collected from February 26th to April 6th, 2026, with a total of 71 responses. Survey questions asked for community feedback on the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan, including the level of support for the vision and recommendations and the highest priorities.

2 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

2.1 ROUND 1 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

2.1.1 COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND INTERVIEWS

The following section outlines key points raised during the community workshops and interviews of elected officials, Houston Leisure Services, and the Houston Hikers.

Elected Officials

- A meeting held with the Ministry of Forests at Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) discussed their commitment to a ten kilometre trail between the Granisle and Topley Landing previously explored in a 2021 feasibility study by the Village of Granisle. This is a top priority for the municipality.
- Future forestry campsites and access roads will be important to trail and recreational access planning, as forestry companies may not continue to maintain all roads.
- Changes to permitting requirements mean a larger number of permits will likely be required to establish new projects, particularly along lakeshores and rivers. Focusing on maintaining existing assets over establishing new infrastructure may reduce required permits.
- Fishing along the Morice River and lake access were identified as priorities, alongside closing gaps in hiking trails along lake and river frontages.
- Unmaintained and unsanctioned boat launches along waterfronts present a hazard. Barrett and Klinger Lakes were identified as sites in need of improved amenities and parking.
- Stronger partnerships with local First Nations are needed to support access to public recreation sites and improve communication with the public, especially as Provincial reconciliation processes may change future access to Crown land. Several long-term, well-used recreation sites are now exclusively used by First Nations. Elected officials expressed the importance of collaborative approaches, including culturally respectful signage that acknowledges First Nations sites and encourages responsible use.

Houston Leisure Services

- A challenge identified was limited volunteer capacity within a small population.
- Priorities identified included accessibility, safety, trail connectivity, and improved signage.

Houston Hikers

- Challenges include trail maintenance and limited funding streams for operational work .
- There is interest in establishing a link between the Morice Mountain cabin and the Owen Lookout Cabin.

- Interest was expressed in establishing trails and access along Old Man, Swans and Elwin Lakes in partnership with RSTBC.
- Members noted several long-standing recreation sites are now exclusively used by local First Nations, and the community feels the loss of these areas. They suggested exploring opportunities to develop new sites or expand existing ones to maintain recreation capacity.

Key Locations Shared:

- Morice River
- Barrett Lake
- Klinger Lake
- Owen Lake
- Helen Lake
- Silverthorne Lake
- Old Man Lake
- Swans Lake
- Elwin Lake
- Irrigation Lake (District of Houston)
- By-mac Campground (District of Houston)
- Northwood Park (District of Houston)

2.1.2 ROUND 1 PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT

During the pop-up event, the following themes emerged:

- **Nadina Mountain:** Participants identified the Nadina Mountain area as a place of interest valued for its wilderness lodge, Nadina Mountain Provincial Park, and the Owen Lake Recreation Site.
- **Road access:** Concerns over maintaining road access after industry decommissioning was discussed, with specific reference to Palisades, Morice Lake Park, and Nadina Mountain access along the Owen Connector.
- **BC Recreation Sites:** Sites located close to town were described as popular and favored by locals due to their ease of access including Silverthorne Lake, Helen Lake, and Sunset Lake.
- **Bike trails:** Participants expressed interest in improved bike safety, increased community connections, and development of more trails in the area. Mountain biking emerged as the main topic, however an opportunity for introducing gravel bike trails was identified.

2.1.3 ROUND 1 ONLINE SURVEY

The following key findings shared in the round 1 online survey include:

- **Trail use habits:** Three quarters of respondents use trails at least on a weekly basis (76%).
- **Popular activities:** The most popular activities among adults include hiking, walking, and snowshoeing. Among children, hiking, ATV/snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, dog walking, and mountain biking were the most popular activities. Though not as popular as summer activities, a significant portion of respondents participate in winter trail activities.
- **Outdoor recreation habits:** Camping is a popular outdoor recreation activity enjoyed by many adults (83%) and children (95%) and respondents enjoy water-based activities including canoeing and kayaking, swimming, going to the lake, and fishing.
- **Barriers to access:** Primary barriers to accessing parks and trails include wildlife concerns (28%), poor maintenance (26%), lack of information (20%), and being too busy (20%). Roughly a quarter of respondents don't face any barriers (28%).
- **Key destinations:** Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club is the most mentioned destination from participants followed by China Nose Mountain (not in Electoral Area G) and the Babine Lake hiking trails.
- **Trail networks and connections:** Respondents indicated the creation and management of new trail networks should be prioritized over the next 10 years, with 78% ranking it in their top two, followed by connections between communities (56%), preservation of natural areas (38%), and acquiring land (29%).
- **Park priorities:** Respondents indicated campgrounds, environmental protection, opportunities to be active, connect with nature, and more park amenities are the main priorities for parks.
- **Trail priorities:** Respondents indicated hiking and walking (82%), trail signage (49%), and improved trail connections to community amenities (56%) are their main priorities for trails and active transportation.
- **Tax increase:** More respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails improvements than those opposed (47% supportive compared to 29% opposed).
- **Additional comments:** Many respondents commented on the need for improved connectivity, maintenance, and more information, wayfinding, and signage.

2.2 ROUND 2 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

2.2.1 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

The following input was shared during the virtual open house including:

- The Houston Mountain Bike Association (HMBA) and the Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club (MMNSC) are jointly developing summer biking maps and signage;
- The Owen-Nadina connection should be restored to provide 4x4 access; and
- A shortened version of the final plan would be helpful for the public and for grants.

2.2.2 ROUND 2 ONLINE SURVEY

The key findings shared in the round 2 online survey include:

- **Vision and goals:** The majority of respondents support the draft vision statement (80%) and the five goals (90%). When asked to describe overall goals missed, a few respondents mentioned a desire for providing garbage maintenance.
- **Parks and Trails working group:** The majority of respondents support the creation of a parks and trails working group (77%). However, 21% feel neutral or unsure.
- **Granisle and Topley Landing multi-use trail:** The majority of respondents (59%) support creating a new multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing and 33% feel neutral. With further engagement, the project has a strong potential to build even broader community support.
- **Expansion of trail networks:** Support was strong for both initiatives, with a slight preference for Nadina Mountain trail connection to the Owen Lake recreation site (52% ranked as their top priority) followed by developing a three-lake canoe route integrated with Old Man Lake Park (48% ranked as their top priority).
- **Outdoor recreation organization and land manager initiatives** – Respondents would like the RDBN to prioritize establishing a campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails with the Houston Mountain Bike Association (61% ranked as their top two priorities). Both enhancing the Houston Palisades Trail and improving Silverthorne Lake and the Morice Wilderness Area were equally prioritized (48% ranked as their top two priorities).
- **Provincial Recreation Site improvements:** Respondents prioritized upgrades at Owen Lake (26 votes), followed by Silverthorne Lake (24), Mt. Harry Davis (20), and the Aspen sites (19). They highlighted needs such as better signage and maps, improved accessibility, better access to the Morice River and Lamprey Creek, more trails and benches, and additional camping options, particularly at Mt. Harry Davis.
- **Dominion Telegraph Line trail:** The majority of respondents (60%) support creating a new trail following the historic Dominion Telegraph Line and 33% feel neutral or unsure, suggesting further distribution of information to build community support.

- **Further comments:** Additional comments included not finding information on the planning process, the importance of highlighting that the western portion of Area E is often considered a “Houston area” for recreation and a desire of advertising to get input from neighbouring areas.

2.2.3 ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The RDBN received additional feedback through email messages from organizations including:

- **Houston Hikers:** Provided feedback on content related to Houston Hikers trails and a recreation site.
- **BC Parks:** Shared feedback on recommendations related to BC Parks, including insight into trail upgrade projects, specifically Old Man Park, and engagement with Houston Hikers and First Nations.
- **Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC):** Provided information on sites under jurisdiction, including missing trails and recreation site closures.
- **Village of Granisle:** Clarified municipal jurisdiction of parks and trails.
- **Mayor of Granisle:** Shared input on making a user-friendly version of the plan.

3 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

Section three summarizes key themes from both rounds of engagement, including challenges, opportunities, and priorities found from the community workshops and interviews, online surveys, the in-person pop-up event, and the virtual open house.

3.1 CHALLENGES

Key challenges include:

- **Volunteer capacity and funding:** Volunteer capacity is limited by a small population and ongoing operational work is limited by a lack of stable funding.
- **Loss of road access:** The decommissioning of roads by forestry companies is a significant concern, particularly for the Palisades, Morice Lake Park, and Nadina Mountain.
- **Current level of maintenance:** Declining quality of trails and amenities has raised concern about the current level of park and trail maintenance.
- **Access to water recreation:** Unmaintained and unsanctioned boat launches have limited access to recreational use of lakes.
- **Lack of information and signage:** Missing information and signage on parks and trails was identified as a challenge.
- **Wildlife concerns:** Presence of wildlife was identified as the biggest barrier to access.

3.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities include:

- **Grow the trail network:** Open up the trail network to provide additional opportunities for hiking. Trails could provide additional access to Nadina Mountain, including a new trail connecting Granisle to Topley Landing and a new trail along the Owen Connector.
- **Improve cabin access:** Establish a link between the Morice Mountain cabin and the Owen Lookout Cabin.
- **Improve water access:** Provide improvements to access the Morice River and Morice Lake, as well as Barrett and Klinger Lake, by formalizing boat launches to increase recreation opportunities for water sports.
- **Build partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration between organizations and the RDBN, including partnering with the RSTBC to develop trails and provide access to Old Man, Swan, and Elwin Lakes, helping to increase volunteer capacity, and building ongoing relationship with local First Nations.

- **Improve trail maintenance:** Establish funding pathways through tax increases, grants, or creating a parks and trails working group to enhance maintenance and management of the trail system, as well as build capacity.
- **Improve information, wayfinding, and education:** Develop clear trail wayfinding, information on the trail system, and education. Providing information on wildlife-human interactions could help address wildlife related concerns.

3.3 SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN

Overall, there was strong support for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, including:

- **80%** of online survey respondents were supportive or very supportive of the vision.
- **90%** of online survey respondents were supportive or very supportive of the goals.
- Participants of the virtual open house expressed support for the Draft Master Plan.
- Organizations providing feedback expressed support for the Draft Master Plan.

3.4 PRIORITIES

Community priorities place emphasis on expanding trail networks, improving trail connectivity, and improving amenities. Key priorities identified include:

- **Expand and connect trail networks:** Expand trail networks to increase recreation opportunities and improve connectivity between communities and key recreation destinations. This could include developing a 10-kilometre trail linking the Village of Granisle with Topley Landing and establishing a connection between Nadina Mountain Park and the Owen Lake Recreation Site.
- **Establish a historic trail:** Plan and construct a trail along the historic Dominion Telegraph Line to support tourism, enhance local recreation, and highlight the area's historical past.
- **Enhance water recreation opportunities:** Develop a three-lake canoe route incorporating Old Man Lake Park.
- **Improve Provincial Recreation Sites:** Support improvements to provincial recreation sites including enhanced amenities, signage, and improved access, with a focus on Owen Lake, Silverthorne Lake, and Mount Harry Davis.
- **Strengthen Relationships with Local First Nations:** Work with local First Nations to ensure ongoing communication and engagement is developed to support shared stewardship of public recreation sites, support cultural and ecological practices, and ensure clear communication in planning and management conversations.
- **Establish a new campground:** Establish a new campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails in collaboration with the Houston Mountain Bike Association.

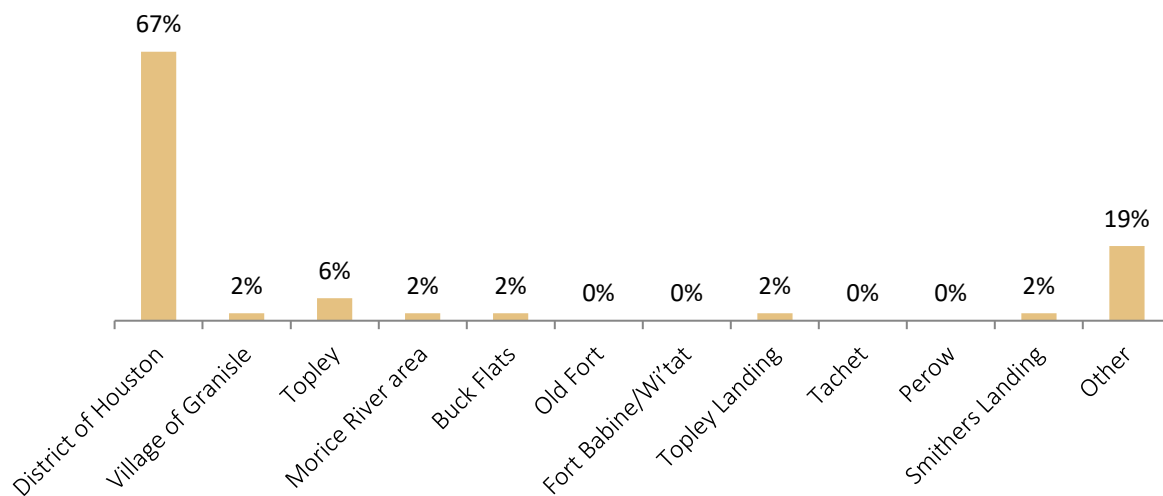
- **Create a Parks and Trails Working Group:** Establish a parks and trails working group to build partnerships, collaborate, and improve community capacity, bringing together local organizations, land managers, other levels of government, and First Nations to collaborate and share resources and knowledge to support and improve parks and trails opportunities.

APPENDIX A – ONLINE SURVEY 1 SUMMARY

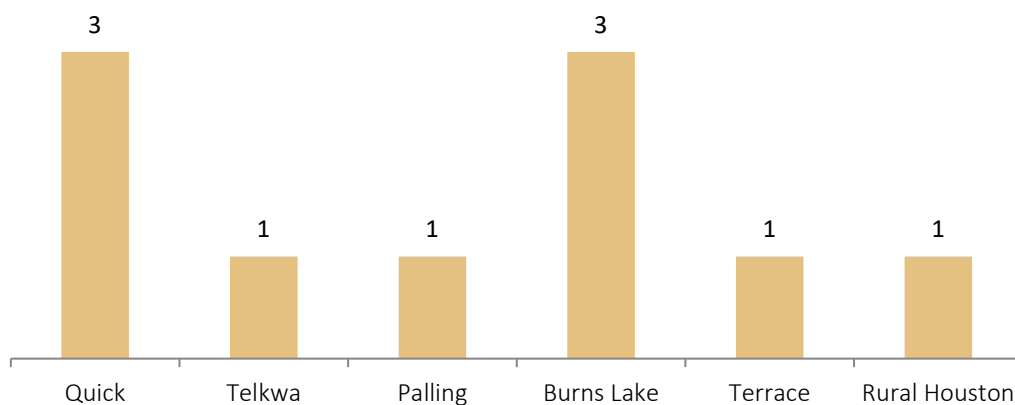
Who Responded

- The survey was completed by a total of 54 respondents.
- The majority of respondents identified as women (80%).
- The largest age group of respondents were between 35 and 49 years of age (43%).
- Less than half of respondents noted having children under the age of 18 living at home (38%).
- The majority of respondents were from the District of Houston (67%).

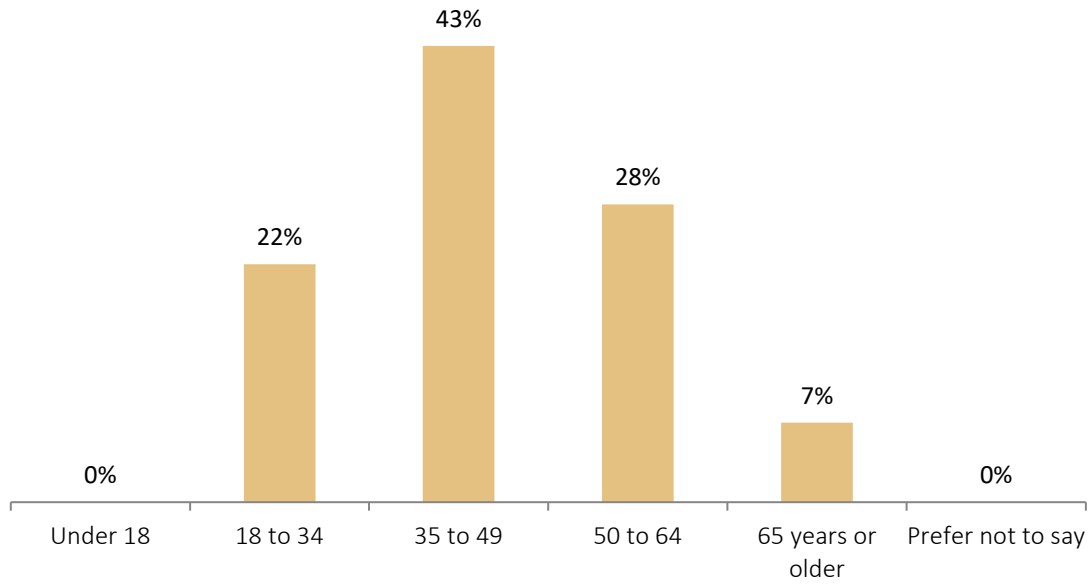
Where do you live?



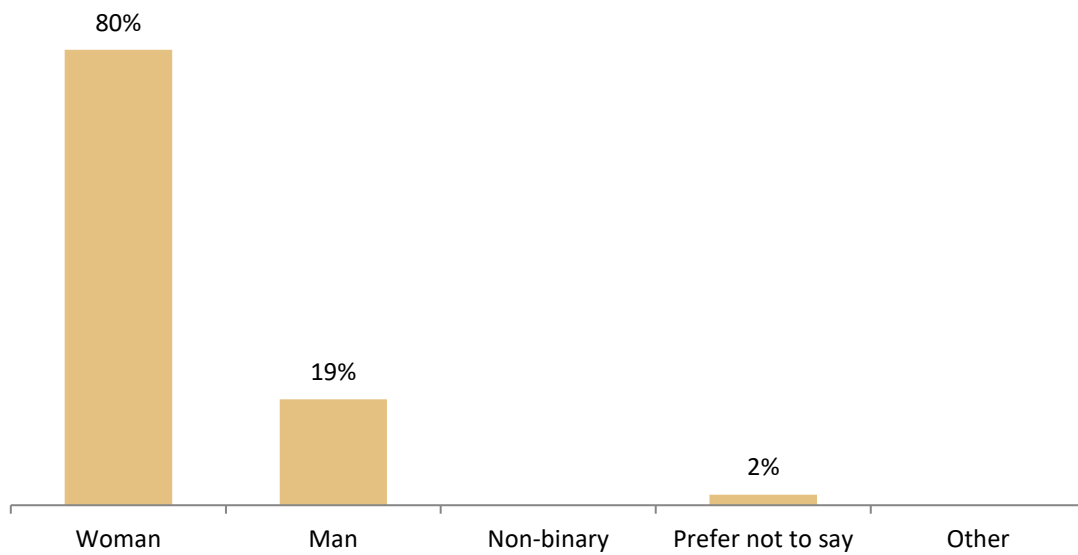
Other Areas of Residence



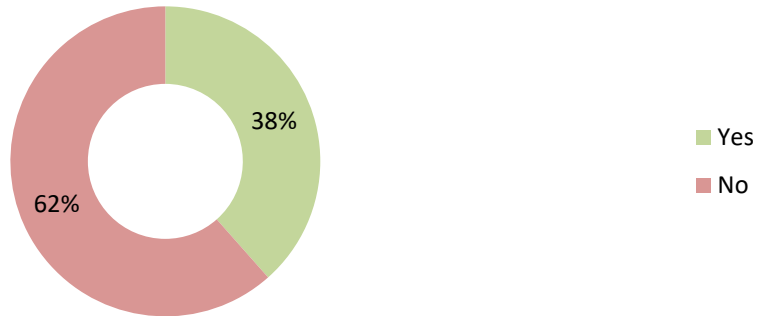
What age category are you?



What gender do you identify with?



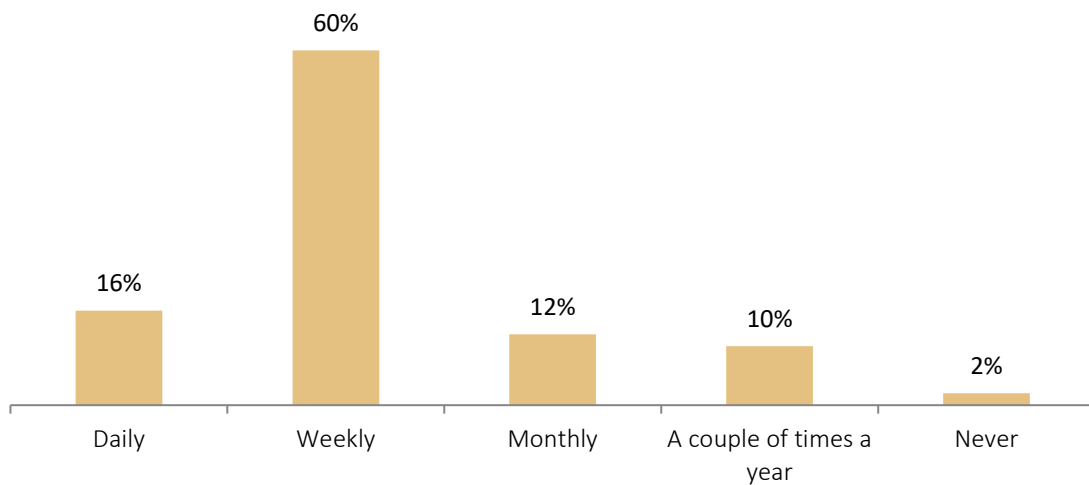
Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?



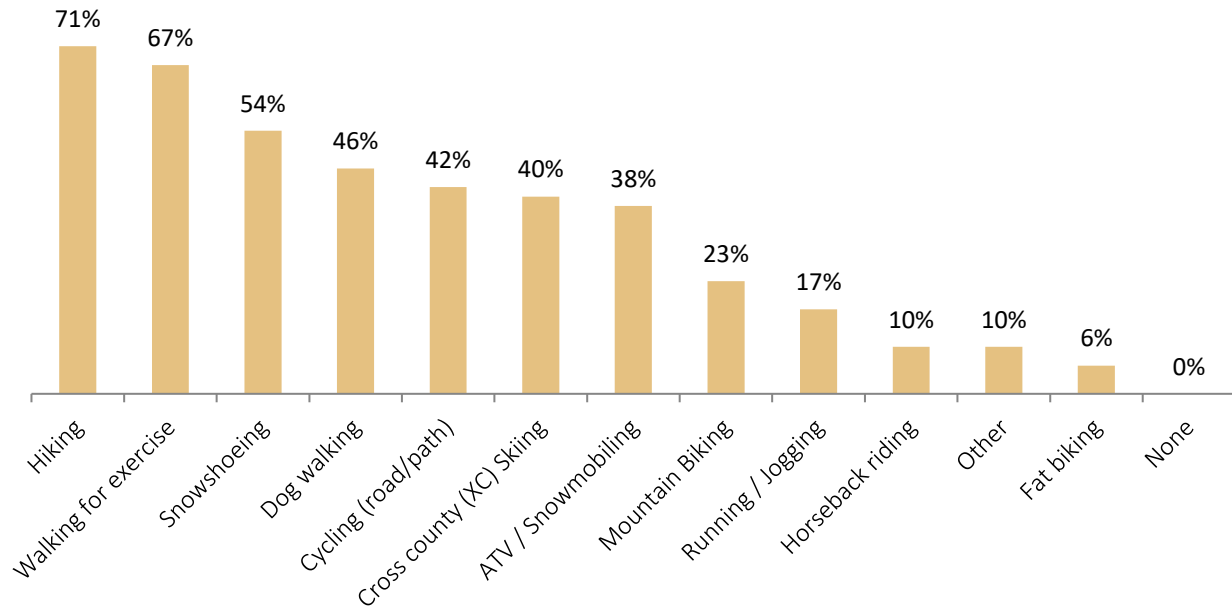
Trail Use Habits

- Roughly three-quarters of respondents noted using trails at least on a weekly basis (76%).
- The most popular trail activities among respondents were hiking (71%), walking for exercise (67%), and snowshoeing (54%).
- Though not as popular as summer activities, a significant portion of respondents reported participating in winter trail activities.
- The most popular trail activity among the children of respondents was hiking (65%), though ATV/snowmobiling (45%), cross-country skiing (45%), dog walking (40%), and mountain biking (40%) were also common responses.

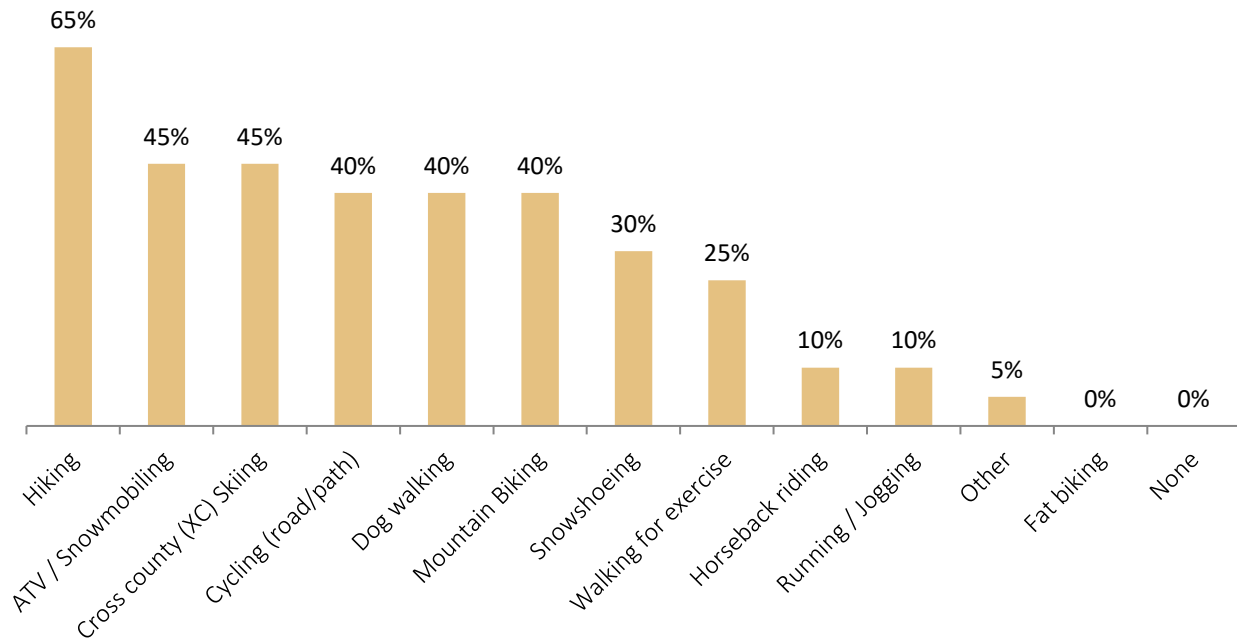
How often do you use trails?



What types of trail activities do you do most often?



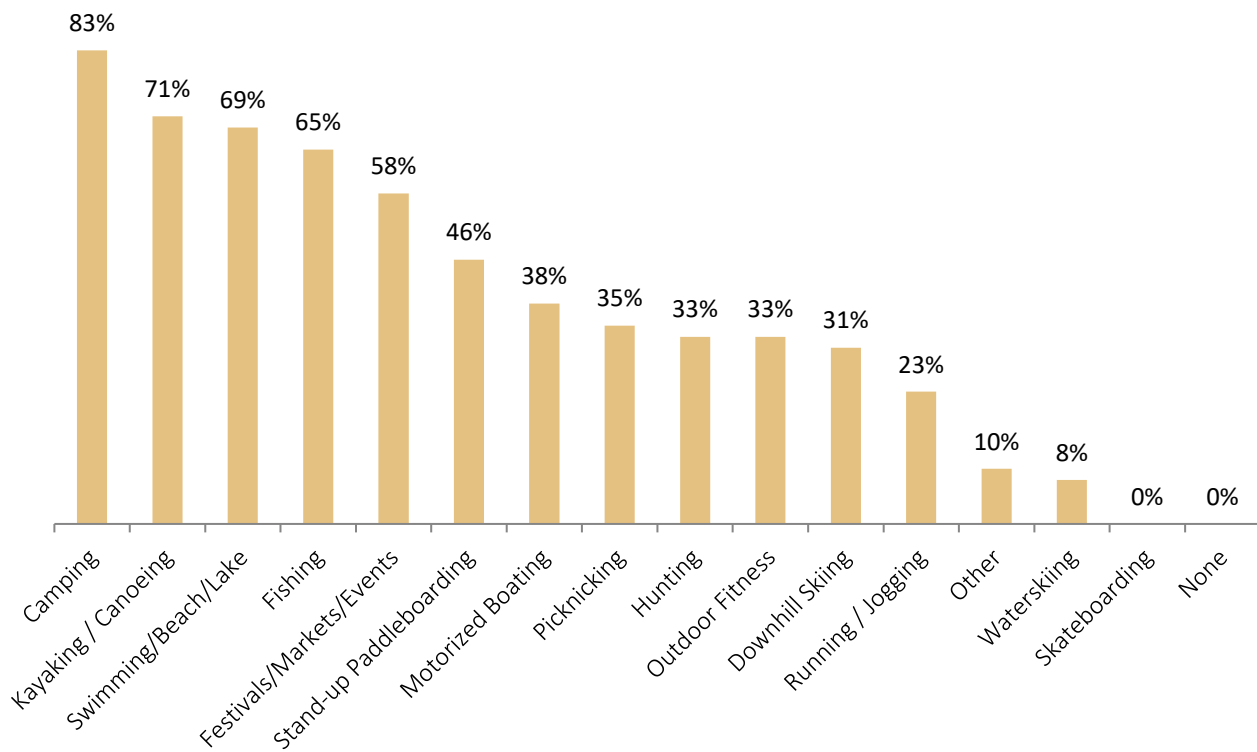
What types of trail activities do your children do most often? (Select all that apply).



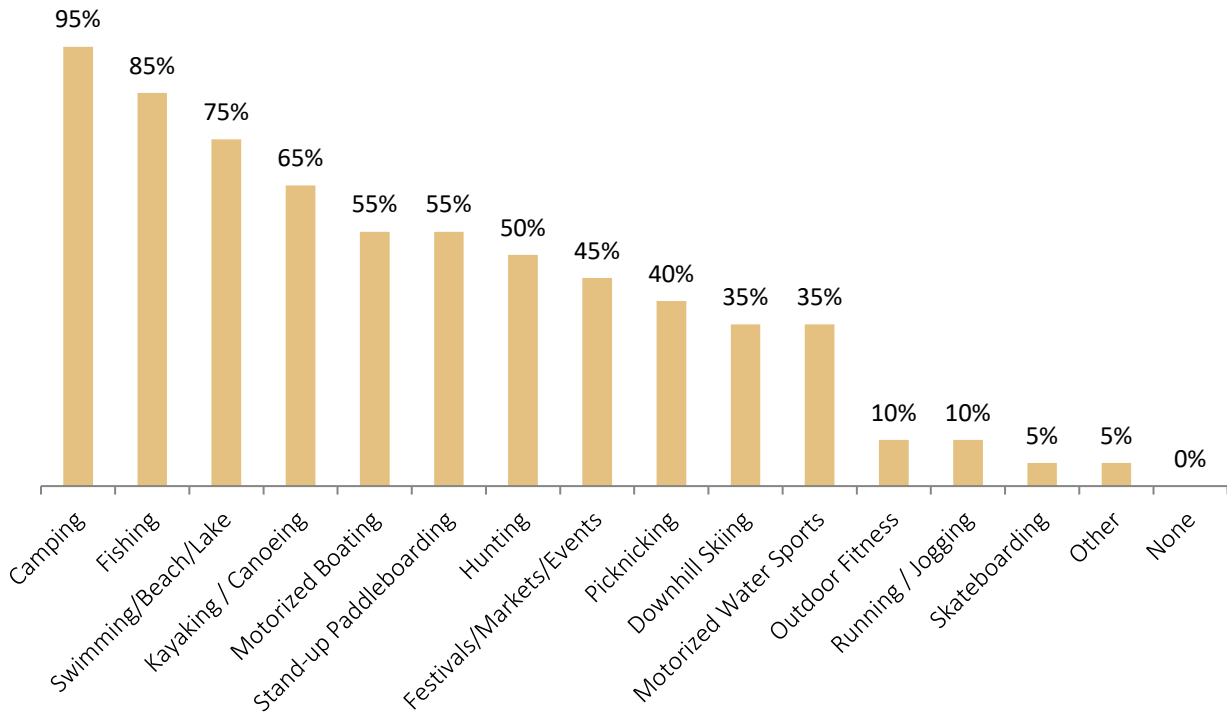
Outdoor Recreation Habits

- Camping was the most popular outdoor recreation activity among respondents (83%).
- Many respondents participated in water-based activities such as canoeing/kayaking (71%), swimming/going to the lake (69%), fishing (65%), stand-up paddleboarding (46%), and motorized boating (38%).
- The most popular outdoor recreation activities among the children of respondents were camping (95%), fishing (85%), and swimming/going to the lake (75%).

What types outdoor activities do you enjoy? Think of all seasons and times of the year.
(Select all that apply).



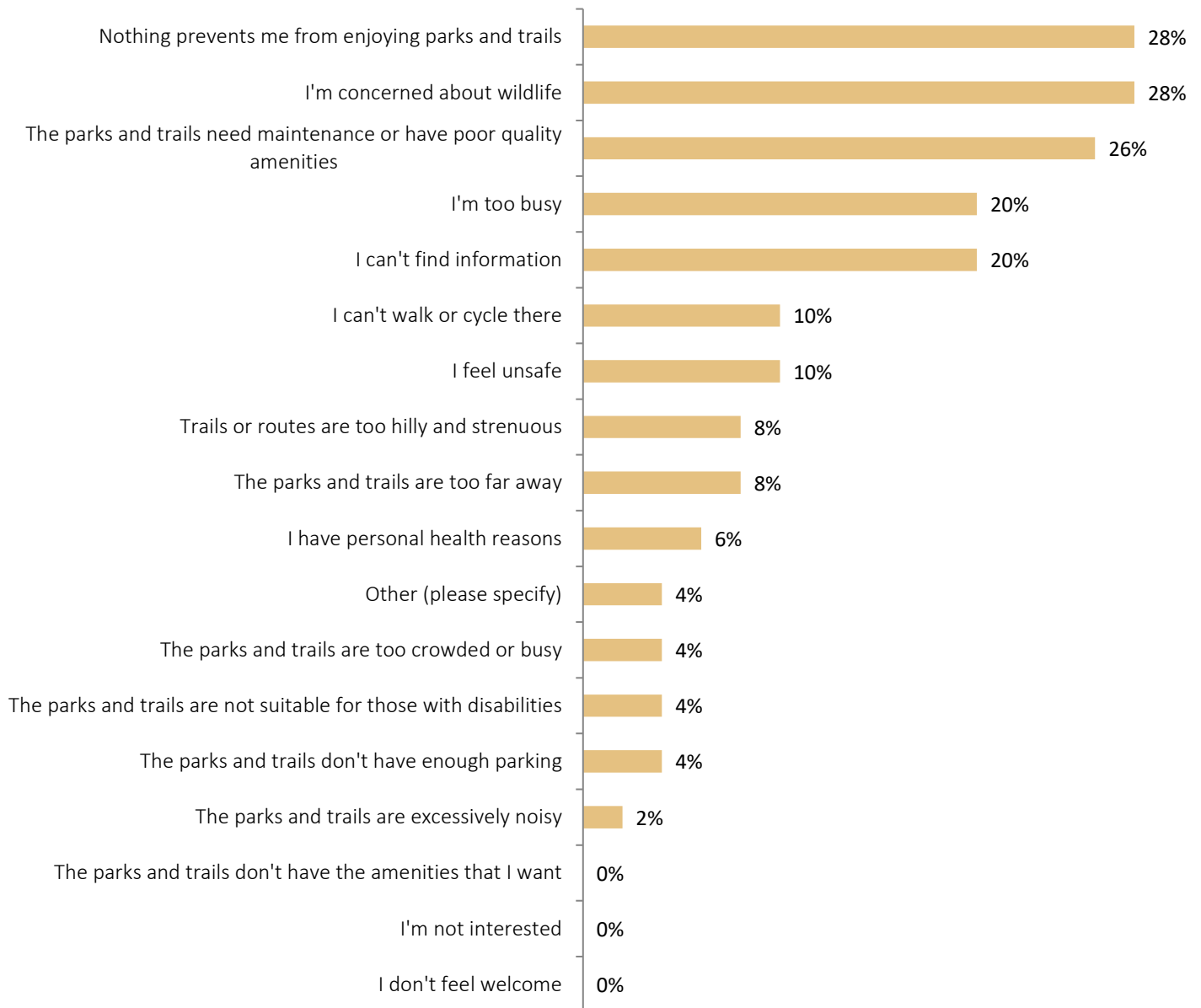
What types outdoor activities do your children enjoy? Think of all seasons and times of the year. *(Select all that apply).*



Barriers to Accessing Outdoor Recreation

- The primary barriers to using parks and trails more often were wildlife concerns (28%), poor park and trail maintenance (26%), a lack of information (20%), and being too busy (20%).
- Roughly one-quarter of respondents said they don't face any barriers in accessing parks and trails (28%).

What, if anything, keeps you from visiting parks or getting out on trails more often? (Select your top 3 reasons).



