



# owntrust

Stories of *people and places* in the Columbia Basin **FALL 2019 FREE**

Feeding families,  
reducing waste

FOOD RECOVERY ADDS VALUE 18

Cultural and  
ecological renewal

YAQAN NU KIY RESTORE A WETLAND 12

Training tomorrow's  
tradespeople

APPRENTICES LEARN LOCALLY 14

# Together, we are strengthening the Basin

Columbia Basin Trust supports the ideas and efforts of the people in the Columbia Basin.

We take our lead from residents and communities. Whatever the situation calls for, we adapt our role: from providing resources, to bringing people together, to leading an entire initiative.

The Trust is here to offer experience and support to all Basin residents.

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

For 25 years, we've been working together to strengthen the Basin. In 2020, help us celebrate all that we have accomplished together, and have your say on how we can continue to support your efforts into the future. Watch our website for ways we'll be recognizing this milestone.

## THE COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST REGION

The Trust serves the region consisting of all the watersheds that flow into the Columbia River in Canada.

### Map Legend

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



## Our History

**Pre-WW II** The Columbia River Basin's many mountains and rivers made it susceptible to floods. This was a concern to residents who lived along the river in Canada and the United States.

**Post-WW II** Residents on both sides of the border began using and demanding more electricity.

**Late 1940s to Early 1950s** The Canadian and U.S. governments began to ask: How can we control the Columbia River to minimize flooding and generate more electricity?

**1964** The answer was the Columbia River Treaty, signed in 1964. It allowed two countries to build four dams, creating large reservoirs entirely or partially in BC.

When the governments created the treaty, they didn't ask Basin residents for their views, concerns or solutions.

# Imagine the possibilities

When you think about the future of this region, where do you see opportunities? We want to hear about your bold and innovative ideas.

Our work is guided by the Columbia Basin Management Plan, which is developed in consultation with you.

The **Our Trust, Our Future 2020** engagement process will get under way early in the new year, when we'll be hosting community conversations, events, online forums and more.

Help us shape the future of how we live, work and play in the Basin.

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

What can you do now? Get to know how we are supporting you and your communities.

- Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn.
- Sign up to receive our monthly BasinLink e-newsletter at [ourtrust.org/basinlink](http://ourtrust.org/basinlink).
- Read remarkable stories of people and places at [stories.ourtrust.org](http://stories.ourtrust.org).
- Start imagining your ideas for the future.

## Contact Us

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



Early 1990s

Canadian Basin residents approached the Province of BC and asked it to give a fair share of funds to the region and create a Basin-based organization to manage those funds.

1995

The government established Columbia Basin Trust and endowed it with \$276 million to invest in regional hydro-electric projects, \$45 million to invest otherwise, plus provided \$32 million for operations from 1995 to 2010.

To support its delivery of benefits activities and corporate operations, the Trust earns money by investing in power projects, Basin businesses and market securities, which generates a predictable, sustainable and appreciating income.

Today

The Trust continues to support the ideas and efforts of the people of the Basin. It takes its lead from residents and communities, offering resources, experience and support.

The Trust's work focuses on improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Columbia Basin—now and for generations to come.

- 5** Message from the Chair and CEO
- 6** A glimpse of projects from around the region
- 11** Key stats about programs and projects
- 12** Reviving wetlands and a traditional hunting ground  
Culture, history and ecology take the forefront in Yaqan Nu?kiy project
- 14** Training tomorrow's tradespeople  
Education and experience are key to creating the workforce Basin businesses need
- 16** Brewing up business  
A social hub creates economic impact
- 18** Feeding families while reducing waste  
Creston Valley food recovery projects bring fruit products and skills to people in the Basin
- 20** Fun and games—with a purpose  
Developing leadership skills in youth
- 23** A bubbly future  
A Basin business gains momentum
- 24** Protecting habitat, supporting a livelihood  
Ranchers balance needs of cattle and environment
- 26** Art energizes public spaces  
Communities celebrate their people and places
- 28** To preserve and enjoy  
Partnerships allow purchase of key lands
- 30** Over 80 years strong  
Volunteers help Grasmere flourish
- 31** The power of local ownership  
The Trust becomes a 50/50 partner in Waneta Expansion
- 32** Investing in Basin businesses  
Giving local businesses a boost to meet demand
- 34** Revenues and benefits for the Basin  
2018/19 financial report
- 35** Inspired by the Basin  
A look back with Board Chair Rick Jensen



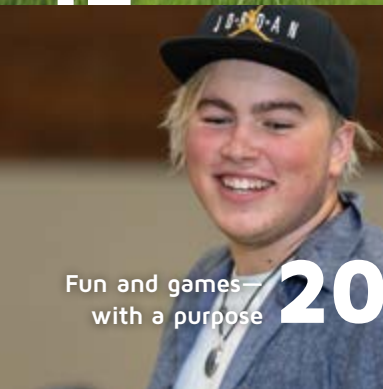
Protecting habitat, supporting a livelihood



Reviving wetlands and a traditional hunting ground



Training tomorrow's tradespeople



Fun and games—with a purpose

ON THE COVER  
Elizabeth Quinn with the Fields Forward Society, which helps to process and distribute Creston Valley cherries that would otherwise go to waste.

Columbia **trust**  
Basin

Our Trust is published and produced annually by Columbia Basin Trust. If you'd like to reproduce anything you read, contact us at [communications@ourtrust.org](mailto:communications@ourtrust.org).



Design by [marianlowe.com](http://marianlowe.com)

# Our thoughts

**Our Trust magazine looks at the year that was while** glimpsing at what will come. The pages that follow feature some of the recent projects, people and places that have inspired us.

Thanks to the efforts of people in the Basin and the support of our partners, we now have more than 70 active programs and initiatives. These include new ones that help kids get active, support businesses to realize their potential for growth, revitalize public spaces and make community-purpose buildings more energy efficient.

In 2018/19, we delivered \$62.6 million in funding benefits and commercial investments to the region and entered into 1,750 new projects and partnerships. Also, we and our partner Columbia Power Corporation purchased Fortis Inc.'s 51 per cent share of Waneta Expansion Generating Station (see page 31), ensuring local ownership of all our power projects.

In 2020 the Trust will be 25 years old. Watch our website for the ways we'll be commemorating this special year, including the launch of a book on our organization's history.

Also, expect to hear from us as we think about how we can better support you into the future. Two years after our formation in 1995, we wrote our first Columbia Basin Management Plan, which guides our work based on the ideas, dreams and goals of people living in the Basin. Since then, we have renewed the plan and strategic priorities three times. It's now time to embark on the fourth.

In the new year, we'll be reaching out to you through community meetings, surveys, in-person conversations and more. We'll be seeking your feedback on where you think we should head next. Your input will help us determine the Trust's strategic priorities for the coming years.

Above and beyond all that, we'll also be hosting our next Symposium in October 2020. This is an excellent chance to join other people to celebrate the region's accomplishments and help us all work toward solutions to shared challenges.

The year 2020 is going to be an exciting and fulfilling one here at the Trust. We look forward to connecting with you!



Johnny Strilaeff and Rick Jensen. ADRIAN WAGNER

**Rick Jensen**  
Chair, Board of Directors

**Johnny Strilaeff**  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer

# Snapshots

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



## Growing with confidence

**Popov Leather** produces handmade leather goods like wallets and belts. Since hiring its first employee in 2016, it has rapidly expanded to 12 employees in a large workshop outside **Nelson**, shipping 50 to 60 orders per day.

With such growth, one hurdle has been managing productivity and efficiency. Enter **Basin RevUp**. Funded by the Trust and developed by Accelerate Okanagan, this program is for non-technology-based businesses that are poised for significant growth. Business owners work directly with a team of highly skilled advisors to build the business knowledge and skills they need to help their businesses grow, thrive and obtain future success.

"I would consider my time at RevUp as a turning point," says owner Ryan Popoff. "I have a new level of knowledge and confidence to run and grow my business."

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

BELOW: Staff of Popov Leather.  
RIGHT: Ryan Popoff, owner of Popov Leather.



ADRIAN WAGNER

Full story at  
*Basin Stories*  
[stories.ourtrust.org](http://stories.ourtrust.org)

## An eye-catching restoration

Outside the Revelstoke Railway Museum sits a vibrant yellow **caboose**. Not long ago, the caboose was showing its age. Now, with help from the Trust's **Heritage, Museum and Archive Grants**, Ed Koski and Jimmy Young from the **Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society** have restored it close to its original condition.

Built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1954, the caboose was one of the first to be built in steel, rather

than wood, and to have a cupola (elevated windows and seats) in the centre, rather than at an end.

"The caboose is the one piece of outdoor rolling stock that we are able to have open to the public year-round," says Hayley Johnson, Executive Director. "This project will draw enthusiasts to the museum at all times of the year."

