



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AGENDA  
Thursday, October 09, 2025**

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

**First Nations Acknowledgement**

**AGENDA**

Approve

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

Receive

**MINUTES**

**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - September 4, 2025**

Page 4-10

Approve

**DELEGATIONS**

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS - Strategic Initiatives and Forest Landscape Planning - Skeena - via Zoom**

Tara Dunphy, Director

Steffy Howard-Stratton, Section Head, Project Management

Jass Morin Parker, Section Head, Project Management

Re: Update - Lakes Resiliency Forest Landscape Planning and Bulkley Morice Forest Landscape Plan

**CITYWEST**

Stefan Woloszyn, Chief Executive Officer

Philip Mills, Director, Sales & Marketing

Lee Brain, Community Engagement Specialist

Re: Project Update

## **ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - NCLGA Mental Health and Addictions Symposium October 15, 2025, Prince George, BC** Page 11-13

Recommendation

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - 2026 BC Natural Resources Forum - January 20-22, 2026 - Prince George, B.C.** Page 14-22

Recommendation

**Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Canada Community-Building Fund BC – Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) Grassy Plains Hall Foundation Repair Project** Page 23-24

Recommendation

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Food Producing Non-Profit Gathering Report** Page 25-36

Receive

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Young Agrarians BC Land Matching Program** Page 37-38

Receive

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy - Fall 2025 Update** Page 39-41

Receive

## **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **IN-CAMERA MOTION**

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

- Connectivity
- Labour Relations

**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**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, September 04, 2025**

Directors Present: Chair Mark Parker  
Gladys Atrill  
Shane Brien  
Leroy Dekens  
Martin Elphee  
Judy Greenaway  
Clint Lambert  
Linda McGuire  
Shirley Moon  
Kevin Moutray  
Chris Newell  
Michael Riis-Christianson  
Stoney Stoltenberg  
Sarrah Storey  
Henry Wiebe

Staff: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services  
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer  
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services  
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services  
Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services  
Anusha Rai, HR Advisor – left at 11:48 a.m.  
Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator – left at 12:05 p.m.

---

Thursday, September 04, 2025

2

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:54 a.m.

## **First Nations Acknowledgement**

## **AGENDA**

### **2025-COWM-001**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director McGuire

That the Agenda be approved; and that the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **MINUTES**

### **Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - June 5, 2025**

#### **2025-COWM-002**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director McGuire

That the Committee of the Whole Minutes of June 5, 2025 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

### **John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Chinook Community Forest Update**

#### **2025-COWM-003**

Moved by Director Lambert

Seconded by Director Greenaway

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's Chinook Community Forest Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Thursday, September 04, 2025

3

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Statutory Reserve Update  
2025-COWM-004**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's Statutory Reserve Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**John Illes, Chief Financial Officer and Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic  
Initiatives and Rural Services - Television Rebroadcasting Survey Data  
2025-COWM-005**

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's and the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services' Television Rebroadcasting Survey Data memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- Information has been provided to the Television Rebroadcasting Societies
- Minimal responses to the survey
- Different numbers of channels provided for each society
- Gathering additional information such as radio usage
- History of television rebroadcasting to television viewing to date
- Challenging to determine actual usage of service and viability of the service
- Upgrade from analog to digital services
- Responses from Area E
- If any interruptions to the service, the RDBN receives input.

**Anusha Rai, HR Advisor - Introduction of AI (Artificial Intelligence)  
Governance Policy for the RDBN  
2025-COWM-006**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the HR Advisor's Introduction of AI (Artificial Intelligence) Governance Policy for the RDBN memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Thursday, September 04, 2025

4

The following was discussed regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- AI spam received
- Protection and privacy of confidential and sensitive information
- Monitoring AI usage
  - Providing licenses for AI tools utilizing RDBN log in information
  - Importance of monitoring
  - Rigorous monitoring
- Staff considerations
  - Creating efficiencies
  - Responsible use of AI
- Process in place if a negative occurrence takes place
- Implications of the use of AI
- Using 'shall' rather than 'should' in areas of the Policy
- Financial protections with AI
- AI data advancements
- AI usage disclaimer
- Cybersecurity training
- Organization champions to continue into the future

**Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator - Growing Opportunities Newsletter  
- Issue 29, August 2025**

**2025-COWM-007**

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Brien

That the Committee receive the Agriculture Coordinator's Growing Opportunities Newsletter Issue 29, August 2025 memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Moon expressed interest in the Young Agrarians program and providing information to the region. Staff will follow-up.