Key Destinations

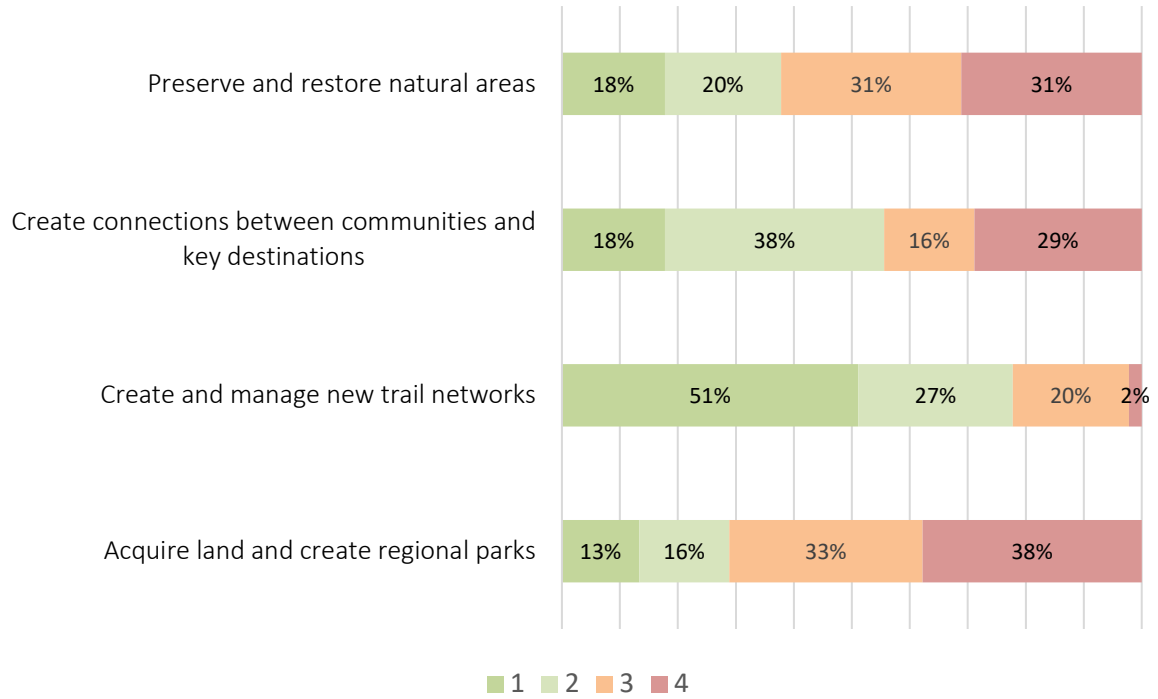
Destinations raised by engagement participants included:

- Morice Mountain Nordic Ski Club (n=10)
- China Nose Mountain (n=7) (Note: This is not in Electoral Area G)
- Babine Lake Hiking Trails (n=6)
- Equity Ice Falls (n=4)
- Barret Hat Hiking Area (n=3)
- Owen Lake (n=3)
- Duck Pond (n=2) (District of Houston)
- Telkwa Range (n=2)
- Sunset Lake (n=1)
- Buck Creek Falls (n=1)
- Perow Falls (n=1)

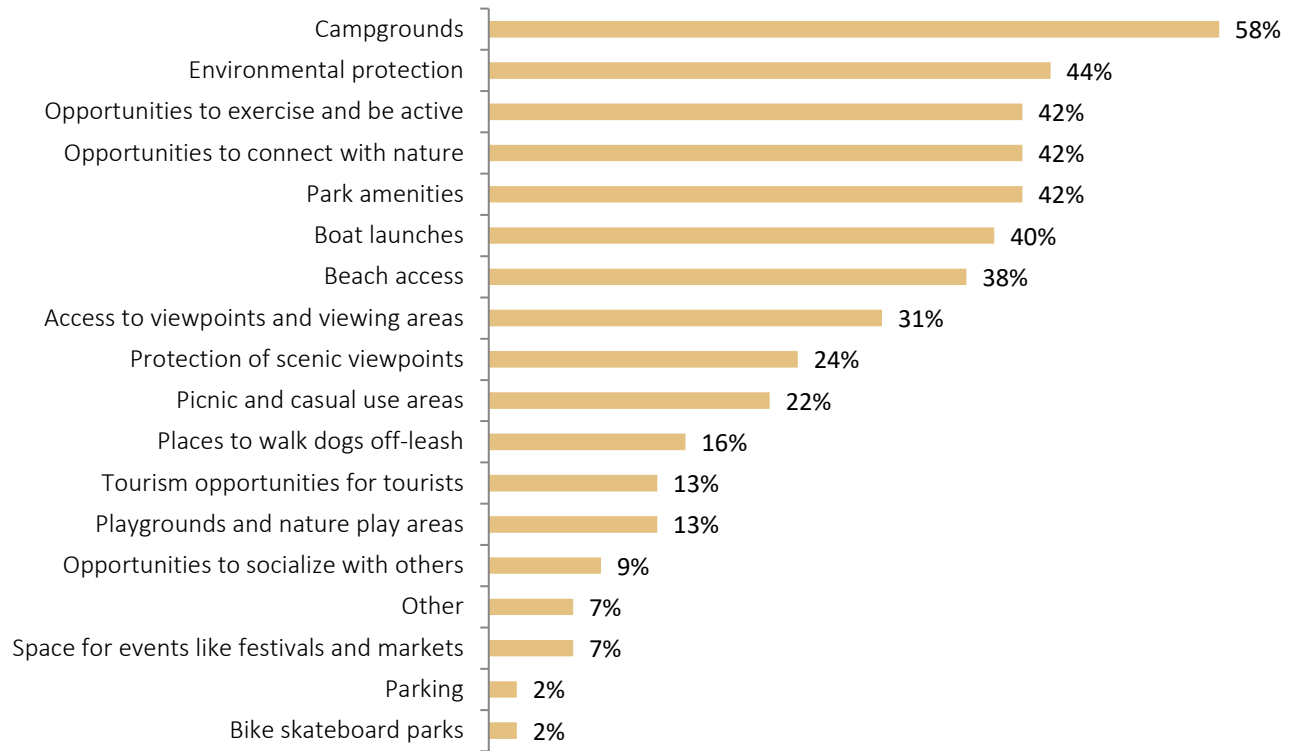
Park and Trails Priorities

- Respondents indicated that the **creation and management of new trails networks** should be prioritized over the next 10 years (78% of respondents selected as their top two priorities), followed by the **creation of connections between communities and key destinations** (56% of respondents selected as their top two priorities).
- Respondents indicated that **campgrounds** (58%), **environmental protection** (44%), **opportunities to be active** (42%) and **connect with nature** (42%), and park **amenities** (42%) are their main priority for parks in Electoral Area G.
- Respondents indicated that **hiking and walking** (82%), trail **signage** (49%), **improved trail connections to community amenities** (36%), **hard-surface multi-use pathways** (33%), and **ATV/snowmobile routes** (31%) are their main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area G.
- More respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails improvements than those opposed (47% supportive compared to 29% opposed). A quarter of respondents (24%) were neutral regarding increased taxation.
- When asked what else we need to know, many respondents commented on the need for improved connectivity (n=9). Improved maintenance (n=6) and the need for more information, wayfinding, and signage (n=4) were also commonly mentioned.

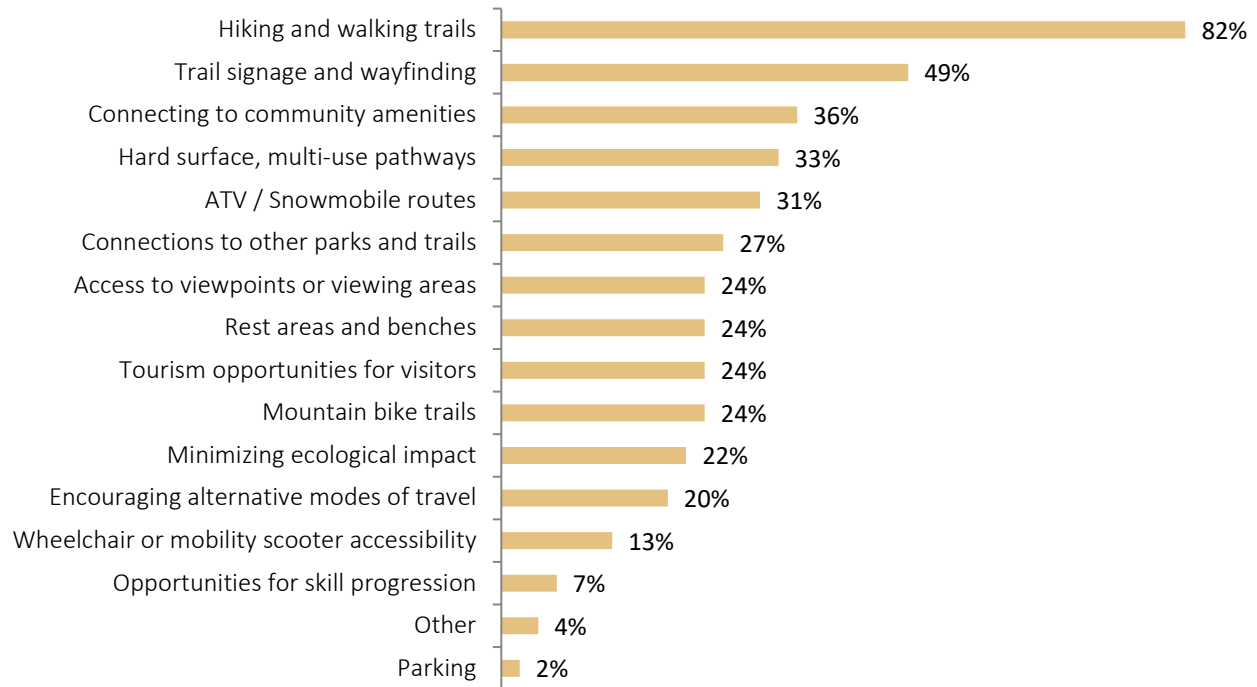
What should the RDBN prioritize in parks and trails over the next 10 years? (Rank options in order of priority)



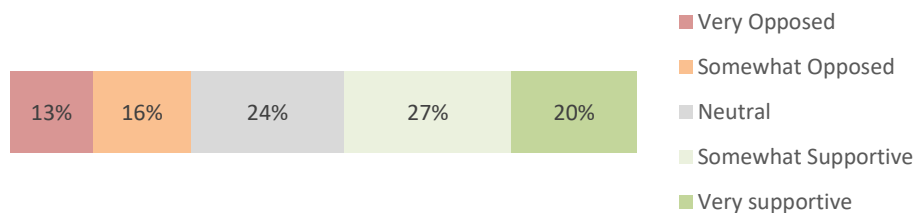
What are your main priorities for parks in Electoral Area G-Houston/Granisle Rural? (Select your top 5)



What are your main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)? (Select your top 5).



How supportive are you of a tax increase to fund the acquisition of new parks and trails, or the development of new infrastructure in parks and trails?

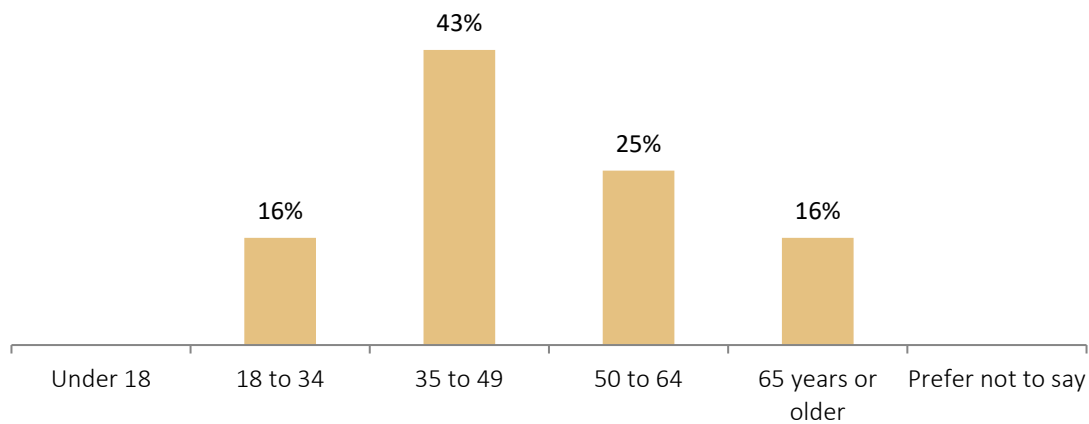


APPENDIX B – ONLINE SURVEY 2 SUMMARY

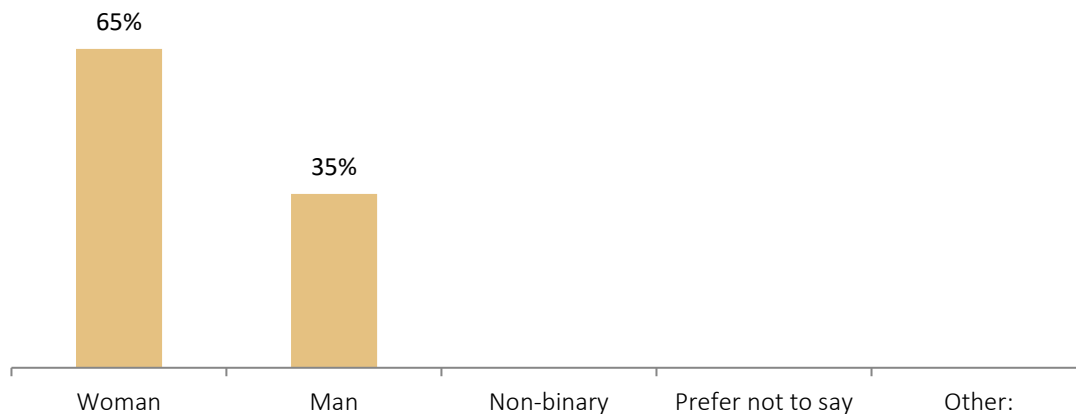
Who Responded

- The survey was completed by a total of 71 respondents.
- The majority of respondents are between the ages of 35-64 (69%)
- 65% of respondents identify as a woman.
- The majority of respondents live in the District of Houston (78%) with the remainder from the Village of Granisle, Topley Landing, or a location not listed (e.g. Smithers).

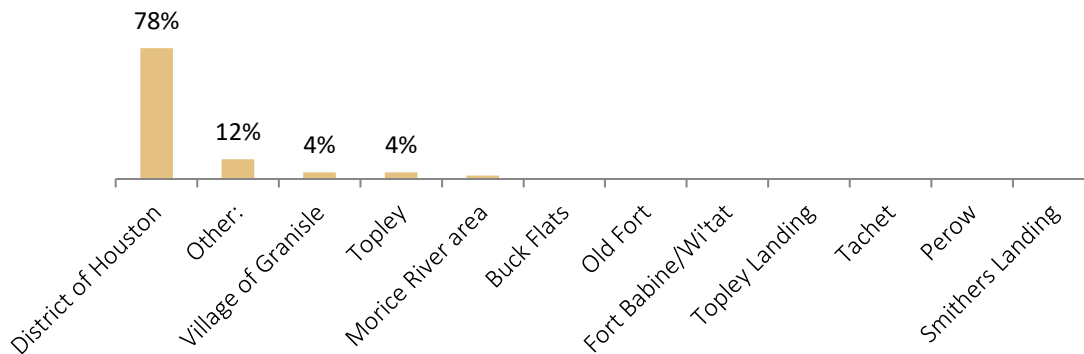
What age category are you?



What gender do you identify with?



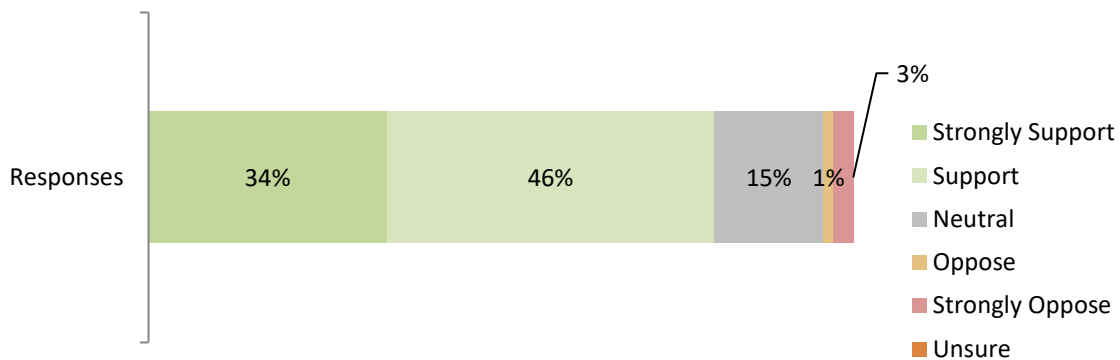
Where do you live?



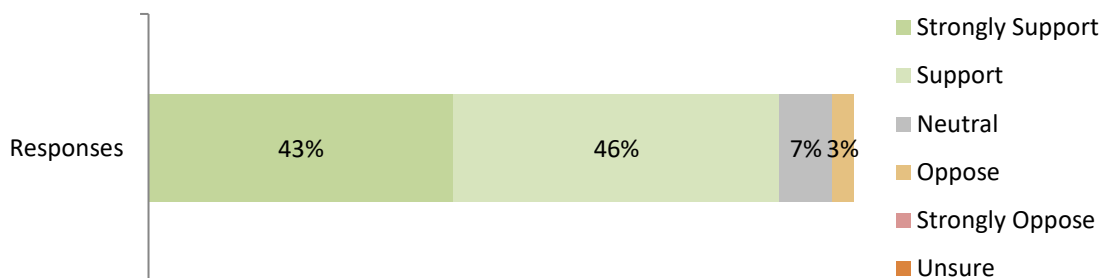
Vision and Goals

- The majority of survey respondents support the vision statement (80%).
- The majority support the five goals presented (94%)

To what extent do you support the Vision Statement?



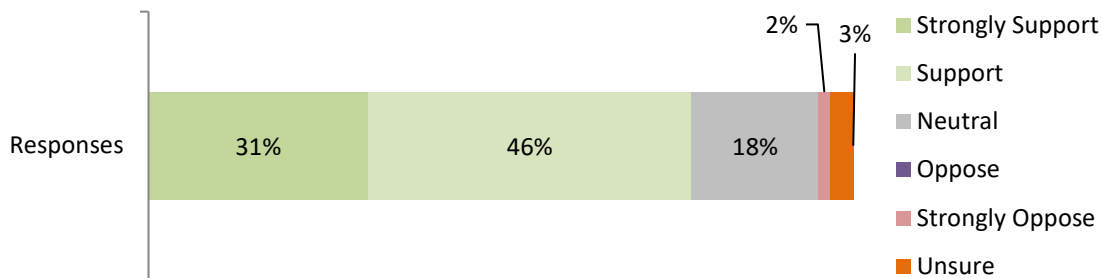
To what extent do you support the five goals?



Parks and trails working group

- The majority support the RDBN in creating a parks and trails working group (77%). However, it should be noted, 21% were neutral or unsure suggesting room for more feedback.

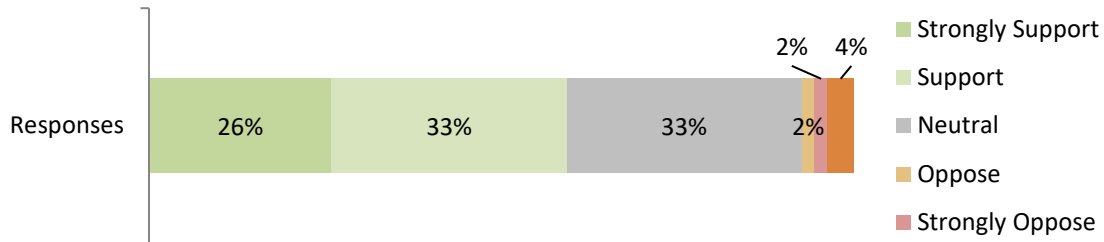
How supportive are you of the RDBN helping to form a parks and trails working group?



Park and Trails Priorities

- **Granisle and Topley Landing multi-use trail** – The majority of respondents (59%) support creating a new multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing and 33% feel neutral. With further engagement, the project has a strong potential to build even broader community support.
- **Expansion of trail networks** – Support was strong for both initiatives, with a slight preference for Nadina Mountain trail connection to the Owen Lake recreation site (52% ranked as their top priority) followed by developing a three-lake canoe route integrated with Old Man Lake Park (48% ranked as their top priority).
- **Outdoor recreation organization and land manager initiatives** – Respondents would like the RDBN to prioritize establishing a campground near the Mt. Harry Davis mountain biking trails with the Houston Mountain Bike Association (61% ranked as their top two priorities). Both enhancing the Houston Palisades Trail and improving Silverthorne Lake and the Morice Wilderness Area were equally prioritized (48% ranked as their top two priorities).
- **Provincial Recreation Site improvements** – Respondents prioritized upgrades at Owen Lake (26 votes), followed by Silverthorne Lake (24), Mt. Harry Davis (20), and the Aspen sites (19). They highlighted needs such as better signage and maps, improved accessibility, better access to the Morice River and Lamprey Creek, more trails and benches, and additional camping options, particularly at Mt. Harry Davis.
- **Dominion Telegraph Line trail** – The majority of respondents (60%) support creating a new trail following the historic Dominion Telegraph Line and 33% feel neutral or unsure, suggesting further distribution of information to build community support.

How supportive are you of the RDBN working with the Village of Granisle to explore the development of a multi-use trail between Granisle and Topley Landing?



Expanding trail networks and recreation opportunities requires collaboration across recreation service providers. The RDBN can work with land managers and outdoor recreation organizations, such as RSTBC, BC Parks, and Houston Hikers, to secure access to e

Collaborate to establish a trail connection from Nadina Mountain Park to the Owen Lake rec site to improve access to the climbing area and provide new hiking opportunities

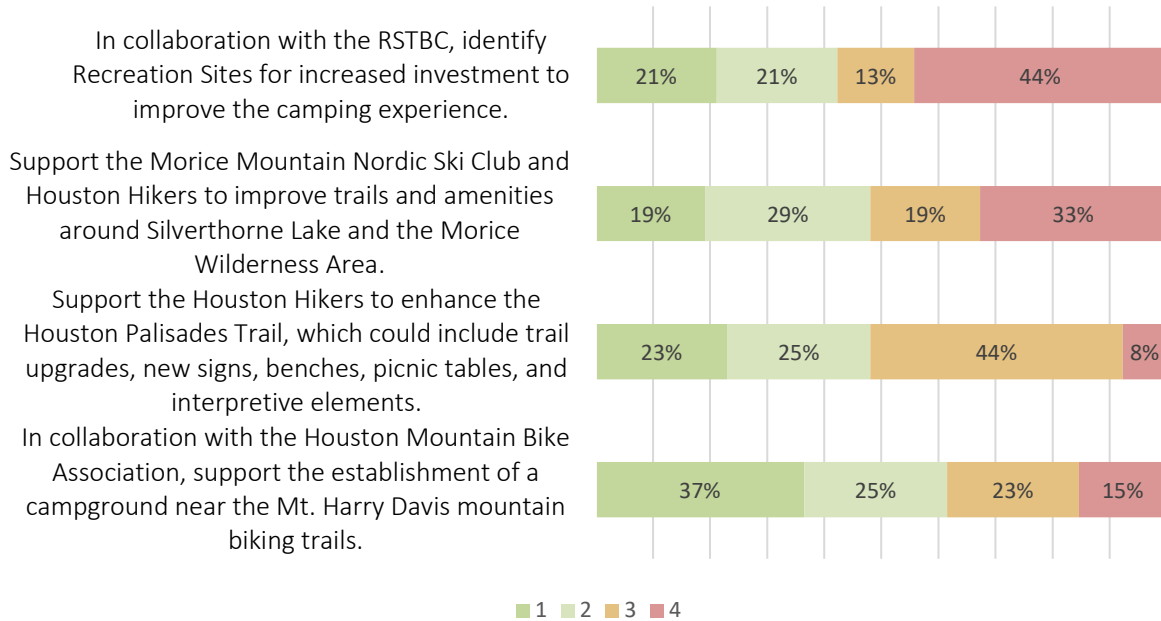


Collaborate to support the development of a three-lake canoe route integrated with Old Man Lake Park. The proposed route will connect Old Man, Swans, and Elwin Lakes by designated portages.

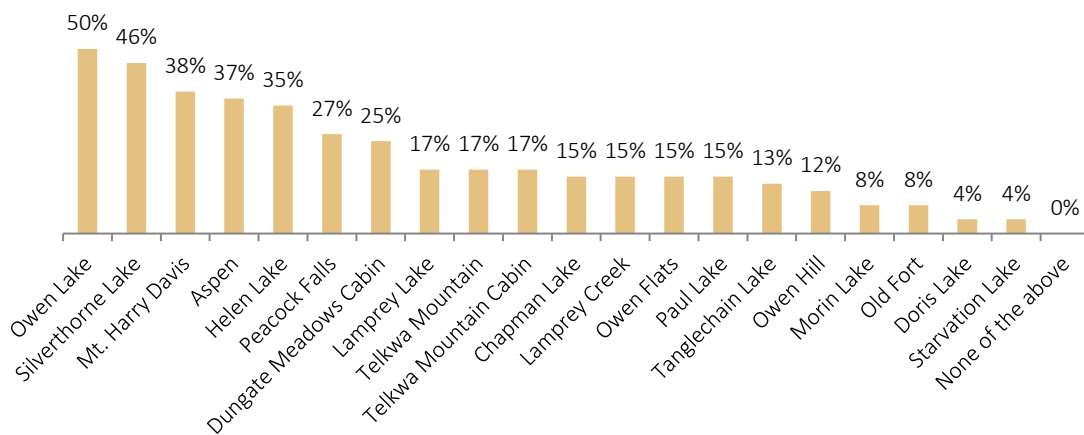


■ 1 ■ 2

The RDBN is aiming to support existing outdoor recreation organizations and land managers to enhance the user experience at existing park and trail locations. Which of the following initiatives are most important to you? Rank from highest priority to lowe



Which Provincial Recreation Sites in Area G would you like to see improved? Please select all the sites you'd like to prioritize and reference Figure 1 for locations.



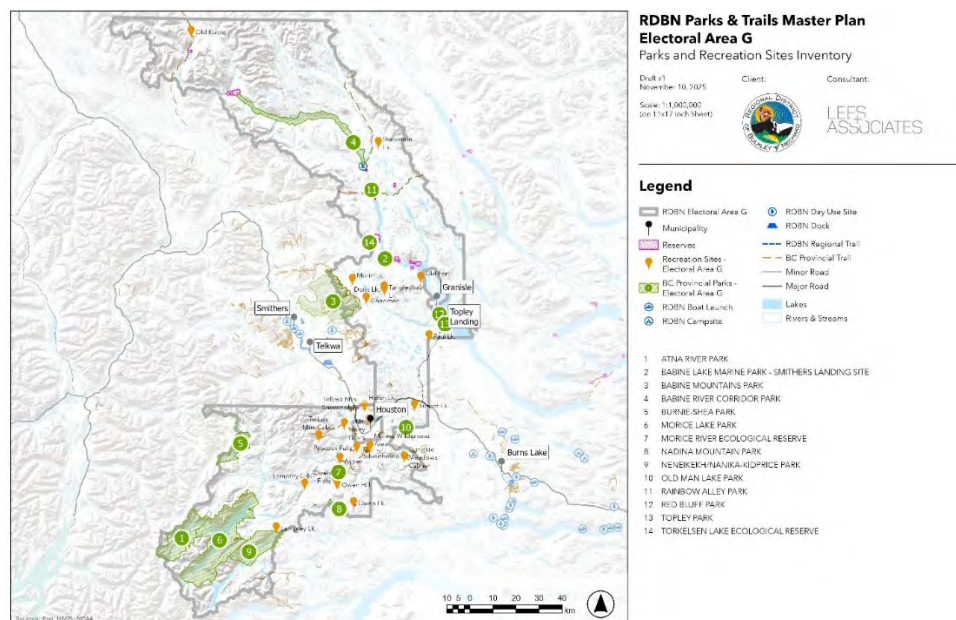
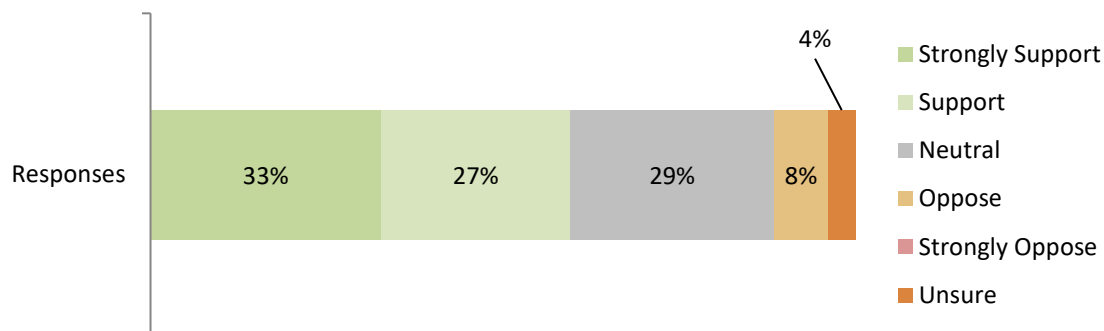


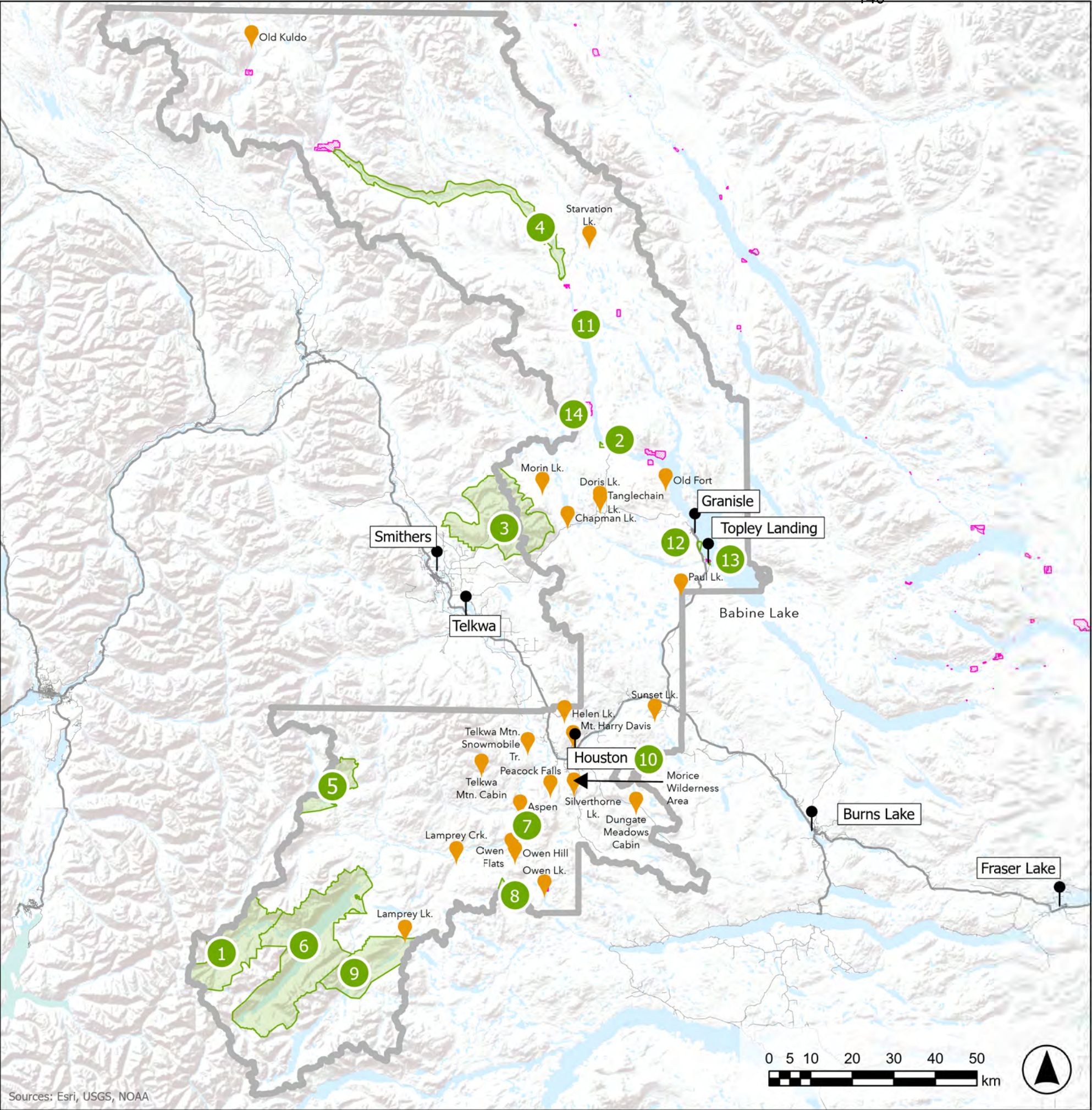
Figure 1

How supportive are you of the RDBN constructing a new trail based on the Dominion Telegraph Line ?



APPENDIX B

MAP



RDBN Parks & Trails Master Plan Electoral Area G

Parks and Recreation Sites Inventory

Final
June 2026

Client:

Consultant:

Scale: 1:1,000,000
(on 11x17 Inch Sheet)



LEES
ASSOCIATES

Legend

- RDBN Electoral Area G
- Reserves
- Recreation Sites - Electoral Area G
- BC Provincial Parks - Electoral Area G
- Lakes
- Rivers & Streams
- Municipality
- Major road
- Minor road

Note: There were no RDBN owned or managed parks, trails, or outdoor recreation amenities in Electoral Area G at the time of this plan.

BC Provincial Parks in Electoral Area G

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | ATNA RIVER PARK |
| 2 | BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - SMITHERS LANDING SITE |
| 3 | BABINE MOUNTAINS PARK |
| 4 | BABINE RIVER CORRIDOR PARK |
| 5 | BURNIE-SHEA PARK |
| 6 | MORICE LAKE PARK |
| 7 | MORICE RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE |
| 8 | NADINA MOUNTAIN PARK |
| 9 | NENEIKEKH/NANIKA-KIDPRICE PARK |
| 10 | OLD MAN LAKE PARK |
| 11 | RAINBOW ALLEY PARK |
| 12 | RED BLUFF PARK |
| 13 | TOPLEY PARK |
| 14 | TORKELSEN LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE |

APPENDIX C

PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY

Recreation Sites and Trails BC
Aspen
Bairnsfather Creek
Chapman Lake
Dungate Meadows Cabin
Dungate Meadows Trails
Doris Lake
Helen Lake
Lamprey Creek (Closed by the Province due to First Nations use)
Morin Lake
Mt. Harry Davis
Old Fort
Owen Flats
Owen Hill
Owen Lake
Paul Lake
Peacock Falls
Silverthorne Lake
Starvation Lake
Sunset Lake
Tanglechain Lake
Telkwa Mountain Trail
Telkwa Mountain Cabin

District of Houston
Avalon Park
By-Mac Park*
Four Seasons Park
Hagman Park
Irrigation Lake*
Jamie Baxter Park
Nadina Park
Northside Park
Northwood Picnic Site
Ruiter Heights Park
Steelhead Park
Duck Pond Walking Trails
Circle Pathway
Bulkley River/Buck Creek Junction
Buck Creek Drive

**Note: These two parks are located outside municipal boundaries, within Electoral Area G, but are operated by the municipality.*

Village of Granisle
Granisle Memorial Park
New Beach
Whiskey Jack Trail/Eagle Way Trail
Lakeshore trail/Beach Trail
Granisle Lions Club
Granisle Lions Beach Park

BC Parks
Atna River Park
Morice Lake Park
Neneikekh/Nanika-Kidprice Park
Red Bluff Park
Nadina Mountain Park
Old Man Lake Park
Topley Park
Burnie-Shea Park
Morice River Ecological Reserve
Babine River Corridor Park
Torkelsen Lake Ecological Reserve
Rainbow Alley Park
Long Island Conservancy
Wilkinson-Wright Bay Conservancy
Port Arthur Conservancy
Sanctuary Bay Conservancy
Bear Island Conservancy
North Spit Conservancy
Babine Lake Marine Park - Smithers Landing Site



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board receive the attached "Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)".

BACKGROUND

This report presents the "Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)" to the Board for consideration. The Plan is intended to serve as a long-term guiding document for the Regional District's provision of parks and trails services in Electoral Area C.

The Plan builds on the significant contributions of existing parks and recreation providers, including the District of Fort St. James, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), and local recreation organizations. Electoral Area C has a strong foundation of outdoor recreation opportunities, including four-season trail networks, lake and river access, camping opportunities, and recreation amenities supported by community organizations and volunteers.

In May 2025, Lees and Associates were awarded the contract to develop the plan. The consultant developed the Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) concurrently with the Electoral Area C plan, which allowed for project efficiencies and cost savings. Both plans are now completed and ready for consideration by the Board.

The project was funded by the Northern Capital Planning Grant and came in on budget.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a strategy and action plan for recreation, parks and trails in Electoral Area C which builds on the successes of existing outdoor recreation service providers, identifies the role of the Regional District in providing new and improved outdoor recreation services, and establishes a priority list of projects and tasks to be undertaken to meet community recreation needs over the next ten years.