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

REVELSTOKE RAILWAY MUSEUM



COURTNEY FORSTER



## Free access to tech-enabled spaces

People in Kimberley can now arrange to visit the **Kimberley Public Library's** new mobile **tech-enabled space** to use laptops, creative software, virtual reality equipment, photography and video cameras, equipment for younger tech explorers and soon a 3-D printer. The library will offer programs to help them use the technology, and held a computer-building workshop in partnership with the Kimberley Youth Action Network.

In March 2019, nine public facilities received \$613,000 to purchase state-of-the-art technology with support from the Trust's **Community Technology Program**. People can access this sophisticated equipment for free, making it easier for them to participate in the digital world.

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

Full story at

*Basin Stories*

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

## Road map for the future

The **Radium Hot Springs Public Library** has recently enlarged its space and enjoyed increased circulation. It has also been working on important **background processes**—particularly strategic planning and fundraising. It tackled these issues with support from the Trust's **Non-profit Advisors Program**, which helps non-profit organizations increase capacity, become more sustainable and become more efficient.

The program's initial assessment provided the library Board members with practical direction, and then some financial support to follow up on the priorities they'd identified. "Because of our participation in the program, we are now engaging in solid governance practices," says Board Chair Jane Thurgood Sagal. "Working with our advisor and consultants allowed us to map out five years of work—as a Board, it is a gift to receive focused direction! We now have a road map for our future."

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



Board members of Radium Hot Springs Public Library.

Full story at  
*Basin Stories*  
[stories.ourtrust.org](http://stories.ourtrust.org)



ASHLEY VOYKIN

## Playing in the Basin

Kids are getting active and getting support to lead healthy lifestyles through the Trust's **Basin PLAYS (Physical Literacy and Youth Sport)** initiative. Here are some of the activities:

### YMIR TAKES IT OUTSIDE

In **Ymir**, the community noticed youth wanting to play more court sports outside—but that meant many were playing in the streets. A new **multipurpose court** gives them a safer place to play sports like basketball and volleyball, right next to the skatepark.

### MUDDY MOVEMENT

There was mud, leaping, crawling and laughter. At **Rosland Summit School**, leadership students designed and built a **mud obstacle course**. Other students then eagerly started training to tackle it, getting fit so they could use their strength, endurance and physical literacy skills to conquer the challenging route.

### TRAINING COACHES

Before, the **Cranbrook Lacrosse Association** was bringing in referees from elsewhere. Now, it has trained and certified 10 referees of its own, giving local youth the opportunity to play the sport at various levels. In total, 67 training grants have helped groups throughout the Basin **accredit coaches and officials**.

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



From left to right: Heather Rennebohm, ʔakisq'nuk First Nation, and Shelbie Clarke, Bryan Armstrong and Nicole Shovar with the Columbia Lake Recreation Society.



## Community dream comes true

The new \$4-million **Columbia Lake Recreation Centre** is the largest project the community of **ʔakisq'nuk** has ever undertaken.

"This project was an absolute priority for this community," says Heather Rennebohm, Economic Development Officer.

The 22,400-square-foot complex houses a gymnasium, elevated track, exercise room and more, including office space for a variety of community services. From design to construction, the Trust-supported project provided jobs and training for community members and provides employment today to the people who help make the place run.

The facility opened in spring 2019 and is already making an impact in the community and beyond. From intramural sports to hosting tournaments, the centre offers something for everyone when it comes to improving health through sports and activities.

Anyone from anywhere can use the facility, which runs activities for all ages and a range of interests. Chief Alfred Joseph says, "This community is not separate. We are all part of the larger whole."



TRACY CONNERY

## A fun ride for all abilities

Twists, turns, bumps and more. Mountain biking is fun—including for people with disabilities who ride three-wheeled adaptive mountain bikes. In the Basin, **adaptive trails** like **Nakusp's Mount Abriel network** and **Fernie's Montane property** are opening the outdoors to a broader range of people, with support from the Trust.

"You can hike on them, you can bike on them, you can chariot, you can have the kids on their strider bikes," says Dawn Driscoll, Project Manager of the Nakusp and Area Bike Society, which is developing Mount Abriel. "The vision was to have an outlet for recreation and physical activity for all."



Josh Dueck.

Full story at

*Basin Stories*

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

JESSE-SCHPAKOWSKI

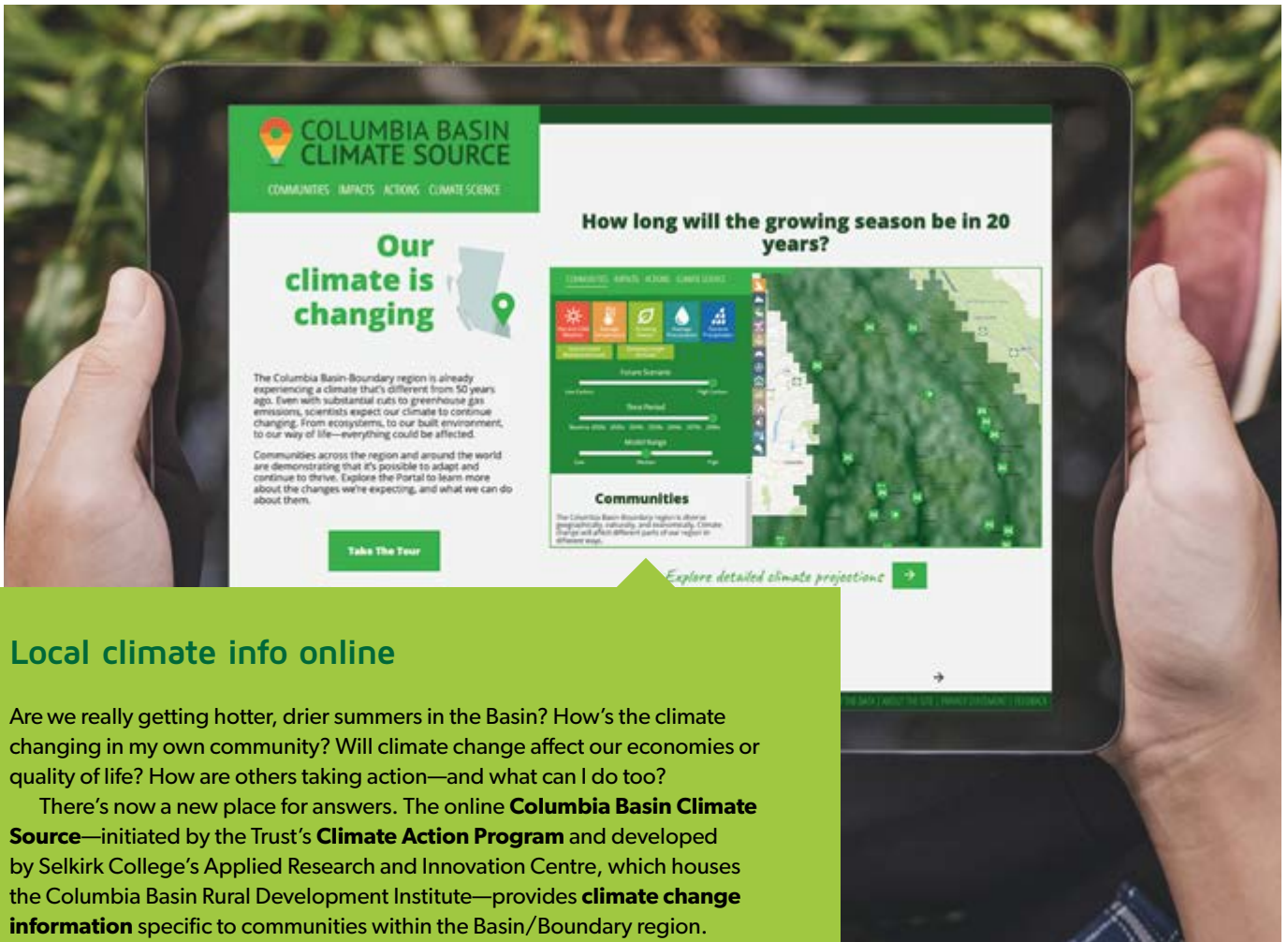


## Growing affordable housing

Twelve new **affordable housing** units for families are ready to open their doors in **Kimberley**. These are just a fraction of the over 1,000 new affordable housing units the Trust has helped create in the Basin since 2002, in addition to repairs and upgrades to over 1,000 existing affordable units.

Affordable housing is essential when it comes to creating healthy and resilient communities and reducing poverty. The Trust supports affordable housing, including over 500 new affordable rental units that are currently under development in the Basin.

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



## Local climate info online

Are we really getting hotter, drier summers in the Basin? How's the climate changing in my own community? Will climate change affect our economies or quality of life? How are others taking action—and what can I do too?

There's now a new place for answers. The online **Columbia Basin Climate Source**—initiated by the Trust's **Climate Action Program** and developed by Selkirk College's Applied Research and Innovation Centre, which houses the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute—provides **climate change information** specific to communities within the Basin/Boundary region.