Director Moon brought forward the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy. She noted the recommendations coming forward from the Task Force. Additional information will be brought forward at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Thursday, September 04, 2025

5

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - Union of B.C.  
Municipalities – Meeting Update**

**2025-COWM-008**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services Union of B.C.  
Municipalities Meeting Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- Chair and staff will review meeting confirmations and determine speakers
- Staff will be providing meeting information and calendar invitations to all Directors
- Requesting meetings with the Premier and Ministers outside of the UBCM Convention
  - BC Natural Resources Forum in Prince George
- Prioritize advocacy topics to discuss with the Province
- Utilizing the learning opportunity and advocacy while attending the Annual UBCM Convention.

**Lunch at 12:13 p.m., reconvened at 12:52 p.m.**

**ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE**

**Coastal GasLink Socio-economic Effects Management Plan Engagement,  
June to November 2025**

**2025-COWM-009**

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the Board receive the correspondence from Coastal GasLink regarding the Socio-economic Effects Management Plan Engagement, June to November 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**UBCM - Canada Community-Building Fund BC - First Community Works Fund Payment for 2025/2026****2025-COWM-010**

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Moon

That the Committee receive the correspondence from UBCM - Canada Community-Building Fund BC - First Community Works Fund Payment for 2025/2026.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA****CIHR Application 'Community of Practice on Climate Displacement' Letter of Support****2025-COWM-011**

Moved by Director Moutray

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the Letter of Support for the application to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for a Community of Practice on Climate Displacement project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Minister of Forests - Forest Service Road Usage Response****2025-COWM-012**

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Dekens

That the Committee receive the correspondence from the Minister of Forests regarding Forest Service Road Usage.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Newell spoke of continued advocacy for the use and maintenance of Forest Service Roads (FSRs) for recreational purposes. Director Lambert brought forward the use of FSRs for evacuation routes outlined in the letter. Discussion took place regarding gathering data of usage for the roads.

Thursday, September 04, 2025

7

**NEW BUSINESS****Canadian Federation of Independent Business - An Examination of Regional District Spending Growth**

Director Riis-Christianson spoke of report released by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business regarding

**IN-CAMERA MOTION****2025-COWM-013**

Moved by Director Brien

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

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

- Labour relations

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**ADJOURNMENT****2025-COWM-014**

Moved by Director Newell

Seconded by Director Brien

That the meeting be adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

---

Mark Parker, Chair

---

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee

**From:** Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

**Date:** October 9, 2025

**Subject:** **NCLGA Mental Health and Addictions Symposium October 15, 2025, Prince George, BC**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Committee recommend that the Board authorize Director Greenaway's attendance at the NCLGA Mental Health and Addictions Symposium October 15, 2025 in Prince George, BC and further, that Director Greenaway be authorized to sign the Accord.

---

**BACKGROUND**

In 2024 the Regional District appointed Director Greenaway as a Signatory to the NCLGA Mental Health and Addictions Accord. Due to limited space NCLGA has requested that 1-2 representatives from each organization attend the 2025 NCLGA Mental Health and Addictions Symposium October 15, 2025 in Prince George, BC.

Director Greenaway has expressed her wish to attend the event.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Register for the October 15, 2025 Mental Health & Addictions Symposium, for Accord Signatories

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

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

**From:** [Cheryl Anderson](#)  
**To:** [Wendy Wainwright](#)  
**Cc:** [Curtis Helgesen](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Register for the October 15, 2025 Mental Health and Addictions Symposium, for Accord Signatories  
**Date:** September 29, 2025 1:52:42 PM

---

---

**From:** Judy Greenaway <judy.greenaway@rdbn.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 29, 2025 1:32:09 PM  
**To:** Cheryl Anderson <cheryl.anderson@rdbn.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Register for the October 15, 2025 Mental Health and Addictions Symposium, for Accord Signatories

Hi Cheryl as discussed here is the letter from NCLGA for the symposium  
Cheers Judy  
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Sandra Moore <admin@nclga.ca>  
**Date:** September 16, 2025 at 9:41:46 AM PDT  
**Cc:** Bettina Johnson <bjohnson@nclga.ca>  
**Subject:** Register for the October 15, 2025 Mental Health and Addictions Symposium, for Accord Signatories

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please do not click on links on open attachments from unknown sources.

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

Secured by Check Point

Greetings,

Please find below the hotel and registration details for the Mental Health and Addictions Symposium, taking place on October 15, 2025, at the Courtyard by Marriott Prince George, for Accord Signatories and select guests. You are receiving this notice as the identified representative for your organization. As space is limited, we kindly ask that only 1–2 representatives from each signatory

agency/organization attend. If you are unable to participate, please reply with the correct contact name and email.

## Registration

Capacity is limited to 1–2 representatives per agency. **Registration link:** <https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2025/NCLGA-MHA>.