The Plan was developed through a five-phase process from June 2025 through June 2026. The process included a review of existing parks and trails, engagement with stakeholders and the public, development of a draft plan, a second round of engagement, and refinement of the final Plan. Engagement included outreach to First Nations, community organizations, the District of Fort St. James, government agencies, recreation groups, and the public through interviews, meetings, online surveys, community events, and virtual engagement opportunities. The Plan's Appendix A – "What We Heard Report" outlines the engagement strategy and details the input received.

The key priorities identified by the community include new trail connections, improved amenities, better information and signage, opportunities to expand lake access, enhance existing trails and connections, and strengthen partnerships. Challenges identified included limited volunteer capacity, access to funding and resources, the need for improved trail information, safe walking and cycling connections, and concerns related to wildfire risk.

The Plan presents the following vision statement that supports the identified key priorities:

Over the next 10 years, the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area C will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** *The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and outdoor recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experiences for all users.*
- **Support the Creation of Safe Connections.** *The parks and trails system in Electoral Area C will support connections between rural residents and Fort St. James, as well as connections to parks and key recreation destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.*
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** *The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and well-being for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by building and maintaining new infrastructure, as well as the creation of new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.*
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty.** *The parks and trails system will facilitate access to lakes, shorelines, unique natural areas, historic sites and trails, and important community destinations. The parks and trails system will protect and enhance the rich ecosystems of the region, preserving opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation of native flora and fauna for future generations.*

The following five goals that support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trails were identified:

Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the Parks and Trails Service in Electoral Area C

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity

Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation

Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails

Goal 5: Support active transportation and a connected community

Section 6 of the Plan identifies recommendations to support these goals, including actions related to developing partnerships, improving recreation access, supporting community organizations, enhancing trail information and signage, improving connections between recreation destinations, and working with other agencies to improve existing recreation assets.

The implementation plan in Section 7 identifies the recommendations along with their priority levels, timelines, resource requirements, and responsible partners. Implementation will occur incrementally as resources allow and may depend on partnerships, regulatory approvals, and external funding opportunities. The Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates support for the overall direction of the Plan but does not indicate a commitment regarding implementation of any aspect of the plan.

The Master Plan is intended to serve as a resource document for staff and the Board when developing annual work plans, prioritizing projects, pursuing funding opportunities and guiding future decisions for the Parks and Trails service in Electoral Area C.

ATTACHMENT:

RDBN Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

FOR ELECTORAL AREA C (Fort St. James Rural)



2026

The development of this plan was guided by input from the following individuals:

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Staff

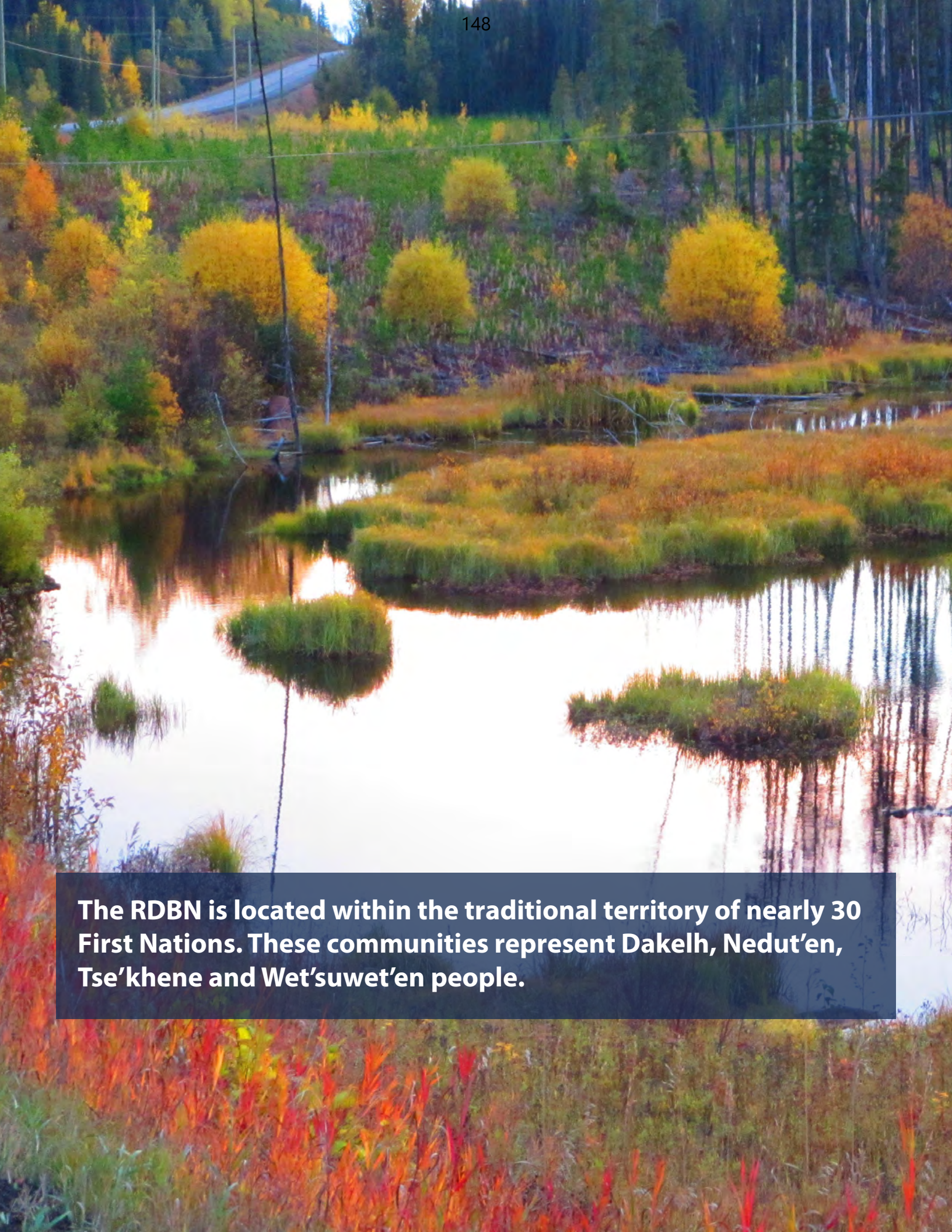
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services
Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services
Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator



The Consulting Team

LEES
+
ASSOCIATES

Thank you to those residents, members of the public, and stakeholders who shared their thoughts and ideas through the engagement process.



The RDBN is located within the traditional territory of nearly 30 First Nations. These communities represent Dakelh, Nedut'en, Tse'khene and Wet'suwet'en people.

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APPENDIX C – PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2020, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) established a vision for delivering outdoor recreation across the regional district, and subsequently created a Parks and Trails Service Area and a Recreation Contribution Grant Service Area for Electoral Area C - Fort St. James Rural, as well as three other service areas. This Parks and Trails Master Plan is the first step in implementing these services for Electoral Area C, providing a framework for investment over the next 10 years.

The Parks and Trails Master Plan (the Plan) was developed in five phases from June 2025 through June 2026. Initial phases focused on understanding the inventory of existing parks and trails provided by others and engaging with stakeholders and the public to understand values, gaps and challenges. This review showed a strong foundation of parks and trails provided by the District of Fort St. James, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and community organizations.

Across Electoral Area C, there are four-season trail networks for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ORV riding, as well as park amenities that support camping and access to lakes and rivers for swimming, fishing, and boating. Electoral Area C has a rich history of First Nations and settler heritage values, including the Fort St. James National Historic Site and the grease trails that are part of historic trade routes connecting from the Pacific Ocean to the interior.

Community-led outdoor recreation organizations have championed substantial initiatives, such as the Murray Ridge Ski Hill, going strong for nearly 50 years; the cross-country ski trails managed by the Stuart Lake Nordic Society; and the many kilometres of ORV trails south of town managed by the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club. Though their volunteer base is small, these organizations have made significant contributions to outdoor recreation opportunities through community organizing, fundraising, maintenance, and expansion projects.

Swimming, going to the lake, camping, hiking, and winter activities were the most popular among participants in the community survey. However, poor maintenance and a lack of information were mentioned as limiting the use of existing parks and trails. Engagement results showed that community priorities included new trail connections, improved amenities, and better information and signage, and revealed opportunities to expand lake access, enhance existing trails and connections, and strengthen partnerships.

Several challenges and gaps emerged, including limited volunteer capacity and challenges accessing funding and resources for ongoing maintenance and operations. There is unmet demand for safe and accessible walking and cycling connections, a need for better information about trails, and a growing concern around wildfire risks. One of the local trail networks used by the community for hiking and mountain biking, known as the Graveyard Trails, may not be secure in the long term without formalized planning and partnerships.

Combining the findings from the inventory and analysis, research on best practices, and community engagement, the Plan sets out an aspirational vision statement for parks and trails services and amenities over the next 10 years (2026-2036). The RDBN will contribute to parks and trails that build on community strengths, create safe connections, provide diverse and accessible recreation opportunities, and celebrate the region's natural beauty.

To help achieve the vision, a set of goals and recommendations was developed and is summarized on the following pages. The recommendations will be implemented incrementally as resources allow. Some initiatives will depend on external partnerships, regulatory approvals, and additional funding (i.e. grants). The Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.



VISION STATEMENT

Over the next 10 years, the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area C will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and outdoor recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experiences for all users.
- **Support the Creation of Safe Connections.** The parks and trails system in Electoral Area C will support connections between rural residents and Fort St. James, as well as connections to parks and key recreation destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities, leading to increased participation in outdoor activities, improved health and well-being for residents, and

enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by building and maintaining new infrastructure and creating new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.

- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty.** The parks and trails system will facilitate access to lakes, shorelines, unique natural areas, historic sites and trails, and important community destinations. The parks and trails system will protect and enhance the rich ecosystems of the region, preserving opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation of native flora and fauna for future generations.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Five goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trails. Each goal is linked to a set of action-oriented recommendations to enhance parks and trails in Electoral Area C across a 10-year period from 2026 to 2036.

- **Goal 1:** Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area C
- **Goal 2:** Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity
- **Goal 3:** Increase access to outdoor recreation
- **Goal 4:** Enhance the user experience at parks and trails
- **Goal 5:** Support active transportation and a connected community

A summary of the recommendations is provided on the following pages. Partnerships with other levels of government, First Nations, and community organizations will be critical to successful implementation. More information about resources required, partnerships, and collaboration is provided in the full Implementation Plan section of this report.

The Regional District Board's endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.

	Recommendation	Priority
Goal 1: Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the parks and trails service in Electoral Area C		
1.1	Continue to engage with other levels of government and community organizations to prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships, direct acquisition, and management.	High
1.2	Establish service levels and management plans for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas.	High

1.3	Consider adding staff to support the implementation of parks and trails projects across the RDBN's four parks and trails service areas.	Medium
1.4	Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements.	Medium
Goal 2: Strengthen Partnerships and Build Capacity		
2.1	Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.	High
2.2	Continue to implement the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that provides allocation of multi-year funding to recreation organizations.	High
2.3	Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN's capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations.	High
2.4	Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups actively engaged in maintaining parks and trails features within Electoral Area C.	High
Goal 3: Increase access to outdoor recreation		
3.1	Explore opportunities for the RDBN to support BC Parks in improving access to Mount Pope trails and improve key amenities.	Medium
3.2	Explore opportunities to improve year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road.	Medium
3.3	Explore the potential for developing a small, water-access rustic campsite with basic amenities and a natural shoreline boat landing on the north shore of Stuart Lake.	High
3.4	Explore opportunities to coordinate with the District of Fort St. James to further develop the Mount Dickenson Trail.	High

3.5	Support intergovernmental collaboration to formalize and improve the Graveyard Trails network.	Low
3.6	Explore opportunities to partner with First Nations communities, local recreation organizations, and tourism organizations to create a long-term, shared vision for the Grease Trail network.	Low
3.7	Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads.	High
Goal 4: Enhance the user experience at parks and trails		
4.1	Follow accessibility standards, such as the Universal Design Guide by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading parks and trails.	Medium
4.2	Lead the development of a cohesive mapping and information system for trail networks in the region. Update the RDBN's website to provide more information about trails.	High
4.3	Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.	Medium
4.4	Support enhancements to the provincial RSTBC trails southwest of town, including those maintained by the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club.	High
4.5	Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management.	Medium
Goal 5: Support active transportation and a connected community		
5.1	Advocate to the province to explore opportunities to connect communities and key recreation assets in Electoral Area C through the development of multi-use trails and pathways.	Dependent on proposed route

1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The RDBN encompasses the north-central region of British Columbia, with the majority of the Regional District's residents living in and around the communities along Highway 16, though settlements can be found across the region. The RDBN is home to 14 First Nations, with many others having identified Aboriginal rights or title. These nations have been stewards of the lands since time immemorial and continue to have significant cultural values and interests. The region includes rich agricultural lands, abundant rivers and lakes, as well as extensive forestry and mining opportunities that provide economic opportunities. Recreation opportunities, including fishing, hunting, and camping, are essential to enhancing both residents' and visitors' quality of life, while bolstering the local economy.

The RDBN's *Parks and Outdoor Recreation Study* (2020) identified the need for a regional parks and trails service to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation in the region's rural areas and address gaps in the recreation services provided by volunteer clubs, municipalities, Recreation Sites & Trails BC, and BC Parks. In response to the 2020 study, the RDBN initiated the creation of four Parks and Trails Service Areas including Smithers and Electoral Area A, Houston, Granisle and Electoral Area G, Burns Lake and Electoral Area B and Electoral Area E, and Fort St. James and Electoral Area C. The RDBN has also established four Recreation Contribution Service Areas that provide financial assistance to organizations offering recreational activities for residents and visitors. To facilitate the implementation of these services, the Regional District is developing Parks and Trails Master Plans for each service area. This plan is the first for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural).

1.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan builds on the progress made by municipalities, community groups, and other parks and trails managers in providing outdoor recreation experiences in Electoral Area C. The plan sets out a vision, goals, and specific recommendations to guide management of parks and trails in the region over the next 10 years.

1.1.2 PLANNING AREA

Dakelh, Nedut'en, and Tse'khene speaking peoples have resided upon the lands that include Electoral Area C since time immemorial. First Nations with reserve communities and Aboriginal rights or title in Electoral Area C include the Binche Whut'en, Nak'azdli Whut'en, Takla Nation, Tl'azt'en Nation, and Yekooche First Nations (Figure 1). The Stellat'en, Lheidli T'enneh, Saik'uz, McLeod Lake, Halfway River, West Moberly, Doig, Nadleh Whut'en, Tsay Keh Dene, and Lake Babine Nations have also identified Aboriginal rights or title in Electoral Area C.

The Parks and Trails Master Plan applies to Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural), located in the northeastern part of the RDBN. The area extends from Fort St. James and the Stuart River Valley in the southeast to the northern end of Takla Lake in the northwest. Electoral Area C surrounds the District of Fort St. James, the Electoral Area's only incorporated municipality and its main population centre. Most residents live in the Fort St. James area, with additional population in the First Nations communities of Binche and Yekooche on Stuart Lake, Takla on Takla Lake, and the unincorporated settlements of Germansen Landing and Manson Creek.

Similar to residents across the Bulkley-Nechako region, residents of Electoral Area C enjoy many opportunities for outdoor recreation in parks, trails, recreation sites, and Crown lands. The area's distance from Highway 16 contributes to its rural, independent lifestyle.

Electoral Area C has a population of 1,266 residents (2021). The area's numbers have decreased by 12% since 2016, similar to the decline in Fort St. James. The Electoral Area has a slightly higher proportion of seniors age 65 or older (22%) than the RDBN (18%) and British Columbia (20%). Electoral Area C has a similar proportion of youth aged 14 years or younger (13%) as British Columbia (14%), but a lower proportion than the RDBN (19%). Adjacent to Fort St. James is Nak'azdli's main reserve, Nak'azdli 1, which has a population of 528 residents. Youth make up 19% of the reserve's population, consistent with the RDBN average.

Roughly 18% of Electoral Area C residents reported some form of Indigenous identity. Only 35 residents identified as visible minorities, although the demographic is commonly underrepresented in census data.



Figure 1: First Nations communities in the Plan Area (Source: OCP 2024).



Figure 2: Electoral Area C Boundary.

1.2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 – Review of Relevant Background Materials

Phase 1 included background research, reviewing relevant regional strategies and bylaws, and mapping the existing inventory of parks and trails in the region.

Phase 2 - Community Engagement Round 1

Phase 2 included site visits, discussions with RDBN staff, and community engagement. This involved outreach to local First Nations, interviewing interest-holders, a public in-person pop-up event, and a public online survey. The sessions introduced the community to the project, asked about values and priorities, and identified challenges and opportunities regarding parks and trails in the region. Findings from engagement activities were summarized in a Draft Engagement Summary.

Phase 3 - Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan

Phase 3 involved developing the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan, including information gathered in the first two phases of the project and a draft vision, goals, and recommendations.

Phase 4 - Community Engagement Round 2

Phase 4 featured a second round of community engagement to report the draft Plan's findings back to the community and collect feedback on the draft vision, goals, and recommendations. Round two of engagement included a second online survey and a virtual open house. Engagement findings from both rounds of engagement were summarized in a final engagement report, found in Appendix A.

Phase 5 - Final Parks and Trails Plan

Phase 5 of the project incorporated feedback from round 2 of community engagement into the draft plan to develop the final Parks and Trails Master Plan. The final Plan was presented to the Regional District's Board of Directors.



Figure 3: The project timeline for the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

1.2.1 RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The Electoral Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan is informed by the following RDBN strategic documents.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

The RDBN's Strategic Plan outlines the vision, mission, and priorities of the Regional District as it plans for future community growth between 2022 and 2026. The Plan outlines four strategic focus areas: relationships with First Nations, advocacy with the Province, housing supply, and community and economic sustainability.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: Park and trail planning and development present opportunities to implement the Plan's recommendations for collaborating with First Nations on areas of mutual interest. They also serve as opportunities to act on the recommendation to provide services to First Nations communities. Additionally, outdoor recreation-based tourism could help advance the goal of economic diversification in Electoral Area C.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – 2020

This study was part of the groundwork that led to the development of the Parks and Trails Service. It reviewed community demand for outdoor recreation across the Regional District and surveyed outdoor recreation clubs that operate in the region. It also gives an overview of regional district park services across British Columbia and their service-delivery strategies. The study presents potential strategies for the RDBN to provide park and recreation services to residents in rural regions of the Regional District.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: This study established the vision for delivering outdoor recreation in the region, where volunteer-based clubs continue to play a vital role in providing recreation experiences, backed by support and collaboration from the Regional District.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan – 2024

The OCP identifies the values and aspirations of Electoral Area C's residents with respect to land use and development. It states objectives and policies to govern areas of different land-use designations and provides management guidelines for park and recreation lands.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Fort St. James Rural OCP emphasizes the protection of areas having significant environmental or recreational value, and recommends developing a Parks & Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C. The OCP supports the development of recreation access to lakes and rivers. The OCP also maps areas with potential for new parks and trails, and areas where development proponents should enhance recreation values.

Bulkley-Nechako Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee - Accessibility Plan – 2024

The Accessibility Plan identifies barriers that people living with accessibility concerns experience in the RDBN. The plan includes recommendations to promote a more accessible built environment, including in parks, trails, and outdoor public spaces.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Accessibility Plan recommends the design or upgrading of recreation infrastructure to adhere to standards set out in the BC Parks Universal Design Guide Front-Country Parks.

RDBN Value of Tourism Report – 2017

The report identifies the value of tourism for communities across the RDBN in accordance with Tourism BC's Value of Tourism Model. The report summarizes the benefits of tourism in the RDBN and includes an estimate of tourism spending in the region. The report also contains a review of local planning documents related to tourism.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The Report contains no specific recommendations relevant for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, but its findings demonstrate that infrastructure is in place to allow the RDBN to benefit from tourism, which is often driven by outdoor recreation in the region.

District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan – 2010

This Plan includes a vision and strategies to guide land use and development in Fort St. James. The plan includes objectives and policies on parks, trails, and open spaces. This includes a classification system of municipal parks as well as acquisition/suitability criteria for future parks. The plan emphasizes supporting the development of regionally significant recreation amenities to benefit residents and promote tourism. The plan also includes objectives and policies to guide the development of active transportation infrastructure.

Implications for the Parks and Trails Master Plan: The OCP recommends a downtown and community revitalization project, including signage, appearance beautification, and developing the lakeshore/bringing the lake into the forefront. In addition, the OCP proposes developing walking, hiking, and biking trails with historical information and boardwalks at key locations. The OCP also recommends establishing related community infrastructure, such as a swimming pool, an arts centre, and a skateboard park.

Parks and Trails Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1930, 2020

A bylaw to establish a parks and trails service for Fort St. James and Electoral Area C.

Implications for this Plan: This bylaw authorizes the RDBN to establish, operate, and promote parks and trails, thereby supporting the implementation of recommendations in this Plan related to creating new parks and trails.

1.2.2 ROLE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT

The role of the Regional Parks and Trails Service is to establish, manage, and promote parks and trails, and by extension, support healthy and active living, foster community bonds through recreation, and enable individuals to enjoy the natural environment. The RDBN intends to complement and coordinate with the overall network of parks and trails in the region but not duplicate the services of other agencies in fulfilling its mandate. The general role of the park and trails system is to provide opportunities for the public to access and enjoy significant destinations for a range of year-round outdoor recreational activities including hiking, biking, walking, boating, paddling, fishing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and swimming.

The RDBN implements a phased approach to developing parks and trails, focusing on providing access to day-use recreation areas, improving access to lakes and shorelines, and supporting the efforts of other government and community organizations to provide recreation services. Future phases of park and trail development are determined by the availability of resources, funding opportunities, and community priorities.

1.2.3 REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICES

In addition to the Parks and Trails Service and Recreation Contribution Service, the RDBN does the following:

- **Grants in Aid:** The RDBN provides grants to community organizations through an application process which is reviewed by the RDBN's Board. Grants may be used for cultural, charitable, sporting, recreational, service activities, and special events benefiting the community.
- **Canada Community Building Fund:** The RDBN administers funding. Local non-profit organizations can apply for support on a variety of community projects, including outdoor recreation capital projects.
- **Transfers to Partner Municipalities for Recreation Services:** The RDBN may collect property taxes from rural residents to contribute to the costs municipalities incur for recreation services. The RDBN does currently contribute to the Fort St. James arena.
- **Grant Writing Support:** The RDBN has an economic development team with proposal writers on staff with the ability to help non-profit organizations with the grant writing process.¹

¹ Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – June 2020

2 CURRENT PARKS & TRAIL SYSTEM



2.1 THE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

Parks and trails play a crucial role in the region and are greatly appreciated by the community for providing recreational opportunities that enhance health and wellness. Parks and trails serve as avenues for accessing nature, provide opportunities for outdoor activities, and protect open spaces for the benefit of future generations.

The RDBN is known for its many lakes and fishing opportunities, as well as abundant recreation sites, camping, and trail networks, particularly for motorized recreation, that weave through working forests and crown lands.

2.1.1 REGIONAL PLANNING

The RDBN Parks and Trails Service is administered by the Regional District's Planning Department. In each of the four service areas, planning staff are responsible for overseeing the development of the Parks and Trails Service, coordinating with provincial government and community recreation organizations, offering outdoor recreation services in the regional district, and administering capital projects and maintenance of parks and trails.

Each parks and trails service area has unique challenges and opportunities, as well as distinct outdoor recreation needs. A key challenge for the RDBN has been the question of how to balance resources and staff time between each service area. In 2025, 20% of staff time was dedicated to Fort St. James/Electoral Area C, with additional time allocated for 2025/2026 to develop and implement this plan. As parks and trails services in all areas grow, additional staff resources may be needed to address inequities.

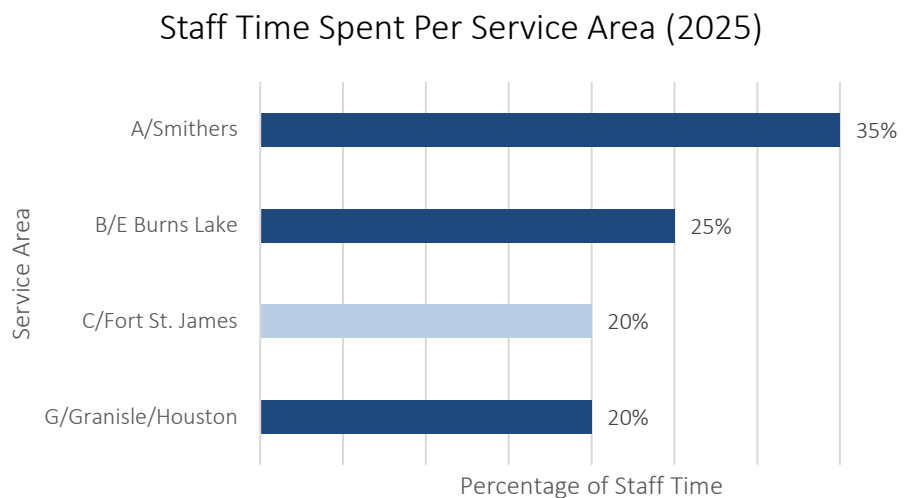


Figure 4: Percentage of Regional District staff time spent per service area in 2025.

2.1.2 PARKLAND ACQUISITION

The RDBN has the authority to establish and operate parks and recreation services as set out in *Part 10 of the Local Government Act*. The *Act* allows the RDBN to acquire land for parks and trails and pass regulatory bylaws with respect to managing those parks. With the RDBN's establishment of a parks function by bylaw, the following funding streams are the main sources of revenue:

- **Property Taxes:** Property taxes are the most common revenue stream to support the function of parks and recreation.
- **Canada Community Building Fund and other Senior Government Grants:** The RDBN has access to various government grant programs to fund parks and recreation infrastructure. Typically, programs do not provide funding for maintenance or operational costs.²

Although not currently in use or commonly available, the following additional tools can be used to generate revenue for parks and recreation services if opportunities arise:

- **Parkland or Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland at Time of Subdivision:** The *Act* gives the RDBN authority to require parkland dedication or cash in lieu of parkland dedication equivalent to the market value of 5% of the land at the time of subdivision.
- **Development Cost Charges (DCCs):** Through a Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw, the RDBN may charge developers a fee at the time of development. DCCs for parks can be used to acquire land for specific improvements, including for new trails and picnic areas.
- **Ecological gifts, bequests, life-estates, and land donations:** The RDBN has the authority to accept ecological gifts of land which can be a considerable tax benefit to a donor to have a land donation recognized as having "ecological significance" by Revenue Canada.

In all service areas, there will be a separate **Parkland Reserve Fund**. Revenue collected in each service area will be used to cover the expenses for the capital, operational, and administrative aspects of the parks and trails service.

² Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Parks & Outdoor Recreation Study – June 2020

2.1.3 OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

Various levels of government, contractors, and recreation organizations play a significant role in parks and recreation in the planning area. Outdoor recreation service providers include:

- **BC Parks** – BC Parks manages provincial lands including parks, protected areas, conservancies, and ecological reserves. Some land is undeveloped and designated as park lands, while other managed areas include camping, trails, and boat launches.
- **Parks Canada** – Parks Canada owns and operates the National Historic Site at Fort St. James. The site includes a collection of wooden buildings and interpretive features restored to the fur trade era, and staff host events during the summer months.
- **District of Fort St. James** – Fort St. James owns and manages municipal parks, trails, and sidewalks within the District boundaries, supporting community organizations and public users of parks and trails.
- **First Nations** – First Nations in the region are important partners and land stewards, with Aboriginal title and rights that inform the planning, management, and provision of parks, trails, and recreation opportunities on reserve lands and within their traditional territories.
- **Private Businesses** – Private businesses related to parks and trails include commercial campgrounds, marinas, shuttle and water taxi services, guiding and charter services, backcountry outfitters, lodging and restaurants. This plan focused on enhancing recreation that will complement these services, enhancing the overall economic opportunities for the Electoral Area.
- **Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC)** – In Area C, the RSTBC manages recreation sites and trails on backcountry Crown Land. The sites include various amenities including campgrounds, day use areas, and washrooms.
- **Recreation organizations** – Recreation organizations operate and maintain trails on Crown and community forest land. Organizations include the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and the Stuart Lake Nordic Society.

2.2 PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY

The following section provides an inventory of parks and trails within the service area, focusing on those provided by other service providers as the RDBN does not currently own, manage, or operate parks and trails. A comprehensive inventory of parks and trails in Electoral Area C enables the RDBN to bridge existing gaps in the parks and trails system and identify opportunities to expand service offerings. A map of the parks and trails are provided in Appendix B. A full parks and trails inventory list can be found in Appendix C.

2.2.1 RDBN PARKS AND TRAILS IN ELECTORAL AREA C

The Regional District cooperates with other recreation service providers to support the delivery of parks and trails within the area. The main support mechanism is through the recreation contribution grant, which provides multi-year funding to outdoor recreation organizations. The 2024-2026 funding cycle included approved funding to support operational costs for organizations such as the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and the Stuart Lake Nordic Society.

2.2.2 OTHER PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEMS

District of Fort St. James

The District of Fort St. James owns and manages municipal parks, trails, and sidewalks within the District boundaries, supporting community organizations and public users of parks and trails. There are five (5) municipal parks, including a waterfront park and marina, municipal campground, splash park and sport fields, playground, and a plaza, highlighted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Municipal parks and park amenities owned and managed by the District of Fort St. James.

Municipal park	Park amenities
Cottonwood Park & Cottonwood Marina	Beach; beach volleyball; washrooms; change rooms; band stand; covered picnic area; playground; small campground; boat launch; boat moorage; free Wi-Fi
Municipal Campground (within Cottonwood Park)	50 amp power at 4 waterfront sites; 30 amp power at Lakeshore Drive sites; water hook-ups; sani-stations
Goodwin Park	Playground; tennis courts; splash park; playing field; washroom; paved walking trail, basketball court, pickleball court
Rotary Kiddie Park	Playground; picnic tables
Spirit Square Park	Plaza; war memorial; botanical garden; monument to Johan Pitka

Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC)

RSTBC, contractors, and partner recreation organizations, including the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club and Stuart Lake Nordic Society, are responsible for the operation and maintenance of recreation sites and trails on Crown and community forest lands. 26 RSTBC recreation sites and 586 kilometers of RSTBC trails are located in Electoral Area C, highlighted in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: RSTBC managed sites in RDBN C.

RSTBC Site Name
Ahdatay
Battleship Bay
Camp Lake
Camsell Lake
Chuchi Lake North
Chuchi Lake Point
Cripple (Nendatoo) Lake
Dem Lake
Dolphin Lake
Grassham Lake
Inzana Lake
Kalder Lake
Kloch Lake
Manson Lake
Philip Creek
Philip Lake South
Robinson Lake
Sakeniche Crossing
Sarah Point
Skunk Lake
Takatoot Lake
Tchentlo Hot Springs
Tezzeron Lake
Tsilcoh Falls
Whitefish Bay
Wolverine Lake

Table 3: RSTBC managed trails in RDBN C.

RSTBC Trail Name
Duzcho Grease Trail
Fort St. James Snowmobile Trail South
Fraser Lake-Stuart Lake Trail
Island Lake Trail
Kazcheck Falls Trail
Murray Ridge Trail
Shass Mountain Trail

BC Parks

BC Parks is responsible for the management of provincial lands including parks, protected areas, conservancies, and ecological reserves (Table 4). Most lands are undeveloped designated park lands that protect important habitats, lakes, and waterways. There are three main accessible parks with amenities that support outdoor recreation including:

- **Paarens Beach Park**, located 11 km from Fort St. James on the south side of Stuart Lake, is a full-service campground with 39 campsites and a day-use area. The park day use area includes a paved boat launch, a long beach along the lake, and a playground. Activities include boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and enjoying nature in a beautiful setting.
- **Sowchea Bay Park**, located 20km from Fort St. James on the south side of Stuart Lake, is a former forestry campground. The 30 small-vehicle campsites are rustic, with hand-pump water taps and pit toilets and half of the sites are lake-front. Lake access is via a single-lane gravel boat launch, and parking limitations limit day-use.
- **Mount Pope Park** is a highly valued park close to Fort St. James with a rock climbing area, caves, and hiking trails. A network of mountain biking trails traverse in and out of the parklands and adjacent private properties known as the **Graveyard Trails**, named such because they are an access point from Fort St. James and an adjacent cemetery.

Other scenic and ecologically rich BC Parks lands are remote and difficult to access. While there is potential for more outdoor recreation, there are no immediate plans for additional amenities. Two other BC Parks systems are worth noting due to their abundance of rivers and lakes including:

- **Nation Lakes Chain** offers a 120 kilometre route to canoeists through four spectacular lakes of Tsayta, Indata, Tchentlo, and Chuchi. The route was established in 2004 as a result of the Fort St. James Land and Resource Management Plan. There are four road locations for canoe access and eight backcountry, water-access provincial campgrounds. There are two commercial lodges, one on the south side of Tchentlo Lake and one on the east end of Chuchi Lake. A private work camp is located on the north end of Tsayta Lake.
- **Stuart-Trembleur-Takla Lake boating system**, has 630 kilometres of lakeshore with a series of small parks with protected anchorages and beaches, but no facilities.

Parks Canada – National Historic Site

Parks Canada owns and operates the Fort St. James National Historic Site located in the heart of the District of Fort St. James. The Fort is open during the summer months and has historic recreations of buildings and interpretive programs focused on the fur trade era of the late 1800's. The Fort is a significant tourist draw and offers open space, beachfront access on Stuart Lake, and a large dock.

Table 4: BC Parks and amenities in Electoral Area C.

BC Park	Park area	Front country camping	Boat launch (motorized)	Trail	Day use area
Mount Pope Park	2,037			✓	
Paarens Beach Park	50	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sowchea Bay Park	13	✓	✓	✓	✓
TOTAL Parkland	2,100				
Babine Lake Marine Park – Hook (Deep Bay) Site	179				
Babine Lake Marine Park – Sandpoint Site	55				
Mount Blanchet Park	24,774				
Mudzenchoot Park	644				
Nation Lakes Park	19,398				
Omineca Park	132,417				
Omineca Protected Area	1,773				
Rubyrock Lake Park	41,221				
Stuart Lake Marine Park	227				
Stuart Lake Park	343				
Stuart River Park	20,948				
Sutherland River Park	13,559				
Sutherland River Protected Area	4,835				
Takla Lake Ecological Reserve	240				
Takla Lake Marine Park	550				
Trembleur Lake Park	57				
Total (wilderness/unimproved)	261,220				

2.3 OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The following section provides a snapshot of the outdoor recreation services provided in Electoral Area C to identify gaps and potential opportunities for the RDBN in the planning area. The section summarizes parks and outdoor recreation amenities and services in all four parks and trails service areas in the RDBN.

2.3.1 COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE AREAS

Gaining insights into the provision of parkland and outdoor recreation amenities in each of the RDBN's parks and trails service areas will empower the RDBN to make informed decisions about the specific services and amenities required in each area. Table 5 below provides the number of parks and recreation sites by service area managed by the RDBN, BC Parks, municipalities, and RSTBC.

Electoral Area C has the second-highest number of recreation sites compared to other service areas in the RDBN, however, sites are predominantly rustic with limited amenities, are user-maintained, and may be difficult to access. The supply of provincial parks in Area C is similar to other electoral areas. There are three popular provincial parks in the Fort St. James area, including Mount Pope, Paarens Beach, and Sowchea Bay Parks. Most remaining provincial parks are unimproved, backcountry, or water-access only.

Table 5: Number of RDBN parks, provincial parks, municipal parks, and recreation sites by service area.

Service Areas in the RDBN	RDBN Parks	Provincial Parks	Municipal Parks	Recreation Sites (RSTBC)
Village of Burns Lake and Electoral Area B, and Electoral Area E	2	10	13	35
Town of Smithers and Electoral Area A	2	3	21	21
District of Fort St. James and Electoral Area C	0 ³	9	7	26
District of Houston, Village of Granisle, and Electoral Area G	0 ³	11	19	21

³ As of 2026, RDBN Parks service in Electoral Area C and G is new and no parks have been established.

2.3.2 SUMMARY OF ELECTORAL AREA C OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Table 6 below summarizes amenities provided by outdoor recreation service providers including government entities, land managers, and outdoor recreation organizations. Electoral Area C has abundant winter activities, including cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and snowmobiling. Winter opportunities are managed and maintained by community recreation organizations and occur primarily on Crown lands authorized by RSTBC.

Warmer season activities include full-service and rustic camping, rock climbing, swimming and boating at Stuart Lake, and off-road vehicle (ORV) riding. Mount Pope Provincial Park offers hiking opportunities, and Fort St. James provides walking paths. A few winter trails are also used in the summer for hiking and biking. While many recreation opportunities exist, main barriers include accessibility challenges, a lack of consistent maintenance, a declining volunteer base, and limited information and signage.

Table 6: Outdoor recreation activities by outdoor recreation service provider.

Outdoor Recreation Service Providers	Campgrounds	Walking/ Hiking / Biking Trails	Skiing / Snowshoeing Trails	ATV / Snowmobiling Trails	Beach Access/ Beaches	Boat Launches	Outdoor event space/ Fair Grounds
RDBN							
District of Fort St. James	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
BC Parks	✓	✓			✓	✓	
RSTBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Community Recreation Organizations		✓	✓	✓			✓
Community Forest		✓		✓			✓
Total Activities	3	5	2	3	3	2	3

2.4 PARKLAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Parkland Needs Assessment identifies gaps and opportunities within the parks and trails system found during the planning process. A benchmarking exercise was also conducted, comparing the provision of parkland to other similar communities in BC.