This one-stop site of videos, data, maps, explanations and more helps you understand the science, access and interpret local data, grasp the impacts and learn how you too can prepare for the future.

[basinclimatesource.ca](http://basinclimatesource.ca)  
[ourtrust.org/climateaction](http://ourtrust.org/climateaction)

# By the numbers

## 118

**affordable housing units in five communities** received **\$1.5 million** in support in spring 2019, and **First Nations communities** recently received **\$2.9 million** to build 43 new units and improve 88 existing ones. Since 2002, the Trust has helped groups create, upgrade or repair nearly **2,000 units in 24 communities**.

AFFORD



## 325

people used **nutrition coupons** from the BC Association of Farmers' Markets to purchase food at **16 farmers' markets** in **14 Basin communities** in summer 2019. The Trust has committed **\$520,000** over four years to this program.

NOURISH



## \$10.2 million

is the total value of two projects that will bring high-speed internet to **26 Basin communities**. This will involve installing **175 kilometres** of fibre-optic cables, adding to the Trust's current **895-kilometre network** that connects **35 communities**.

CONNECT



## 300+

**student jobs** have been created annually through the Trust's wage subsidy and career internship programs.

EMPLOY



## 10,000+

**Basin students** benefit each year from Trust-supported **environmental education** programs, connecting with the natural world through hands-on activities that teach them about their own wild backyards.

EDUCATE



## \$155,000

was committed in June 2019 to help **nine communities** educate their residents about the **risks of wildfire** and how they can take action. This adds onto the **\$1.1 million** that **24 communities** received in 2018 to undertake wildfire-mitigation projects, which brings Trust support for these kinds of projects to over **\$1.5 million** since 2012.

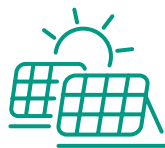
PREPARE



## \$657,000

was announced in 2019 to support **renewable energy upgrades**—from solar panels to heat pumps—on **16 community buildings** like community halls and aquatic centres. The Trust has also supported an **electric vehicle charging network** across the Basin, plus helped improve energy use in **935 units in 47 affordable housing buildings**.

CONSERVE



**A new project is helping the Yaqan Nu?kiy—also** known as the Lower Kootenay Band—restore traditional hunting grounds near the mouth of Goat River. This area has been known by many names, including anaxamnamki, which means “where the people hunt.”

In days past, the Yaqan Nu?kiy people paddled canoes to use the wetlands throughout this valley bottom near Creston. But historical changes intended to improve a 517-hectare area ended up cutting off a portion of it from the flood plain, degrading habitat value and allowing invasive species, both plant and animal, to creep in.

Major improvements will restore habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species, including white sturgeon, burbot, kokanee salmon, rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, northern leopard frog, western painted turtle and various waterfowl.

“We’re trying to create a lot of habitat for them,” says Community Planner Norm Allard.

The restoration will benefit plant life too, including wild potato, cattail, bulrush, sedges and other plants traditionally used by the Ktunaxa, such as early spring plants that become part of annual feasts.

“The people in the community utilize all of that,” he says. “We can go out and harvest a bit of it, and keep those practices alive.”



# Reviving wetlands and a traditional hunting ground

Culture, history and ecology take the forefront in Yaqan Nu?kiy project

The area was once a natural flood plain, but human-caused changes, beginning in the 1930s, have had undesirable effects. This in turn has created a perfect environment for invasive species like the American bullfrog and reed canary grass.

The project will now use 1929 aerial photos that show the natural configuration of the wetlands, and the knowledge of Yaqan Nuʔkiy Elders, to bring the area closer to its previous condition.

The long list of actions includes removing 1.9 kilometres of dam surrounding the entire area, restoring a 1.2-kilometre reach of Goat River South that was separated from Goat River, enhancing 600 metres of ditch so it acts like a natural river channel, restoring

wetlands and streams, and re-establishing a diversity of culturally and ecologically important vegetation. Significant erosion will be controlled along Goat River by resloping and restoring native vegetation on over one kilometre of vertical banks.

The plans have given Yaqan Nuʔkiy members hope for the future of these wetlands—a future that will hopefully look more like the past.

“Thirty years ago, you would see clouds of thousands of ducks,” says Allard. “Now, there are far fewer.

We hope to restore more of their habitat and see how much population the area can sustain.”

## Supporting and strengthening ecosystem health in the Basin

The Yaqan Nuʔkiy are undertaking this project with support from the Trust’s Ecosystem Enhancement Program. This five-year, \$10-million initiative supports large-scale, on-the-ground projects that aim to maintain and improve ecological health and native biodiversity.

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



# Training tomorrow's tradespeople

Education and experience are key to creating the workforce Basin businesses need



Angela Maio, apprentice carpenter, Purcell Timber Frame Homes.

**“I’m absolutely loving being a carpenter,” says Angela Maio.** She attended the 24-week carpentry foundation program at the Silver King (Nelson) campus of Selkirk College and is now a first-year apprentice working for Purcell Timber Frame Homes in Nelson.

“Purcell is located right in the heart of Nelson, so it has been easy to get to work and back,” she says. “Doing my apprenticeship locally is amazing and very convenient for me.”

It’s this “local” aspect that deserves attention. Not only can students in many trades get educated right here in the Basin, but they can do their apprenticeships here too. It’s an important way of growing the region’s workforce.

## LEARNING THE SKILLS

To start, apprentices like Maio need a solid foundation. That’s why the Trust has supported educational facilities where future tradespeople learn classroom theory and obtain hands-on training.

In 2017, the Trust provided \$1 million to College of the Rockies (COTR) to help it build a new, larger trades training facility that has improved program delivery and enabled the college to accept more trades students.

“The addition of Patterson Hall has allowed us to further expand our ability to provide the trades training that our students need to reach their goals and secure careers in high-demand fields,” says COTR President and CEO David Walls. “These students, then, are well-equipped to serve the needs of our communities and industry partners.”

In 2014, the Trust provided \$1 million to Selkirk College to help it create a modern trades facility and upgrade equipment at its Silver King campus. And beyond the trades, in March 2019 the Trust announced support of \$3 million each for Selkirk College and COTR over three years to help them to develop, diversify and enrich programs and otherwise enhance the college experience for all students.



Lilly-Anne McLaren, apprentice electrician, Kimberley Electric Ltd. ZOE FERGUSON



Left to right: Corey Havers, Angela Maio and Al Gluckman at Purcell Timber Frame Homes. RYAN FLETT



“Education, skill development and training for trades is essential to building a capable workforce and a strong economy in our region and beyond,” says Angus Graeme, Selkirk College President. “The opportunities for those interested in rewarding careers in the skilled trades will only increase in the coming decades. State-of-the-art equipment and learning facilities, and modern student life spaces, provide a fantastic environment to learn, gain confidence and be job-ready for a tremendous future in their chosen fields.”

#### PUTTING THE SKILLS TO USE

Maio and the business that hired her also benefited from the Trust’s School Works program. Since 2015, the Trust has helped employers hire apprentices—now in 17 trades—through its School Works wage subsidy program. The businesses get support meeting their workforce needs and apprentices gain local, career-related work experience.

“I feel strongly that the Trust’s apprenticeship program improves our workforce and skill set, which ultimately improves our community,” says Al Gluckman, in charge of apprentices like Maio at Purcell Timber Frame Homes. “The houses that we’re building at Purcell are being shipped all over North America, so the skill sets that are being developed here are having a far-reaching impact, as well as empowering our own community.”

Lilly-Anne McLaren is another apprentice who has studied at upgraded college facilities and been employed with the help of the School Works program. The COTR student is currently a first-year apprentice electrician working at Kimberley Electric Ltd.

Being an apprentice is “a good way to start making decent money while you’re still being trained, and the work is challenging and interesting,” she says. “I was born and raised in Kimberley, and it’s great that I can get my professional training within 30 minutes of home.”

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

**On the main strip in downtown Kaslo, near the pharmacy and a short stretch from the historic S.S. Moyie sternwheeler and beach, a chicken holding a cleaver hangs from a sign. Inside the building, a chalkboard menu offers a variety of made-on-the-premises beers, with names like Fowl Play and Struttin' Stout. If you want a locally made brew in Kaslo, this is the place to come.**

The chicken is the logo of Angry Hen Brewing. This seven-barrel microbrewery has been welcoming Kaslo and area residents and visitors since December 2017. There are up to eight beers on tap at a time. There's a lounge and seasonal patio. Customers can bring the brew home in cans called Growlers or Crawlors. And the beers are available on tap in about 20 bars and restaurants in the province.