## Hotel Block Rate

- **Rate:** \$179 CAD per night + \$5 underground parking
- **Hotel:** Courtyard by Marriott Prince George
- **Booking Deadline to Reserve this Rate:** Thursday, September 25, 2025
- **Cancellation Policy:** Cancellations made within 96 hours of arrival will incur a one-night charge plus tax to the guaranteed credit card.

**Link to reserve a room:** <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1757708625699&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

## Agenda

A draft agenda will be shared with registered participants closer to the event date.

Kind regards,

Sandra



**Sandra Moore**  
 Board and Committee Support  
**Website** [www.nclga.ca](http://www.nclga.ca)  
**Email** [admin@nclga.ca](mailto:admin@nclga.ca)  
**Phone** 604-512-4604



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services  
**Date:** October 9, 2025  
**Subject:** **2026 BC Natural Resources Forum - January 20-22, 2026 - Prince George, B.C.**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

That the Board authorize attendance of Rural Directors wishing to attend the 2026 BC Natural Resources Forum on January 20-22, 2026 in Prince George, B.C.

---

**BACKGROUND**

The BC Natural Resources Forum is taking place in Prince George from January 20-22, 2026. The conference program is not yet available.

Registration and all associated costs will come from each director's rural legislative budget.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

2026 BC Natural Resources Forum – Register Now

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

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

Additionally, the recommendation supports the following objective(s) related to this Focus Area(s):

2.3 Extend invitations to Ministers and staff to visit our region to observe and discuss our issues in-person.

**Wendy Wainwright**

---

**From:** BC Natural Resource Forum <info@bcnaturalresourcesforum.com>  
**Sent:** September 24, 2025 8:16 AM  
**To:** Wendy Wainwright  
**Subject:** Registration Now Open!

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please do not click on links on open attachments from unknown sources.



## Early bird registration for the 23rd Annual BC Natural Resources Forum is now open!

Secure your spot at this leading event that brings together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators from across the natural resources sector. Early registration gives you the chance to reserve tickets for the highly anticipated Celebrating Natural Resources Banquet, the exclusive Ministers' Breakfast, and the inspiring Keynote Luncheons, all available as optional add-ons to your standard pass.

**REGISTER NOW!**

*Due to high demand, registration for the conference tends to sell out quickly. We encourage you to purchase your registration early to ensure your attendance!*

## Why Attend The BC Natural Resources Forum?

The BC Natural Resources Forum annually hosts a large contingent of federal, provincial, and local government leaders, as well as continuing strong interest, support and attendance by Indigenous leaders, representatives from resource developers and service and supply sectors that are the foundation of our resource economy.



The Forum offers a positive, non-partisan arena to discuss and learn first-hand the latest news, trends and opportunities within the resource sector in BC and across Canada.



### The BC Natural Resources Forum:

- Is Northern B.C.'s largest and best-attended resource conference, attracting over 1,500 delegates;
- Features an impressive line-up of high-profile, respected speakers.
- Includes a sold-out trade show providing exceptional networking opportunities.

**Unveiling our theme: Momentum for Continued Growth:  
Building B.C.'s Resource Future**

British Columbia's resource sector is entering a critical period of transformation.

This year's theme speaks to the steady progress already underway across the province. Infrastructure and project development are advancing, investor confidence is stabilizing, and new partnerships are creating models for inclusive economic development rooted in mutual benefit and respect for Indigenous.

The Forum will explore how B.C. can maintain this momentum while continuing to lead on sustainability, innovation, and reconciliation.



## Professional Development Workshops

Enhance your expertise with our comprehensive workshop offerings designed for natural resource professionals.

**Learn more about these engaging sessions here!**



# Event of Interest



**How Can We Help Each Other?  
A Conversation Between  
Industry and Communities**

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Coast Prince George Hotel by APA

**Early Bird Tickets  
available until December 1st, 2025**

Member Ticket : \$250 + GST  
Member Table of 6: \$1200 + GST

Future Member Ticket: \$299 + GST  
Future Member Table of 6: \$1500 + GST

Interested sponsors please contact Colleen Sparrow:  
**Membership@pgchamber.bc.ca**  
(250)645-4826

**Join the Prince George Chamber of Commerce for a full day of insight, connection, and collaboration at the TrueNorth Business Development Forum.**

This event brings together leaders from industry, government, Indigenous communities, and the non-profit sector to share best practices and explore opportunities for sustainable growth in Northern BC.

When: Jan 20, 2026

Where: Coast Prince George Hotel by APA

**Find Out More!**



## Become a Sponsor

Partner with us for the 23rd Annual BC Natural Resources Forum - Western Canada's largest multi-sector resource conference!

Elevate your brand, build partnerships, and be at the heart of the industry!