Defining adequate supply of parkland depends on the values, desires, and needs of the community. Metrics commonly used to gauge the adequacy of parkland include a comparison across regions, assessing area of parkland per capita, and evaluating parkland distribution, and ease of access. The following section analyzes parkland per capita to understand inventory and distribution needs.

2.4.1 PARKLAND PER CAPITA ANALYSIS

Parkland area and population estimates were used to determine the amount of regional district parkland in Electoral Area C per 1,000 residents. Since the establishment of the Parks and Trails Service in 2020, the RDBN has acquired approximately 43.5 hectares of parkland, resulting in an average of 1.2 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents. The RDBN has a below-average supply of parkland compared to similar regional districts. However, as the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service is newly established and anticipated to change the parkland provision over the next 10 years.

To meet the average parkland provision of 2.8 hectares/ 1,000 residents, an additional 62.16 hectares are required throughout the RDBN. **Proportionally, Electoral Area C would need three to four additional hectares to meet this target.**

Table 7: RDBN parkland supply compared to similar Regional Districts in BC.

Regional District	Population (2021)	Total Area of Regional Parks (ha)	Parkland (ha) per 1,000 people
Bulkley-Nechako	37,737	43.5	1.2
Thompson-Nicola	143,680	67	0.5
Peace River	61,532	72	1.2
Central Kootenay	62,509	86	1.4
East Kootenay	65,896	254	3.9
Fraser Fort-George	96,979	330	3.4
Central Okanagan	222,162	2,020	9.1
Average			2.8

3 COMMUNITY PROFILE



3.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The RDBN's regional context includes rich agricultural lands, rivers, and abundant lakes, as well as extensive resource lands providing economic opportunities through forestry and mining operations. Popular recreation opportunities with tourists include fishing, hunting and camping which diversify the economy and benefit people's well-being and quality of life. Electoral Area C is home to sizable provincial parks, primarily established to protect critical fish and ungulate habitat. The region sees short, mild summers and cold winters, with average daily temperatures below 0°C for five months of the year where snowfall averages more than 170 centimeters annually.

Developing a community profile for RDBN's Electoral Area C is an important step towards understanding the community's present and future needs for parks and recreation. As of 2021, the service area had a total population of 1,266 accounting for approximately 3.4% of the population of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The service area's primary population center is the District of Fort St. James. As of 2021, the District of Fort St. James had a total population of 1,386, accounting for approximately 3.7% of the population of the RDBN. Within Electoral Area C, an estimated 1,379 people live on reserve, comprising 3.7% of the total population, with Nak'azdli 1 as the largest reserve.

Although 2021 Statistics Canada Census data reports a decline in population between 2016 and 2021, the Regional District and District of Fort St. James note that the value may be inaccurate and believe the population is relatively unchanged.

Looking ahead, BC Stats reported the population is expected to remain stable over the next 20 years (BC Statistics). Most population growth is expected to occur among people age 45 years and older (Regional District of Bulkley Nechako).

Table 8: Population by area in the RDBN (Based on the 2021 Canadian census).

Community area in the RDBN	2021 Census population	Population Density (per km ²)	Percentage of census population within the RDBN
RDBN	37,737	0.5	100%
Electoral Area C	1,266	0.05	3.4%
District of Fort St. James	1,386	59.1	3.7%
Nak'azdli 1	528	170.9	1.4%
Yekooche 3	90	45.2	0.2%
North Takla Lake (Takla Lake FN)	243	248	0.6%
Tache 1 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	400	44.5	1.1%
Binche 2 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	118	25.5	0.3%

Population growth, age distribution, and household incomes are pivotal demographic factors shaping the recommendations in this Master Plan. The 2021 Statistics Canada Census Reports unveil key characteristics about the service areas presented below.

- **Average Age** - Electoral Area C has an average age of 46.1, slightly higher than the RDBN (41.1) and BC (43.1).
- **Household Income** - In 2020, the median after-tax annual household income in Electoral Area C was \$67,500, slightly less than British Columbia and RDBN (both at \$85,000).
- **Population of youth** - 13% of the population within Electoral Area C consists of youth aged 0-14, slightly less than BC (15%) and the RDBN (18.9%).

The parks and trail system will need to adapt to accommodate future populations of Electoral Area C and ensure a diversity of recreation opportunities are provided. A robust parks and trails system is important for attracting and retaining families, particularly within the context of maintaining a stable, yet aging population. Section six provides recommendations and actions to improve park and trail accessibility and the overall user experience.

3.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.2.1 PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The volunteer community in Electoral Area C includes an extensive network of community organizations and sport/interest groups who are engaged in the provision of recreation opportunities. Understanding the community's vision and goals for local parks and recreation is critical to the success of the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Through two phases of community engagement, significant challenges, opportunities, and priorities were identified and guide recommendations.

3.2.2 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The RDBN invited fifteen First Nations with consultation areas in Electoral Area C to participate in individual rights holder meetings, as well as extending the invitation to participate in the public event and online surveys. There have been no requests for meetings to date.

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes protecting culturally significant areas within the parks system. All further input will be integrated into the decision-making process.

3.2.3 WHAT WE DID

The first round of community engagement, held in summer 2025, asked stakeholders, potential partners, and the public how they use parks and recreation facilities and programs within Electoral Area C. Feedback informed the vision and goals presented in the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan and identified opportunities for the parks and trails system.

The second round of engagement, held in early 2026, shared the results from the first round of engagement and asked the community for feedback on draft vision, goals, and recommendations, informing the final Parks and Trails Master Plan.

3.2.4 WHO WE HEARD

Public consultation activities and participation numbers in both rounds of engagement included:

- 183 participants in two online surveys
- Nine (9) participants in community workshops
- Four (4) participants in a virtual open house
- One (1) in-person pop-up event at the Fort St. James Night Market

3.2.5 COMMUNITY VALUES

In the first round of engagement, the community was asked what recreation opportunities they value and how they currently use parks and trails within RDBN Electoral Area C. The following are key findings informing the Parks and Trails Master Plan. Further results from the first round of engagement can be found in Appendix A.

- **Trail use** – More than three quarters of respondents use trails at least on a weekly basis, most commonly for hiking, walking for exercise, or dog walking. Winter activities are also popular and for children, the most popular activities are hiking, ATV/snowmobiling, cycling, dog walking, and mountain biking.
- **Diverse recreation opportunities** – The most popular outdoor recreation activities were water-based including swimming and visiting lakes and beaches. Children most commonly went camping, swimming/going to the lake, and downhill skiing. Respondents also particularly valued camping, fishing, kayaking, and canoeing.
- **Barriers to park and trail access** – Roughly one-third of respondents do not face barriers to accessing parks and trails within the Service Area. Those who did most commonly listed barriers including poor maintenance, limited time, and a lack of information.
- **Key trail destinations** – Mount Pope was overwhelmingly the most commonly mentioned destination. Stuart River, Murray Ridge, and Sowchea Bay were also popular mentions.
- **Parks and trail planning priorities** – Respondents would like to see the RDBN prioritize the creation and management of a new trails network over the next ten years. They would also like to prioritize the creation of connections between communities and key destinations.
- **Recreation priorities** - They would also like to see more opportunities to be active, specifically hiking and walking as a main priority which could include improved trail signage identified as a priority.

3.2.6 KEY FINDINGS

Key themes were identified across engagement activities through both rounds of engagement, informing the vision, goals, and recommendations. The following challenges, opportunities, and priorities shared are provided in the following section.

Challenges

- **Volunteer capacity** – A small volunteer base, an aging group of volunteers, and informal maintenance practices limit regular maintenance, increase concerns with risk and liability, and minimize opportunities to secure trail access across private lands.
- **Safety on roads** - A lack of safe and accessible walking and cycling connections in and around Fort St. James trails is of particular concern along busy roadways.
- **Resource access** - Difficulties accessing resources from other levels of government outside of the RDBN and a lack of information limit ongoing trail maintenance.
- **Wildfire risk** - A growing risk of wildfire continues to place pressures on existing recreation areas.

Opportunities

- **Trail networks** - Formalizing and improving existing trail networks, particularly the Graveyard Trails and ensuring access as development occurs nearby.
- **Trail connections** - Establishing a continuous trail connection from Sowchea Bay Road to Fort St. James and onward to the Graveyard Trails and Mount Pope Provincial Park.
- **Winter access** - Providing additional winter trail access to expand cross-country skiing opportunities, especially closer to town.
- **Lake access** - Increasing access to lakes by improving boat launches and parking.
- **Accessible trails** - Improving trail accessibility, wayfinding, signage and comfort amenities across existing trails.
- **Funding** - Securing funding to support existing and new local recreation organizations.
- **New organizations** - Forming a hiking or biking organization.
- **Working group** - Establishing a Parks and Trails working group.

Priorities

- **Trail improvement** - Creating and managing new trails, including creating mountain biking trails and upgrading existing routes. This includes joining McLeod Lake and Nak'adzli to improve the Grease Trail.
- **Local First Nations** - Acknowledging and prioritizing local First Nations in the overall vision of the Parks and Trails Master Plan and ensuring their meaningful involvement in the establishment of a Parks and Trails working group.
- **Safe connections** - Developing safer connections between communities and key destinations.
- **Additional land** - Acquiring new land for regional parks to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Recreation opportunities** - Expanding opportunities for year-round recreation and nature opportunities.
- **Recreation access** - Improving access to beaches, the Mount Pope trails, the T-caves climbing area, and year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road.
- **New amenities** - Adding supporting amenities including pit toilets, improved signage, and accessible trail upgrades, to support tourism opportunities.

4 BENEFITS & TRENDS



4.1 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section presents benefits of parks and trails, including improvements to health and well-being, advancement in reconciliation, strengthening local ecosystems and the environment, and providing economic growth and tourism opportunities.

Health and well-being

Spending time in nature and participating in outdoor recreation reduces stress and promotes social connections. In 2023, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC⁴ conducted a survey on outdoor recreation participation, emphasizing the importance across British Columbia. The survey highlighted the significance of outdoor recreation for creating positive social connections and preserving mental well-being during the winter in the RDBN. The Stuart Lake Nordic Society and Fort St. James Snowmobile Club are two examples of organizations that spend considerable time and energy to provide winter recreation opportunities in the community.



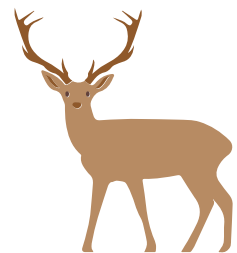
Reconciliation

There is an increasing imperative to understand the pre-colonial settlement history of British Columbia and to gain greater awareness and consideration of Indigenous cultures. Initiatives such as naming parks and trails in partnership with Indigenous communities and incorporating Indigenous stories and histories have become best practices. Engaging with First Nations communities and incorporating their values and needs in parks and trails is a very important step that land managers can take towards Reconciliation. Consideration is also needed when establishing parks or amenities to protect archaeological and other culturally important areas, and making sure access is maintained for hunting, fishing, gathering, and ceremony.



Environmental

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), parks and trails serve a vital role in conserving natural resources, providing wildlife habitat, safeguarding air and water quality, offsetting carbon emissions, and preserving open spaces for future generations. Engaging in stewardship and participating in volunteer activities within parks allows the public to actively contribute to protecting these spaces for the future while also increasing awareness of environmental issues at both local and global levels.



⁴ Lopez, X.D. (2023). The Impacts of Outdoor Recreation in Rural B.C. Communities. Outdoor Recreation Council of BC.

In the RDBN, parks can play a significant role in safeguarding essential ecosystems and natural features, such as rivers, lakes, spawning areas, and marshes. Moreover, they can serve as habitats for a diverse range of wildlife.

Tourism

This region's natural attractions are becoming increasingly popular with tourists seeking outdoor activities in rural areas. In particular, the area is known for the abundant lakes and rivers, offering boating and fishing opportunities. Camping and other recreation activities are promoted through various organizations and outlets, such as Destination BC, which could increase interest in parks and trails in the area. Tourism brings economic benefits by supporting outdoor recreation guides and outfitters, as well as restaurants, hotels, and other services. A cohesive set of information and resources on the wide variety of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities could include maps, brochures, and links to additional resources. Planning for variation in the tourism sector is also important, as tourism can be affected by wildfires and weather.



Economic

Parks and trails encourage people to get outside and move, contributing to long-term reductions in healthcare costs associated with the health burden of physical inactivity and associated chronic diseases. Research suggests that even a 10% increase in physical activity rates among Canadians could lead to a substantial \$150 million reduction in direct healthcare costs⁵.

Regional district parks and trails serve as attractive destinations for both visitors and residents. The infrastructure of these parks and trails provides opportunities to generate revenue through venue rentals, events, educational programs, and interpretive activities. A 2020 study reveals that outdoor recreation in British Columbia contributes over 15 billion dollars in economic value to the residents of the province each year⁶.



⁵ Katzmarzyk, P.T. *The economic burden of physical inactivity in Canada*. 2000, November 28. Canadian Medical Association Journal, pp. 163(11):1435-40.

⁶ Smith, Patrick Lloyd. *The Economic Benefits of Recreation in Canada*. 2020, August 25. Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics, University of Saskatchewan. <https://plloydsmith.github.io/files/LloydSmith_RecCJE.pdf>

4.2 TRENDS OF PARKS AND TRAILS

The following section examines key trends shaping parks and trails in Area C, including climate change, communication and wayfinding, recreation, accessibility, park use, and volunteer capacity.

Climate Change

Northern BC is experiencing the effects of climate change, including increased wildfire risk, extreme weather events, changes in snowfall and frost-free days, more severe rainfall events, and other impacts on residents' health and community infrastructure. Climate change will be top of mind for future park endeavours, including operational practices, maintenance considerations and park acquisition. On the flip side, parks can enhance climate resilience by serving as respite in hot weather, protecting important natural areas such as wetlands and lakeshores, and incorporating FireSmart principles to ensure community preparedness for wildfires.



Wayfinding

Communicating with park and trail users is an important component to creating a vibrant tourism sector, as well as making residents aware of the opportunities in the community. Wayfinding and interpretation make it easier to find and take advantage of the abundant opportunities, while also connecting people to place and telling the story of the area's natural and cultural values. Interpretive programs, signage, and wayfinding resources help park visitors learn about the area they are exploring, providing a more profound and meaningful experience beyond just being present in the space.



Recreation

Activities such as fishing, mountain biking, cycling for recreation, canoeing, horseback riding, motorized trail use, walking and hiking continue to increase in popularity – highlighting the importance of planning and managing for diverse use and potential conflicts associated with shared use of parks.

In Northern BC, both residents and visitors are increasingly drawn to wildlife viewing, with the Bulkley-Nechako area being recognized as one of the finest places to observe undisturbed wildlife in remote locations. Wildlife viewing offers a flexible, equipment-light activity suitable for all ages. However, educating park visitors is crucial to ensuring public safety during wildlife viewing and to effectively minimizing human-wildlife conflicts.



Accessibility

With an aging population in the planning area, a growing number of individuals will face mobility challenges precisely at a time when the significance of staying active and getting outdoors increases. In parks, the presence of safe, enjoyable options for seniors and those with limited mobility holds great appeal, as these amenities can be used by people of all ages, including parents with strollers and younger children. Trails that are safe and easily accessible play a crucial role in encouraging and empowering children and youth to engage in physical activity.



The issue of accessibility extends beyond the younger and older demographics. According to the Canadian Survey on Disability Report, in 2022, 27% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older had one or more disabilities, ranging from mild to severe⁷. That percentage is up from 22% in 2017. These disabilities pose challenges for the most vulnerable members of the community in accessing public facilities, including parks.

Year-Round Park Use

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako experiences winter weather conditions for nearly six months each year. Encouraging and embracing outdoor recreation during this period is essential to keep people active and engaged with parks throughout the entire year. By providing opportunities for these winter activities, parks can cater to a broader range of visitors and ensure that the enjoyment of outdoor spaces extends beyond the warmer months.



Volunteerism

A survey conducted in 2023 for the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC⁸ emphasized volunteer retention can be challenging, with factors such as burnout and aging demographics contributing to this issue. Outdoor recreation clubs expressed that the burden of work falls on the same few volunteers consistently. The combination of an aging volunteer base and a relatively small population presents further difficulties in effectively addressing these maintenance needs. There is a need for strategies to build community capacity and increase sharing and collaboration among organizations.



⁷ Statistics Canada. *A demographic, employment and income profile of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over in Canada, 2022*. 2024, May 28. <<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2024001-eng.htm>>

⁸ Ipsos. *Trails and Outdoor Recreation in BC*. 2023, June 2. <<https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/trails-and-outdoor-recreation-bc>>

5 VISION AND GOALS



VISION

This vision for the future of parks and trails in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) was created based on community input, exploration of the trends and opportunities, and discussions with RDBN staff.

Over the next 10 years, the RDBN's Parks and Trails Service for Electoral Area C will:

- **Build on Community Strengths.** The RDBN seeks to build upon the strengths of the recreation services provided by others, including First Nations, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and outdoor recreation organizations. These partnerships will create a cohesive and sustainable system that enhances the overall recreational experiences for all users.
- **Support the Creation of Safe Connections.** The parks and trails system in Electoral Area C will support connections between rural residents and Fort St. James, as well as connections to parks and key recreation destinations, focusing on accessible and multi-use linkages.
- **Provide Diverse and Accessible Recreation Opportunities.** The parks and trails system will offer diverse and accessible recreation options for all ages and abilities that will lead to increased participation in outdoor activities, increased health and well-being for residents, and enhanced tourism capacity. This will be achieved by building and maintaining new infrastructure, as well as the creation of new or expanded parks, trails, and amenities to address gaps.
- **Celebrate the Region's Natural Beauty.** The parks and trails system will facilitate access to lakes, shorelines, unique natural areas, historic sites and trails, and important community destinations. The parks and trails system will protect and enhance the rich ecosystems of the region, preserving opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation of native flora and fauna for future generations.

5.2 GOALS

Five goals emerged to support the RDBN in achieving the vision for parks and trail. Specific recommendations are provided for each goal, to be accomplished over the next 10 years. The recommendations are outlined in the following section.

- **Goal 1:** Establish tools and processes to support the delivery of the Parks and Trails Service in Electoral Area C
- **Goal 2:** Strengthen partnerships and build community capacity
- **Goal 3:** Increase access to outdoor recreation
- **Goal 4:** Enhance the user experience at parks and trails
- **Goal 5:** Support active transportation and a connected community

6 RECOMMENDATIONS



The following section outlines key recommendations specific to each goal for Electoral Area C.

GOAL 1: ESTABLISH TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE IN ELECTORAL AREA C

This goal establishes a comprehensive approach to delivering parks and trails services in Electoral Area C. By providing a clear framework and consistent processes, this goal ensures the strategic allocation of resources for the parks and trails within Electoral Area C.

Recommendation 1.1

Continue to engage with other levels of government and community groups to identify and prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships or through direct acquisition and management.

This could take the form of a parks and trails “working group”. An example of this model is the Shuswap Trails Alliance, which brings together interest-holders across all sectors to one table for regular meetings to discuss, collaborate, coordinate, and share resources and knowledge. By bringing interest-holders together, the RDBN will help build community capacity and volunteerism and can also help identify ways to remove administrative burdens and increase collaboration toward shared priorities.

The members could be invited from First Nations, District of Fort St. James staff, BC Parks, RSTBC, Parks Canada, local outdoor recreation organizations, local stewardship organizations, local outdoor recreation businesses, youth representatives, etc.

Recommendation 1.2

Establish service levels for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas.

For parks, develop a park management plan for future parks and update it every five years. Management plans should consider maintenance levels, infrastructure development and upgrades, universal accessibility, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and invasive species management. Plans may also be informed by existing provincial park management plans.

For trails, once maintenance responsibilities are assumed, conduct regular trail inspections as described in the RDBN Parks and Trails Inspection and Maintenance Policy. This will help ensure trails are safe, well-maintained, and that appropriate resources and budget are allocated to maintenance.

First Nations consultation and archaeological assessments may be required for both parks and trails.

Recommendation 1.3

Consider adding staff to support the implementation of new parks and trails projects across the RDBN's four parks and trails service areas and ensure equitable distribution of staff time between the service areas as the network of parks and trails grows.

Recommendation 1.4

Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements for recreation and conservation.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY

This goal emphasizes the importance of building robust partnerships and enhancing community capacity in the realm of parks and trails services. By fostering collaboration, providing financial support, and expanding land-use agreements, this goal aims to build a stronger community foundation and ensure effective management and development of parks and trail services.

Recommendation 2.1

Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.

A special feature of Electoral Area C is the long-distance historic trail connections that form part of the "Grease Trail" network, which were used for millennia to transport eulachon (oolichan) fish oil from the coast to the interior, driving a vast trade network. This could be an opportunity for collaboration (see Recommendation 3.6).

Recommendation 2.2

Continue the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that supports the RDBN in allocating multi-year funding to recreation organizations providing recreation services, such as regular maintenance of the snowmobile trail network. Continue to monitor the success of the program and adjust criteria for funding and reporting requirements as needed. Increase funding availability as resources allow, if needed.

While there is not currently a mountain biking or hiking organization in Electoral Area C, should a group emerge within these focus areas, funding would provide significant benefits, along with administrative and coordination support.

Recommendation 2.3

Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN's capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations, such as grant writing and coordination between different levels of government.

Recommendation 2.4

Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups who are actively engaged in maintaining parks and trail features within Electoral Area C.

GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

This goal focuses on increasing access to outdoor recreation, particularly lakes and trails. By enhancing access, this goal aims to improve recreational opportunities while recognizing the significance of these natural assets.

Recommendation 3.1

Explore opportunities for the RDBN to support BC Parks in improving access to Mount Pope trails, including the T-Caves climbing area, and improving key amenities such as parking and washroom facilities.

Recommendation 3.2

Explore opportunities to improve year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road in support of non-motorized boating and cross-country ski trails on the lake.

Recommendation 3.3

Explore the potential for developing a small, water-access rustic campsite with basic amenities, and a natural shoreline boat landing to support paddlers, small craft boaters and backcountry recreation users on the north shore of Stuart Lake.

Long-term, this campsite is envisioned as a first step toward exploring a network of rustic campsites that would support a multi-day kayak and canoe route around Stuart Lake. The route would provide designated overnight options that improve safety, reduce informal shoreline use, and promote responsible, low-impact recreation while maintaining the lake's natural character.

Recommendation 3.4

Explore opportunities to coordinate with the District of Fort St. James to further develop the Mount Dickenson Trail, including improvements like accessibility, signage, connectivity, and improved viewpoints.

The steep one-kilometre trail begins within the District of Fort St. James and ends at a viewpoint in the Regional District. It is currently promoted in local brochures and used for both motorized and non-motorized recreation. There could be opportunities to realign portions of the trail to make it accessible to more trail users, even if universal accessibility standards are not possible due to the terrain. Additionally, implementing trail standards, adding amenities, and upgrading signage would help improve the trail.

Recommendation 3.5

Support intergovernmental collaboration for the formalization and improvement of the Graveyard Trails network. The role of the RDBN needs to be defined, but it could include coordination support and funding partnerships with the District of Fort St. James, BC Parks, and a local mountain bike or hiking group. At the time of this report, there is no formal mountain bike organization in Fort St. James.

Recommendation 3.6

Explore opportunities to partner with First Nations communities, local recreation organizations, and tourism organizations to create a long-term, shared vision for Grease Trails in the region. Depending on interest and capacity, a first phase could be to create an improvement and enhancement plan for the Nyan Wheti trail from Fort St. James to Fraser Lake, but other priorities might emerge through further discussions.

Recommendation 3.7

Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads. Identifying key access routes will strengthen advocacy to the Ministry of Forests to keep key access roads open for outdoor recreation and tourism.

GOAL 4: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE AT PARKS AND TRAILS

This goal aims to improve overall user experience within Regional District parks and trails. By prioritizing accessibility, information availability, cultural inclusion, and amenity expansion, this goal aims to create an enriched and user-friendly parks and trails system, enhancing community enjoyment and engagement.

Recommendation 4.1

Follow accessibility standards, such as the [Universal Design Guide](#) by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading parks and trails. Support organizations managing trails by providing guidance on accessibility improvements and identifying potential funding sources.

Recommendation 4.2

Lead the development of a cohesive mapping and information system for trail networks in the region. Update the RDBN's website to provide more information about trails, including information about accessible features at trails, safety, wayfinding, and amenities.

Recommendation 4.3

Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.

Recommendation 4.4

Support enhancements to the provincial RSTBC trails southwest of town, currently managed and maintained by the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club. These are four-season trails used by hikers, backpackers, cross-country skiers, snowmobiles, and ORVs. Improvements could include wheelchair access, picnic tables, and an outhouse.

Recommendation 4.5

Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management. Priority sites will include locations that improve public access to lakes and shorelines, are connected to parks and trails, and can accommodate camping, viewpoints, and other special features.

GOAL 5: SUPPORT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

This goal focuses on fostering active transportation and community connectivity within Electoral Area C. By addressing transportation needs and connectivity, this goal contributes to better access to recreation for all ages and abilities, improved access to services, and enhances tourism-readiness.

Recommendation 5.1

Advocate to the province to explore opportunities to connect communities and key recreation assets in Electoral Area C through the development of multi-use trails and pathways for both residents and tourists. As a long-term vision, there are three key routes proposed:

- **Route 1: (A)** Paarens Beach Provincial Park along Sowchea Road into Fort St. James and **(B)** continuing to Mount Pope Provincial Park;
- **Route 2:** Highway 27 from Fort St. James south to connect residents and businesses. A first phase could be to Airport Road, with future phases continuing south.
- **Route 3:** Highway 27 to Mowbay Road to connect residents with downtown Fort St. James. The link would connect to the existing protected pathway on the west shoulder of the highway and continue northeast of Stones Bay Road.

The bridges across the Necoslie and Stuart Rivers are critical links in achieving connections for Route 1 (A) and Route 2. All three routes should be coordinated with the District of Fort St. James and Nak'azdli Whut'en to enhance the plan for a Community Gateway and active transportation initiatives described in the Fort St. James Rural OCP.

7 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



This Master Plan identifies recommendations to enhance parks and trails in Electoral Area C across a 10-year period from 2026 to 2036. The Board’s endorsement of the Master Plan indicates a preliminary agreement, without implying a financial commitment. The Board will make specific decisions regarding financial allocation as part of the financial planning process.

An implementation table on the following pages outlines recommended actions, levels of prioritization, timelines, and resources required. Operational tasks are recommended to support staff work plans and departmental resources. Capital projects will be evaluated and integrated into budget planning, as subject to Board approval based on available resources and priorities.

RDBN’s partners will be responsible for implementing actions where they are the primary provider. Responsibilities for partners are highlighted in the implementation table for reference by the RDBN in discussions, monitoring, and assessing generated value from the RDBN’s investments. Aligning the objectives and priorities of community members and the RDBN will help improve their ability to meet community needs.

7.1 TIME FRAME

The table defines three time frames for implementation including:

- **Short term** – 0-5 years
- **Medium term** – 5-10 years
- **Long term** – 10+ years

Longer-term actions may be completed ahead of short-term actions depending on funding opportunities, partnerships, or other influencing factors. Actions will be sequenced as determined by the RDBN’s annual work plans to accommodate changing community needs and funding availability.

7.2 RESOURCES REQUIRED

Actions described in the implementation table come with associated costs including staff time, operational expenses, and/or capital investments. Resource requirements are categorized in the table as follows:

- **\$ - Low** – less than \$50,000
- **\$\$ - Medium** - \$50,000-\$100,000
- **\$\$\$ - High** – more than \$100,000

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
GOAL 1: ESTABLISH TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS SERVICE IN ELECTORAL AREA C					
1.1	Continue to engage with other levels of government and community organizations to identify and prioritize opportunities for the RDBN to provide parks and trails through partnerships or through direct acquisition and management.	High	Ongoing	\$	- Community groups - RSTBC - BC Parks - First Nations - District of Fort St. James
1.2	Establish service levels for parks and trails, in line with the standards for other service areas. For future parks and trails, develop management plans and update the plans every five years (see report for full recommendation details).	High	Medium	\$	
1.3	Consider adding staff to support the implementation of parks and trails projects in Electoral Area C and across the RDBN’s four parks and trails service areas.	Medium	Medium	\$\$-\$\$\$	
1.4	Continue to work with First Nations communities, other levels of government, and community groups to maintain and expand land use agreements for recreation and conservation.	Medium	Long	\$	- BC Government - First Nations - Community groups
GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY					
2.1	Continue to engage and build relationships with First Nations, including for the protection and enhancement of cultural and ecological values.	High	Ongoing	\$	First Nations
2.2	Continue to implement the Recreation Contribution Grant Program that provides allocation of multi-year funding to recreation organizations providing recreation services.	High	Ongoing	\$\$	Community organizations
2.3	Continue to increase awareness of the RDBN’s capacity to support outdoor recreation organizations, such as grant writing and coordination between different levels of government.	High	Short-Ongoing	\$	- Internal: RDBN grant writers - Outdoor Recreation Groups
2.4	Facilitate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups who are actively engaged in maintaining parks and trail features within Electoral Area C.	High	Short-ongoing	\$	- Internal: RDBN grant writers - Outdoor Recreation Groups
GOAL 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION					
3.1	Explore opportunities for the RDBN to support BC Parks in improving access to Mount Pope trails, including the T-Caves climbing area, and improve key amenities such as parking and washroom facilities.	Medium	Long	\$\$	BC Parks

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
3.2	Explore opportunities to improve year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road in support of non-motorized boating and cross-country ski trails on the lake.	Medium	Medium	\$\$	
3.3	Explore the potential for developing a small, water-access rustic campsite with basic amenities and a natural shoreline boat landing on the north shore of Stuart Lake.	High	Short	\$-\$\$	- District of Fort St. James - Project underway
3.4	Explore opportunities to coordinate with the District of Fort St. James to further develop the Mount Dickenson Trail, including improvements like accessibility, signage, connectivity, and improved viewpoints.	High	Medium	\$* <i>*Dependent on joint funding opportunities</i>	- District of Fort St. James - Community Forest
3.5	Support intergovernmental collaboration to formalize and improve the Graveyard Trails network.	Low	Long	\$-\$\$\$	- District of Fort St. James - BC Parks - Landowners
3.6	Explore opportunities to partner with First Nations communities, local recreation organizations, and tourism organizations to create a long-term, shared vision for the Grease Trail network in the region.	Low	Medium	\$\$	- First Nations - Local recreation organizations - Tourism organizations - Heritage BC
3.7	Secure long-term access to recreation and tourism areas by working with the community to identify priority resource roads. Identifying key access routes will strengthen advocacy to the Ministry of Forests to keep the roads open for outdoor recreation and tourism.	High	Short	\$	Province of BC
GOAL 4: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE AT PARKS AND TRAILS					
4.1	Follow accessibility standards, such as the Universal Design Guide by BC Parks, when establishing or upgrading parks and trails. Support organizations managing trails by providing guidance on accessibility improvements and identifying potential funding sources.	Medium	Medium	\$\$* <i>*Dependent on grant funding opportunities</i>	Internal: RDBN Accessibility Committee
4.2	Lead the development of a cohesive mapping and information system for trail networks in the region. Update the RDBN’s website to provide more information about trails, including information about accessible features at trails, safety, wayfinding, and amenities.	High	Short	\$ - website update \$\$- mapping and info system	- RDBN Accessibility Committee - Coordinate with Tourism Plan
4.3	Develop a naming policy for trails and look for opportunities to incorporate Indigenous stories and histories into interpretive signage along trails, where appropriate.	Medium	Medium	\$-\$\$	First Nations

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Resources	Other/Partners
4.4	Support enhancements to the provincial RSTBC trails southwest of town, currently managed and maintained by the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club.	High	Medium	\$* <i>*Dependent on grant funding opportunities</i>	- Fort St. James Snowmobile Club - RSTBC
4.5	Work with RSTBC to identify priority sites for increased maintenance and management.	Medium	Medium	\$	RSTBC
GOAL 5: SUPPORT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND A CONNECTED COMMUNITY					
5.1	Advocate to the province to explore opportunities to connect communities and key recreation assets in Electoral Area C through the development of multi-use trails and pathways for both residents and tourists. As a long-term vision, there are three key routes proposed: Route 1: (A) Paarens Beach Provincial Park along Sowchea Road into Fort St. James and (B) continuing to Mount Pope Provincial Park; Route 2: Highway 27 from Fort St. James south to connect residents and businesses. A first phase could be to Airport Road, with future phases continuing south. Route 3: Highway 27 to Mowbay Road to connect residents with downtown Fort St. James. The link would connect to the existing protected pathway on the west shoulder of the highway and continue northeast of Stones Bay Road.	(High) 1. Route 1A 2. Route 3 3. Route 1B (Low) 4. Route 2	Long-term – project will be divided into phases	\$\$-\$\$\$* <i>*Specific project costs are dependent on the location and design</i>	- Province of BC - Other land managers

APPENDIX A

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Parks and Trails Master Plan

For Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

Engagement Summary

Prepared for:



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) is developing a Parks and Trails Master Plan for Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural). This plan will create a strategy and plan of action for parks and trails that reflects the unique character, culture, and geography of the region.

Community input is key to the success of this initiative. To make sure that the Plan reflects a community vision and a wide range of perspectives, consultation included outreach to the public and key rights and interest-holders including outdoor clubs, community groups, and Indigenous communities. Consultation with BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), local governments, and organizations was also completed to coordinate efforts and build on existing infrastructure and service offerings.

The engagement program took place in two rounds which provided participants an opportunity to shape the vision and priorities for parks and trails in the area, then provide feedback on the Draft Master Plan before the final revision.

Round 1 engagement included stakeholder meetings, stakeholder interviews, a public online survey, and a public pop-up event. Round 2 engagement included a public online survey, and a virtual public open house. The details of these activities are described below, and the results are summarized in this report.

1.2 FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

The RDBN invited fifteen First Nations that have identified as having consultation areas within the RDBN's Electoral Area C to participate in individual rights holder meetings, as well as extending the invitation to participate in the public pop-ups and online surveys. There have been no requests for meetings to date.

The RDBN is committed to fostering robust relationships with local First Nations and acknowledges the significance of considering their interests and values. This includes the protection of culturally significant areas within the parks system. As further input is offered in the future, it will be integrated into the decision-making process.

1.3 OVERALL PLANNING PROCESS

The Parks and Trails Master Plan process includes the following five phases. This Engagement Summary summarizes feedback received during Phase 2 and 4 of the planning process, and two rounds of community engagement (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The project timeline for the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.1 PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The first round of engagement, held in late summer 2025, asked stakeholders, rightsholders, potential partners, and the public to share how parks, trails, and recreation areas are meeting their needs in Electoral Area C. This round also identified key challenges and opportunities for the provision and operation of parks and trails, as well as potential strategies to improve partnership and coordination. The feedback from the first round of engagement helped gather information on any potential gaps and identified future needs. Engagement also informed the vision, goals, and recommendations presented in the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan.

The second round of engagement, held in early spring of 2026, asked the community to confirm the draft vision and goals and provide feedback on key recommendations in the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan. The engagement results were considered in the refinement of the vision, goals, and recommendations in the Final Parks and Trails Master Plan, as well as setting priorities and timelines for the implementation plan.

2.2 OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

Public consultation activities included three virtual interest-holder workshops, two online public surveys, one virtual open house, and a community pop-up event. Further details about each activity are provided below, and a summary of the results is included in this report.

A combination of phone calls, email invitations, newspaper ads, and social media posts was used to encourage participation in this engagement series. The RDBN website served as a central hub for all updates, information on how to participate, and a link to the online surveys.

Engagement by the Numbers

183 participants in two online surveys

9 participants in the community workshops

1 virtual open house

1 pop-up event at the Fort St. James Night Market

2.3 ROUND 1 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

2.3.1 INTEREST-HOLDER WORKSHOPS

In fall of 2025, three virtual workshops were held in Round 1 with interest-holders, including local and provincial government representatives, community organizations, and school representatives. At the time of the workshops, a BC Government Employees Union strike delayed engagement with staff of provincial agencies. Interviews with individual knowledge holders were also conducted. Participants included representatives from:

- Elected officials from RDBN Electoral Area 'C'
- Elected officials from District of Fort St. James
- Fire Smart
- BC Parks
- Stuart Lake Nordic Society
- Stuart Lake Seniors Association
- Fort St. James Snowmobile Club
- Fort St. James Dog Sled Association
- Fort St. James Secondary School
- Murray Ridge Ski Area

Workshops involved a brief presentation on the project and a discussion about the current state of parks and trails in the region, challenges faced by interest-holders, and opportunities to improve outdoor recreation amenities in Electoral Area C.

2.3.2 ROUND 1 ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

Public input was gathered through an online survey posted on the Regional District's website. The results were collected through the online platform Survey Monkey and are summarized in Section 3.1 of this report.

Round 1 - Survey responses from the first round engagement were collected from August 15th to September 30th, 2025, with a total of 107 responses. Survey questions asked the community to reflect on needs and aspirations for parks, trails, and recreation. Questions aimed to understand:

- The most popular trails and outdoor activities for the community and children specifically
- The frequency of trail use
- Barriers for visiting parks and using trails
- Key destinations visited
- Main priorities for parks, trails, and active transportation
- Level of support for tax increases
- Any additional comments

2.3.3 ROUND 1 PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT

One in-person pop-up event was held at the Fort St. James Night Market at Caledonia Days on August 15th, 2025, from 4:00-8:00pm. Facilitators from the Regional District and LEES were present to gather feedback, guide conversation, and answer questions.