Former Montrealers Andy LeCouffe and his wife Manon Gagnon have lived in Kaslo since 2008. "I was a home brew

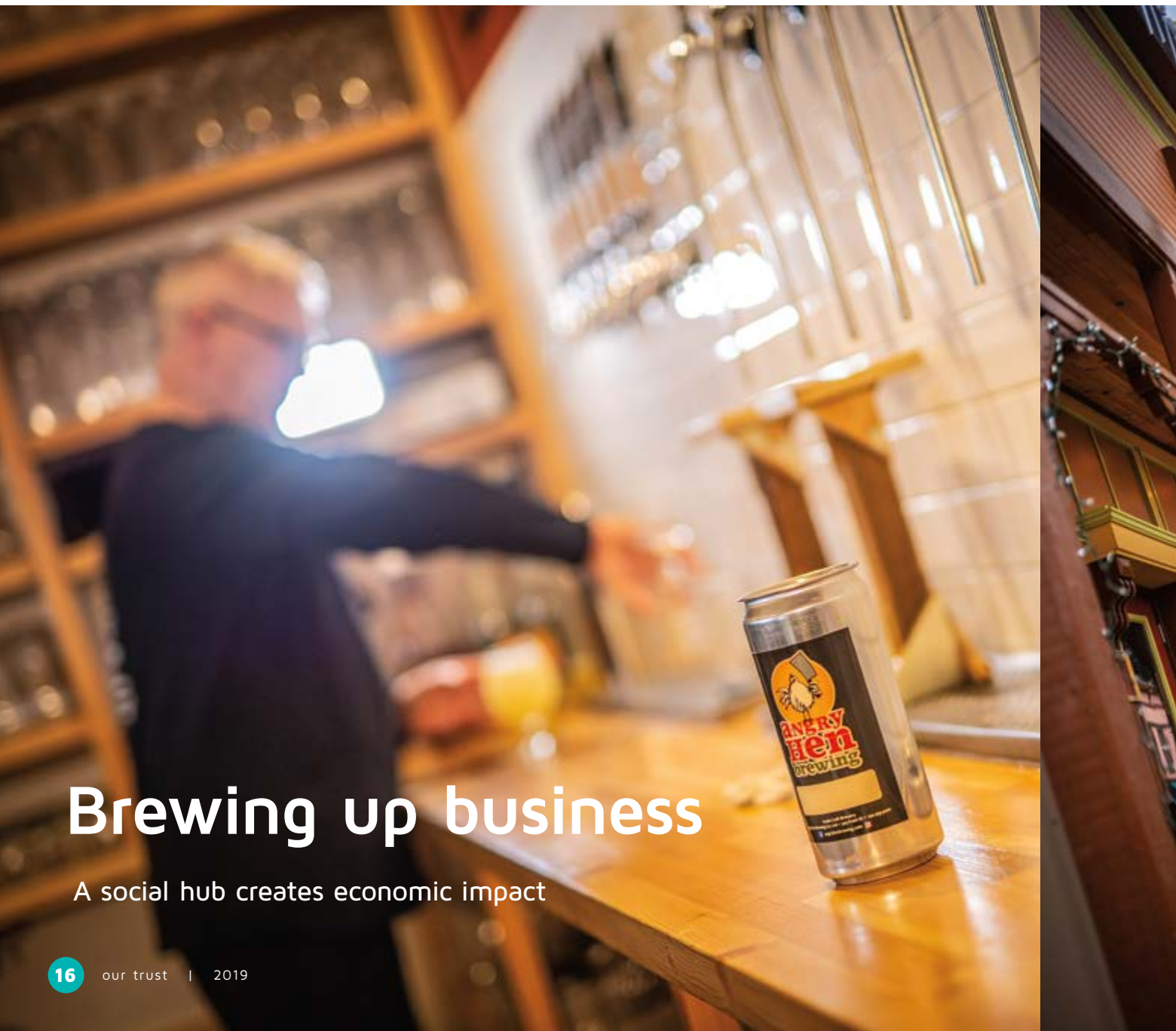
hack," LeCouffe says, "and always thought it would be fun to have a brewery. But I knew I didn't have the technical skills that are required for a commercial brewery."

That's when they decided to enlist the Angry Hen herself—the nickname for an experienced brewer from Vancouver named Shirley Warne, who has family in Kaslo. "Shirley had the technical skills to make great beer, but didn't have the marketing/business experience," says LeCouffe, who has a business background.

Now LeCouffe, Gagnon, Warne and her partner Frances Fry are co-owners of the brewhouse. To get it off the ground, though, they needed financial help, which they found through the Trust's Impact Investment Fund. Delivered by Community Futures and Heritage Credit Union, this program finances business opportunities that many not be eligible for conventional financing, but that benefit Basin communities in some way, such as job creation.

# Brewing up business

A social hub creates economic impact



In the Angry Hen’s case, the benefits are multiple. The business provides employment to 12 full- and part-time employees. The partners purchased an underused, 100-year-old building and renovated it extensively, prioritizing local contractors and suppliers. “We tried to keep the money in the area,” says LeCouffe. The lounge creates an attraction for visitors, plus gives residents another reason to love their community.

LeCouffe confirms that business has been “great.” Even though they knew winters were going to be slow in such a small community, “we’ve exceeded our sales expectations in the two winters we’ve been operating.”

Cassie Gerretsen has worked at the Angry Hen for well over a year, in a role that ranges from serving the beer, to ordering merchandise, to doing the big monthly cooking sessions that provide the brewery with the pre-made foods it offers to customers.

She’s grateful for the Angry Hen in several ways. First, it helped reinforce her and her boyfriend’s decision to leave Nelson and buy a house in Kaslo—a community that “just felt like home,” she says. “It was definitely a factor in moving: They have a brewery coming soon! We really like craft beer so that’s really cool for us.”

Second, it gave her the opportunity to quit her job in Nelson and work locally. Third, it’s providing her with the experience and contacts she needs to pursue her next dream: starting a small catering business of her own.

Plus, she says, she simply enjoys being there. “I like their beer. I enjoy working there. It’s really fun. It’s a bit of a community hub, so if you ever sit in the brewery, you can always find somebody to talk to.”

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



Andy LeCouffe, co-owner of Angry Hen Brewing. ADRIAN WAGNER





# Feeding families while reducing waste

Creston Valley food recovery projects bring fruit products and skills to people in the Basin

**When July rolls around, cherries dot the Creston Valley landscape.** Now, even more people in the Basin can look forward to enjoying this abundance as two food recovery projects work to reduce food waste and help families meet their nutritional needs.

## **JUICED**

When it comes to cherries, the Creston Valley sees about 40 dump truck loads a year discarded because of poor looks or size. Since 2017, the Fields Forward Society—which promotes a vibrant, productive local agri-food system—has used its Kootenay Mobile Press to help farmers turn about 200,000 pounds of these cherries into juice. Now it will be doing even more by making its own juice.

This year, in a Trust-supported project, the society plans to divert two of these truckloads—about 15,525 pounds of cherries—to make 3,375 litres of cherry juice. It will also work to develop fruit leather or other cherry products from the “mash” (crushed cherry pulp) left over from juicing.

“There is so much mash from the process,” says Coordinator Elizabeth Quinn. “The mash would either end up as compost or in the landfill, so it’s a missed opportunity not to create value-added products.”

The society will then distribute the juice and additional products to about 2,250 low-income people:

- 800 through the Nelson Community Food Centre
- 800 through the Cranbrook Food Bank Society
- 200 through the Creston Valley Gleaners Society Food Bank and families sponsored by the Creston Refugee Committee
- 450 through Christmas hampers in Creston and the Regional District of Central Kootenay Area A.

This wide distribution will help redistribute quality food to people who can have a hard time accessing nutritional products.

Quinn says, “It’s very important to me to value what we have in the valley.”

The society will also experiment with other cherry products, including purchasing a dehydrator by early spring 2020. With consultation from a food scientist, it also plans to establish



Left to right: Dennis Charles, Harvest Share Coordinator, and James Gates, President, both of the Creston Valley Food Action Coalition.



Jeremy Ferris, Kootenay Mobile Press Lead Operator, Fields Forward Society.



Elizabeth Quinn, Coordinator, Fields Forward Society.

ZOE FERGUSON

a process that can be adapted to discarded items from other crops, hopefully giving incentive to new entrepreneurs.

“Some producers want to add value to the mash but don’t have the time to think it through,” says Quinn. In this way, Fields Forward will be helping them out.

### SHARING THE BOUNTY

The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition—which runs the Creston farmers’ market—will also be using Trust support to undertake a food recovery project.

The project’s name—Harvest Share Food Recovery 2.0—is taken from the coalition’s Harvest Share program. This program recovers 18,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables annually and shares it with agencies, families and volunteers—enough for 288 families’ annual intake of produce. Harvest Share 2.0 will take that recovery a step further.

First, the coalition is helping Fields Forward package the cherry juice it will be creating with its mobile press. Second, it’s hosting Whole Food for Whole Family cooking classes, which

teach families to cook with nutritious, seasonal, local food. The 12-week program began in late July 2019 and is being attended by families brought to Creston by the Creston Refugee Committee and participants in the BC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Coupon Program. The 2019 classes focus on preparation, and the 2020 classes will include sessions on preservation and canning.