For more information or to request the sponsorship prospectus, please contact [info@bcnaturalresourcesforum.com](mailto:info@bcnaturalresourcesforum.com)

**THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 SPONSORS**

## Registration Fees

### In Person - 1 Day Pass (no meals)

**Early Bird Rate**

Until November 7, 2025

**\$345.00****Regular Rate**

After November 7, 2025

**\$435.00****On-Site Rate**

At the event

**\$515.00**

### In Person - 2 Day Pass (no meals)

**Early Bird Rate**

Until November 7, 2025

**\$565.00****Regular Rate**

After November 7, 2025

**\$620.00****On-Site Rate**

At the event

**\$680.00**

### Virtual Only

**Early Bird Rate**

Until November 7, 2025

**\$310.00**

**Regular Rate**

After November 7, 2025

**\$400.00****Add-On Tickets**

Waitlist Only

Additional events and meals available for purchase.

**Banquet Dinner Ticket**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 - Waitlist only

**\$150.00****Wednesday Keynote Ticket**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 - Waitlist only

**\$115.00****Thursday Keynote Ticket**

Thursday, January 22, 2026 - Waitlist only

**\$115.00****Minister's Breakfast Ticket**

Thursday, January 22, 2026 - Waitlist only

**\$115.00****Offsite Events**

Special events held at external venues.

**Official Opposition Breakfast**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

**\$65.00****Workshops****W1 - Renewable Energy 101****\$179.00**

Canadian Renewable Energy Association and Relay Education

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM at the Courtyard by Marriott, Fraser Room

**W2 - Consultation to Agreement: Navigating Benefit Sharing Agreements in BC****\$629.00**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 9:00 AM – 4:00PM at the Prince George Conference and Civic Centre

**W3 - Proven Communication Strategies for Moving Natural Resource  
Projects Forward** **\$329.00**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the Prince George Conference and Civic Centre



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee

**From:** Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services

**Date:** October 9, 2025

**Subject:** **Canada Community-Building Fund BC – Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) Grassy Plains Hall Foundation Repair Project**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

1) That the Committee recommend that the Board authorize contributing up to \$33,000 of Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) Canada Community- Building Fund BC allocation monies to a Recreation Infrastructure Project for the Grassy Plains Community Hall, and further,

(participants/weighted/majority)

2) That the Committee recommend that the Board authorize the withdrawal of up to \$33,000 from the Federal Gas Tax Reserve Fund.

---

**BACKGROUND**

The Grassy Plains Community Hall has experienced significant deterioration of the foundation due to rot caused by water. A structural review performed on the Hall indicated that, due to the foundation damage, the building is not safe for use by the public unless/until repairs are completed. A subsequent review of the roof indicated that it is suitable for the use intended. The Hall Society, based on the engineer's reports, decided to pursue repairs to the foundation to ensure the ongoing use of the facility.

A CWF contribution of \$50,000 was approved in 2022 to begin the engineering work, with another \$160,000 approved in 2024 to begin the construction work. The project, which experienced some delays but is now underway, has a shortfall of \$33,000 to see the foundation repairs to completion. This \$33,000 contribution will complete the project budget and enable the foundation repair work to occur this year.

| Revenue              | Amount     | Status    |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| NKDF                 | \$ 25,000  | Confirmed |
| NDIT                 | \$ 30,000  | Confirmed |
| RDBN CWF (2022/2024) | \$ 210,000 | Confirmed |

|                                                    |                   |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| RDBN CWF (2025)                                    | \$ 33,000         | Pending           |
| Burns Lake Community Forest                        | \$ 20,000         | Confirmed         |
| Chinook Community Forest                           | \$ 20,000         | Confirmed         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                               | <b>\$ 338,000</b> |                   |
|                                                    |                   |                   |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                    | <b>Amount</b>     | <b>Source</b>     |
| Structural Work                                    | \$ 155,530        | Karl Weller       |
| Civil Work                                         | \$ 117,600        | 1194966 BC Ltd.   |
| Building Preparation (demolition of damaged areas) | \$ 29,870         | Local contractors |
| Engineering Expenses                               | \$ 35,000         | BV Engineering    |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                              | <b>\$ 338,000</b> |                   |
| <b>Surplus/Deficit</b>                             | <b>\$ -</b>       |                   |

Total uncommitted Canada Community-Building Fund BC funds remaining in the Electoral Area E allocation is \$228,650.

Director Clint Lambert is supportive of this project and of accessing Canada Community-Building BC funds in the amount of up to \$33,000 from Area E for this Recreation Infrastructure project.

A Board resolution is required to contribute Canada Community-Building BC Funds to this project.