The pop-up event introduced the project to the community and provided information about parks and trails planning in the area. Display boards prompted participants to share their vision for parks and trails, identify key locations they would like to see prioritized, and share what features and amenities were most important. The pop-up also encouraged participation in the online survey.

The following questions were asked on the display boards:

- What areas should be prioritized for future parks and trails?
- What features and amenities would you like to see in Regional District parks?
- What features and amenities would you like to see in Regional District trails?
- Over the next 10 years, what are the most important priorities for parks and trails?
- What is your vision for the future of parks and trails in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)?

2.4 ROUND 2 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

2.4.1 ROUND 2 ONLINE SURVEY

Survey responses for round 2 engagement were collected from February 16th to March 23rd, 2026, with a total of 76 responses. Survey questions asked for community input on the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan. Questions aimed to understand:

- Level of support and missing information for the draft vision and five goals
- Level of support for forming a parks and trails working group
- Interest in the formation of hiking and mountain biking organization
- Top priorities for increasing access and improvements to outdoor recreation
- Top priority for creating a roadside trail connection
- Any additional comments

2.4.2 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

In February of 2026, a virtual open house was held. The event was open to all members of the community and was promoted via the RDBN's website, social media posts, newspaper ads, and through direct emails to interest-holders. The open house included a presentation on the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan with an opportunity for questions and comments from those attending. Information presented included the following:

- Overview of the project
- The role of the RDBN in supporting parks and trails
- The current state of parks and trails
- Key demographics and service providers
- Opportunities for parks and trails
- Key findings from community engagement in round 1
- The draft vision, goals, and recommendations

The presentation of the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan was also recorded and posted to the RDBN's website for viewing by those who could not attend.

3 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

3.1 ROUND 1 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

3.1.1 INTEREST-HOLDER WORKSHOPS

(1) Elected Officials

- Land acquisition at Stuart Lake is under consideration to support a water access campsite and campsite improvements. There is potential for the establishment of a circuit that is proposed to tie into BC Parks and other sites.
- While trails are informally managed by community groups, the lack of formal leadership presents challenges for coordination. Volunteers contribute considerably to the trail system but have limited capacity to take on additional responsibilities.
- Some trails are located within FireSmart fuel treatment areas, and there may be a synergy between fuel management and trails establishment and maintenance.
- Pedestrian safety and active transportation was raised as a priority.

(2) BC Parks

- Limited staffing was identified as a challenge.
- There is a desire to improve connections between user groups and volunteers.
- An outhouse at Mt. Pope has been requested by the community.
- The climbing trailhead parking is at capacity.
- Improving partnership with the RDBN would help coordinate signage and promote trail improvements.
- There is an opportunity to work with the Nak'azdli to improve the Grease Trail by joining McLeod Lake with a section of Carp Lake.

(3) Community Organizations

- The Seniors Association would benefit from improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians along Sowchea Road.
- Community organizations expressed that volunteer capacity, risk and liability, and securing access to trail areas that intersect with private property are key challenges.
- It was noted that there is no walking trail on the bridge crossing the Stuart River. However, Necoslie River has a good walking trail on the bridge.
- Improvements for walking and cycling from Sowchea Road into Fort St. James were identified as a priority.
- The Graveyard Trails are well-loved, but are located on Crown, private and BC Parks land.

- The need for improved bike safety to protect cyclists commuting around the town from industrial traffic was expressed.
- There are opportunities for a trail from the subdivision north of town along the old railway bed and gas line to town. People currently bike on the highway.
- Protection of boat launches and water access is a priority. Boat launches on Stuart Lake are in place at Paarens Beach, Sowchea Bay, and Big Bay.
- Additional parking near Stuart Lake for vehicles and boat trailers was requested.
- Snowmobile trails would benefit from wheelchair access, picnic tables, and an outhouse.
- The Nordic Club faces challenges as a few key volunteers are responsible for trail maintenance. They would like to offer trails closer to town, and on Stuart Lake.
- Access to the lake around Mt. Pope was identified as a challenge, especially for canoes and kayaks.
- The Nordic trail would benefit from the burial of overhead electrical lines, which are frequently impacted by tree blowdown.
- **Key Locations shared:**
 - Stuart Lake
 - Necoslie River
 - Graveyard trails
 - Paarens Beach
 - Big Bay
 - Mt. Dickinson
 - Nyan Wheti Trail, south of Fort St. James
 - Sowchea Road connection to Fort St. James, including improvements to the Highway 27 bridge over the Stuart River
 - Mount Pope

3.1.2 ROUND 1 PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT

- The Graveyard Trails were frequently mentioned as being well used but under-developed.
- Traditional First Nations travel routes were mentioned as an opportunity for developing long-range and inter-regional trails. Routes mentioned spanned from Takla to Fort Babine, Fort St James to McLeod Lake, and Fraser Lake to Stuart Lake.
- The Mt. Pope trails and climbing routes were described as well-used but in need of additional infrastructure such as pit toilets.
- Participants expressed a need for additional formal boat launches on Stuart Lake.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the decommissioning of Forestry Service Roads, which are regularly used for recreation (hiking, ATVing, etc.) and access to wilderness areas.

3.1.3 ROUND 1 ONLINE SURVEY

The following key findings shared in the round 1 online survey include:

- **Trail use** – More than three quarters of respondents use trails at least weekly, most often for hiking, walking for exercise, or dog walking, with winter activities also popular. For children, the most common activities are hiking, ATV/snowmobiling, cycling, dog walking, and mountain biking.
- **Diverse recreation opportunities** – The most popular outdoor recreation activities were water-based including swimming and visiting lakes and beaches. Children most commonly went camping, swimming/going to the lake, and downhill skiing. Respondents also particularly valued camping, fishing, kayaking, and canoeing.
- **Barriers to park and trail access** – Roughly one-third of respondents do not face barriers to accessing parks and trails within the Service Area. Those who did most commonly listed barriers including poor maintenance, limited time, and a lack of information.
- **Key trail destinations** – Mount Pope was overwhelmingly the most commonly mentioned destination. Stuart River, Murray Ridge, and Sowchea Bay were also popular mentions.
- **Parks and trail planning priorities** – Respondents would like to see the RDBN prioritize the creation and management of a new trails network over the next ten years. They would also like to prioritize the creation of connections between communities and key destinations.
- **Recreation priorities** – They would also like to see more opportunities to be active, specifically hiking and walking as a main priority which could include improved trail signage identified as a priority.
- **Tax increases** – Most respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails.

3.2 ROUND 2 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

3.2.1 ROUND 2 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

The following input was shared during the virtual open house, including:

- **Mount Pope challenges**
 - Desire for toilets at the Mount Pope trailhead to accommodate a large volume of people.
 - Concern over fire risk from a blowdown was noted.
 - BC Parks has conducted a trail assessment but noted a challenge of maintaining trails without a formalized biking group.
- **Access road potential** – A proposed mine development in the area has potential to open up access to FSR routes.
- **Trail organization limitations** – Establishing a shared trail organization may be a challenge, as local residents currently maintain trails on an as-needed basis. However, a potential

opportunity was identified to hire an individual to manage trails at the north end of Takla Lake.

- **Active transportation priorities** – Top priorities to improve safety along Sowchea and Necoslie Road.

3.2.2 ROUND 2 ONLINE SURVEY

The following key findings shared in the round 2 online survey include:

- **Vision and goals** - Respondents support the draft vision and five goals overall.
- **Strengthen relationship with local First Nations** – Survey respondents noted they would like to see local First Nations recognized in the vision statement. Multiple comments stressing the importance of meaningful collaboration with Nak’zadli and Dakelh peoples and concern over the lack of involvement in developing the Plan.
- **Parks and Trails Working Group** – Survey respondents shared support for the formation of a Parks and Trails Working Group by the RDBN. Respondents would like to ensure local First Nations are involved throughout the process and an acknowledgement of the limitations that may hinder long-term growth, such as capacity concerns.
- **Forming a hiking or biking organization** – There is a strong desire and support from community to form a hiking and mountain biking organization, with more frequent mentions of a hiking group. A few respondents are interested in taking the lead but many noted limitations due to capacity and time but interest in participating. There is also a desire to support the existing organizations and acknowledgment of the work that unofficial groups have done on the trails.
- **Improvements to access** - Respondents would like to prioritize access to the Mount Pope trails, T-caves climbing area, as well as year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road.
- **Trail upgrades** - Respondents would like to prioritize trail and trailhead upgrades to be more accessible, and adding new support amenities, like pit toilets. They would also like to reuse and revitalize unmaintained spaces (e.g. former forestry campsites, cultural, and historically significant locations).
- **Roadside trail connections** – Throughout engagement, the community shared a strong desire for safer trail connections in town and from the rural area to town. Participants were asked to prioritize roadside trail connections up for consideration by the RDBN. All three segments, including Sowchea Road to Fort St. James, Airport Road to Fort St. James, and Fort St. James to Mount Pope were generally ranked equally with a slight preference for the segment along Sowchea Road into Fort St. James, including bridge improvements.

3.2.3 ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The RDBN received additional feedback through email messages including:

- **BC Parks** – Provided updates on BC park locations, associated area measurements, and feedback on recommendations pertaining to lands under jurisdiction. They also shared challenges, including need for a formal bike organization and challenge with accessing the Mount Pope climbing area due to private access.
- **Fort St. James** – Provided feedback and updates regarding provided park amenities.
- **Anonymous** - Shared feedback on formatting and readability of the Master Plan as well as clarification on boat launches provided on RSTBC sites.

4 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

Section four summarizes key themes from round 1 and 2 of engagement, including challenges, opportunities, and priorities identified from workshops, surveys, the in-person pop-up event, and the virtual open house.

4.1 CHALLENGES

Key challenges identified include:

- **Volunteer capacity** - A limited capacity, aging group of volunteers, and informal maintenance limits regular maintenance, increases concerns with risk and liability, and minimizes opportunities to secure trail access across private lands.
- **Safety on roads** - A lack of safe and accessible walking and cycling connections in and around Fort St. James trails is of particular concern along busy roadways.
- **Resource access** - Difficulties accessing resources from other levels of government outside of the RDBN and a lack of information limit ongoing trail maintenance.
- **Wildfire risk** - A growing risk of wildfire continues to place pressures on existing recreation areas.

4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities were also identified and include:

- **Trail networks** - Formalizing and improving existing trail networks, particularly the Graveyard Trails and ensuring access as development occurs nearby.
- **Trail connections** - Establishing a continuous trail connection from Sowchea Bay Road to Fort St. James and onward to the Graveyard Trails and Mount Pope Provincial Park.
- **Winter access** - Providing additional winter trail access to expand cross-country skiing opportunities, especially closer to town.
- **Lake access** - Increasing access to lakes by improving boat launches and parking.
- **Accessible trails** - Improving trail accessibility, wayfinding, signage and comfort amenities across existing trails.
- **Funding** - Securing funding to support existing and new local recreation organizations.
- **New organizations** - Forming a hiking or biking organization.
- **Working group** - Establishing a Parks and Trails working group.

4.3 SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN

Overall, there was strong support for the Parks and Trails Master Plan, including:

- **89%** of online survey respondents supportive or very supportive of the Vision.
- **88%** of online survey respondents supportive or very supportive of the Goals.
- Support expressed by those attending the **virtual open house** presentation of the Draft Master Plan.
- Organizational support from **BC Parks and the District of Fort St. James** through feedback received.

4.4 PRIORITIES

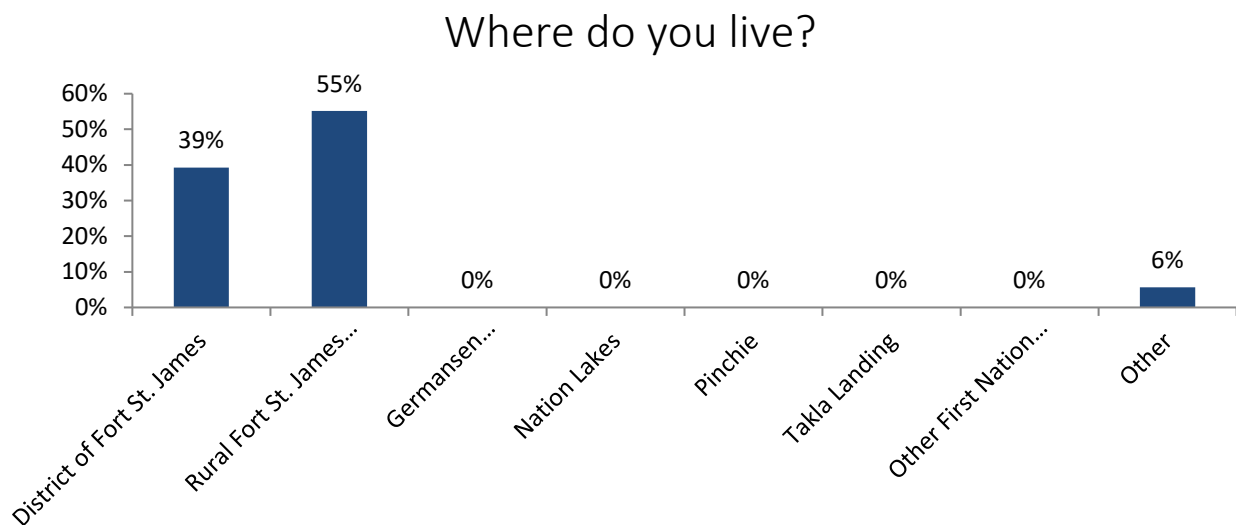
Community priorities place emphasis on trail connectivity, increasing access, and improving stewardship. Key priorities include:

- **Trail improvement** - Creating and managing new trails, including mountain biking trails, alongside upgrading existing routes. This includes joining McLeod Lake and Nak'adzli to improve the Grease Trail.
- **Local First Nations** - Acknowledging and prioritizing local First Nations in the overall vision of the Parks and Trails Master Plan and ensuring their meaningful involvement in the establishment of a Parks and Trails working group.
- **Safe connections** - Developing safer connections between communities and key destinations, specifically Sowchea Road linking to Fort St. James.
- **Additional land** - Acquiring new land for regional parks to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Recreation opportunities** - Expanding opportunities for year round recreation and nature opportunities.
- **Recreation access** - Improving access to beaches, the Mount Pope trails, the T-caves climbing area, and year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road.
- **New amenities** - Adding supporting amenities including pit toilets, improved signage, and accessible trail upgrades, to support tourism opportunities.

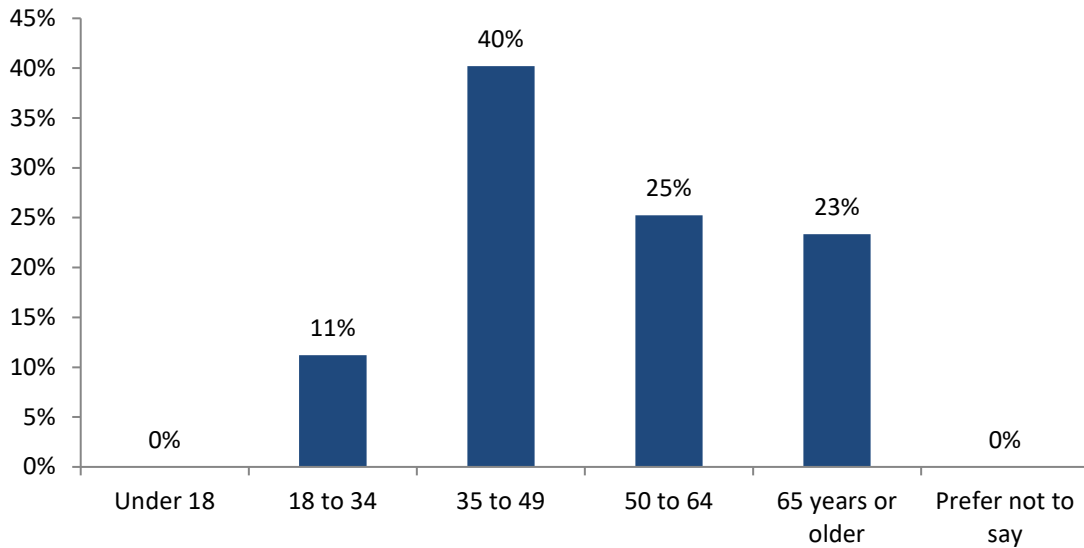
APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY 1 SUMMARY

Who Responded

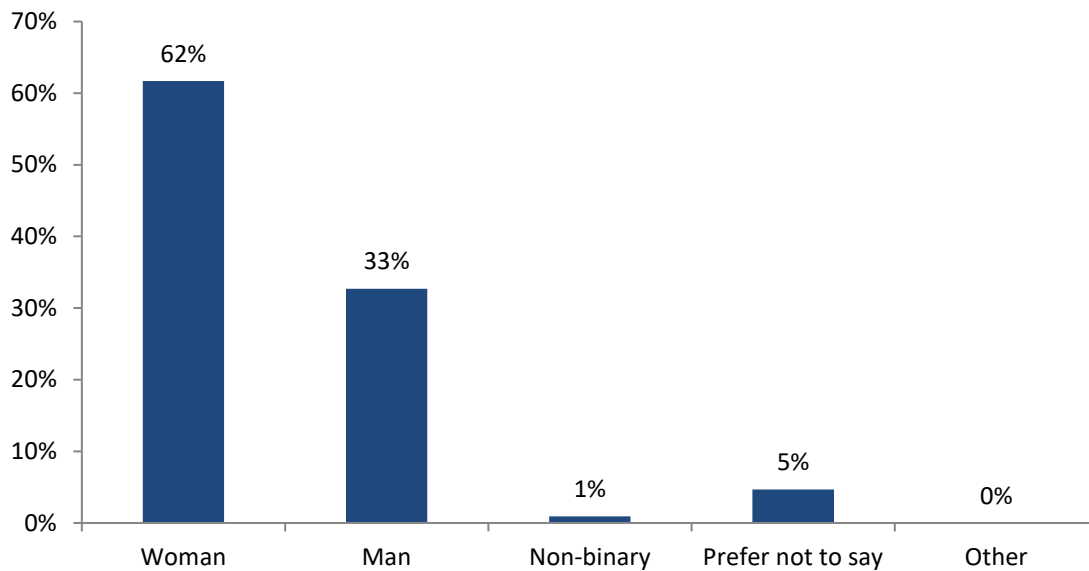
- The survey was completed by a total of 107 respondents.
- The majority of respondents identified as women (62%).
- The largest age group of respondents were between 35 and 49 years of age (40%).
- Less than half of respondents noted having children under the age of 18 living at home (37%).
- The majority of respondents were from Rural Fort St James, up to 20km from municipal limits (55%).



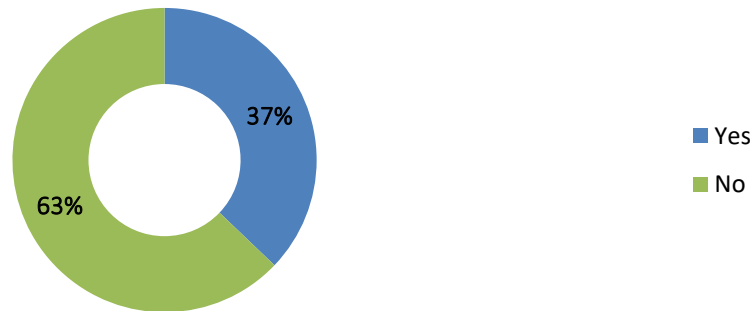
What age category are you?



What gender do you identify with?



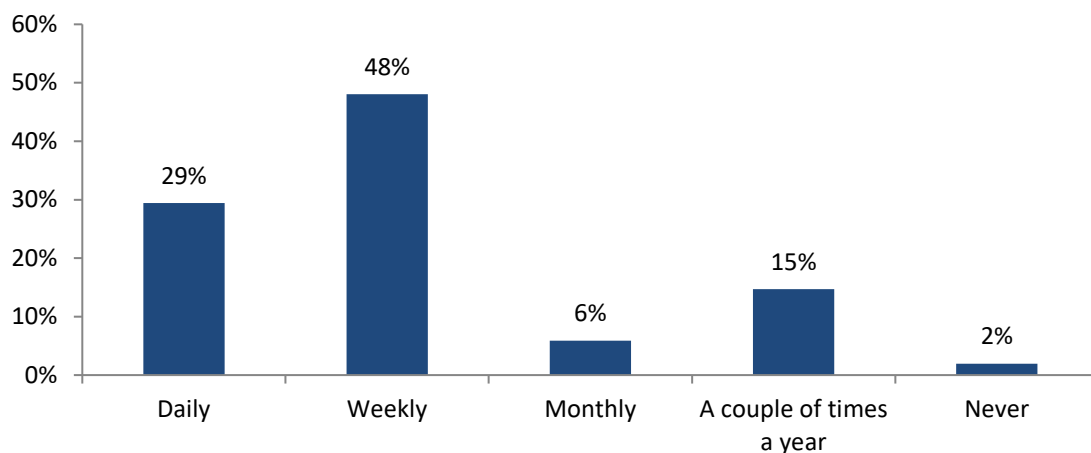
Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?



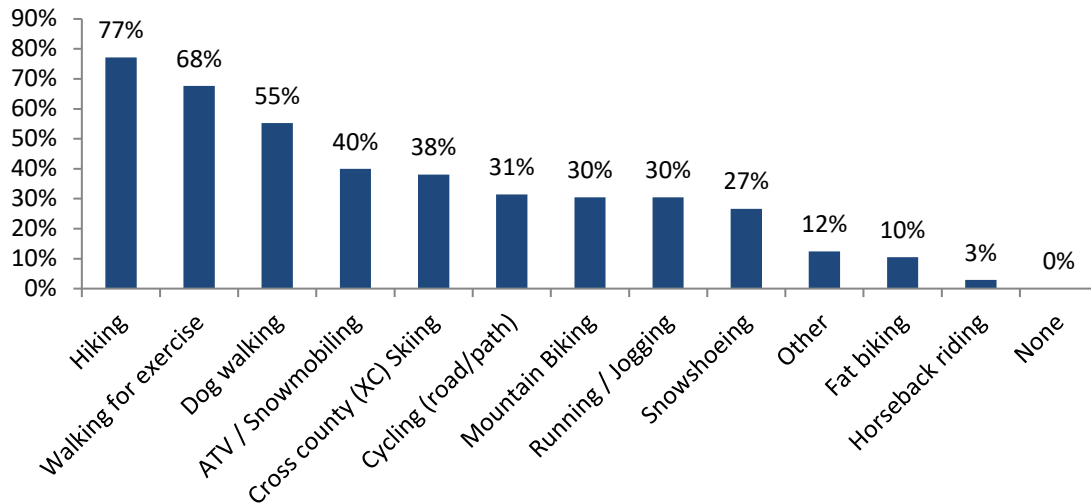
Trail Use Habits

- Roughly three-quarters of respondents noted using trails at least on a weekly basis (77%).
- The most popular trail activities among respondents were hiking (77%), walking for exercise (68%), and dog walking (55%).
- Though not as popular as summer activities, a significant portion of respondents reported participating in winter trail activities.
- The most popular trail activity among the children of respondents was hiking (69%), though ATV/snowmobiling (49%), cycling (49%), dog walking (44%), and mountain biking (44%) were also common responses.

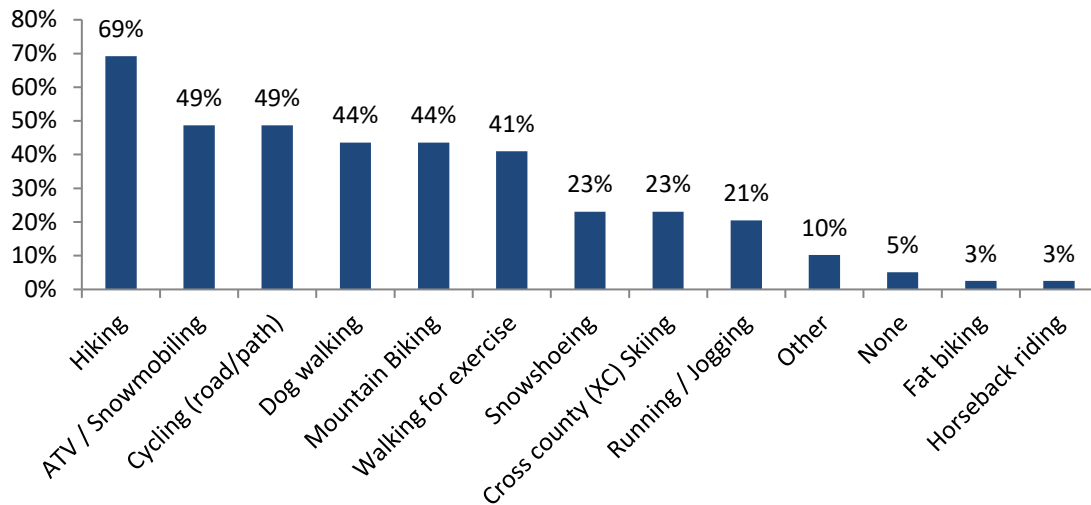
How often do you use trails?



What types of trail activities do you do most often? (Select all that apply)



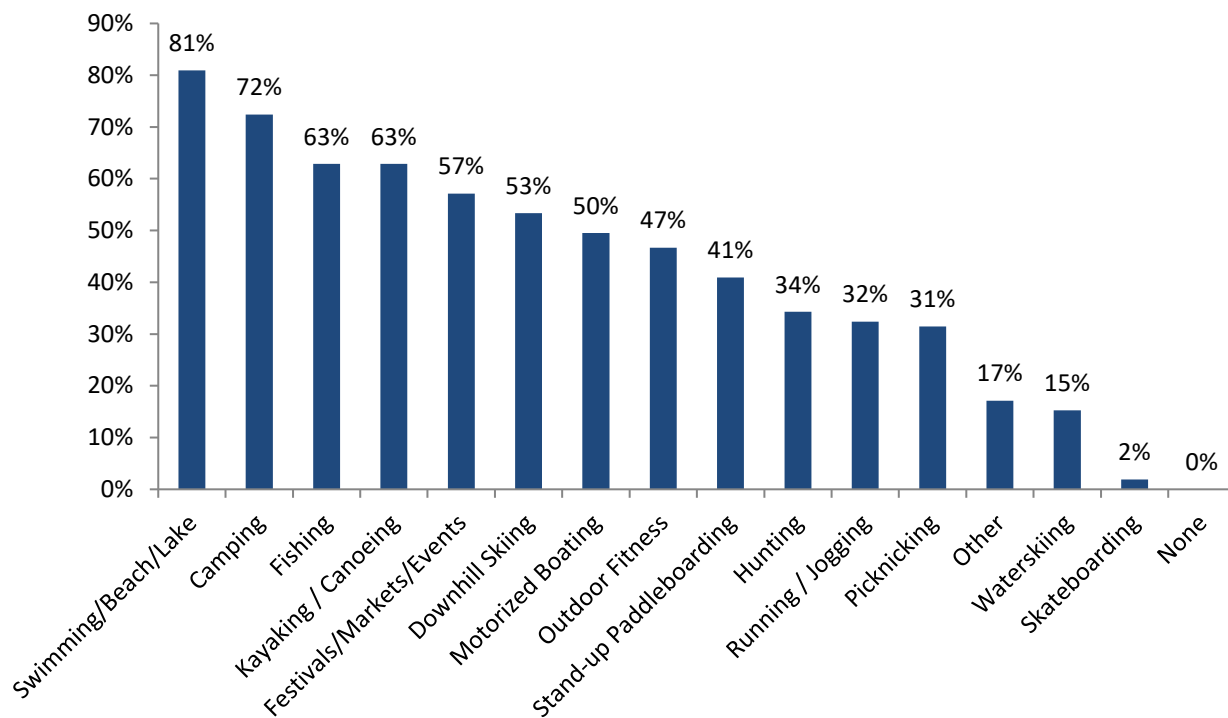
What types of trail activities do your children do most often? (Select all that apply).



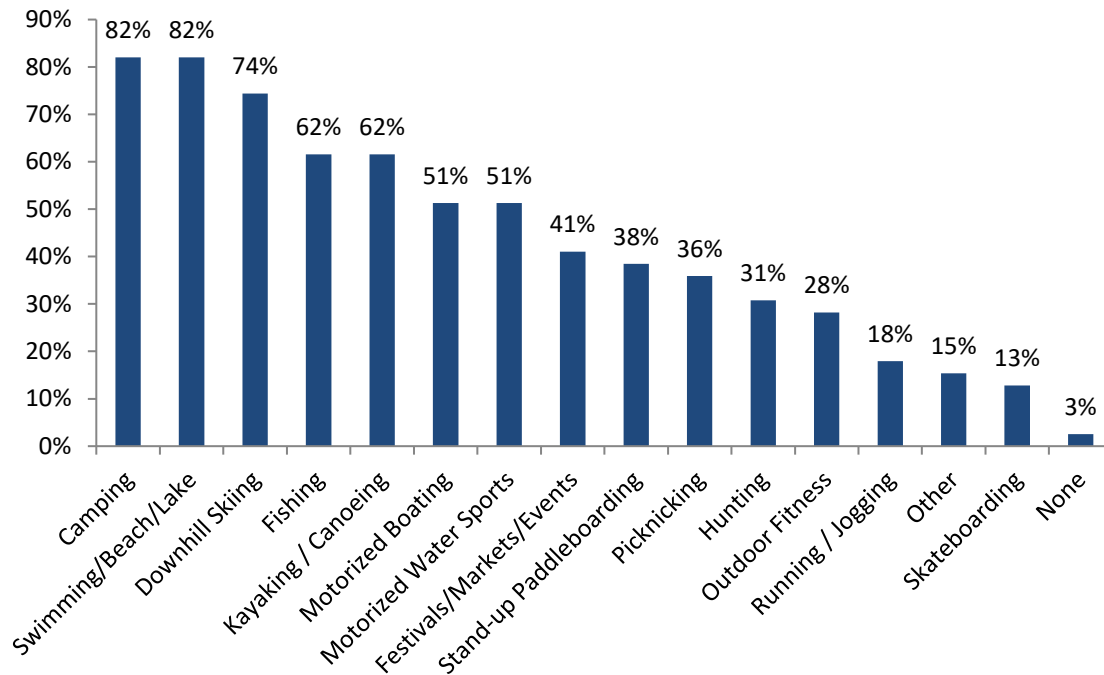
Outdoor Recreation Habits

- Water-based activities such as swimming and visitation of lakes and beaches were the most popular outdoor recreation activities among respondents (81%).
- Many respondents participated in camping (72%), fishing (63%), kayaking and canoeing (63%), festivals, markets, or other events (57%), and downhill skiing (53%).
- The most popular outdoor recreation activities among the children of respondents were camping (82%), swimming/going to the lake (82%), and downhill skiing (74%).

What types outdoor activities do you enjoy? Think of all times of the year. (Select all that apply).



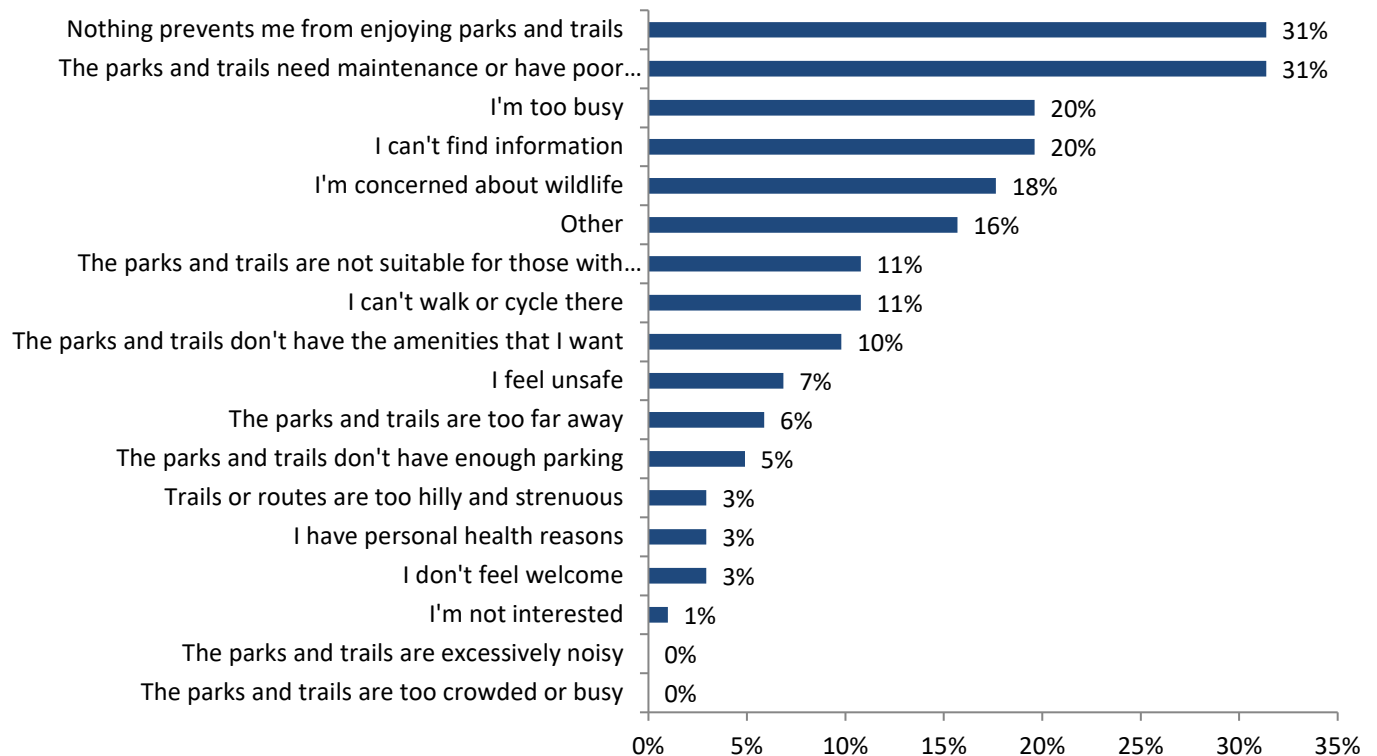
What types outdoor activities do your children enjoy? Think of all seasons and times of the year. (Select all that apply).



Barriers to Accessing Outdoor Recreation

- The primary barriers to using parks and trails more often were poor park and trail maintenance (31%), being too busy (20%), and lack of information (20%).
- Roughly one-third of respondents said they don't face any barriers in accessing parks and trails (31%).

What, if anything, keeps you from visiting parks or getting out on trails more often? (Select your top 3 reasons).