“The classes show how to source natural food in the valley at a low cost, so everybody can make nutritious food for the family,” says James Gates, Co-chair. “It’s really an extension of what the Food Action Coalition tries to do. We harvest food and distribute it to agencies, but people don’t always know what to do with it.”

Between the juicing and the classes, Gates comments that there’s huge opportunity to keep even more food from rotting. “It’s an opportunity to turn what’s wasted into nutritious food for those who need it.”

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

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

# Fun and games—with a purpose

Developing leadership skills in youth

**It's hard to keep all the balls in the air—literally.**

Picture a room of youth tossing juggling balls to each other, calling each other's names, seeing how many balls they can keep moving. It may sound like hysterical fun, but it's got a purpose. It's a lesson on communication.

This is one activity of the program A Leadership Journey: The First Steps. Developed by the Trust and delivered by Community Youth Networks in the Basin, this six-week program helps youth develop their leadership and communication abilities and actively think about making change in their communities. The youth come away with practical skills they can immediately use at school, at jobs and in their lives.



The Trust has committed \$4.65 million over three years for the Basin Youth Network to support youth aged 12 to 18.



**With the help of the journey and other opportunities from Lori, I was fortunate to receive the community and volunteerism scholarship. This opportunity will help other students in the upcoming years, just like it helped me and my peers.**

NAYEON HYUN, 18, PARTICIPANT OF THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY, KIMBERLEY YOUTH ACTION NETWORK

These sessions “allow them to see how to become a leader, make things happen and achieve a goal,” says Lori Joe, Coordinator, Kimberley Youth Action Network. It offered the program in January 2019, resulting in nine “graduates” from grades nine to 12, who can now add this certificate to their resumé. Plus, several of the youth have been inspired to join the network’s leadership team.

Like all of the Kimberley network’s activities, the program was offered because the youth asked for it. “The youth actually have a voice and get to speak to what’s important to them,” Joe says, “whether it be fun activities or initiatives or job readiness skills. They create the priorities. And then we create an action plan to support those priorities.”



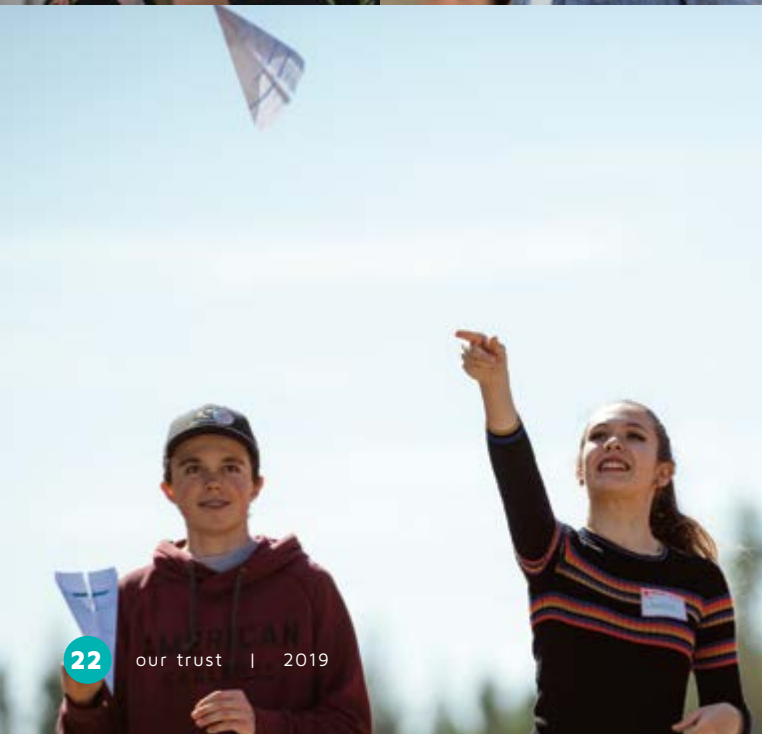
LEE ORR





**The Youth Action Network is a place where they know your name. It's also great because no matter who you are, you are welcome there, and it's a great work space to do homework. I love helping with events and going to drop-in between my busy schedule.**

SOFIA OLSON, 14, ROSSLAND YOUTH ACTION NETWORK



### PUTTING YOUTH FIRST

This youth-led aspect is also a priority of the entire network of youth groups. In fall 2015, the Trust built upon its previous work with youth and established the Basin Youth Network. At the community level, this network supports and provides funding to 28 Community Youth Networks, like Kimberley's. These work to increase local activities and opportunities for youth aged 12 to 18, enabling them to learn new skills and engage more with each other and their communities.

For six years, the Rossland Youth Action Network has been offering “a ton of different programs,” says Coordinator Holly Borwick. More than 100 youth visit the centre over the course of a school year, including 20 to 30 youth during the daily drop-ins. There are various clubs and activities, and the latest Rossland Youth Week took place in June 2019. “It was a ton of fun,” she says. “There was an event each day so it was lots of work and a lot of the youth got on board with volunteering.

“We're really lucky in this community to have a centre like this,” she says. “I feel there's really a sense of community that's grown around the youth centre. Youth are more inclined to help out and volunteer, and they come to me with their ideas, and they come to me with their problems. I think it's a really important program.”

In addition to supporting Community Youth Networks like these, the Trust's regional network also takes on Basin-wide tasks. It develops programs—like the Leadership Journey—that address youth priorities. It provides resources to local youth coordinators and others who work with youth. It also hosts events that bring together youth from different communities.

For example, in spring 2018 it hosted a Leadership Summit for youth. Here, participants developed their leadership skills, learned public speaking techniques, networked and took part in confidence-building activities. Nearly 100 youth came to the event in Kimberley from 22 communities.

### THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

In all, more than half a dozen youth networks in the Basin have offered the Leadership Journey, including those in the Beaver Valley, Slocan Valley and Nelson. About 70 youth have completed the program.

While the Rossland network isn't one of these, it hopes to offer the program in the fall. “It would be good to target some of the older youth to gain these leadership skills that are becoming more important in the job place,” Borwick says.

As for Kimberley, it hopes to offer the program a second time in September. During the program, participants identify some priorities that are important to them. By providing the program earlier in the school year, the youth would then have time to tackle these priorities during school months.

Becoming a leader and an active community member is a lifelong path. The Trust's Leadership Journey—and the guidance of the region's Community Youth Networks—help Basin youth take the crucial first steps.

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

# A bubbly future

## A Castlegar business gains momentum

**Leeza Zurwick of Castlegar hardly has time these days to be amazed at the rapid growth of her home-based water kefir business—she’s too busy filling orders.**

“Water kefir is like pop—it’s a fermented, fizzy drink that’s full of live probiotics,” Zurwick says. “I make three flavours and a non-effervescent mix that you add to smoothies instead of juice or milk. You can also make your own fizzy soda with the smoothie mix in 24 hours.”

Zurwick learned about water kefir from a friend and started making the probiotic drink for her own use in September 2016. She was impressed by the positive changes. “I was feeling lots of energy from drinking it,” she says. “My skin was clearing up and even though I was working at the local high school, being bombarded by germs all the time, I didn’t get sick that year.”

When she heard on the news that an American health association endorsed probiotics as beneficial, she decided to take the product to market, naming her business Happy Gut. And apparently, the world was ready for water kefir—since Zurwick made her first sale on August 1, 2017, the business’s momentum has quickly grown.

For support, Zurwick contacted the Trust’s Basin Business Advisors program (BBA), delivered by Community Futures. The program provides free, one-to-one, confidential counselling and assessment services to businesses that are creating and sustaining jobs or bringing wealth into the region.

“I’ve been very, very fortunate to have the Trust be so supportive of my company,” she says. Together, Zurwick and her BBA advisor tackled issues like financial analysis, market analysis and marketing, planning and human resources. “I could never have built my company the way I have without her.”

As part of the program, the advisor also connected Zurwick to a specialized consultant who coached her on how to get into health-based stores. In addition, Zurwick has accessed the Trust’s School Works and Summer Works programs, which have provided wage subsidies to help her hire students. Plus, she took part in the Trust’s Basin Food and Buyers Expo, a fall 2018 event in Nelson that brought together food professionals of all types.

As well as students, Zurwick also employs people with disabilities through the Employ Me! program of the Kootenay Society for Community Living. “Currently I have two women working for me, and I am planning to hire more as the company grows.” And she plans to hire a brewer this fall—thus titled because water kefir is a fermented product.