**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 Committee of Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator  
**Date:** October 9, 2025  
**Subject:** **Food Producing Non-Profit Gathering Report**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

---

### BACKGROUND

A day-long gathering of food producing, non-profit agricultural organizations was held on March 22, 2025, at the Heritage Church in Burns Lake. Representatives from three non-profit organizations attended: Groundbreakers Agriculture Association, the Nechako Valley Food Network, and the Fraser Lake Eco-Coop. The session was facilitated by Mark deHoog, of Blue Ocean Group. The Regional Agriculture Coordinator was also in attendance.

Attached please find a report prepared by Mark deHoog following the event that summarizes the key themes and findings.

Next steps involve re-engaging with agricultural non-profit organizations in the region to determine if there is interest in a day-long workshop that covers topics such as:

- Governance best practices
- Diversity and inclusion
- Member recruitment and retention
- Financial statements and bookkeeping
- Fundraising
- Developing effective and efficient systems (including the use of AI)
- Human resources (contracts, hiring employees)
- Marketing and use of social media

### ATTACHMENTS:

RDBN Report Food Producing Non-Profit Gathering Report

**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.

# REGIONAL NON-PROFIT FOOD PRODUCERS CONSULTATION REPORT

*Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategic  
Pathways for Development*



Prepared for:  
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN)  
and Regional Agricultural Stakeholders  
Date:  
April 2025



PREPARED BY  
Mark deHoog  
[mark@markdehoog.com](mailto:mark@markdehoog.com)

## Executive Summary

This report synthesizes the discussions and findings from the recent consultation meeting on March 22, 2025 with the RDBN and several Non-Profit Agricultural Groups in the Region. The primary focus was connection with one another and discussion on the challenges and opportunities for developing food security strategies in the region, emphasizing funding, government support, community engagement, and collaboration with First Nations communities. Strategic planning, youth involvement, and partnerships with local businesses were also identified as crucial for success.

Key findings include the necessity of sustainable funding, the role of food hubs in strengthening local food systems, and the need for effective collaboration among stakeholders. Challenges such as high infrastructure costs, regulatory restrictions, and limited processing facilities were also highlighted. Several actionable steps were proposed to address these issues, including lobbying efforts, strategic alliances, and enhanced information sharing.

## Food Security and Sustainable Development

Addressing food security in the Bulkley Nechako region requires a multifaceted approach that combines sustainability, accessibility, and economic resilience. The consultation explored how food hubs can act as a cornerstone for regional food development, strengthening the local food economy and ensuring year-round access to nutritious, affordable food.

## Local Food System Enhancement

Improving the local food system involves creating effective distribution channels, supporting producers, and building public awareness around the benefits of buying local. Examples from other regions offer scalable models, but success depends on tailoring these initiatives to the unique needs and capacities of local communities.

The meeting emphasized the importance of making local food more accessible and sustainable. Several initiatives, including food hubs and farm-to-school programs, were discussed as potential models for regional adoption.

Successful food hubs in the Kootenays and Kamloops serve as examples of how structured operational plans and collaboration can support local food systems. However, adapting these

models requires community-specific strategies that consider local resources and funding challenges.

## Community Gardening and Youth Engagement

Youth involvement is a vital element of a thriving local food system. Programs that connect youth to gardening and farming help nurture a new generation of food leaders. This section highlights the successes and limitations of current efforts and identifies strategies for deepening youth engagement through schools and community partnerships.

Projects such as the Young agrarians and Youth On Farm (Groundbreakers) program demonstrate the value of engaging young people in sustainable agriculture. However, these programs face issues related to compliance, funding, and staff availability. Schools play a key role in these efforts, but their level of engagement varies.

## Volunteer and Community Engagement Strategies

Volunteers are the backbone of many food-related initiatives in the region. Sustaining momentum and avoiding burnout requires intentional strategies that value, support, and empower volunteers. This section offers insights into practices that can enhance community participation and long-term project stability.

Sustaining community-driven initiatives requires a well-structured volunteer framework. Recognizing and incentivizing volunteer contributions can enhance retention and engagement. Recommendations include:

- Establishing formal recognition programs for volunteers.
- Providing small stipends or benefits for long-term volunteers.
- Encouraging local businesses to support volunteer efforts through sponsorships.

## Current Landscape of Non-Profit Orgs

The post-pandemic environment has created both urgency and opportunity for food development. This section maps out the current state of food infrastructure, outlines the barriers organizations face, and lays the groundwork for potential collective solutions to strengthen food networks across the region.

Post-pandemic, many organizations have struggled with:

- **Resource Constraints:** Limited funding and human resources have made it difficult to sustain operations.
- **Volunteer Fatigue:** Many initiatives rely heavily on volunteers, who often experience burnout due to overcommitment and lack of recognition.

- **Limited Funding Opportunities:** Grants often require organizations to provide upfront capital, making it challenging for under-resourced groups to access funding.
- **Lack of Coordination:** Organizations working toward similar goals often operate in silos, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for collaboration.