Key Destinations

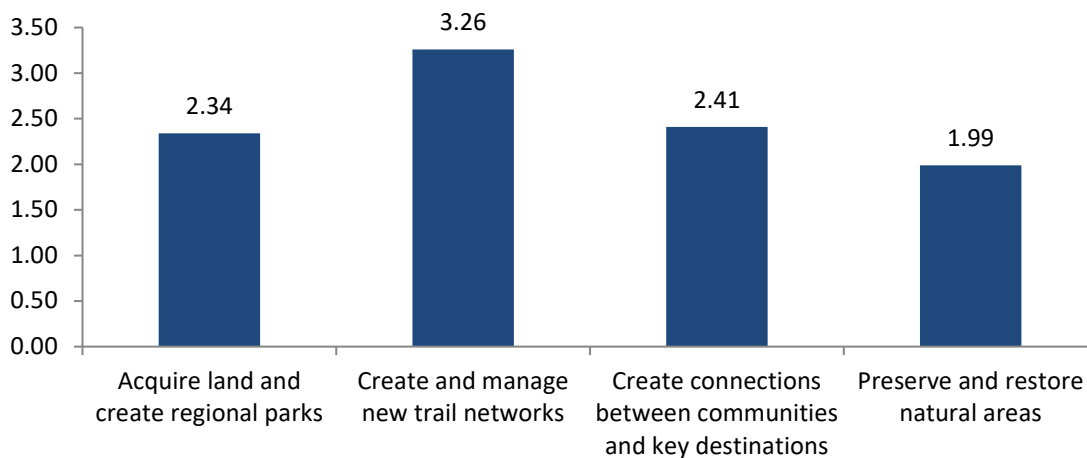
Destinations raised by engagement participants included:

- Mt. Pope trails (n=60)
- Stuart River (n=26)
- Murray Ridge trails (n=25)
- Sowchea Bay (n=14)
- Paarens Beach Provincial Park trails (n=11)
- Graveyard trails (n=9)
- Mt. Dickinson trails (n=7)
- Cottonwood Park (n=6)
- T-Caves (n=6)
- Nyan Wheti (n=3)
- Jim Henry Trail (n=2)
- Whitefish Bay (n=2)
- Russ Baker Memorial (n=1)
- Pinchi Mountain (n=1)

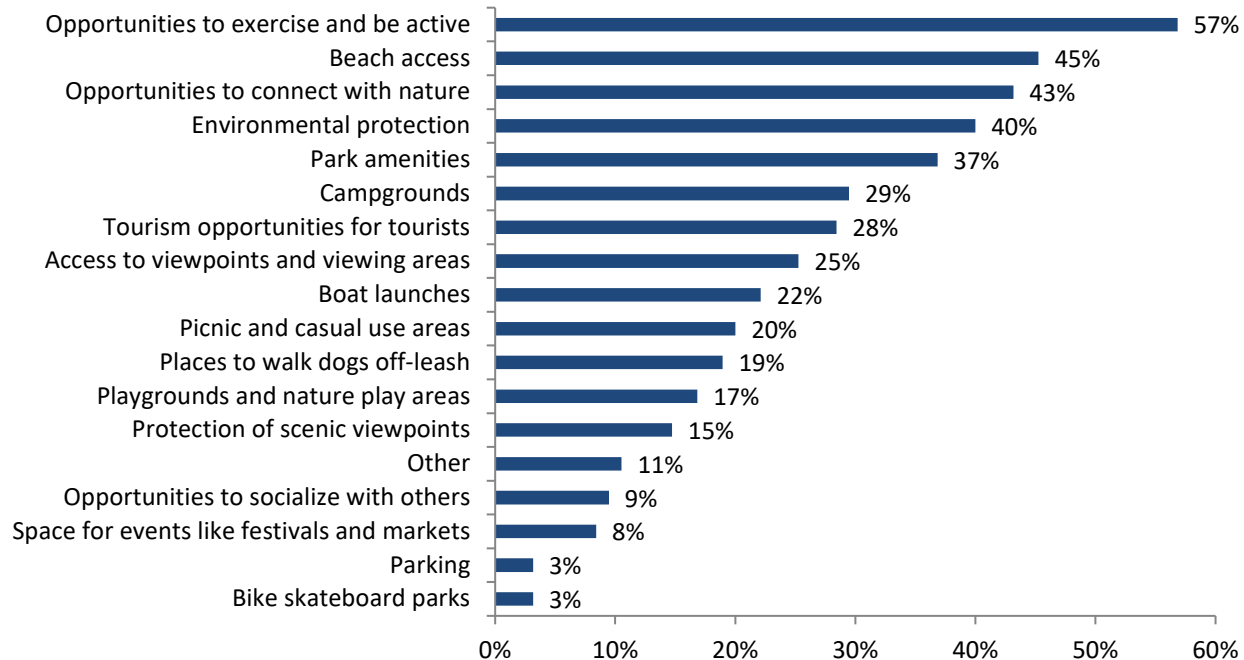
Park and Trails Priorities

- Respondents indicated that the **creation and management of new trails networks** should be prioritized over the next 10 years (Score of 3.26/4). 56% of respondents selected this as their top priority.
- The **creation of connections between communities and key destinations** was of importance to respondents (Score of 2.41/4).
- Respondents indicated that opportunities to be **active** (57%), **beach access** (45%), opportunities to **connect with nature** (43%), and **environmental protection** (40%) are their main priorities for parks in Electoral Area C.
- Respondents indicated that **hiking and walking** (80%), trail **signage** (55%), **improved trail connections to other parks and trails** (37%), **mountain bike trails** (36%), and **tourism opportunities for visitors** (33%) are their main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area C.
- More respondents were supportive of tax increases to fund parks and trails improvements than those opposed (59% supportive compared to 21% opposed). A fifth of respondents (20%) were neutral regarding increased taxation.
- When asked what else we need to know, many respondents commented on the need for improved signage, wayfinding, and information (n=10). Improved maintenance (n=9) and the importance of parks and trails to local tourism (n=9) were also commonly mentioned.

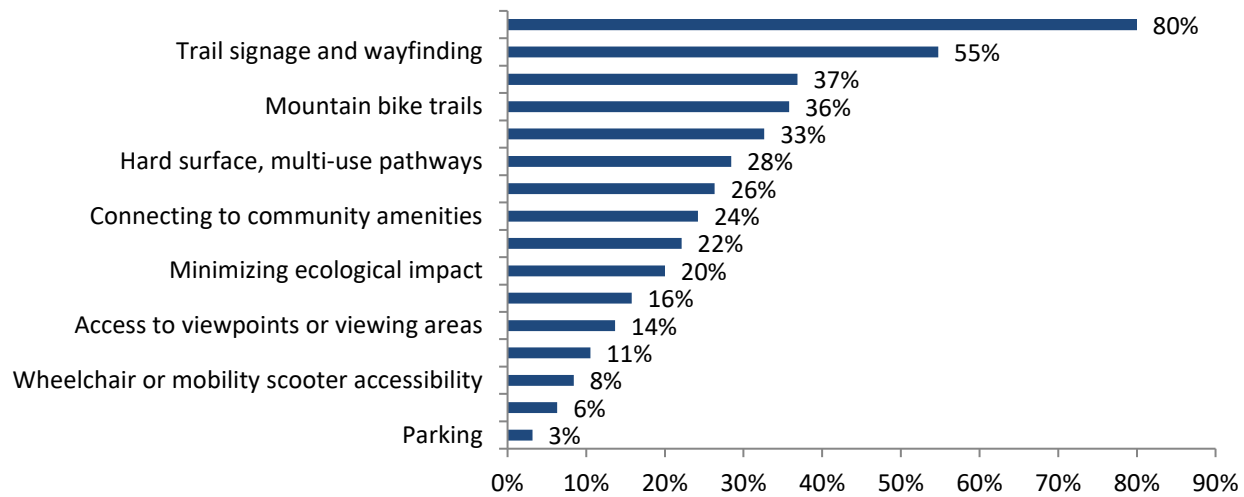
What should the RDBN prioritize in parks and trails over the next 10 years? (Rank options in order of priority).



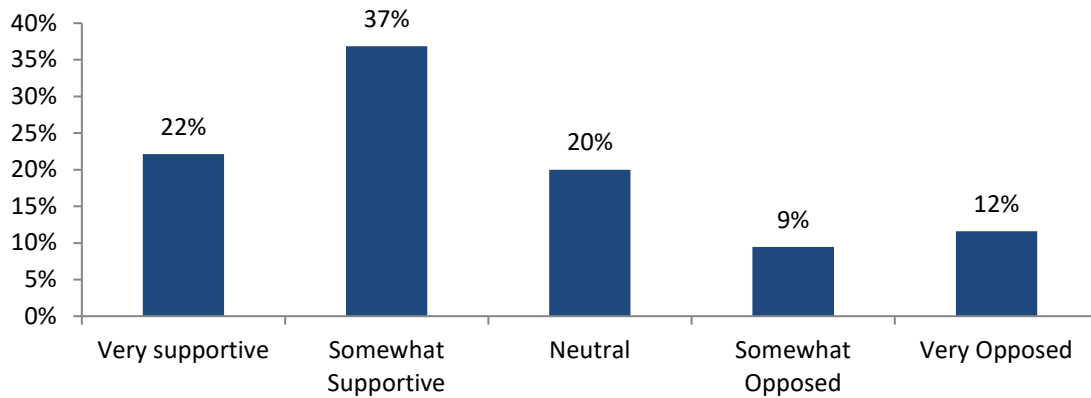
What are your main priorities for parks in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5)



What are your main priorities for trails and active transportation in Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)? (Select your top 5).



How supportive are you of a tax increase to fund the acquisition of new parks and trails, or the development of new infrastructure in parks and trails?

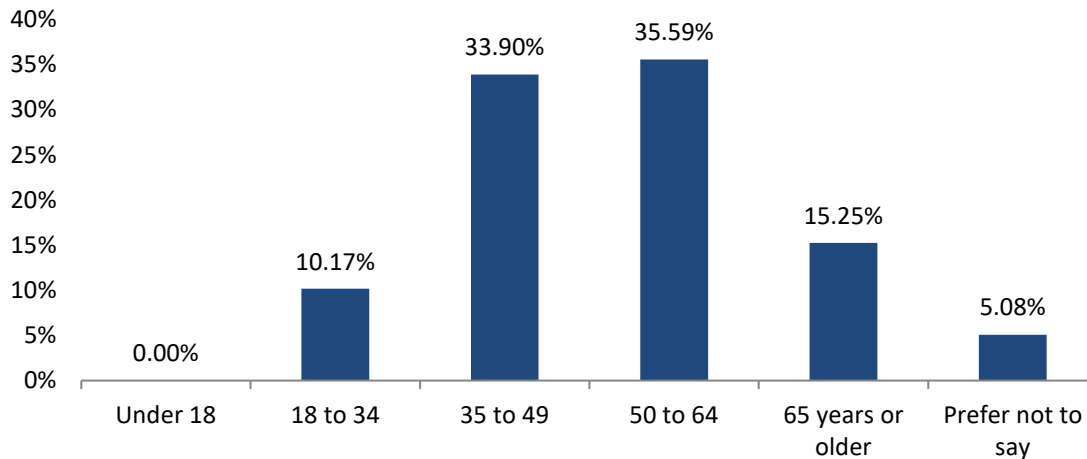


APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY 2 SUMMARY

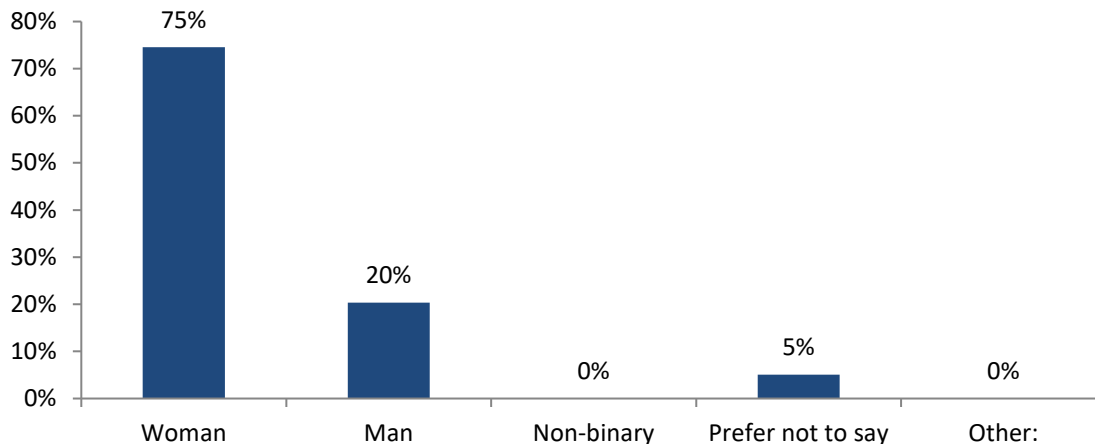
Who Responded

- The survey was completed by a total of 76 respondents.
- Most respondents were between the ages of 35 to 64 (69%).
- Most respondents identify as women (75%).
- Most respondents live in Rural Fort St James (up to 20 kilometers from municipal limits) (59%). The remaining live in the District of Fort St. James (29%) or in other locations, such as Vanderhoof (12%).

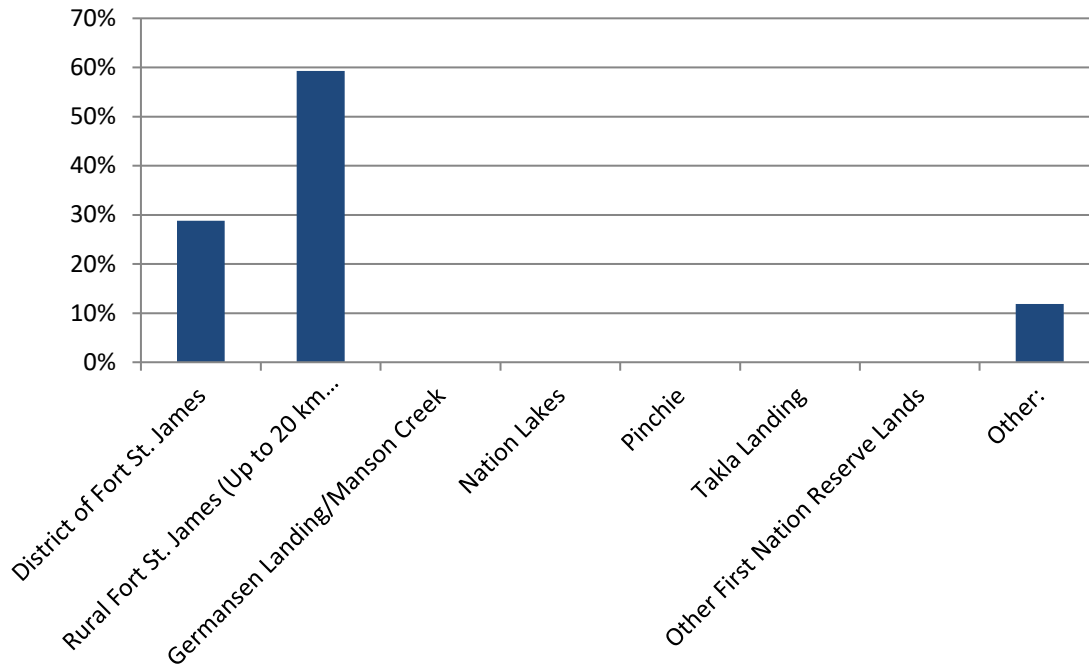
What age category are you?



What gender do you identify with?



Where do you live?

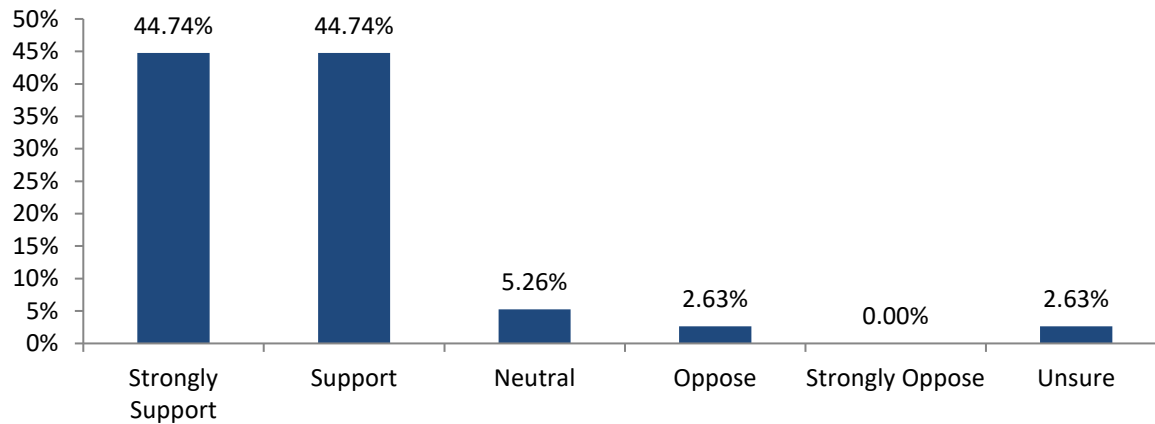


Vision statement

The majority (89%) of respondents support the draft vision statement. 19 community members provided suggestions on improvements to the vision statement including:

- Multiple concerns over vague language and a need for concrete objectives;
- Multiple mentions to recognize Indigenous peoples rights and title;
- Specific additions or upgrades to trails;
- Regional districts acting as a liaison between authorities;
- Emphasizing sustainability;
- Acknowledging safety and accessibility;
- Specific addition and maintenance of infrastructure (e.g. outhouses and signage); and
- Highlighting funding, regional collaboration and tourism, and detailed action plans.

To what extent do you support the Vision Statement?

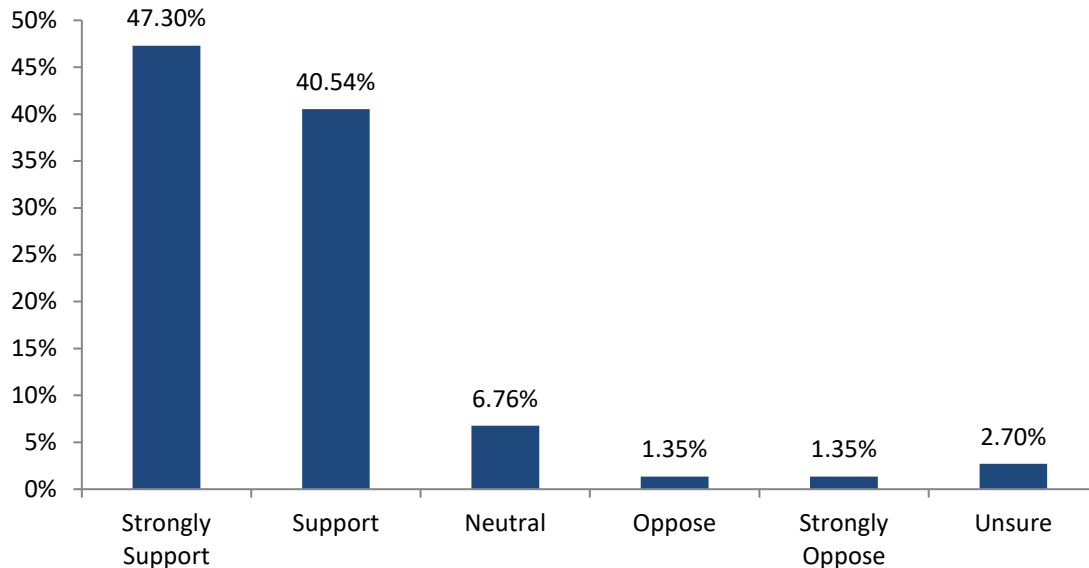


Five goals

The majority of respondents support the five goals (88%), and 19 community members provided further information on which goals were missed for parks and trails. Responses included:

- Multiple mentions noting the importance of goal 5 and moving to goal 1;
- Concern over the vague descriptions;
- Desire for goals mentioning maintenance cost, funding, tourism, and leadership responsibility;
- Adding language on accessibility, trail development, and land purchase funding as goals;
- Emphasizing safety, maintenance, recognition and consent from Indigenous consultation, ecosystem conservation, and expanding trail networks;
- Specific concerns about Sowchea Road safety; and
- Advocating for supporting and upkeep existing recreation assets.

To what extent do you support the five goals?



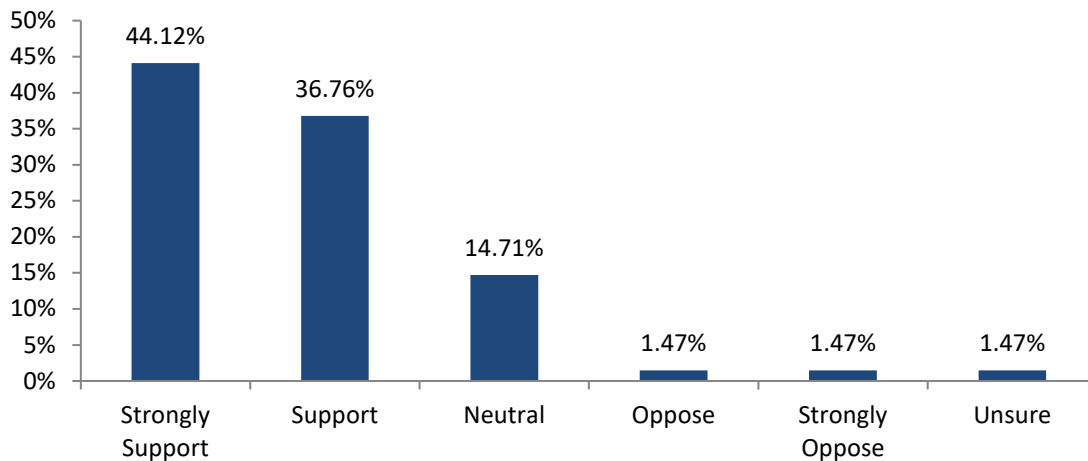
Support for a Trails Working Group

The majority (81%) of respondents are supportive of a parks and trails working group. 24 survey respondents elaborated on their responses, including:

- A need to acknowledge collaboration can also slow down the process with mention of clear leadership and concrete outcomes as important to its success.
- Mention of the benefits of working groups to drive maintenance and growth through permanent action but consideration is needed for long-term support.
- Desire for clarity on who will be in the group and desire for equal representation across organizations in the working group. Missing information on how this will be done and what is affected.
- Capacity for involvement: Current volunteers are mainly seniors and overworked; Region struggles with lack of volunteers, and the group could face difficulties with different schedules. Mention group members could get paid. Partnerships have the potential to ease burden on volunteers and create employment for local FN people
- First Nations: Would like to see 50 percent First Nation representation; require First Nations support, Indigenous involvement throughout the process
- Working group desires: Mention of priority to focus on improving accessibility and an overall desire for more funding.

- Concerns and limitations: Fear over the decline of local recreation opportunities with a desire for much more. Concern over town turning into park. Acknowledgement of both proactiveness and reactivity to the areas needs

How supportive are you of the RDBN helping to form a parks and trails working group?



Forming a hiking or mountain biking organization

Respondents were asked if they were interested in creating a hiking or mountain biking group, with access to funds provided through a Recreation Contribution Program. 35 respondents answered, eight of which noted they were not interested. Those interested or with further comments provided more details summarized below.

- A few respondents noted there are many active bikers and hikers in the community who would be interested, however limitations in distance, ongoing commitments, and time were identified as barriers to participation. One mention preferred a group supporting a wide range of recreation options, beyond biking or hiking.
- Some respondents mentioned they may already have a group, mentioning Stuart Lake Outdoor Group, or they are surprised there isn't currently a group, with mention of a desire to partner with Murray Ridge.
- A few respondents noted there is concern the volunteers are getting older and current volunteers don't want a dedicated organizational group.
- There were a few respondents who were interested in becoming leaders with a few contacts provided.
- There was mention that Murray Ridge Ski Hill and the fire department should be included and desire for an acknowledgement of the previous mountain biking groups dedication to creating existing recreational assets.

- An additional comment was presented that the Fort St. James Sled Dog Association was not mentioned in the report. They partner with the Fort St. James Snowmobile Club to maintain and enhance access, particularly on Stuart Lake. Respondent would like to see them given the opportunity for more input.

Prioritizing access to outdoor recreation

Respondents were asked to rank a series of priorities regarding priorities to increase access to outdoor recreation. The highest ranked priorities were to:

- Seek opportunities to support access to Mount Pope trails, T-caves climbing area, and improving amenities such as parking and washroom facilities (3.72/4).
- Explore opportunities to improve year-round access to Stuart Lake along Stones Bay Road in support of a non-motorized boating and cross-country ski trails on the lake (3.34/4).

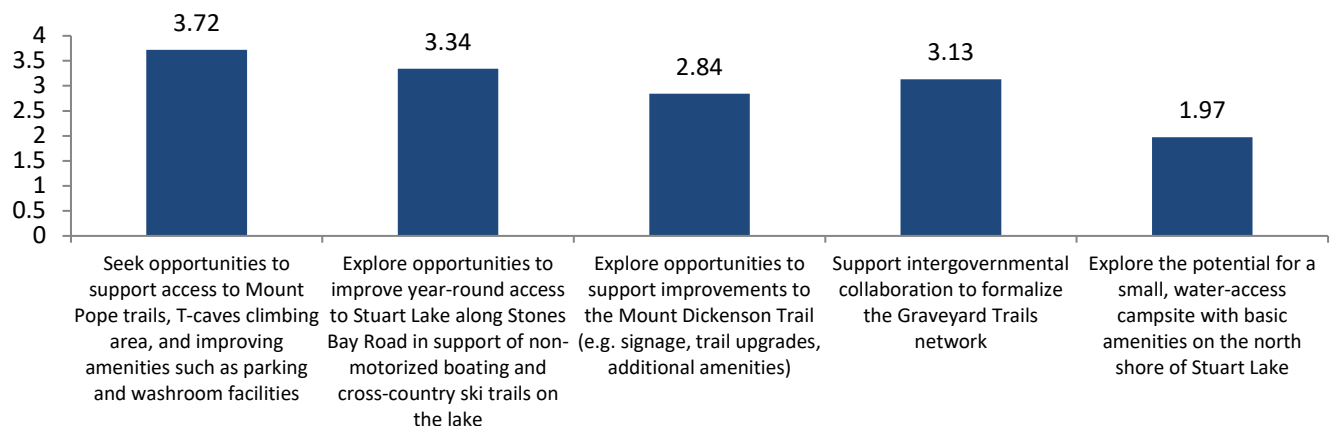
The lower ranked priorities were:

- Explore opportunities to support improvements to the Mount Dickenson Trail (e.g. signage, trail upgrades, additional amenities) (2.84/4).
- Support intergovernmental collaboration to formalize the Graveyard Trails network (3.13/4).

The lowest ranked:

- Explore the potential for a small, water-access campsite with basic amenities on the north shore of Stuart Lake (1.97/4).

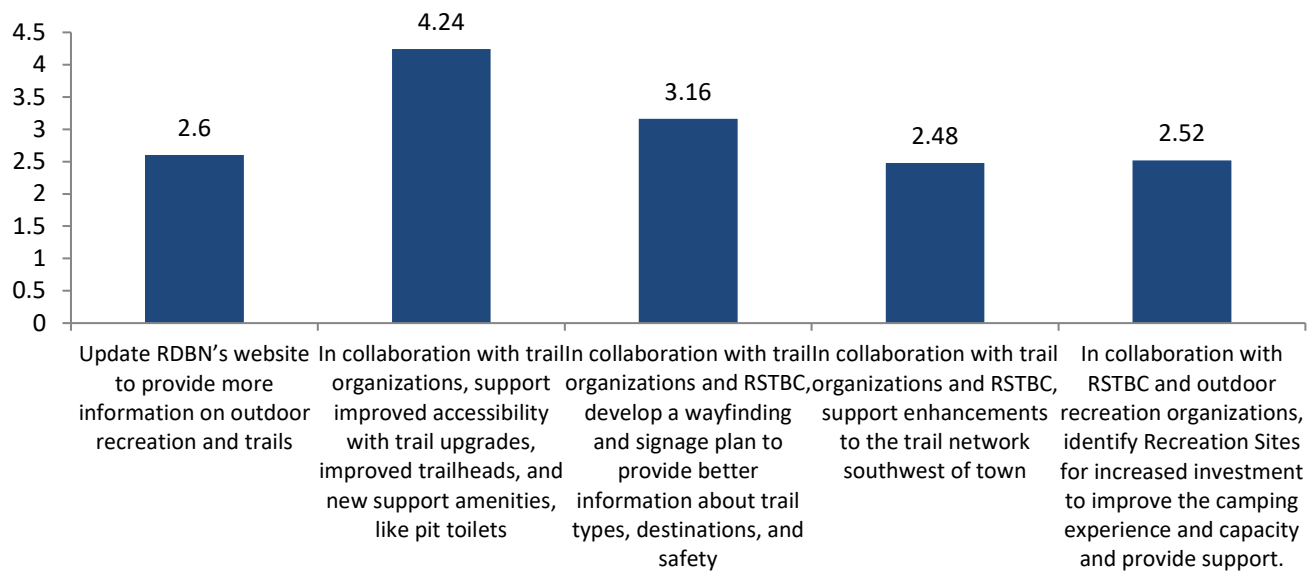
The RDBN's role in increasing access to outdoor recreation in Electoral Area C will primarily be through collaboration with other levels of government, land managers, and community organizations. With this in mind, which actions should the RDBN prioritize



Prioritizing the user experience of parks and trails

Respondents were asked to prioritize actions presented for Goal 4. Participants would like to prioritize improving accessibility in collaboration with trail organizations, including trail upgrades, improved trailheads, and new support amenities (4.24/5). They also prioritized developing a wayfinding and signage plan to provide better information about trail types, destinations, and safety (3.16/4.5).

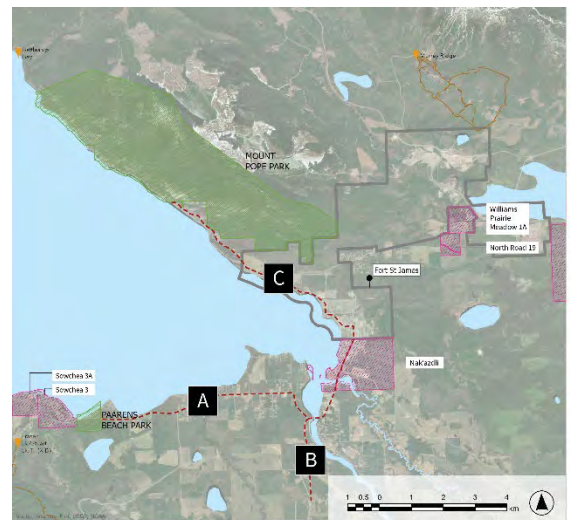
Which actions should the RDBN prioritize for Goal 4? Rank from highest priority to lowest priority by dragging the text boxes or by using the arrows on the right.



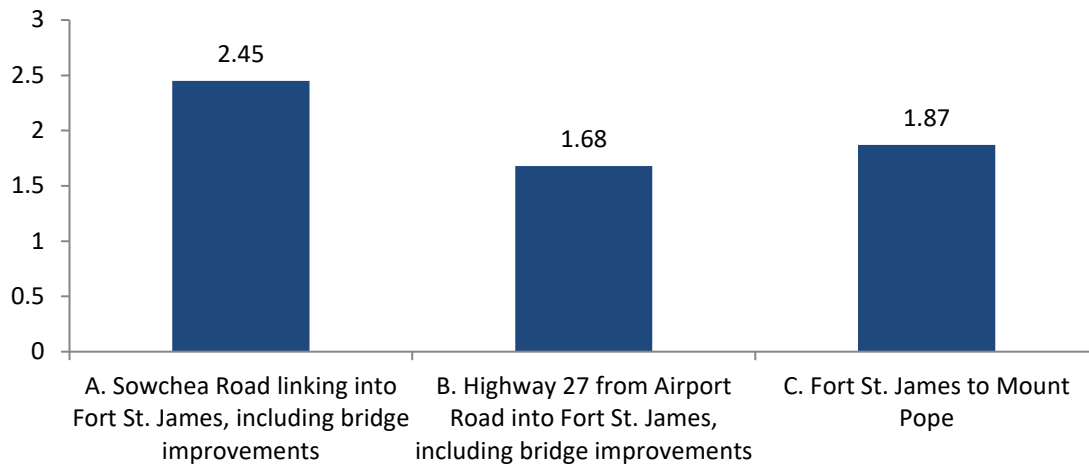
Prioritizing roadside trail connections

Respondents were asked to rank the trail segments from the highest to lowest priority to plan and fund connections with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit. Responses would like to prioritize Sowchea Road linking to Fort St. James, including Bridge improvements (2.45/3), as shown in the map to the left.

- A: Sowchea Road linking into Fort St. James
- B: Highway 27 from Airport Road into Fort St. James, including bridge improvements
- C: Fort St. James to Mount Pope



Three segments of roadside trail connections have been identified for Electoral Area C, as shown in Figure 1 below. The RDBN can support the planning and funding of these connections, including coordination with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.



Additional comments

32 respondents shared further comments on the Draft Parks and Trails Master Plan. Common themes included:

- Multiple comments stressing the importance of meaningful collaboration with Nak'zadli and Dakelh peoples and concern over the lack of involvement in developing the Plan.
- Emphasis on accessibility and inclusion as a priority, including considering marginalized communities in the plan.
- Desire for support to existing organizations and acknowledgement of the work that unofficial groups have done on the trails. Lots of community desire to help.
- Widespread support for safer trail connections and linked trail systems.
- Desire to reuse and revitalize poorly maintained spaces (e.g. former forestry campsites, culturally, and historically significant locations).

APPENDIX B

MAP

RDBN Parks & Trails Master Plan

Electoral Area C

Parks and Recreation Sites Inventory

Final
June 2026

Client:

Consultant:

Scale: 1:1,000,000
(on 11x17 Inch Sheet)



LEES
ASSOCIATES

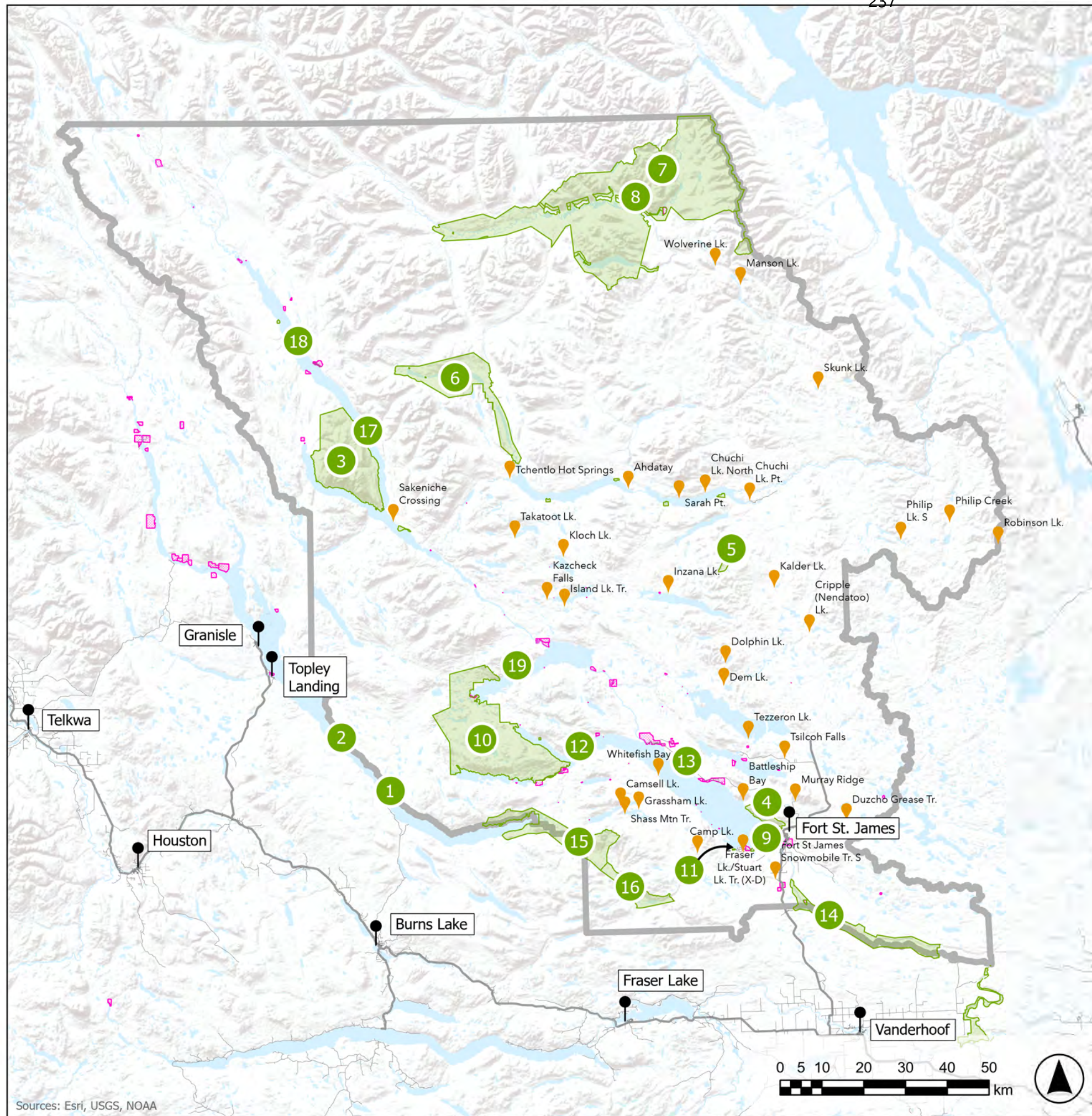
Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------|
| | RDBN Electoral Area C | | Lakes |
| | Reserves | | Rivers & Streams |
| | Recreation Sites - Electoral Area C | | Municipality |
| | BC Provincial Parks - Electoral Area C | | Major road |
| | | | Minor road |

Note: There were no RDBN owned or managed parks, trails, or outdoor recreation amenities in Electoral Area C at the time of this plan.

BC Provincial Parks in Electoral Area C

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - HOOK (DEEP BAY) SITE |
| 2 | BABINE LAKE MARINE PARK - SANDPOINT SITE |
| 3 | MOUNT BLANCHET PARK |
| 4 | MOUNT POPE PARK |
| 5 | MUDZENCHOOT PARK |
| 6 | NATION LAKES PARK |
| 7 | OMINECA PARK |
| 8 | OMINECA PROTECTED AREA |
| 9 | PAARENS BEACH PARK |
| 10 | RUBYROCK LAKE PARK |
| 11 | SOWCHEA BAY PARK |
| 12 | STUART LAKE MARINE PARK |
| 13 | STUART LAKE PARK |
| 14 | STUART RIVER PARK - LOWER SITE |
| 15 | SUTHERLAND RIVER PARK |
| 16 | SUTHERLAND RIVER PROTECTED AREA |
| 17 | TAKLA LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE |
| 18 | TAKLA MARINE PARK - TAKLA WEST |
| 19 | TREMBLEUR LAKE PARK |



APPENDIX C

PARKS AND TRAILS INVENTORY

RSTBC Sites
Ahdatay
Battleship Bay
Camp Lake
Camsell Lake
Chuchi Lake North
Chuchi Lake Point
Cripple (Nendatoo) Lake
Dem Lake
Dolphin Lake
Grassham Lake
Inzana Lake
Kalder Lake
Kloch Lake
Manson Lake
Philip Creek
Philip Lake South
Robinson Lake
Sakeniche Crossing
Sarah Point
Skunk Lake
Takatoot Lake
Tchentlo Hot Springs
Tezzeron Lake
Tsilcoh Falls
Whitefish Bay
Wolverine Lake

RSTBC Trails
Duzcho Grease Trail
Fort St. James Snowmobile Trail South
Fraser Lake-Stuart Lake Trail
Island Lake Trail
Kazcheck Falls Trail
Murray Ridge Trail
Shass Mountain Trail

District of Fort St. James
Cottonwood Park & Cottonwood Marina
Municipal Campground (within Cottonwood Park)
Goodwin Park
Rotary Kiddie Park
Spirit Square Park

BC Parks
Mount Pope Park
Paarens Beach Park
Sowchea Bay Park
Babine Lake Marine Park – Hook (Deep Bay) Site
Babine Lake Marine Park – Sandpoint Site
Mount Blanchet Park
Mudzenchoot Park
Nation Lakes Park
Omineca Park
Omineca Protected Area
Rubyrock Lake Park
Stuart Lake Marine Park
Stuart Lake Park
Stuart River Park
Sutherland River Park
Sutherland River Protected Area
Takla Lake Ecological Reserve
Takla Lake Marine Park
Trembleur Lake Park



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Alex Eriksen, Director of Environmental Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **Purchase of a New Dump Truck**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Board approve the purchase of a New 2027 Western Star 47X Dump Truck from Velocity Truck Inland Truck & Equipment for a total of \$298, 807 plus applicable taxes.