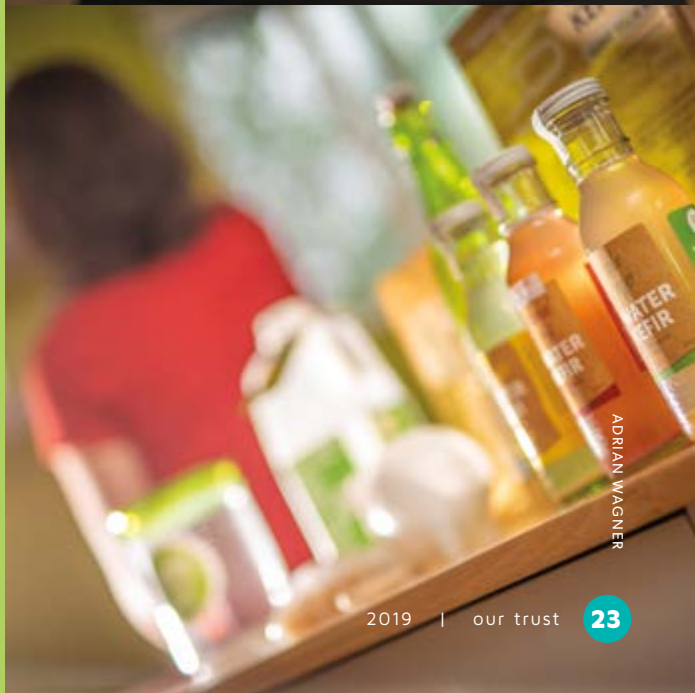
In addition to selling her kits and grains (probiotic cultures) on her website, she sells to more than 50 grocery stores, gas stations and restaurants in the East and West Kootenays, and to more than 100 additional stores elsewhere in BC and across Alberta.

“To watch my company grow is really exciting,” Zurwick says. She expresses gratitude for all the programs that have helped her get where she is today. “We are so, so lucky to live in the Columbia Basin and have access to these programs.”

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



Left to right: Cyan Lemoal, Summer Works employee, and Leeza Zurwick, owner of Happy Gut.



ADRIAN WAGNER

**“The health of the land is so critical to our lives here.”**

Karen Barraclough owns the B-E Ranch in Skookumchuck. She and her husband Doug took over management of the family ranch from her father in 1991. She’s seen lots of changes over her many years on the ranch, but the work and challenges of a rancher’s life remain constant, from working outdoors in all seasons and all weather to keeping an ever-watchful eye on what’s happening on the range.

This includes keeping cattle where they should be. To make sure cattle are grazing the right land at the right time of year, while keeping them out of sensitive habitat, ranchers like the Barracloughs must use items like fencing and cattle guards.


To better control the movements of their cattle, the Barracloughs took advantage of the Trust’s Grassland and Rangeland Enhancement Program (GREP). Delivered by the Kootenay Livestock Association, GREP supports projects that

help ranchers protect grasslands, waterways and wetlands on Crown lands where cattle graze. The goal is to inspire and help people to take care of these areas, while ensuring they’re used without conflict between people, livestock and wildlife.

In 2018, GREP funded 21 projects that included building or repairing livestock fencing, controlling invasive plants, developing and protecting water sources, upgrading cattle guards, refurbishing pastures and installing signage to educate the human users of these areas. Together, these projects have benefited approximately 2,500 hectares of terrestrial habitats and 2.25 hectares of aquatic habitats.

The Barracloughs themselves are now working on a project in the Wolf Creek area to protect its extensive wetlands.

“We are replacing the fence right around the watering lane to keep cattle out of the wetland,” says Doug. They’ll also be moving a gate that currently crosses a public road so it won’t



# Protecting habitat, supporting a livelihood

Ranchers balance the needs of their cattle and the environment

accidentally be left open by others who use this section of range for recreation purposes. Plus, they'll improve an old water hole that's connected to Wolf Creek by a watering channel. Over time, the channel has filled in with silt and vegetation, choking off the flow of water into the dugout and driving cattle into the wetland to drink. "We are going to lay geo-textile fabric and put clean fill in the bottom of the channel to maintain its integrity and keep it free-flowing into the dugout."

This isn't the first time the Barracloughs have used the program. Previously, they fenced around Gina Lake to ensure the cattle were using it appropriately. They also cleaned out five cattle guards to ensure they were functioning properly and added fencing on Wolf Creek Road to control cattle movement while enhancing the pastures where both cattle and wildlife graze.

"With the support of this program, you have fewer problems with cattle encroaching onto sensitive habitat," says Doug. In addition to encompassing wetlands, their land provides winter grazing for elk and bighorn sheep, plus includes a provincially protected area with habitat for the at-risk American badger and long-billed curlew. "Our ranch sits on a special management area for ungulates and we have to keep 52 kilometres of our range fences maintained."

For Doug and Karen, the place they call home is precious to them and, with the right efforts, ranching and the health of the Basin's water and land can be balanced and enhanced.

Doug says, "We hope that, in our work, we are making sure these areas remain for future generations."

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



TRACY CONNERY

Communities celebrate their people and places

# Art energizes public spaces

**It engages minds and offers broad learning experiences.**

It adds vibrancy to communities, attracts visitors and benefits local economies. It helps provide a living to those engaged in creative careers. What is it?

Public art.

In 2018, the Trust introduced Public Art Grants to help communities and groups buy and install art by Basin artists in public spaces like main streets, parks and plazas.

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



## LARGE-SCALE MURALS

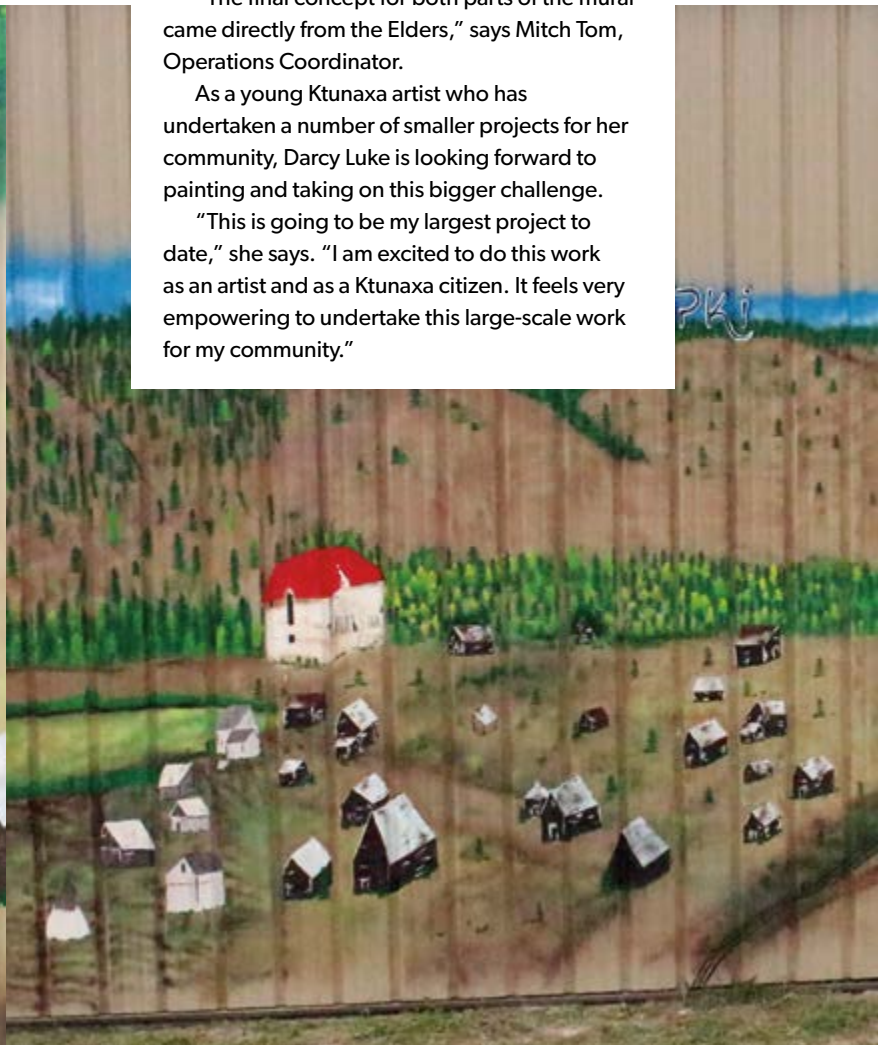
A new mural for the community of ʔaąam will span two exterior walls of its biomass heating building. One will depict a horseshoe feature found on nearby hoodoos, incorporate the four seasons and include local animals and their Ktunaxa traditional names. The other will reproduce a historical photo of ʔaąam taken around 1900.

“The final concept for both parts of the mural came directly from the Elders,” says Mitch Tom, Operations Coordinator.

As a young Ktunaxa artist who has undertaken a number of smaller projects for her community, Darcy Luke is looking forward to painting and taking on this bigger challenge.