## Strategic Collaboration and Information Sharing

Effective collaboration is essential to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize limited resources. Participants voiced a strong desire for better coordination and knowledge exchange. This section explores the importance of building formal alliances and communication frameworks across the region.

One of the central themes of the meeting was the need for improved collaboration among regional organizations. Participants expressed concerns over duplicated efforts, lack of communication, and insufficient information-sharing mechanisms. Some organizations reported experiencing challenges with idea appropriation, where their initiatives were used by others without collaboration or credit.

To address these concerns, participants suggested **establishing formal partnerships** and implementing **clear protocols for information exchange**. These steps would help protect intellectual contributions while fostering an environment of cooperation and shared success.

## Regional Food Networks and Their Roles

### Groundbreakers Collective

Groundbreakers is a key player in the regional food movement, leading with a grassroots approach to education, sustainability, and advocacy. This section outlines their work and presents ideas for expanding their reach and impact through enhanced partnerships.

Groundbreakers is a grassroots organization focused on food sovereignty and sustainability. It works to create resilient food systems by supporting local farmers, hosting educational workshops, and developing community food initiatives. Their key initiatives include:

- **Educational Programs:** Providing training on sustainable agriculture and food security.
- **Community Support:** Assisting local farmers with resources and networking opportunities.
- **Advocacy Work:** Engaging with schools and community to support local food production and sustainable practices.

Despite their impact, Groundbreakers faces funding challenges and a need for more extensive community engagement. Expanding partnerships with regional organizations could help enhance their reach and effectiveness.

## Nechako Valley Food Network

As a locally driven initiative, the Nechako Valley Food Network plays a crucial role in addressing food insecurity and supporting producers. This section presents their strengths and challenges

The Nechako Valley Food Network is dedicated to strengthening local food systems through education, advocacy, and community-driven initiatives. Its primary goals include:

- **Food Security Programs:** Implementing food-sharing initiatives and supporting local food hubs.
- **Farmer and Producer Support:** Providing training and financial guidance for small-scale farmers.
- **Sustainable Practices Promotion:** Encouraging environmentally friendly farming methods and reducing food waste.
- **NeighborLink** provides emergency food access but does not function as a full-scale food hub (Vanderhoof)

One of the network's major challenges is securing long-term funding to sustain its programs. Strengthening collaborations with local governments and businesses could provide additional support and resources.

## The Eco Co-op

The Eco Co-op is a unique organization aiming to integrate food security with cultural, environmental, and youth development goals. This section examines their innovative model, existing barriers, and potential for scalable impact through partnerships and social enterprise.

The Eco Co-op is an emerging Co-op with a compelling vision. They are dedicated to building community capacity, enhancing food security, promoting local arts and culture, and supporting youth engagement. It operates in an ecologically responsible manner while fostering regional collaboration.

### Key Challenges

Despite its strong mission, the Eco Co-op faces several obstacles:

- **Economic Downturns:** The closure of primary employment sources has placed financial pressure on the community and the co-op.
- **Funding Limitations:** Access to grants and investor support remains a challenge, particularly because the co-op is not Indigenous-owned, limiting eligibility for certain funding streams.
- **Community Capacity Issues:** With a small population of 1,000 residents, many of whom are either elderly or young, volunteer availability is limited.

## Observations

- Limited existing food hubs in the region.
- Successful examples from other regions demonstrate the importance of strategic planning and financial sustainability.
- Funding remains a significant challenge for many organizations. Alternative approaches such as cooperative investment, community-backed funding, and social enterprise models can help diversify revenue streams.
- Additionally, collaboration with universities and research institutions can provide opportunities for grants and strategic partnerships. The Eco Co-op has already taken steps in this direction by partnering with academic institutions to conduct feasibility studies for sustainable business planning.
- A strategic point of front line contact in Schools is the best way of implementing. eg - Talk to a teacher not an admin.

## What are the Elements of a Successful Food Hub?

The group spent some time discussing what was needed for a successful food hub. A successful food hub must go beyond logistics and infrastructure—it must be a community-driven, financially viable initiative that adapts to local realities. This section breaks down the key components the group identified for success and lessons from other regions.

- Sufficient funding to cover operating costs.
- Government support to supplement volunteer efforts.
- Integration of educational and community engagement components.
- Adaptation to regional needs, including First Nations collaboration.
- A solid and adaptable business plan that takes into account regional factors and revenue streams from the start

## Challenges and Solutions

### Food Processing and Retail Issues

- **Limited Processing Facilities:** Small-scale producers struggle with inadequate facilities, leading to sales difficulties.
- **Market Access:** Producers need support in retail strategies and product presentation.
- **Infrastructure Costs:** High costs have led to the failure of previous food hub initiatives.