BACKGROUND

The 2026 Environmental Service Capital Budget includes the purchase of a new dump truck for the Clearview Landfill. The Landfills currently have dump trucks that are critical for hauling landfill cover which is a component of landfill compliance. The Clearview dump truck is increasingly unreliable which puts the RDBN behind on routine tasks. In addition, the RDBN has several other tasks that are not landfill related such as hauling soil for projects, septage bed maintenance, and transfer station maintenance, which historically are conducted using the landfill dump trucks. The new dump truck will provide needed continuity for the landfill and field operations. The current Dump truck (T6) will be sold once the new one arrives.

The current fleet of Dump Trucks is shown in the table below.

Unit	Make/Model	Site	Condition	Mileage	Reliability	Replace
T6	1999 Kenworth T880	CLF	Fair	983,000 km	med	2026
T4	2015 CAT CT660	KLF	Poor to fair	48,947 km	low	2028
T12	2026 Kenworth T880	ALL	Excellent	20,847 km	High	2035

The 10-year capital plan included the replacement of one dump truck in 2026, and this purchase will fulfill this plan. The 2026 budget allocation for this purchase is \$400,000.

EVALUATION:

The RDBN posted a Request for Quotes (RFQ) on BC Bid in April and received four (4) quotes, all of which met the required specifications and range from a 3 to 6-month delivery.

Scoring

Quoted vehicles were scored on a point system as follows:

Quotation Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Diamond Truck Centre	Inland Group	Velocity Truck Center	Velocity Truck Center
Quoted Vehicle		2027 International HX620	2026 Kenworth T880	2027 Freightliner 114SD Plus	2027 Western Star 47X
Specifications	25	17.55	19.65	14.93	19.31
Service package	20	15.00	14.50	15.00	15.00
Delivery Date	10	5.40	7.40	5.20	5.20
Quote Quality	5	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Price	40	36.50	33.06	40.00	36.76
Total Points	100	78.20	78.36	78.88	80.02
Rank		4	3	2	1

As per the evaluation criteria, staff is recommending purchasing the 2027 Western Star 47X from Velocity Truck Center as it met all of the specification requirements, has a comparable service package and has a mid-range price. The prices quoted ranged from \$274,627 to \$332,262.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **RDBN Pump and Haul Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026 and RDBN Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw No. 2105, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026" and "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw No. 2105, 2026" be adopted this 9th day of July, 2026.

BACKGROUND

At the March 26, 2026 Board meeting, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026 and Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw No. 2105, 2026 were given three readings by the Board. Bylaw No. 2104 required approval of the Inspector of Municipalities. Approval has been received and both bylaws may now be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026
- Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw 2105, 2026

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
BYLAW NO. 2104

A Bylaw to Repeal "Regional District of
Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1095, 1998"

WHEREAS "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1095, 1998" established a service for the purpose of collection, conveyance, treatment, and disposal of sewage from holding tanks;

AND WHEREAS the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako no longer operates this service;

AND WHEREAS pursuant to Section 349(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act*, the participants have consented, in writing, to the adoption of this Bylaw;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in open meeting enacts as follows:

That "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1095, 1998" and all bylaws enacted in amendment thereto are hereby repealed.

This bylaw may be cited as "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026".

READ A FIRST TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

READ A SECOND TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

READ A THIRD TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Local Service Establishment Repeal Bylaw No. 2104, 2026".

DATED AT BURNS LAKE this 26th day of March, 2026



Corporate Administrator

CONSENT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL AREA "A" RECEIVED this 26th day of March, 2026

CONSENT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL AREA "C" RECEIVED this 26th day of March, 2026

CONSENT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL AREA "D" RECEIVED this 26th day of March, 2026

CONSENT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL AREA "E" RECEIVED this 26th day of March, 2026

CONSENT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR ELECTORAL AREA "F" RECEIVED this 26th day of March, 2026

APPROVED BY THE INSPECTOR OF MUNICIPALITIES this 21 day of June, 2026

ADOPTED this ____ day of ____

Chairperson

Corporate Administrator



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
BYLAW NO. 2105

A Bylaw to Repeal "Regional District of
Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Bylaw No. 1101, 1999"

WHEREAS "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Bylaw No. 1101, 1999" established regulations governing sewerage connections related to the collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of sewage for participating electoral areas;

AND WHEREAS the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako no longer operates the service to which these regulations apply;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in open meeting enacts as follows:

That "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Bylaw No. 1101, 1999" and all bylaws enacted in amendment thereto are hereby repealed.

This bylaw may be cited as "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw No. 2105, 2026".

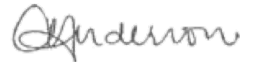
READ A FIRST TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

READ A SECOND TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

READ A THIRD TIME this 26th day of March, 2026

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Pump and Haul Sewage Disposal Regulation Repeal Bylaw No. 2105, 2026".

DATED AT BURNS LAKE this 26th day of March, 2026



Corporate Administrator

ADOPTED this ____ day of ____

Chairperson

Corporate Administrator



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment
Bylaw No. 2114, 2026 - Adoption**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2114, 2026 be adopted this 9th day of July, 2026.

BACKGROUND

Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2114, 2026 was given three readings by the Board on June 25, 2026. The Board may now adopt the bylaw.

ATTACHMENTS:

Bylaw 2114, 2026

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

1. Relationships with First Nations



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

BYLAW NO. 2114

A bylaw to amend the boundaries of the Southside Rural Fire Protection Service Area within a portion of Electoral Area E

WHEREAS the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has established by Bylaw No. 761 a service of fire protection to a portion of Electoral Area E known as the Southside Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area;

AND WHEREAS the Regional District may amend a Local Service Establishment Bylaw;

AND WHEREAS the Regional District has received a request from owners of the properties to be included in the Southside Rural Fire Protection Service Area;

AND WHEREAS the Director of Electoral Area E has consented in writing to the adoption of a bylaw which would amend the boundaries of the service area which amendments are described herein;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

- 1) That the Regional District hereby amends the boundaries of the Southside Rural Fire Protection Service Area by including the following properties:

THE FRACTIONAL SOUTH ½ OF DISTRICT LOT 745, RANGE 4 COAST DISTRICT EXCEPT THEREOUT STRIPS OF LAND BEING THE MOST SOUTHERLY AND THE MOST WESTERLY 66 FEET IN PARALLEL WIDTH THEREOF

BLOCK A, DISTRICT LOT 749, RANGE 4 COAST DISTRICT

NW1/4, DISTRICT LOT 744, RANGE 4 COAST DISTRICT

SW1/4, DISTRICT LOT 744, RANGE 4 COAST DISTRICT

NE1/4, DISTRICT LOT 744, RANGE 4 COAST DISTRICT

and that the resulting boundaries of the Southside Rural Fire Protection Service Area are as shown on Schedule "A";

- 2) This bylaw may be cited as Southside Rural Fire Protection Service Area Boundary Amendment Bylaw No. 2114, 2026.

READ A FIRST TIME this 25th day of June, 2026

READ A SECOND TIME this 25th day of June, 2026

READ A THIRD TIME this 25th day of June, 2026

ADOPTED this day of , 2026

Chairperson

Corporate Administrator

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Bylaw No. 2114 as adopted.

Corporate Administrator

249

François Lake

Amendt Rd

Properties Subject
to Bylaw No. 2114

Property Subject
to Bylaw No. 2114

Bylaw 2114: Schedule A

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)

Produced: 2026-06-10



Southside Rural Fire Protection Area

0 250 500



Meters





Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) Economic Development Service Grant to the Village of Telkwa for Community Hall Kitchen Upgrade Project**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board approve an Economic Development Service Grant from Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) of \$10,500 to the Village of Telkwa for the Telkwa Community Hall Kitchen Upgrade project.

BACKGROUND

The Telkwa Community Hall is a key gathering space used for community events, meetings, and programs. Existing kitchen equipment is outdated and unreliable, and there is a lack of sufficient dishware for typical event sizes. Upgrading to modern commercial equipment and adding reusable dishware will improve safety, efficiency, and user experience, while reducing reliance on disposable items. This project will enhance the functionality and accessibility of the facility, supporting ongoing community use and engagement.

The Village is requesting \$10,500 towards this \$15,000 project.
The Area A Economic Development Service balance is \$47,902.
Director Stoltenberg is supportive of the request.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **Grant to Stellat'en First Nation for Marianne Louis Memorial Hall Restoration Project**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

1) That the Board authorize contributing \$5,000 from the RDBN's allocation of Northwest BC Regional Funding (RBA) to Stellat'en First Nation for this First Nations Outreach project.

2) That the Board authorize contributing up to \$5,000 in Build Communities Strong Fund monies from the Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) allocation to Stellat'en First Nation for a Cultural Infrastructure project and further,

(participants/weighted/majority)

3) That the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$5,000 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

BACKGROUND

This project will include energy efficiency upgrades as well as emergency exit and accessibility improvements as Phase 2 of restoration at the Marianne Louis Memorial Hall. This project supports both the 2024 Comprehensive Community Plan, as well as the 2024 Strategic Planning Report for Stellat'en First Nation. The total project cost for Phase 2 is \$173,457.

Stellat'en First Nation is requesting \$20,000 towards this project.

Director Parker supports a contribution in the amount of \$10,000.

The Area D allocation of Build Communities Strong Funds is \$261,827.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

1. Relationships with First Nations

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

1.2 Share and discuss respective strategic goals and objectives to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration on areas of mutual interest.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Grant in Aid to Stuart Lake Golf Club**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board approve a \$15,000 Regional Grant in Aid from the Area C (Fort St. James Rural) allocation to the Stuart Lake Golf Club for a Clubhouse Replacement Feasibility project.

BACKGROUND

Please see the attached application for further information.

The remaining Regional Grant in Aid allocation for Area C is \$44,076.
Director Greenaway supports the contribution.

ATTACHMENTS:

Stuart Lake Golf Club Clubhouse Feasibility Application

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable

Nellie Davis

From: Nellie Davis
Sent: June 16, 2026 3:47 PM
To: Nellie Davis
Subject: Grant in Aid Application - Stuart Lake Golf Club

Grant in Aid Application

Organization Legal Name:
 Stuart Lake Golf Club

Contact Email Address:
 [REDACTED]

Contact Phone Number:
 [REDACTED]

Organization Mailing Address:
 2704 Stones Bay Rd. PO Box 158 Fort St. James, BC. V0J 1P0

Project or purpose for which you require assistance:

We are requiring assistance in the funding for our feasibility study for a new clubhouse to be built. I have attached a file that includes the presentation that was provided to us from Prakash Architecture, and we are looking for help to cover the costs of the initial feasibility study.

Amount of Grant Requested:
 15000

To the best of my knowledge, all of the information that is provided in this application is true and correct. Furthermore, I hereby certify that this application for assistance is NOT being made on behalf of an individual, industry, commercial or business:
 Yes

Please describe the services/benefits that your organization provides to the community. Are these services/benefits available to the community from another organization or agency?:

We are the local golf club in Fort St. James, and provide a great source of recreational activity for the town. We are consistently holding events throughout the summer at our club, so that is why we are starting the process of building a new building that the whole community can benefit from. We have numerous businesses that use our facilities to host banquets, fundraisers, and other events, along with it being available to rent to the public.

Is your organization voluntary and non-profit?:
 Yes

Please detail any remuneration paid, or funds otherwise made available to members, officers, etc. of your organization.:

We have staff members that receive wages, but the board members, along with members of the club, do not receive any sort of monetary compensation.

Please comment on the number of members/volunteers in your organization and how long your organization has been in operation.:

We have a board that consists of 7 members that volunteer their time and effort. The club has been in operation since 1991.

Assistance is being requested for::

Capital project and/or equipment

Please describe the project/event for which you are requesting assistance. If you are applying for an exemption from fees and/or charges or other consideration, please provide details of your request here. Attach additional information if required.:

We are requesting assistance for the cost of the initial feasibility study to be conducted by Prakash Architecture to begin the process of building a new clubhouse.

Describe how this proposal will benefit the community.:

By providing a new clubhouse to the community, it will create a modern recreational space for the community to enjoy. As previously stated, our current facilities are already used frequently by the community through a plethora of different events, and we feel as though a new updated facility will benefit the community as a whole. With a new building, we will be able to accommodate more members, provide additional revenue for local businesses, and create a fun environment for all to enjoy, among other positive opportunities.

Have you applied for a grant/funding from other source(s)?:

No

Has the organization received assistance (grant in aid/waiving of fees, etc.), from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in previous years?:

Yes - Through the RDBN Recreation Contribution Grant Program (RCGP)

If yes, please provide the year, the amount, and the purpose for the assistance.:

2024 - \$10,000 (RCGP)

2025 - \$10,000 (RCGP)

2026 - \$10,000 (RCGP)

The purpose for this assistance was to supplement labor costs for clubhouse personnel and grounds people to relieve pressure on volunteers and staff. The funds have been use solely for increase regular employee hours (straight time) on maintenance resulting in decrease volunteer work on maintenance.

Does your Organization: (Please check all that apply):

Provide an opportunity for individuals to make direct contributions?

Contact Name:

Kyle Hentis

Attach supporting financial information, ie: budget/financial report. Ensure all information is clearly itemized, including: total cost of project, grants/funding from other sources, funding contributed by applicant, total expenses for the fiscal year.

Which RDBN electoral area(s) receive services or benefits from your organization?:

Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Letter of Support Request – College of New Caledonia**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Board provides a letter of support to the College of New Caledonia to support its application to the Province of BC's Project Based Labour Market Training funding program for its DRIVE program.

BACKGROUND

The College of New Caledonia (CNC) is applying to the Province of BC's Project Based Labour Market Training program for funding to support its DRIVE program and requires letters of support with the application.

The Project Based Labour Market Training program provides funding to organizations in support of projects that provide a combination of training, on-the-job work experience and follow-up support to eligible individuals that will improve their employment skills and prepare them for in-demand jobs.

The proposed DRIVE Program will enable participants to obtain Class 2 and Class 3 licenses through a cohort-based format. Delivered by CNC, the program will equip participants for employment as professional drivers by combining licensing, air brake certification, workplace readiness, and required safety training and certification.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Nechako Valley Sporting Association – Resolution of Support Request**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board supports the application to Northern Development Initiative Trust from the Nechako Valley Sporting Association for the 2026 Nechako Nordics Ski Trail and Lighting Upgrade Project.

BACKGROUND

The Nechako Valley Sporting Association is applying to Northern Development Initiative Trust's (NDIT) Recreation Infrastructure Program for funding to support the 2026 Nechako Nordics Ski Trail and Lighting Upgrade Project and requires a resolution of support as part of the application.

The Nechako Valley Sporting Association is a non-profit that supports outdoor recreation in the Vanderhoof area, including the Nechako Nordics cross-country ski club. The Nechako Nordics Trail Upgrade Project will improve and expand the ski trail network by widening and brushing 11.5 km of existing trails, installing 52 new signposts, constructing 0.85 km of new trails, and adding underground lighting in the Archery Area and along the Archery Trail.

These upgrades will enhance trail safety and accessibility, while supporting growing membership and program demand. The new trails will increase capacity and provide more challenging terrain, and the added lighting will create a safe, enjoyable space for evening programming and instruction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Shari Janzen, Community Development Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Regional Business Forum Report**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

Please find attached the final report for the 2026 Bulkley-Nechako Regional Business Forum held in Fraser Lake on May 26, 2026.

Key highlights:

- 115 attendees, including approximately 40 percent representing local small businesses.
- Strong participation from across the regional business community, along with industry, government, and First Nations.
- The Forum supported increased awareness of regional projects, strengthened relationships and collaboration opportunities.
- Approximately two-thirds of event spending remained within the region, supporting local businesses.

Overall, the Forum continues to provide strong value as an initiative that supports regional economic development and business connections.

ATTACHMENTS:

Regional Business Forum Report

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable

Bulkley-Nechako Regional Business Forum Event Final Report

Overview

The 2026 Bulkley-Nechako Regional Business Forum was held in Fraser Lake on May 26, 2026. The event brought together business owners, industry representatives, government, and economic development professionals from across the region.

The Forum continues to serve as an important platform for regional economic development by supporting collaboration, strengthening relationships, and sharing information on major projects and emerging opportunities.

Attendance and Participation

The Forum saw strong engagement, with a total of 115 attendees.

- Approximately 40 percent of attendees represented local and small businesses, highlighting strong participation from the regional business community.
- Participants included a mix of business owners and entrepreneurs, industry and project leaders and managers, First Nations governments and development organizations, local government representatives, economic development professionals, Chamber of Commerce, and business support organizations



This level of participation demonstrates continued interest in the Forum and reinforces its role as a key convening event within the Bulkley-Nechako region.

Program and Outcomes

The Forum program featured presentations, panel discussions, and networking opportunities focused on regional priorities and collaboration.

Key outcomes included:

- Increased awareness of major projects and economic activity across the region.
- Strengthened connections between businesses, industry, and government.
- Enhanced opportunities for collaboration and information sharing.
- Continued positioning of the Forum as a hub for regional dialogue.

Participants particularly valued the keynote speaker, panel discussions, and networking opportunities, which were identified as core strengths of the event.

Participant Feedback

Post-event feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction.

Key themes from participants included:

- The event was well organized and professionally delivered.
- Content was relevant and informative, particularly related to major projects and economic opportunities.
- Networking opportunities were valuable and supported relationship building.
- The Forum provided meaningful value to businesses and organizations.

Suggestions for improvement included increasing interactive elements, expanding topic areas such as marketing and business development, and enhancing structured networking opportunities. Ongoing refinements based on participant feedback will help ensure the Forum remains relevant, responsive, and impactful in future years.

Financial Overview

The Forum was delivered in a financially responsible manner.

- Event expenses were fully covered through sponsorship and registration revenue.
- No additional operating funds were required

This model demonstrates the sustainability of the Forum and the strong support from sponsors and participants.

Local Economic Impact

An assessment of event spending shows a significant positive impact on the local economy.

- Approximate event spending: \$28,000
- Approximate local spending: \$19,000 (68 percent)
- Approximate non-local spending: \$9,000 (32 percent)

Key observations:

- Approximately two-thirds of all spending remained within the Bulkley-Nechako region.
- Local expenditures were concentrated in catering, food services, décor, and event supplies.
- Local vendors played a significant role in event delivery.
- Non-local spending was primarily related to key event components that could not be sourced locally, including the keynote speaker, specialized services, and select equipment.

This reflects a strong commitment to supporting local businesses and maximizing regional economic benefits.



Conclusion

The 2026 Bulkley-Nechako Regional Business Forum was a successful and well-received event that delivered strong value to speakers, sponsors, and the attendees.

With strong attendance, positive feedback, and measurable local economic impact, the Forum continues to play an important role in supporting economic development and collaboration across the Bulkley-Nechako region.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **2020-2025 Agriculture Plan Audit**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Discussion.

BACKGROUND

The RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan (2020-2025) is now in the process of being updated. Upland Agricultural Consulting Ltd. has been awarded the contract to complete this work alongside RDBN staff. At present it is anticipated that the updated version will follow the same format for identifying Priority Action Areas and Implementation Considerations. The new RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan will also include a high-level Foundations Report update.

The attached RDBN 2020-2025 Food and Agriculture Plan Audit will be used to help guide this process. RDBN Board of Directors are encouraged to review both the audit and the current RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and provide feedback on which Priority Action Areas should remain as priorities moving forward, as well as identify any additional Priority Action Areas that should be incorporated in the updated Food and Agriculture Plan.

The Engagement Work Plan is currently being developed by the contractor. As part of the engagement process, a working group will be established, similar to the one used during the development of the 2020-2025 RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan. RDBN Directors interested in being on the Working Group can contact Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services.

ATTACHMENTS:

RDBN 2020-2025 Food and Agriculture Plan Audit
[RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan – April 2020 \(current plan\)](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

4.2 Revisit, prioritize and advance recommendations of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and the work of the Agriculture Coordinator.

RDBN 2020 Ag Plan Audit – Completed June 2026

Priority Area 1: Support Producers in Navigating Government Policies		
1.1 Develop a communication strategy to disseminate information to producers on government regulations affecting agriculture.		
Section	Task	Status/Notes
1.1 a	Request support from the AGRI in developing fact sheets, diagrams, webinars and other communication tools to help clarify the path to compliance with regulations.	Done / Ongoing eg: Livestock Processing Pathway Growing Opportunities Newsletter and Podcast
1.1 b	Continue to follow changes to the ALC act, specifically Bills 52 and 15 and include in communications strategy.	Ongoing
1.1 c	Identify any areas of misinformation, lack of clarity, or conflicting policies to address in the communication strategy.	Done
1.1 d	Consider industry organizations that are also leading workshops and other producer events.	Ongoing
1.2 Create and disseminate producer focused tools to support clarity with the multiple levels of government regulation.		
1.2 a	Host workshops, field days, etc. communicate better understanding of govt regulations.	Not initiated
1.2 b	Include communication tools on the RDBN website where appropriate (e.g. description of the role of rural directors and the Rural and Agricultural Committee, comment/feedback page).	Done
1.2 c	Support local small-scale producers to navigate regulations to sell products to consumers and lobby on behalf of these producers to have their voice heard.	Done – eg: BCVMC Ongoing
Priority Area 2: Prepare for Natural Emergencies		
2.1 Update and publish RDBN Agriculture Emergency Preparedness Information.		
Section	Task	Status
2.1 a	Keep publications up to date.	Done
2.1 b	Ensure that information is in plain language and easy to navigate for a range of technological ability levels.	Done
2.1 c	Consider strategies for how to disseminate information for those not on-line in both emergencies and non-emergencies.	Done eg: Association meeting presentations and Voyent
2.2 Strengthen livestock emergency preparedness.		
2.2 a	Host producer emergency preparedness workshops on Firesmart and livestock preparedness.	Done

2.2 b	Host mock emergency exercises to help prepare RDBN staff and other EOC agencies as well as producers.	Done
2.2 c	Develop a <i>risk mitigation of farmland</i> pilot program of BNFFG CAI for 2020 In 2021, to move towards producers being able to utilize on their farmland.	Done eg: Crown/Ag interface risk. Now defunded.
2.3 In the event of emergency, activate Agriculture Emergency plan within regional EOC in events involving agriculture.		
2.3 a	Update Agriculture Emergency plan with any lessons learned from past events and/or mock emergency exercises.	Done
2.3 b	Coordinate agriculture support in the EOC to assist producers in animal/feed movement/relocation.	Done
2.4 Strengthen responses for recovery from emergency events impacting agriculture.		
2.4 a	Advocate for Agri-Recovery funding for significant agriculture events to be administered by Risk Management Staff of AGRI.	Done
2.5 Identify regional risk mitigation projects to assist producers.		
2.5 a	Identify projects for FESBC than can assist agriculture producers.	N/A
2.5 b	Identify projects for CRI than can assist agriculture producers.	N/A
2.5 c	Prepare alternate route plans for producers in case of highway closures.	Done (EOC staff in an event)
Priority Area 3: Develop the RDBN Food and Agriculture Sector and Market(s)		
3.1 Advocate for and facilitate access to affordable shavings and hay.		
3.1 a	Explore potential using alternative materials in livestock bedding such as recycled cardboard.	Done
3.1 b	Advocate producer associations to continue research in the form of a feasibility study in establishing a more permanent shavings supply.	Done
3.1 c	Advocate for Business Plan development for a sustainable shavings industry.	Done
3.1 d	Submit potential hay sellers who contact RDBN to the BCFC to add to their website hay list.	Done
3.2 Continue to update and distribute the <i>Connecting Producers and Consumers Guide</i> annually.		
3.2 a	Update and promote website content.	Done
3.2 b	Update and distribute printed booklet.	Ongoing
3.2 c	Expand locations for where the guide is available.	Ongoing
3.2 d	Track number of guides that are printed and distributed annually as well as number of participating producers and other food businesses.	Ongoing
3.3 Undertake a food hub feasibility study and a regional food economy assessment.		
3.3 a	Hire qualified contractors to support the RDBN in undertaking a food hub feasibility study and regional food economy assessment.	Done

3.3 b	Identify possible pilot projects of food processing and distribution hub(s) within the region and establish working group for each pilot and set objectives for increasing local food access.	Done Ongoing as required
3.3 c	Hold workshops on cooperatives, SSFPA, etc.	Done Ongoing as required
3.3 d	Support working group(s) to secure funding and pilot food hub(s), work on increasing local food consumption and supporting local food export beyond the region in such ways as processing, and tracking progress (e.g. number of participating producers, increased value and volume sold locally and exported).	Ongoing
3.4 Undertake specific product market studies to better understand emerging opportunities.		
3.4 a	Consider a market opportunity study for hemp and cannabis in the RDBN.	Done by third party
3.4 b	Consider food and fibre products from farms as well as from nontimber forest products from forested ALR and crown land.	Ongoing (collaboration)
3.5 Develop an overall marketing plan and supportive print and online communication materials for promoting RDBN food and agriculture.		
3.5 a	Consider developing, or collaborate in developing in a Planning for Profit in the North series	Investigated – requires funding
3.5 b	Consider developing a regional brand to widely promote RDBN businesses that may be used in conjunction with province-wide branding as well as individual business brands.	BuyBC is best option
3.5 c	Support producers in training/workshops to market/transport RDBN product beyond the region.	Done
3.6 Expand food and agriculture activities in the region.		
3.6 a	Continue to support BCYA in the Land Matching Program to encourage new entrants.	Done
3.6 b	Promote agriculture diversification and value-adding through RDBN website, displays at events and workshops.	Done
Priority Area 4: Engage a Broad Audience in Food and Agriculture Activities and Information		
4.1 Continue to support and build relationships and networks around RDBN food and agriculture.		
4.1 a	Continue networking with producers, producer associations and agriculture stakeholders.	Ongoing
4.1 b	Ensure agriculture representation in the Rural and Agriculture Committee of the RDBN.	Now COW
4.1 c	Coordinate with producers to form their own association to gain strength in numbers.	As needed
4.2 Promote sustainable agriculture practices.		
4.2 a	Update and promote website content to include a range of best practices and success stories in implementing restorative, sustainable, and off-grid agriculture practices.	Done eg: website and videos, podcast
4.2 b	Develop enterprise budgets for commodity groups in the region and Northern BC that integrate sustainable agriculture practices.	Investigated – funding application declined.

4.2 c	Promote participation in existing programs such as the Environmental Farm Plan program.	Done
4.2 d	Help to link producers to land and water stewardship programs and funding sources.	Done
4.2 e	Advocate for opportunities, funding and programs which will enhance agriculture production, processing and distribution.	Done
4.2 f	Assist in the Vanderhoof area to enable the formation of a Vanderhoof Farmers Institute.	Ongoing – needs local champion.
4.3 Organize and host workshops, conferences, and producer events.		
4.3 a	Organize regional agriculture forum(s) in consultation with other agriculture organizations to select complimentary times and agendas.	Ongoing – as needed
4.3 b	In consultation with local organizations, plan and promote other events within the region (e.g. promoting farmers markets, water quality related field trips).	Ongoing
4.3 c	Continue to provide small grants to support community events in the region.	Ongoing – decline in CCAP – increase in Grant in Aid, Ec Dev Service Funds
4.4 Continue to support youth in agriculture initiatives.		
4.4 a	Continue to promote school-based agriculture opportunities utilizing BC based agriculture education programs and special agriculture days.	Ongoing
4.4 b	Continue networking and assisting in specific youth agriculture projects.	Ongoing
Priority Area 5: Prevent and Manage Invasive and Harmful Species		
5.1 Advocate for and support collective efforts to prevent and manage invasive species.		
5.1 a	Continue financial support to NWIPC and maintain RDBN staff person on the NWIPC committee.	Ongoing
5.1 b	Advocate for producers to have support from NWIPC for education, programs, etc. to manage/eradicate noxious weeds.	Ongoing
5.1 c	Advocate and support NWIPC in working with Ministry of Transportation, CN and Hydro to manage noxious weeds.	Ongoing
5.2 Work with producers and senior levels of government to advocate for and create strategies to address on farm challenges posed by wild animals.		
5.2 a	Support producers in advocating to government to investigate the impact of increased elk and deer populations in the region affecting agriculture lands.	Ongoing
5.2 b	Support producers and FLNRORD in securing funding for predator fencing.	No action requested
5.2 c	Support producers in advocating to government to consider appropriate methods of population control in farming areas.	Done

5.2 d	Advocate to other entities and government departments to better manage invasive species in non-RDBN jurisdictions (e.g. Ministry of Transportation, CN Rail, Pipeline ROWs, recreational areas).	Done – through NWIPC
5.3 Ensure that invasive species are prevented and managed on RDBN owned or managed lands.		
5.3 a	Identify any and all RDBN lands that contain invasive species and develop prevention and management strategies based on findings.	Ongoing
5.4 Encourage private landowners to prevent and manage invasive species.		
5.4 a	Redevelop the homeowners rebate program and promote it effectively.	Done
5.4 b	Identify potential to support special projects through external funding for containment and eradication.	Done
5.5 Encourage private landowners to prevent and manage all weeds, noxious and native.		
5.5 a	Add to the RDBN website information on weeds and other hazardous items, such as water hemlock and blue green algae.	Done
5.5 b	Advocate for producer support in events of livestock losses to noxious plants/blue green algae.	Done
Priority Area 6: Ensure Agriculture Policies are In-Place and Consistent		
6.1. Continue to protect and preserve the Agricultural Land Reserve and soils having capability for agricultural purposes through the restriction of subdivision and limiting encroachment of non-farm uses.		
6.1 a	Discourage exclusions from the ALR and subdivision within the ALR.	Evaluated case-by-case
6.1 b	Support municipalities and rural areas to update statutory plans with ALC updates pertaining to agricultural lands in the region.	Done Ongoing
6.2 Continue to advocate to senior levels of government and industry around issues that impact RDBN producers.		
6.2 a	Continue to advocate and participate in ongoing discussions around key topics such as foreign and corporate ownership of farmland.	Ongoing
6.2 b	Continue to monitor ALC updates and advocate for an outcome to the ALR review that will be supportive of producers in the region.	Ongoing
Priority Area 7: Increase Climate Change Resiliency		
7.1 Continue to collaborate in implementing the BNFFG CAI Strategy.		
7.1 a	Continue to support implementation projects.	Done
7.1 b	For 2023 & beyond, advocate for funding projects not achieved in first funding round and/or secondary projects.	Done
7.2 Increase climate risk mitigation and adaptation for agriculture lands.		

7.2 a	Integrate RDBN Protective Services, including agriculture producers, in risk mitigation and adaptation projects, such as HRVA.	Done
7.2 b	Advocate for agriculture producers to allow risk mitigation on crown lands adjacent to agriculture lands.	Done
7.3 Reduce organic and plastic agricultural waste in the landfill.		
7.3 a	Continue educating producers and encourage alternate uses for agriculture plastic waste.	Done
7.3 b	Explore and possibly assist in development of agriculture plastic recycling initiative.	Done
7.3 c	Promote agriculture composters to abattoirs to reduce offal waste and predator attraction at Regional landfills.	Done
7.3 d	Provide information and materials, such as waste guides, to clarify what is acceptable for disposal by means of recycling and landfilling. For example, promoting information on the existing bylaws that prohibit industrial waste (i.e. harvested material) at the landfill.	Done
7.3 e	Encourage on-farm composting of organic waste.	Ongoing
Priority Area 8: Continue to Build Capacity for Effective and Strategic Implementation		
8.1 Update the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan every 5-7 years.		
8.1 a	Update <i>Foundations Report</i> with new Agriculture Census Data (Forthcoming, 2022).	Ongoing
8.1 b	Conduct impact assessments to understand the changes occurring as a result of strategic interventions. Use this information to update the Food and Agriculture Plan. Use multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data.	Done – eg: after action reviews
8.2 Maintain the Agriculture Coordinator Position.		
8.2 a	Consider collaborating with NDIT to establish a pilot staff position in Non-Timber Forest Products that can work alongside the RDBN Agriculture Coordinator.	N/A RDBN First Nations Liaison more effective
8.3 Compile and consolidate quantitative and qualitative data on food systems and agriculture in the RDBN.		
8.3 a	Encourage AGRI to update ALUIs in Smithers and Vanderhoof to enable trend analysis and year to year comparisons.	Done
8.3 b	Update RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and Foundations report with new Census of Agriculture data (Forthcoming 2021).	Ongoing – updated in subsequent documents
8.3 c	Continue to monitor any conversion of farmland to permitted non-farm uses such as silviculture and agritourism.	Done / Ongoing through ALR referrals
8.4 Continue to be a learning organization.		
8.4 a	Continue to actively engage in creating an understanding of UNDRIP. Assist and encourage ways of working with First Nation communities.	Ongoing
8.4 b	Consider how the RDBN can support and facilitate the implementation of UNDRIP.	Ongoing (now DRIPA)



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: John Illes, CFO
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Directors' Remuneration Update**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Direction

BACKGROUND

This memo proposes several changes to the Directors' Remuneration Bylaw. The items highlighted in yellow show the current rates updated for inflation. The proposed changes are highlighted in blue.

Reimbursement for Meal Expenses

At the last meeting there was concern about the reimbursement of meal expenses due to the inflationary pressures on restaurant food over the last five years. This proposed change daily allowance for meals outside the Regional District will now be \$129 per day (less \$23 for every meal otherwise provided) and \$144 per day (less \$23 for every meal otherwise provided) in the Vancouver and Victoria area.

Internet Expenses

When this section was introduced rural highspeed internet was less available. The current expectation is that most individuals seeking election will already have high speed internet for personal home use (such as streaming). Staff are proposing that this section be repealed. This will partially offset the increase in costs associated with the provision of Directors' phones and computers.

Schedule C Travel Time Remuneration Update

This section is proposed to be updated to allow directors to claim for travel time remuneration for conventions held within the Regional District.

Schedule A Daycare Cost reimbursement for attendance at Board and Committee Meetings

The province recently introduced new legislation for parental leave for elected officials to better support gender equity and inclusive participation. Schedule A Section 8 is proposed for consideration to provide greater equity for those wishing to seek election and aligns with the

newly proposed legislation. Schedule A is included as an attachment in the three options described below.

Options 1 to 3

These three options are built on adjusting the base salary of the directors to match the 2024 average of the representative Regional Districts plus 10% (to account for inflation). The increase is greater for the Electoral Area Directors, minor for the Municipal Directors, significant for the chair's remuneration and actually slightly less for the vice-chair position.

While the vice-chair base remuneration is less, the Acting Chair section (Schedule A Part 4) is proposed to be updated to increase the acting chair pay to \$400 per meeting and to make the vice-chair eligible for this stipend.

Each option presented contains a Schedule A. Options 2 and 3 also contain a portion of Schedule C. This Schedule C modifies what the Electoral Area Directors can claim for "meeting pay". The proposed amendments are now expressed in annual amounts to make the information more accessible.

Option 1 proposal involves moving all positions to the 2024 average of representative Regional District plus 10% to account for inflation.

Option 2 is a similar proposal to option 1; however, it proposes to pay each Electoral Area directors and the chair the new amount in Option 1 without the need to "claim" for extra meetings and events as they occur. While this option would be easier for both payroll staff and the directors to implement, it has the disadvantage that the link between the number of extra meetings attended and the amount of remuneration collected would be less. Under this option directors would still receive a "meeting" amount to attend conventions and training.

Option 3 is the same as option 2 except for the remuneration for Municipal Directors. In the last meeting the Board discussed the fact that many member municipalities are unable to pay similar benefits to their elected officials as compared to the Regional District.

Our Regional District is unique in the province in that it contains all small municipalities with the Town of Smithers being the largest with a population just over 5,000 people. Regional Districts usually remunerate their municipal directors around 50% of Electoral Area directors with the thoughts that about 1/2 a municipal directors' full elected officials' remuneration is provided by the municipality. Small municipalities often are unable to provide the same remuneration as our nearest neighboring large municipalities. This may justify an increase in the Municipal Director remuneration so that it is more similar to that of an Electoral Area director. This option proposes an increase in the Municipal Remuneration from 50% of an Electoral Area Director to 65% of an Electoral Area Director.

The costs to both the Rural Government and General Government service are included for all three options. In addition, the total tax rate increase for both municipal and electoral area

taxpayers are included. The most expensive option is just less than a penny per \$1,000 of assessed value for Electoral Area Taxpayers and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a penny for Municipal Taxpayers. Options 1 and 2 is estimated to be around an overall 0.5% property tax increase and Option 3 is estimated to be around an overall 1% property tax increase. Any impact to the 2027 budget as a result of the direction provided on the remuneration bylaw, will be incorporated into the overall budget discussions and the Board will maintain the flexibility to set the overall tax increases based on 2027 priorities and the new strategic plan.