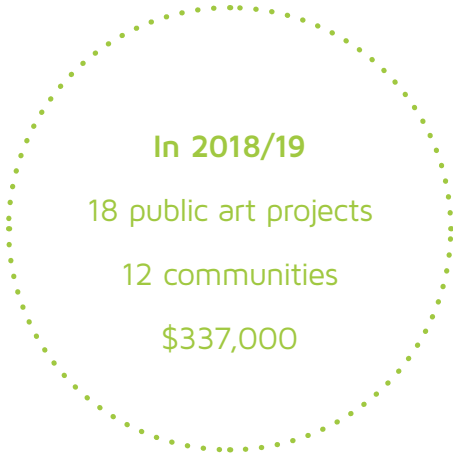
“This is going to be my largest project to date,” she says. “I am excited to do this work as an artist and as a Ktunaxa citizen. It feels very empowering to undertake this large-scale work for my community.”

Darcy Luke, mural artist, ʔaąam. CHASE ROSHAU





*Pass in the Clouds*, Elkford.



### GLASS MOUNTAINS

On a wall inside the community’s main gathering space, the Elkford Community Conference Centre, the Elkford Arts Council Society has installed art that draws the viewer in to reflect on the natural and human history of the area. The piece—*Pass in the Clouds*, by local artist Katherine Russell—uses six glass panels to depict a mountain-ridge trail located in the nearby Height of the Rockies Provincial Park.

“Public art has the power to energize and enhance our public spaces, making us think and transform where we live, work and play,” says Teri Cleverly, Director. “Public art helps celebrate the qualities that make one town different from another and will often reach a demographic that would never otherwise set foot in an art gallery or museum. This piece celebrates the beauty of the Elk Valley and what makes living here unique.”

### A PARK ATTRACTION

Visitors are able to walk, sit and balance on a ribbon of metal as part of a new art installation in Cranbrook’s Idlewild Park. Meant to break down barriers about how people interact with art, *Idlewild and the Spirit of Joseph Creek* was inspired by Joseph Creek, a waterway that winds through the community. Approximately 50 feet long, the sculpture also incorporates large boulders that highlight the creek’s movement.

The Cranbrook and District Arts Council commissioned the piece from local artist Paul Reimer.

“We want to inspire the imagination and fuel creative interpretation in the people who visit the park,” says Yvonne Vigne, President. “Public art like this sculpture provides an experience that is accessible to everyone, while also creating awareness about our local artists. It’s a way to generate a creative spark that does not require visiting a gallery.”



A woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a blue patterned dress stands on a large log that spans across a calm lake. She is holding an acoustic guitar. The lake's surface is still, reflecting the surrounding dense forest of evergreen trees and the overcast sky. In the background, a wooden dock is visible on the shore. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, emphasizing nature and recreation.

# To preserve and enjoy

Partnerships allow purchase of key lands

## A bright addition to Darkwoods

**The Basin features innumerable natural and recreational opportunities** in many environments: forests, beaches, mountains and wetlands. To protect areas like these while meeting local priorities, the Trust helps communities and organizations acquire key pieces of land and will be launching a new land acquisition program this fall.

Since 1998, the Trust has helped preserve over 113,000 hectares of ecologically valuable private land. Some of this has been in the West Kootenay, where the Trust recently supported the purchase of two properties important for their environmental values and use by locals and visitors alike.

### A RECREATIONAL AND CONSERVATION AREA CONTINUES

In Crawford Bay, residents had developed a community park and conservation area in coordination with a private landowner. When the owner chose to sell the 185-acre parcel, its future now uncertain, the Trust helped the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) purchase the land, preserving its environment and this valued recreation area.

The new Crawford Bay Regional Park includes three distinct riparian and wetland areas that are home to more than 90 bird species and many plant and wildlife species. It provides habitat for several species at risk, including the Coeur d'Alene salamander, blotched tiger salamander, western toad, painted turtle and great blue heron. Crawford and Beaver creeks, located on the property, are habitats for bull trout, kokanee and endangered white sturgeon.

These environmental values are closely integrated with recreational opportunities on the property, such as a beach and hiking and biking trails alongside the wetlands maintained by the East Shore Trail and Bike Alliance. The public will have opportunities to help preserve these wetlands, plus will be invited to give input to the RDCK to guide its operations and decision-making for the park.

Stuart Horn, RDCK Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer, says, "The purchase will provide a large, water-access recreational asset that the public will be able to enjoy."

Many groups take on the vital task of acquiring important lands. For example, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, with Trust support, recently purchased the previously unprotected Next Creek watershed within the Darkwoods Conservation Area. This increased the area by 14 per cent and brought the network of protected spaces between Nelson and Creston to about 1,100 square kilometres.

### A PARK EXPANDS

Across Kootenay Lake and 12 kilometres south of Nelson, the RDCK also used Trust support to purchase 21.6 hectares, which had been slated for logging, next to the 0.8-hectare Cottonwood Lake Regional Park. This will increase the size of the park, which is used by over 16,000 people each year for activities like swimming, fishing, boating and cross-country skiing and is connected to nearby communities by the Nelson-Salmo Great Northern Trail and the Great Trail.

As with the Crawford Bay purchase, the expansion of the regional park will ensure that current and future generations can enjoy this small part of the Basin's biological diversity and natural heritage.

"Over the next few years, the RDCK will endeavour to make the park's nature-based recreation activities more accessible and inclusive," says RDCK Parks Planner Mark Crowe. "Even more residents will be able to benefit from the land purchase as they continue to discover, value and enjoy Cottonwood Lake and all that it has to offer."

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



Representatives from the Triangle Women's Institute.



new solar panels



A Good Catch!!



erecting old Grasmere Hall



Apple Blossom Picnic ↑



Elk River Canyon

# Over 80 years strong

From electricity to education, resourceful volunteers help Grasmere flourish

**"We are independent and resourceful. We are advocates for our community,"** says Judy-Lou McDonald, President of the Triangle Women's Institute in Grasmere. "We have had amazing women as part of our group in the past, as we do now."

Founded in 1937, the Institute has stood the test of time. It helped bring phone service to the U.S./Canada border community, along with electricity and a highway. While the "triangle" in its name originally represented a geographic area—from Gold Creek, to Flagstone (now under Kooicanusa Reservoir), to Grasmere—today it means the organization continues to support residents under three points: inclusiveness, education and well-being.

From community dances, to student bursaries, to supporting the local Salvation Army, food bank and 4-H club, the organization offers long-standing activities while introducing new programs that appeal to the evolving, growing community. The Trust has stood by many of these efforts, including the annual Snowflake Tea and Gala and Canada Day celebrations.

"The best part about being part of the Women's Triangle Institute is the sense of community it helps to create," says Yvonne Miller, Past President. "The greatest pleasure is to see everyone gathering and connecting."

One of the main gathering spots is the Grasmere Pioneer Hall. Built in the 1970s, it's owned and operated by the Institute. In 2015, the Institute received Trust funding to expand the hall, providing a better home for the library and adding a meeting room. Recently it received support from the Trust's Energy Sustainability Grants to install solar panels.

"The hall is the heart of our community," says Miller. Fundraising has always been a part of the Institute's work, but recently much of the funds had been used to pay utility bills. The solar panel project "means that running the hall will be more sustainable for us. We can spend more time raising money for the things we really want to get on with in the community."

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

# The power of local ownership

## The Trust becomes a 50/50 partner in Waneta Expansion

The shiny black sign at Waneta Expansion Generating Station lists two owners: the Trust and Columbia Power. Already joint owners of 49 per cent of the hydroelectric facility, the two organizations purchased Fortis Inc.'s 51 per cent interest for \$991 million, becoming equal partners. Inked in spring 2019, the deal signifies an important boost to the Trust's financial capacity to support the region, plus 100 per cent local ownership.

The 335-megawatt facility is located immediately downstream of Waneta Dam on Pend d'Oreille River. It generates clean, renewable, cost-effective power from water that would otherwise be spilled, providing enough energy to power 60,000 homes. Construction took place from 2010 to 2015.

The new ownership means that even more of the facility's revenues will support the efforts of the people of the Basin for generations to come.

**"People in the Basin value the local ownership of all of our facilities and will enjoy even greater benefits now, and in the future, as more of the revenues are injected back into this region."**

JOHNNY STRILAEFF, TRUST PRESIDENT AND CEO  
AND ACTING COLUMBIA POWER PRESIDENT AND CEO

Left to right: Tim Stanley, Columbia Power Board Chair; Katrine Conroy, Minister Responsible for the Columbia River Treaty, the Trust and Columbia Power; Johnny Strilaeff, Trust President and CEO and acting Columbia Power President and CEO; and Rick Jensen, Trust Board Chair.



### Investing in power—for the people

In 1995, the Province of British Columbia endowed the Trust with \$321 million: \$276 million to invest in regional hydroelectric projects and \$45 million to invest elsewhere, plus provided \$32 million for operating costs from 1995 to 2010. The Trust's investments goal is to generate a predictable, sustainable and growing income stream, always keeping in mind the principles of a prudent investor and balancing risk and returns.

Together, the Trust and Columbia Power have developed three power projects: Arrow Lakes Generating Station, Brilliant Expansion Generating Station and Waneta Expansion Generating Station. They also purchased and upgraded Brilliant Dam.

Fifty per cent of the revenues from these investments help the Trust fund its programs and services, and Columbia Power uses the other half to run the operations and pay dividends to the Province of BC.

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



Giving local businesses  
a boost to meet demand

# Investing in Basin businesses

Starting, purchasing or growing a business often requires financial support. Like other traditional lenders, the Trust welcomes smart investment opportunities—like these two examples.

## AN ESSENTIAL PLACE FOR PETS

Co-owned by Dr. Amber Robinson and Jason Schroeder, the Nakusp Veterinary Clinic aims to be a place of low stress for animals. Sure, they may have to endure the odd needle, but there are also yummy treats, stress-relieving pheromones and the occasional refrain of relaxing classical music. “This means a

great deal to us as business owners and how we want to practise medicine here,” says Robinson.

The clinic also means a great deal to the people of the community—if Robinson and Schroeder hadn’t stepped in as the previous vets retired, pet owners might have faced long drives to the nearest vet.

The couple has been treating pets “fear-free” in Nakusp since June 2018. Before that, they and their three children lived in Victoria, where Robinson also worked as a vet. But when Schroeder lost his job as a software developer, it was time to consider “how to run life differently,” he says.

By chance, they heard the previous vets in Nakusp were set to retire. Unfortunately, though, the couple had a hard time securing financing to set up a new clinic. That is, until they received a loan from the Trust.

Now, Schroeder concentrates on the business side of things while Robinson offers a range of veterinary services, primarily to cats and dogs. Aided by the occasional locum vet, they’ve had a constant flow of clients right from the get-go.

They’ve also been supported by a team of nearly half a dozen staff members. “They’ve been learning a lot,” says Robinson, and some even plan to do additional training. “That’s part of our objective when running a business,” she says: not only to provide a service and make an income, but to build the skills of people in the community.



Left to right: Dr. Amber Robinson and Jason Schroeder, owners of Nakusp Veterinary Clinic. Their dog Shasta Fir is a purebred Leonberger and their cat Thomas (LEFT MIDDLE) is likely part Norwegian Forest cat. LEE ORR

As for life in Nakusp, the family hasn't had much time to explore the area yet—a by-product of living on top of where they work. "From that particular side, we're still new here," says Schroeder. "We've barely finished unpacking."

**THE CRESTON FARM WITH INTERNATIONAL REACH**

In addition to the Creston Valley's vineyards, wineries and orchards, there's another type of agriculture-based business making a name for itself beyond the beautiful, fertile valley. PR Forage Co. Ltd. farms more than 2,550 acres to produce timothy hay for export to Japan.

With few local buyers that are already well supplied, selling to faraway markets is a win for the business and for the region, as it brings in outside money to support the local economy. During its busiest season, PR Forage also employs up to 16 people full-time, who prepare the shipments that average 26 metric tonnes.

"We bought the farm from Wynndel Box and Lumber in 2014," says owner James Kemp. "Timothy had been grown on that property for the seed industry for some time. The owners had a relationship with Columbia Basin Trust, and the Trust was ready and willing to provide our financing."

Kemp says that once he got into the hay production business, he realized that if he contracted out the processing and transport, his profits would be minimal. He needed more equipment and higher production without a crippling increase in cost.

"In partnership with the Lower Kootenay Band, we invested in our own custom hay press," Kemp says. "We partner with LKB and profit-share with them on the hay press production. We also purchased four trucks for our own use."

PR Forage also leases 1,500 acres of farmland from the Lower Kootenay Band (also known as Yaqaan Nu?kiy) for timothy hay production, plus gets timothy hay from other Creston Valley farmers who lease land from the band. "The partnership with LKB began in 2007," says Kemp. "Without their continued support, we would have a very tough time staying viable."

"As Indigenous people, the Lower Kootenay Band puts an emphasis on land stewardship, and they like the lower environmental impact of our operation. Timothy is only re-seeded every five years on average, and has a relatively low fertilizer and chemical input compared to some other annual crops."

Together, PR Forage, the Lower Kootenay Band and the Trust are ensuring another successful, sustainable agri-business in the Creston Valley.

**Two-way benefits**

The Trust invests in Basin businesses to help them be successful and make an economic difference in the region. It also invests in them to generate the revenues it needs to fund its programs and services, alongside its investments in power projects, market securities and real estate.



James Kemp,  
owner of PR Forage.  
ZOE FERGUSON



**\$760M**

BOOK VALUE OF ASSETS



**\$71.9M**

IN REVENUES



**\$8.1M**  
BUSINESS LOANS AND  
COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES



**1,750**  
NEW PROJECTS  
AND PARTNERSHIPS



**\$62.6M**  
IN TOTAL BENEFITS



**70+**  
ACTIVE PROGRAMS  
AND INITIATIVES



RETURN ON INVESTMENTS



**12.1%**  
POWER  
PROJECTS



**5.2%**  
PRIVATE  
PLACEMENTS



**6.8%**  
MARKET  
SECURITIES

# Increased revenues and benefits for the Basin

At the Trust, we've had a strong year for our investments and our ability to positively impact the communities and people of the Basin.

In 2018/19 we committed \$62.6 million to benefit the region through granting programs, services and investments in Basin businesses and real estate. This included \$1.9 million for infrastructure to expand broadband in the Basin and help develop the economy, \$8.1 million for business loans and real estate investments, plus financial support for 1,750 projects and partnerships.

Revenues from our investments in power projects, real estate, market securities and business loans grew to \$71.9 million this

year. Approximately 80 per cent of these revenues come from the power projects, whose performance once again surpassed our expectations, partially thanks to a new asset management system that is making them even more reliable with fewer unplanned outages.

With our purchase of Waneta Expansion Generating Station (see page 31), people in the Basin will enjoy even greater benefits into the future, as more revenues are injected back into this region.

See our full 2018/19 financial statements online:

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

A large portrait of Rick Jensen, Board Chair, smiling. He is wearing glasses and a blue blazer over a blue shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green and red foliage.

# Inspired by the Basin

A look back with Board Chair Rick Jensen

Rick Jensen is in awe and inspired by the people and communities of the Columbia Basin. “So often when we look at challenges—globally, provincially or within the Basin—we think there’s not a lot that we can do,” he says. But his time on the Trust’s Board of Directors, which will be coming to an end this year, has proven that people excel at overcoming difficulties and seizing opportunities. “I remember my first year on the Board, when I couldn’t believe what the region, with the Trust at its side, was accomplishing.”

Seven years later, the current Board Chair is even more pleased. In that time, the Trust developed 13 strategic priorities. “I wondered how big of an impact we could have on those priorities in just five years, and have been totally amazed as to what’s been accomplished. We’ll soon write a report card on the results and it’ll be pretty impressive.”

Solid investments, which provide the funding for the Trust’s many programs and services, are one of the keys. In just his time with the Trust, revenues have jumped from nearly \$26 million to \$64 million. “This means there are even more funds that benefit people in the Basin through all the programming we offer, all the organizations we support and all the investments we make.”

Listening to people is another key. In 2014/15, the Trust visited 34 communities and received some 17,000 thoughts that helped develop its 13 strategic priorities. “I was proud to be part of an organization that was able to reach out and talk to all these people in the Basin,” he says. This process will be happening again; Our Trust, Our Future 2020 will be setting new goals that will guide the Trust over the coming years.

And behind the Trust’s investments, outreach, programs and services stand high-calibre staff and Board members, each committed to their roles and each with their own talents. “It has been a privilege to be part of the Board and staff,” says Jensen. “What I’ve learned from them is going to be with me for a long, long time.”

As the Trust looks ahead, Jensen sees “exciting times.” Twenty-five years ago, the organization was simply a good idea—now it’s a corporation with multibillion-dollar assets. In another 25 years, “I think we’ll all be amazed, grateful and much better off as a region.” He encourages the Trust to continue to listen to the people in the Basin, maximize its investments and focus on programming, with the support of excellent staff and Board members and dedicated leadership. “If everybody is behind it, there’s no stopping what can happen.”



## Meet our Directors

The Trust is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors who live in the Basin. The Board meets six times a year in communities around the region. Attend one of our public sessions to learn what we’re up to in your community. View the schedule and read highlights and meeting minutes at:

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

2019 Board of Directors: (back row from left to right) Don McCormick, Owen Torgerson, Krista Turcasso, Murray McConnachie, Corky Evans; (front row from left to right) David Raven, Carol Andrews, Ron Ozsust, Larry Binks, Jocelyn Carver, Rick Jensen (Chair). Missing from photo: Vickie Thomas.

Watch the full interview at [ourtrust.org/rick](http://ourtrust.org/rick).



# Basin Stories

Read more stories  
about **people** and **places**  
in the Basin at  
[stories.ourtrust.org](https://stories.ourtrust.org)



© #basinlife

Columbia Basin **trust**