### Potential Solutions

- **Revenue Generation Strategies:** Incorporating workshops, meeting spaces, and retail components.
- **Niche Market Focus:** Examples of farms targeting specific products like garlic and organic vegetables.
- **Collaboration with Local Businesses:** Food hubs partnering with restaurants to ensure stable demand.

## Strategic Development of a Food Hub

### Building a Sustainable Model

- Determining the primary function: Retail vs. Processing.
- Learning from successful models, such as multipurpose facilities incorporating commercial kitchens and retail space.
- Exploring strategic partnerships with institutions like hospitals and schools.
- To prevent reliance on a few key individuals, organizations need robust succession planning. The development of policies and procedures for smooth leadership transitions can ensure long-term stability. Additionally, tracking progress through a shared database can help measure impact and facilitate collaboration

### Scaling Solutions Despite Market Limitations

- Leveraging distribution networks to expand market access.
- Identifying and supporting niche products to differentiate from large-scale competitors.
- Enhancing consumer education to create demand for local food.

## Policy and Advocacy Considerations

### Regulatory Challenges

- Restrictive policies from the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission affecting northern food production.
- Lack of lobbying power among small northern rural farmers compared to corporate interests rooted in the Fraser Valley area.
- Difficulty navigating government regulations that may deter small producers.

### Proposed Advocacy Efforts

- Strengthening farmer representation through coalitions.
- Educating policymakers on regional agricultural needs.

- Using regulatory frameworks to the advantage of local producers (e.g., labeling programs).
- Just do what you need to do in your community instead of waiting for Government to 'approve' - Lead by grass roots not through policy change.

**A major recommendation from the meeting** was the establishment of a regional food security group to:

- Act as a hub to nurture relationships between organizations.
- Connect resources and funding opportunities.
- Facilitate best practice sharing across communities.

This group would help streamline efforts and ensure that initiatives align with broader regional development goals.

## Community Engagement and Collaboration

Lasting change requires buy-in from all sectors. This section emphasizes the value of inclusive, community-rooted approaches that include First Nations leadership, youth engagement, and improved communication tools to build stronger networks.

### First Nations Involvement

- Recognizing traditional ecological knowledge in food hub development.
- Building partnerships with First Nations communities from the outset.
- Ensuring equitable representation in food security initiatives.

### Youth Engagement Strategies

- Providing hands-on learning experiences in food production.
- Integrating youth into leadership roles within the food strategies.
- Connecting youth with experienced farmers through mentorship programs.

## Information Sharing and Networking

### Developing a Communication Framework

- Establishing a web-based platform for information sharing.
- Organizing regular meetings and networking events.
- Using collaborative tools like Google Workspace to streamline communication.

## Regional Collaboration Opportunities

- Engaging with initiatives like the regional food security coalition in Prince George.
- Learning from other successful models, such as Sprout Kitchen in Quesnel.
- Expanding networking opportunities beyond local boundaries to access more resources.

\*\*\*A major recommendation from the meeting was the establishment of a regional food security group to:

- Act as a hub to nurture relationships between organizations.
- Connect resources and funding opportunities.
- Facilitate best practice sharing across communities.

This group would help streamline efforts and ensure that initiatives align with broader regional development goals.

## Action Plan and Next Steps

Turning ideas into action requires clarity, coordination, and commitment. This section offers a roadmap of immediate and long-term strategies to guide the development of food hubs and local food systems in the region.

### Immediate Action Items

- **Participate in Regional Food Security Coalition (Prince George)** – Observe and adopt successful practices.
- **Engage Business Students for Strategic Planning** – Partner with institutions to develop sustainable business models.
- **Canvas Local Producers** – Identify needs and preferences for the food security ecosystem.
- **Explore Institutional Contracts** – Secure commercial agreements with schools and healthcare facilities.
- **Develop Consumer Education Initiatives** – Increase awareness of the benefits of local food.
- **Organize advocacy Efforts** – Advocate for policy changes supporting northern food producers.
- **Strengthen First Nations Partnerships** – Ensure meaningful involvement in food planning.
- **Enhance Information Sharing** – Implement digital platforms and regular networking events.
- **Plan Next Meeting** – Set a date for continued discussions and updates (April 24, 2025).

## Long-Term Strategies

- **Form a Regional Food Coalition:** Unify smaller farmers and producers under a collective voice.
- **Develop Sustainable Funding Models:** Identify diverse revenue streams to support food hub operations.
- **Expand Market Access:** Work with distributors and retailers to increase visibility for local food.
- Build capacity in community and across the region rather than wait for government to get behind it.
- **Monitor Policy Changes:** Stay engaged in advocacy to influence regulatory decisions.

## Conclusion

The consultation meeting highlighted both the opportunities and challenges for food hubs in the region. While there are existing barriers such as funding limitations, regulatory issues, and infrastructure costs, strategic planning and collaboration can address these concerns. By engaging with community stakeholders, forming strong partnerships, and advocating for policy changes, food hubs can become a sustainable and impactful part of the regional food system.

The next steps involve concrete actions such as networking with regional coalitions, developing business strategies, starting small, building with small wins momentum and engaging youth and First Nations communities in meaningful ways. The ultimate goal is to build a resilient and self-sustaining food hub model that enhances food security, strengthens local economies, and fosters community collaboration.



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator  
**Date:** October 9, 2025  
**Subject:** Young Agrarians BC Land Matching Program

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

---

### BACKGROUND

Young Agrarians is a Canada-wide, volunteer-based, organization made up of a variety of people growing food, advocating for food security, and actively participating in and growing food systems and organizations. Agrarians Foundation doing business as Young Agrarians is a registered charity.

The B.C. Land Matching Program has evolved over time – Young Agrarians (YA) began land access programming in 2012. The current program actively connects and supports people who are looking for land to farm, and people who have land available for farming. Land Matchers are available throughout the province to ensure 'personalized, regional matchmaking services for farmers and landholders'<sup>[1]</sup>.

YA has a variety of resources available for both land seekers and landholders, including land matching workshops, a variety of webinars on topics such as farm transition and legal insights for land access, guides and toolkits that include a Farming in Central and Northern B.C. Guide, a team of people dedicated to the program (they are currently hiring a Central & North Land Matcher), and a U-Map that lists both farmers looking for land and land listings. At present, we have six people looking for land, and seven land listings within our region<sup>[2]</sup>.

<sup>[1]</sup> B.C. Land Matching webpage: <https://youngagrarians.org/bc-land-matching-program/>

<sup>[2]</sup> Young Agrarians U-Map: <https://maps.youngagrarians.org/>

**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.



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of Whole

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator  
**Date:** October 9, 2025  
**Subject:** **Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy - Fall 2025 Update**

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

---

### BACKGROUND

As requested at the September 4, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, staff have prepared an overview of the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy.

The Task Force was established by the Government of British Columbia in February 2025 to provide external policy advice on strengthening B.C.'s agriculture and food sectors. It is composed of 16 members representing producers, processors, labour, retail/sales, academia, First Nations, and industry associations.

The Task Force is co-chaired by: Danielle Synotte, Executive Director, BC Agriculture Council, James Donaldson, CEO, BC Food & Beverage, and Michelle Koski, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

### Mandate & Focus Areas

The Task Force has been asked to produce prioritized, actionable recommendations for government in five key areas: water, competitiveness, labour, land, and investment.

The goal is to enable efficient decision-making, support timely implementation, and set a 'measurable long-term vision for sector growth and competitiveness'<sup>[1]</sup>.

### Key Recommendations to Date

#### Water

- Prioritize Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) permitting for water storage capacity at farm, community, and watershed levels (using both infrastructure and nature-based solutions). Also prioritize water storage projects in Ministry of Agriculture and Food funding programs.
- Streamline Dam Safety Regulation requirements for lower-risk water infrastructure – look to streamline the permitting process.

- Create pathways to low-interest public and private financing for community-level agricultural water projects.
- Clear the backlog of groundwater applications submitted before the deadline in 2022.
- Create a new framework for assessing applications received after the 2022 deadline that streamlines the authorization process.
- Incentivize groundwater licensing by linking possession of a water license to eligibility for government programs.
- The agriculture sector should be represented in watershed planning processes, in particular, government forums. Farmer and rancher participation ensures collaborative problem solving. Government should provide community-level watershed planning processes with the appropriate technical knowledge resources, and a streamlined toolkit.
- Reserve and protect water for agricultural use.
- Develop guidelines at the provincial level that require local government to have a key role in region-specific planning and infrastructure to ensure agricultural water security.

### **Competitiveness**

- Work with the agriculture industry to target government resources toward subsectors, businesses, products and regional clusters with highest sustainable growth potential.
- Eliminate Provincial Sales Tax on agriculture, aquaculture, and food inputs/equipment.
- Remove the motor fuel tax paid by seafood producers.
- Introduce a provincial investment tax credit that can be used to encourage producers and processors to modernize and adopt new technologies.
- Advocate to the Federal Government to continue the Accelerated Investment Incentive for Capital Cost Allowance.
- Provide access to funding to de-risk investments and support technology demonstration projects.
- Reduce regulatory burden for producers and processors.

### **Next Steps**

The Task Force will continue to meet through January 2026. Future recommendations will address labour, land, and investment priorities.

<sup>[1]</sup> Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy webpage:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/premier-s-task-force-on-agriculture-and-food-economy>

### **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.