General Government (paid for by both the municipalities and the electoral areas) cover the base salary and the meeting attendance costs for all directors as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair costs. Rural Government covers the extra salary that Electoral Area Directors receive (in comparison to the Municipal Directors.)

ATTACHMENTS:

Options for Discussion showing cost and taxation implications
Remuneration Bylaw with Options

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
Not Applicable

	PER DIRECTOR Current	PER DIRECTOR Option 1	PER DIRECTOR Option 2 The Median Simplified	PER DIRECTOR Option 3 The Median Municipal
2026 Remuneration Rates	2026 Rates	The Median		
Expected Renumeration for Electoral Area Directors				
Base	11,436	12,000	12,000	18,000
Rural Additional	7,092	12,160	15,910	9,910
Expected Meeting Pay (21 Meetings Scheduled)	6,090	6,090	6,090	6,090
Average Rural Director Population Pay	2,300	2,300		
Average Rural Director Other Meeting Pay (average 5 Meetings)	1,450	1,450		
	<u>28,368</u>	<u>34,000</u>	<u>34,000</u>	<u>34,000</u>
Average Rural Director Conference Pay (average 10 days)	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900
	<u>31,268</u>	<u>36,900</u>	<u>36,900</u>	<u>36,900</u>
Expected Renumeration for Municipal Directors				
Base	11,436	12,000	12,000	18,000
Expected Meeting Pay (21 Scheduled)	6,090	6,090	6,090	6,090
	<u>17,526</u>	<u>18,090</u>	<u>18,090</u>	<u>24,090</u>
Expected Renumeration for Chair				
If Chair is an Electoral Area Director (Basic from above)	31,268	36,900	36,900	36,900
If Chair is a Municipal Director (Basic from above)	17,526	18,090	18,090	24,090
Estimated number of Meetings of "Chair Work" (18.5 days)	5,365	5,365		
Chair Supplement	<u>22,872</u>	<u>31,000</u>	<u>36,365</u>	<u>36,365</u>
Chair (Electoral Area Director)	59,505	73,265	73,265	73,265
Chair (Municipal Director)	45,763	54,455	54,455	60,455
Expected Renumeration for Vice-Chair				
If Vice-Chair is an Electoral Area Director (Basic from above)	31,268	36,900	36,900	36,900
If Vice-Chair is a Municipal Director (Basic from above)	17,526	18,090	18,090	24,090
Estimated number of Meetings of "Chair Work" (2.5 days)	725	725	725	725
Vice-Chair Supplement	<u>8,580</u>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>6,000</u>
Vice-Chair (Electoral Area Director)	40,573	43,625	43,625	43,625
Vice-Chair (Municipal Director)	26,831	24,815	24,815	30,815
		TOTAL CHANGE FOR RD BUDGET	TOTAL CHANGE FOR RD BUDGET	TOTAL CHANGE FOR RD BUDGET
Total Extra Remuneration Cost General Government	-	14,284	14,284	78,034
Total Extra Remuneration Cost Rural Government		35,476	35,476	19,726
Total Estimated Tax Rate Increase (\$\$ per \$1,000) - Municipal	-	0.0013	0.0013	0.0069
Total Estimated Tax Rate Increase (\$\$ per \$1,000) - Rural		0.0066	0.0066	0.0098
Supplements (Included above)				
Annual Chair Supplement	22,872	31,000	36,365	36,365
Annual Vice Chair Supplement	8,580	6,000	6,000	6,000
Annual Committee Chair Supplement	5,724	6,000	6,000	6,000

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
BYLAW 1837
Unofficially Consolidated**

A Bylaw for Directors' Remuneration

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the *Local Government Act*, a Board may adopt procedures, conditions and amounts for Directors' remuneration and expenses;

NOW THEREFORE the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. TITLE:

This bylaw shall be cited as the "Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Directors' Remuneration and Expenses Bylaw No. 1837, 2018".

2. PRINCIPLES

Directors' remuneration and reimbursement for expenses shall be guided by the following principles:

- (A) Directors' remuneration should be structured to recognize the importance of this publicly elected office and provide a reasonable incentive to attract and retain quality individuals to these positions.
- (B) Directors are expected to conduct their business in such a way as to optimize the value to the taxpayer.
- (C) Directors should be reimbursed for their reasonable expenses in carrying out their responsibilities.
- (D) Directors should not use expenses charged for Regional District business to subsidize their personal or business activities.

3. DEFINITIONS:

In this bylaw, unless the context otherwise requires:

Board Day means the day of the regular meeting of the Board for the purposes of conducting regional board business and includes both the public and, when necessary, in-camera portions of the meeting.

Committee means a Committee to which a Director has been appointed by either the Board or the Chair of the Regional District.

Committee of the Whole Meeting means the days on which the entire Board membership meets in a Committee format to discuss and make recommendations to the RDBN Board on broad regional topics such as policy issues, etc.

Meals means food and non-alcoholic beverages consumed by individual Directors while attending sanctioned events when the meal service is not already provided.

Miscellaneous Expenses means reimbursable travel-related expenses not expressly dealt with elsewhere in this bylaw, such as: parking fees; hotel internet costs, fares for taxis, airport shuttle services, ferries, buses, toll booth fees, etc.

Per Diem Rates means the maximum a Director may claim for meals and incidentals while on Regional District business.

4. INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

(A) The Regional District Chief Financial Officer or CAO shall be responsible for reviewing and approving Directors' Remuneration and Expense Reports.

(B) Disputes regarding Directors' Remuneration and Expense Reports shall be forwarded to the Chair, Vice Chair, and CAO for resolution.

5. REMUNERATION

(A) Remuneration shall be paid to Directors for the discharge of the duties of office. Remuneration shall be comprised of the following:

- (i) **Directors, Chair and Vice Chair, Committee Chair Remuneration** -- to be determined and paid pursuant to Schedule A, attached to and forming part of this bylaw; and,
- (ii) **Remuneration for attendance at meetings** -- to be determined in accordance with Schedule B, attached to and forming part of this bylaw.

- (B) A Director shall not receive remuneration for wages lost through absence from work or income deemed lost due to attendance at any meeting or as a delegate representing the Regional Board.

6. OTHER REMUNERATION

Travel time remuneration -- to be determined and paid pursuant to Schedule C, attached to and forming part of this bylaw.

7. ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

- (A) When replacing a Director, an Alternate Director is eligible to receive business meeting remuneration in accordance with Schedule B, travel time remuneration in accordance with Schedule C and reimbursement of expenses in accordance with Section 8.
- (B) As an exception to the above, Alternate Directors are not authorized to attend conventions/seminars or other non-business sessions on behalf of the Director.
- (C) Reimbursement for travel expenses and remuneration is authorized for newly appointed Alternate Directors to attend their first Board meeting accompanied by the Director of the electoral area.

8. EXPENSES

Directors shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while discharging the duties of office in accordance with the following:

(A) Transportation Costs

- (i) A Director shall be paid a "personal vehicle allowance" per kilometre for the use of their personal vehicle as transportation for Regional District business conducted:
 - a) within the Director's electoral area;
 - b) for sanctioned meetings; and
 - c) other meetings/events authorized by the Board or by the Chair where time constraints preclude Board consideration.

The personal vehicle allowance rate for the above-approved travel shall be the rate published by Canada Revenue Agency's automobile allowance rate per kilometre.

The District shall not reimburse the Director for stand-by charges of his personal vehicle while he is attending a meeting. Stand-by refers to the

privately owned vehicle being situated at the point of departure or at the place of the meeting.

For the purpose of calculating distances travelled, the Director's normal place of residence, within the Regional District, shall be considered the starting point and point of return of any trip.

For trips exceeding 600 kilometres, Directors shall be entitled to reasonable accommodation en-route.

No additional personal vehicle allowance is payable for carrying passengers.

- (iii) The amount paid shall not exceed the lesser of the cost of economy airfare and associated ground transportation cost or the personal vehicle allowance.
- (iv) Directors who choose to use commercial transportation shall be reimbursed the actual cost of such transportation based on economy class fares.

(B) Accommodation Costs

- (i) In general, Directors shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of commercial accommodation. For conventions, Board meetings, and Committee of the Whole meetings, commercial accommodation will typically be booked and paid for by the District. A Director may choose to stay at accommodation other than the designated accommodation provided by the corporation; however, they will be responsible for making their own arrangements and will be reimbursed a maximum of the amount charged for the corporate accommodation.
- (ii) A Director who utilizes non-commercial facilities for overnight accommodation shall be paid a private accommodation allowance, provided the period of accommodation would not exceed that required for the purpose of attending to Regional District business. The private accommodation rate shall be the rate paid \$60.
- (iii) Where specific provisions are required to address disability or health issues that are not available in the designated accommodation, a Director may choose to stay at an alternative, comparable accommodation and in such a case, the Director may request that the Chair authorize additional reimbursement.

(C) Meal Expenses

In lieu of reimbursement of actual expenses for meals and incidentals while travelling away from home on Regional District business, a Director may claim the

CRA meal rate for the "Simplified method for meal and vehicle rates used to calculate travel expenses".

For overnight stays, outside the Regional District (excluding Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria), the Director may claim an additional ~~\$45.00~~ \$60.00 incidental amount for each night of the stay.

For overnight stays, in Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria, the Director may claim an additional \$75.00 incidental amount for each night of the stay.

A claim for meals can only be made if it has not been provided by the Regional District or as part of a convention or other event. Where meals are provided, there is no reimbursement if the Director chooses to eat elsewhere. Exceptions would include where there are special dietary needs or the inability to take advantage of paid meals because of a timing conflict with other Regional District business.

The actual cost of any meal may be reimbursed if a receipt is provided and the CAO, Chair, or Vice-Chair determines that reimbursement is warranted.

(D) Miscellaneous Expenses

- (i) While away from his/her residence on regional district business, Directors are entitled to reasonable reimbursement of other expenses necessarily incurred such as parking fees, taxis, hotel internet services, ferries, toll booths, etc. Receipts must be provided.
- (ii) Miscellaneous expenses as defined in section 3 shall be reimbursed at actual cost.

(E) Loyalty Programs and Other Travel Programs

- a. Provided that there are no additional costs to the Regional District, Directors travelling on Regional District business can join loyalty programs and retain benefits offered by the travel industry for business or personal use. Such privilege is conditional upon the use of approved services and products wherever possible.

(F) Authorization for Out-of-District Travel

- (i) In general, out-of-district travel will be authorized by the Board.
- (ii) In the absence of Board authorization, the Chair, or in his absence, the Vice-Chair, may authorize out-of-district travel where such travel is necessary to carry out the business of the Regional District.

- (iii) No travel expenses or accommodation expenses for out-of-district travel shall be paid to any member of the Regional District Board unless the travel was first authorized by Board Resolution, or by the Chair/Vice-Chair.

(G) Extraordinary Expenses

Extraordinary expenses which are in excess of the amounts available under this bylaw shall be accounted for on the Director's claim, accompanied by receipts and details of the circumstances. Such a claim will be paid following review of both the Chair and Vice-Chair.

(H) Attendance at Commission Meetings

Directors attending meetings of Commissions to which they are appointed by the Board of the Regional District will be reimbursed for expenses in accordance with this section.

9. INSURANCE - USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLE

- (A) Directors shall be reimbursed for the cost of the deductible for one comprehensive claim per calendar year to a maximum of \$300 for damage to the vehicle or \$300 for windshield replacement, provided the damage to the vehicle was incurred while on regional district business and a receipt is provided.
- (B) Directors are required to ensure that the vehicle(s) they use for regional district business are insured for business class purposes. Upon submitting proof of coverage, the Director will be reimbursed for the difference in cost between insuring one of his/her vehicles for pleasure and business class purposes.
- (C) The Regional District does not accept any liability under any circumstances for claims arising from the use of privately owned vehicles, but will carry additional liability insurance over and above that which Directors carry on their personal vehicles, for claims arising from use of the vehicle while on RDBN business.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

- (A) All Electoral Area directors will be provided with a RDBN cell phone and with an email address. The RDBN email address will be used for all communication with the RDBN. The RDBN will not reimburse directors for corporate use of their personal devices or cell phones.
- (B) Electoral Area directors will be reimbursed up to \$125 per month for home internet service upon the provision of receipts. A one-time fee of up to \$200 may

~~be reimbursed for the installation costs associated with the provision of a higher speed internet service.~~

- (C) Electoral Area directors will be provided a portable laptop computer for their Regional District duties. The Regional District will work with member municipalities to ensure that the Municipal Directors will be provided with a portable laptop that meets the Regional District cyber security needs for their Regional District duties. This may include the Regional District providing a Municipal Director with a portable laptop computer. Any Director that has received a portable laptop from the Regional District will be provided technical support and business software to support their role as Director.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONVENTIONS

- (A) Electoral Area Directors will be allocated no less than \$10,000 (to be increased by CPI annually) to attend conventions and meetings related to their work as an Electoral Area Director including meetings with Elected Officials or officer of other governments including Indigenous Governments.

This amount includes costs associated with attendance at UBCM and NCLGA. This amount may be used for convention costs, travel and remuneration.

Costs will be reimbursed at the regular expense rate described in this bylaw. Remuneration rates will be either at the ½ day or full day meeting rates listed in Schedule B.

- (B) The Board of the Regional District may send any director to any convention or meeting with its associated cost paid from "General Government – Legislative" at its discretion.
- (C) The Rural Directors may send any director to any convention or meeting with its associated costs paid from "Rural Government – Legislative" at its discretion.
- (D) This section does not apply to the Chair (or Vice Chair) in performing the duties of the Chair.

12. REPEAL

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Directors' Remuneration Bylaw No. 1717, 2014 and all bylaws enacted in amendment thereto are hereby repealed.

13. EFFECTIVE DATE

This bylaw comes into effect November 1, 2026.

14. ADJUSTMENT FOR CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The overnight amount listed in Section 8 (C); The rates listed in Schedule A, Schedule B and Schedule C are to be increased annually on January 1st, based on the previous year's consumer price index (yearly average for the Province of B. C. as published by Statistics Canada). In the event that there is no increase to the consumer price index, or if it were to decline, these amounts would remain the same as in the previous year. The increase to these amounts will be calculated to the nearest cent and this new amount will be used as the basis for the next year's calculation. However, the amount payable for expense claims will be the amount adjusted for inflation rounded to the nearest dollar.

Certified a true and correct copy of "Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Directors' Remuneration and Expenses Bylaw No. 1837, 2018."

Corporate Administrator

READ A FIRST TIME this day of , 2018.

READ A SECOND TIME this day of , 2018.

READ A THIRD TIME this day of , 2018.

ADOPTED this day of , 2018.

CHAIRPERSON

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATOR

SCHEDULE A

Chair and Directors' Remuneration

1) Directors' Basic Remuneration

Effective upon adoption of this bylaw, each Director of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako shall be paid a "Basic" remuneration of \$953 per month.

2) Rural Directors' Local Governance Remuneration

Effective upon adoption of this bylaw, each Electoral Area Director of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako shall be paid an additional 0.62 of the basic remuneration per month for completion of his or her duties of office \$591. In addition each Electoral Area director will receive \$1 for each resident in his/her Electoral Area based on the most recent Canadian Census figures per annum paid in instalments of 8.33 cents per resident monthly.

3) Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Chair Remuneration

A) The Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional amount equal to 2.0 times the basic remuneration. \$1906

B) The Vice-Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional amount equal to 0.75 times the basic remuneration. \$715

C) A Committee Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional amount equal to 0.50 times the basic remuneration. \$477

D) An appointed cheque signer (that is not Chair of the Finance Committee or the Board Chair or Vice Chair) shall receive an additional amount equal to 0.15 times the basic remuneration. \$143

4) Acting Chair

In addition to his/her remuneration for attendance at a Board meeting as specified in this schedule, any Board member who serves as Acting-Chair on Board Day due to the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, shall be compensated \$200 for his/her services in chairing the Board meeting.

5) Emergency Operations

Directors required to attend office at the Regional District or other meetings to support emergency operations will receive the meeting ½ or full day rate (see Schedule B). The board must approve or ratify the Director's attendance for this allowance to be received.

6) Partner's Program Expense

Once a year, the Regional District will pay the registration fees for the partner's program and any additional accommodation costs for the spouse of a Director to stay in the Director's hotel room when attending either a convention or conference.

7) Extended Health and Dental Benefits

Extended Health and Dental Benefits will be provided to all Directors. Directors that can provide proof of other coverage can waive this benefit.

SCHEDULE B

Meeting Remuneration

It must be noted that the following table is intended to provide examples of categories of meetings and the remuneration applicable to that category. It must be recognized that the Board may eliminate or establish committees from time to time, which may or may not be eligible for remuneration in accordance with the applicable category.

- (A) For attendance at meetings, Directors will be remunerated and expenses will be paid in accordance with the attached table.
- (B) Those meetings which receive remuneration as indicated in the attached table are deemed to be "Sanctioned Meetings".
- (C) Where more than one meeting is held on the same day, the meetings shall be deemed to be one meeting.
- (D) Directors are only eligible for remuneration where an agenda for the meeting is prepared and distributed in advance and minutes are recorded and submitted to the Board for consideration or for meetings called because of an emergency.
- (E) Where a Director attends a meeting by means of electronic communications, remuneration shall be at the normal rate for that meeting.
- (F) Remuneration for meetings not listed on the attached table must be approved by the Board. It is noted that Directors may choose to accept appointments to a wide variety of bodies; however, except as specifically provided for herein, those appointments shall be without remuneration. For clarity, meetings regarding a Director's local services, Regional District public hearings, and Advisory Planning Committee and commission meetings are excluded from remuneration under this section.

Meeting Type	Allowance *		Notes
	Half Day < 3.5 hrs	Full Day 3.5 hrs+	
Board and Committee Meetings	\$290	\$290	Travel time may be claimed (if applicable)
Other meetings approved by Board motion within the Regional District	\$145	\$290	Travel time may be claimed (if applicable)
For the Chair, the Vice Chair acting as Chair, Committee Chairs (acting in their role of Committee Chair) and for Electoral Area Directors: Attendance and travel to political conventions or similar events, for attendance at meetings between the Regional District and other levels of government including with Indigenous Governments, and for the attendance at ceremonial events. Attendance by virtual means is included.	\$145	\$290	Includes time spent travelling to these events. Additional travel time is not applicable. All costs are charged to rural government except for costs associated with travel and remuneration of the chair or committee chair are charged to general government.

Schedule C

Travel Time Remuneration

1. Travel time remuneration of \$31.00 for every 100 kilometres driven (for trips over 20 km [one way]) shall apply to all travel when attending Regional District Board and Committee Meetings. For Municipal Directors, this distance is determined from their respective municipal office. Travel time remuneration is also paid for attendance at political conventions and similar events held within the Regional District.
2. Travel remuneration for travel to or from conventions or similar events outside the Regional District boundaries, where attendance is approved by the Board, shall be a ½ day meeting rate for travel of five hours or less and a full day meeting rate for travel more than five hours. This form of remuneration is not available for conventions or similar events held within the Regional District.
3. There is no travel time payable for other events or other types of meetings; however, directors may claim mileage, if eligible, as per section 8 (A).

SCHEDULE A OPTION 1**Chair and Directors' Remuneration****1) Directors' Basic Remuneration**

Each Electoral Area Director will be paid \$24,160 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

Each Municipal Director will be paid \$12,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

2) Rural Directors' Population Remuneration

In addition, each Electoral Area Director will receive \$1 for each resident in his/her Electoral Area based on the most recent Canadian Census figures per annum paid in instalments of 8.33 cents per resident monthly.

3) Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Chair Remuneration

A) The Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$31,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

B) The Vice-Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

C) A Committee Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

D) An appointed cheque signer (that is not the Board Chair or Vice Chair) shall receive an additional \$3,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

4) Acting Chair

In addition to his/her remuneration for attendance at a Board meeting as specified in this schedule, any Board member who serves as Acting-Chair on Board Day due to the absence of the Chair, shall be compensated \$400 for his/her services in chairing the Board meeting.

5) Emergency Operations

Directors required to attend office at the Regional District or other meetings to support emergency operations will receive the meeting ½ or full day rate (see Schedule B). The board must approve or ratify the Director's attendance for this allowance to be received.

6) Partner's Program Expense

Once a year, the Regional District will pay the registration fees for the partner's program and any additional accommodation costs for the spouse of a Director to stay in the Director's hotel room when attending either a convention or conference.

7) Extended Health and Dental Benefits

Extended Health and Dental Benefits will be provided to all Directors. Directors that can provide proof of other coverage can waive this benefit.

8) Reimbursement of Children's Day Care Costs

The Regional District shall reimburse up to the lesser of \$100 or the actual cost of daily day-care for those directors requiring childcare for their children for when the director is attending Board or Committee Meetings.

SCHEDULE A OPTION 2

Chair and Directors' Remuneration

1) Directors' Basic Remuneration

Each Electoral Area Director will be paid \$27,910 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

Each Municipal Director will be paid \$12,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

2) Rural Directors' Population Remuneration

In addition, each Electoral Area Director will receive \$1 for each resident in his/her Electoral Area based on the most recent Canadian Census figures per annum paid in instalments of 8.33 cents per resident monthly.

3) Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Chair Remuneration

A) The Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$31,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

B) The Vice-Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

C) A Committee Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

D) An appointed cheque signer (that is not the Board Chair or Vice Chair) shall receive an additional \$3,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

4) Acting Chair

In addition to his/her remuneration for attendance at a Board meeting as specified in this schedule, any Board member who serves as Acting-Chair on Board Day due to the absence of the Chair, shall be compensated \$400 for his/her services in chairing the Board meeting.

5) Emergency Operations

Directors required to attend office at the Regional District or other meetings to support emergency operations will receive the meeting ½ or full day rate (see Schedule B). The board must approve or ratify the Director's attendance for this allowance to be received.

6) Partner's Program Expense

Once a year, the Regional District will pay the registration fees for the partner's program and any additional accommodation costs for the spouse of a Director to stay in the Director's hotel room when attending either a convention or conference.

7) Extended Health and Dental Benefits

Extended Health and Dental Benefits will be provided to all Directors. Directors that can provide proof of other coverage can waive this benefit.

8) Reimbursement of Children's Day Care Costs

The Regional District shall reimburse up to the lesser of \$100 or the actual cost of daily day-care for those directors requiring childcare for their children for when the director is attending Board or Committee Meetings.

Meeting Type	Allowance *		Notes
	Half Day < 3.5 hrs	Full Day 3.5 hrs+	
Board and Committee Meetings	\$290	\$290	Travel time may be claimed (if applicable)
Other meetings approved by Board motion within the Regional District	\$145	\$290	Travel time may be claimed (if applicable)
For the Chair, the Vice Chair acting as Chair, Committee Chairs (acting in their role of Committee Chair) and for Electoral Area Directors: Attendance and travel to political conventions or similar events, for attendance at meetings between the Regional District and other levels of government including with Indigenous Governments, and for the attendance at ceremonial events. Attendance by virtual means is included.	\$145	\$290	Includes time spent travelling to these events. Additional travel time is not applicable. All costs are charged to rural government except for costs associated with travel and remuneration of the chair or committee chair are charged to general government.

SCHEDULE A OPTION 3

Chair and Directors' Remuneration

1) Directors' Basic Remuneration

Each Electoral Area Director will be paid \$27,910 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

Each Municipal Director will be paid \$18,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

2) Rural Directors' Population Remuneration

In addition, each Electoral Area director will receive \$1 for each resident in his/her Electoral Area based on the most recent Canadian Census figures per annum paid in instalments of 8.33 cents per resident monthly.

3) Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Chair Remuneration

A) The Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$31,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

B) The Vice-Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

C) A Committee Chair of the Regional District Board shall receive an additional \$6,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

D) An appointed cheque signer (that is not the Board Chair or Vice Chair) shall receive an additional \$3,000 per year, paid in equal monthly amounts.

4) Acting Chair

In addition to his/her remuneration for attendance at a Board meeting as specified in this schedule, any Board member who serves as Acting-Chair on Board Day due to the absence of the Chair, shall be compensated \$400 for his/her services in chairing the Board meeting.

5) Emergency Operations

Directors required to attend office at the Regional District or other meetings to support emergency operations will receive the meeting ½ or full day rate (see Schedule B). The board must approve or ratify the Director's attendance for this allowance to be received.

6) Partner's Program Expense

Once a year, the Regional District will pay the registration fees for the partner's program and any additional accommodation costs for the spouse of a Director to stay in the Director's hotel room when attending either a convention or conference.

7) Extended Health and Dental Benefits

Extended Health and Dental Benefits will be provided to all Directors. Directors that can provide proof of other coverage can waive this benefit.

8) Reimbursement of Children's Day Care Costs

The Regional District shall reimburse up to the lesser of \$100 or the actual cost of daily day-care for those directors requiring childcare for their children for when the director is attending Board or Committee Meetings.

Meeting Type	Allowance *		Notes
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Board and Committee Meetings	\$290	\$290	Travel time may be claimed (if applicable)
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For the Chair, the Vice Chair acting as Chair, Committee Chairs (acting in their role of Committee Chair) and for Electoral Area Directors: Attendance and travel to political conventions or similar events, for attendance at meetings between the Regional District and other levels of government including with Indigenous Governments, and for the attendance at ceremonial events. Attendance by virtual means is included.	\$145	\$290	Includes time spent travelling to these events. Additional travel time is not applicable. All costs are charged to rural government except for costs associated with travel and remuneration of the chair or committee chair are charged to general government.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services
Date: July 9, 2026
Subject: **Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organization - Final Reports**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive

BACKGROUND

The RDBN received \$49,070.27 to organize training and purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for seven community groups in the region.

There were 57 people trained and 101 sets of PPE delivered to the groups. The community groups work with Northwest and Price George Fire Centre staff to establish communication guidelines and build relationships. The BCWS is the responding agency for wildfires and are responsible for activating the community groups if needed.

This 2025 program was run through the UBCM FireSmart program and was not renewed. There is currently no word on the state of the rest of the FireSmart program (home assessments, rebates and community education). The funding for the RDBN FireSmart programs runs out in the summer of 2027.

ATTACHMENTS:

- LGPS-11696 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Chinook Emergency Response Society
- LGPS-11890 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Cluculz Lake Livestock Association
- LGPS-11891 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Fort Fraser Livestock Association
- LGPS-11892 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Germensen Landing Community Society
- LGPS-11894 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Sinkut Mountain Livestock Association
- LGPS-11895 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Quick Station Residents Association
- LGPS-11896 RDBN CCWR Pilot: Woodmere Emergency Services Society

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:
4. Community and Economic Sustainability

Choose an item.
Choose an item.

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

Choose an item.
Choose an item.
Choose an item.
Choose an item.



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11696

**Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Chinook
Emergency Response Society**

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$9,658.06. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$4,776.79 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure to the grant maximum less an initial payment of \$4,776.79 issued in July 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonas Woodrow", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11890

**Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Cluculz Lake
Livestock Association**

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$3,577.24. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$847.94 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure less an initial payment of \$2,729.30 issued in July 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jonas Woodrow", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11891

**Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Fort Fraser
Livestock Association**

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$3,282.24. Based on this, a payment in the amount of 552.94 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure less an initial payment of \$2,729.30 issued in June 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

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Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11892

**Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Germensen
Landing Community Society**

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$9,962.29. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$4,834.34 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure to the grant maximum less an initial payment of \$4,834.34 issued in July 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jonas Woodrow", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11894

Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Sinkut Mountain Livestock Association

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$3,282.24. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$552.94 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure less an initial payment of \$2,729.30 issued in June 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

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Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11895

Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Quick Station Residents Association

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$9,650.24. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$4,754.34 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure less an initial payment of \$4,895.90 issued in July 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

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Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



June 18, 2026

Chair Parker and Board
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Reference: LGPS-11896

**Re: 2025 CRI - 2025 CCWR Pilot Program – RDBN CCWR Pilot: Woodmere
Emergency Services Society**

Dear Chair Parker and Board,

Thank you for providing the final report, dated June 2, 2026, for the above noted project. We have reviewed your submission and all reporting requirements have been met.

The final report notes a total eligible expenditure of \$9,658.06. Based on this, a payment in the amount of \$4,682.17 will follow shortly by electronic fund transfer. This represents final payment of the grant and is based on 100% of the total reported expenditure less an initial payment of \$4,975.89 issued in July 2025.

I would like to congratulate the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for undertaking this project and responding to this opportunity.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance, please contact 250-356-2947 or cri@ubcm.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jonas Woodrow", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonas Woodrow, Program Officer

cc: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services

The CRI program is funded by the Province of BC



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Date: July 9, 2026

Subject: **Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from the In-Camera Meeting – June 25, 2026**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

Receive.

BACKGROUND

As per the Board recommendation, the following motions are being brought forward from the In-Camera meeting of June 25, 2026.

Canada Community Building Fund – Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) - Buck Flats Connectivity Application

- I.C.2024-9-5
- 1) That the Board authorize contributing up to \$225,000 of Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) Canada Community-Building Fund BC allocation monies to CityWest for a Broadband Infrastructure project in the Buck Flats area, and
 - 2) That the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$225,000 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

Canada Community Building Fund – Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) -Francois Lake Connectivity Application

- I.C.2024-9-6
- 1) That the Board authorize contributing up to \$141,790 of Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) Canada Community-Building Fund BC allocation monies to CityWest for a Broadband Infrastructure project in the Francois Lake (Glenannan) area, and
 - 2) That the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$141,790 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

Amended Employee Benefits Policy

2026.ICM.107 That the Board approve the Employee Benefits Policy, as amended, including the removal of the reference to “six (6) continuous months” from the definition of “Separated” and to add definitions for clarity and consistent interpretation.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:

4. Community and Economic Sustainability

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

4.3 Continue advocacy efforts for high-speed internet service and explore innovative solutions for high-speed internet service in partnership with the Connectivity Committee and other partners.



File: 0400-20

June 25, 2026

Sent via email only: EMCR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Kelly Greene
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

Dear Minister:

Re: Request for Continued and Enhanced Funding for Emergency Management

We are writing to respectfully request the continuation of grant funding for our emergency management programs in the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN), North Coast Regional District (NCRD) and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). Sustained investment in this area is critical to ensuring that our communities remain prepared and resilient.

Given the fiscal climate and the messaging received from the Minister and staff last year, core funding from the province for emergency management is not a realistic expectation. Further, grant funding programs have not been guaranteed in future years and therefore as regional districts we risk losing critical capacity and momentum. Given the increasing risk of wildfire and extreme weather events, this could compromise our readiness when it is needed the most. For most local governments, grant funding makes up most of our operational budgets for emergency services.

Provincial grant funding is helping to implement new legislative requirements and build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities, as well as fund operational and training requirements. The outcome of that work is to improve our collective abilities to respond and adapt to climate change and emergencies. Below are some highlights from our three regional districts to reinforce the value provincial grant funding provides:

Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding program

- The CVRD is partnering with K'ómoks First Nation on a climate resilience project at Pélxwikw/ Goose Spit to protect against storm surge, coastal flooding and sea-level rise threats.
- RDOS, in partnership with six member municipalities and four First Nations, is undertaking a Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Analysis project that will result in

comprehensive, community-specific reports for each municipality and electoral area, as well as a consolidated regional report.

Indigenous Engagement Requirements Funding program

- The Comox Valley Emergency Management service provided capacity funding for an emergency liaison for K'ómoks First Nation which is critical for operational efficiency and meaningful partnerships. The RDOS has engaged an Indigenous Liaison during significant emergency events since 2019.
- The CVRD has also used Indigenous witnessing to implement cultural safety and protocols for emergency management and long-range planning projects and lay the groundwork for future agreements with Indigenous Governing Bodies.
- CVRD and RDBN staff, volunteers and emergency personnel have participated in cultural safety training and are committed to ongoing learning and the creation of safe spaces in emergency management. With ongoing funding, staff can learn and train with partner First Nations.
- The RDOS hosted a tabletop exercise that included all six member municipalities and four First Nations and provides ongoing Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) training to all member municipalities and First Nations.
- The North Coast Regional District has used funding to codevelop cultural sensitivity and humility training, as well as a communications protocol with the City of Prince Rupert, the District of Port Edward, and coastal Ts'msyen Nations.

Disaster Risk Reduction Climate Adaptation

- The CVRD has completed flood mapping for the regional district and flood mitigation planning for the K'ómoks Estuary, as well as the restoration and climate adaption of Dyke Road Park, in partnership with K'ómoks First Nation.
- The RDOS completed the Extreme Heat Assessment and Response Plan that included all six member municipalities and the four First Nations in 2023.
- The RDOS is collaborating with Fraser Basin Council on several flood plain mapping projects.

Equipment and Training

- The RDBN used Emergency Operations Centres Equipment and Training program funding to access equipment and comprehensive exercises and specialized training to raise the competency of the EOC personnel throughout the region.
- The RDBN uses Emergency Support Services Equipment and Training funding for regional and municipal services that rely on this funding to train and equip volunteers.
- The RDBN also accesses Volunteer and Composite Fire Department Equipment and Training for four voluntary fire departments and six municipal fire departments.

This funding is integral as the training and equipment requirements for rural areas are the same as larger urban areas but with a much smaller tax base.

We are asking that grant funding to support the range of emergency management activities continues in the Province of BC. As evidenced in the examples above, community adaptation and resilience is strengthened as result of grant funding. And further, trust and reciprocity between local governments and Indigenous communities is a direct outcome that we can all acknowledge.

We look forward to meeting with you at the UBCM conference in September to share some of our success stories. Thank you for taking the time to understand the local impacts that provincial funds make on community readiness. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,



Will Cole-Hamilton
Chair, Comox Valley Regional District



Mark Parker
Chair, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako



Mark Pendergraft
Chair, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen



Barry Pages
Chair, North Coast Regional District



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9
p: 250.561.7600 | www.princegeorge.ca

Northern & Rural Governments in
British Columbia

Transmitted via email

June 23, 2026

RE: City of Prince George requesting support for the Northern-Rural Homeowners Grant

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of Prince George City Council, thank you to the many local governments that have supported our request for the Province to reconsider its decision to end the Northern-Rural Homeowner Benefit.

Background

As outlined in our April 28 letter, the homeowner grant offered by the Government of British Columbia helps reduce the amount of property tax residents pay each year on their principal residence. The grant is available to homeowners who pay property taxes either to a municipality or directly to the Province if they live in a rural area.

The current regular grant amount is **\$570** for properties in the Capital, Metro Vancouver, and Fraser Valley Regional Districts. For all other areas of the province, the grant amount is **\$770**. Effective for the 2027 and subsequent taxation years, the additional **\$200** Northern and Rural Homeowner Benefit will be repealed.

Why this matters

Repealing this benefit will have a disproportionate impact on northern and rural communities, where residents and municipalities face persistent cost pressures—including higher transportation costs, longer supply chains, increased heating expenses, and limited access to services—that are not experienced to the same extent in southern urban centres.

Maintaining regional recognition within provincial programs remains essential to supporting affordability and fairness for northern and rural residents.

Requested action

We appreciate the responses and support received to date. UBCM has confirmed that it will not add local governments as additional sponsors after the submission deadline. If two local governments submit very similar or identical resolutions, UBCM will advance one for consideration and place the other in the Referred Resolutions section of the Resolutions Book, with each resolution cross-referenced in the Committee Comments.

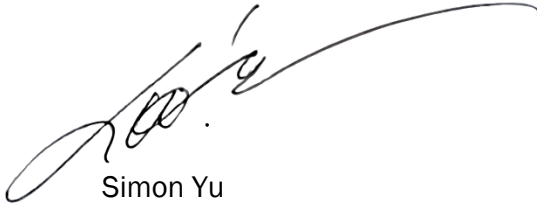
Although additional co-sponsors can no longer be added, we believe a strong, united voice against this planned provincial change remains important.

We ask northern and rural local governments affected by this decision to support the UBCM

resolution at the September 2026 convention by speaking at the Pro Mic and voting in favour of the resolution. We also welcome additional support letters from municipalities so that the City may leverage these during future advocacy (such as Minister meetings at UBCM).

We also encourage direct advocacy with your local MLAs to reinforce the importance of maintaining fair and regionally responsive provincial programs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Yu', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Yu
Mayor
City of Prince George



301 - 1268 Fifth Avenue
 Prince George, BC V2L 3L2
 Tel: 250-561-2525
 Fax: 250-561-2563

info@northerndevelopment.bc.ca
 www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca

June 16, 2026

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
 Box 820
 Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

Attention: Chair Mark Parker

**Subject: 2026 Grant Writing Support
 Northern Development Project Number IA-12882**

The Northern Development Initiative Trust board appreciates your interest and application to the 2026 Grant Writing Support program. The purpose of this funding is to provide grant writing support for priority community projects and to provide assistance to non-profits and First Nations located in or near your community. We are pleased to advise you that your application has been approved for a rebate grant up to \$8,000 toward a community grant writing position during the 2026 calendar year. Northern Development is flexible as to when you contract or hire these services during 2026.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako must submit a completed Grant Writing Support program reporting form which can be found on Northern Development's website at www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/funding-programs/capacity-building/grant-writing-support/. This report must verify a minimum of \$10,500 in wages or contract payments and a minimum of \$200,000 of grant applications during the approved calendar year. We recommend you download the "Reporting Attachment" and keep track of applications applied for during the calendar year. The minimum requirements must be met in order to receive the full \$8,000 rebate. Complete reporting is due by February 28, 2027.

The Northern Development Board wants to see the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako reach its economic potential and we look forward to being a partner in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

Northern Development Initiative Trust

c: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako