

ALERT BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

2020 Annual Report

The Alert Bay Public Library is situated on Cormorant Island, known to many in the First Nation local community as Yalis. The library was founded in 1959 and became part of the Provincial Library system. The Alert Bay Public Library may have the status of being one of the smallest libraries in the Province. As such it has unique benefits and challenges.

Cormorant Island is home to the “Namgis First Nation and the Whe-la-la-U Reserves and the Incorporated Village of Alert Bay. The total population is under a thousand people in winter with a considerable increase before the pandemic occurred in the summer months when many tourists came to visit the museums and take part in cultural events and marine excursions. The First Nation and Village governments have signed an accord that allows joint projects and a cooperative approach to common issues. The library is located on the main street in a building shared by the Tourist Information Office. This building is owned by the Village and provided rent free to the Library. Given its location and facilities, it is often a hub for visitors.

2020, as with most Public Libraries in B.C., was a very difficult year to maintain or even grow our services to our patrons.

We opened our doors as usual in January and February only to have to close on March 19th when the Covid-19 Pandemic was declared. Alert Bay was particularly hard hit with several cases of Covid discovered early on and a complete shut down of all services was put in place on our Cormorant Island.

Because of our large elderly population, who have always enjoyed community involvement in social gatherings and visits, this was an especially hard situation for them. The Library Board decided to redo our small library space so that we could reopen on a limited basis. After we had installed acrylic safety shields, developed a safety plan and purchased safety equipment, we did offer a curbside service starting on June 15th. Then on July 6th, we were able to offer limited access to our building. Interlibrary Loan Services were curtailed at the beginning of the pandemic but were resumed as restrictions were lifted.

During all this time of uncertainty, we had staff retiring and leaving our community. The strain of hiring new people and maintaining our safety procedures kept us from planning most of our usual summer programs we have done in past years. We are planning and designing an outdoor “Story Walk” this coming Spring.

Since September, we have been engaged in finding more ways to train staff and as members of the Islandlink Library Federation, we have been able to have a member of the Salt Spring Island Public Library instruct our library clerk through Zoom meetings.

The Provincial technical grant we received this year enabled us to purchase the equipment to upgrade our computer in order to use Zoom for these training sessions. The Provincial connectivity grant has enabled us to upgrade our internet access, convert our finances into a software program and will enable us to convert our historic photo collection into a new software program.

The annual Provincial grant has enabled us to operate more smoothly and to increase our wages offered to this year's staff. The Village of Alert Bay provide us with a yearly grant as well as a rent-free building and hydro services. The "Namgis First Nation also provide us with a yearly grant.

Improving Access for British Columbians

1. In June, the Library Board of Trustees passed a motion to forgive overdue book fines.
2. Our IslandLink Library Federation provided funding to replace two of our computers and a printer as well as the wages for a technician to upgrade the computer system.
3. The Salt Spring Public Library provided training for our new library clerk on Sitka through Zoom meetings.

Building – Building capacity

1. Due to restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, we are limited to having only two patrons in our building at one time with only one public access computer available.
2. In 2021, we plan to ask the Village Council for the use of the remaining room in our building so that when restrictions are lifted, we will be able to offer our patrons more opportunity and space to enjoy our collection.

Enhancing Citizen Engagement

1. With new people coming to reside in our community, we have welcomed volunteers to help us with our work on our new non-circulating library getting it reshelfed and ready to put into our library system.

Enhancing Governance

1. 2020 was when several of our Board of Trustees moved away from Alert Bay so in 2021, we plan to have more training for our new Board members and hope to use the Zoom program for it.

Challenges for 2021:

1. Finding staff that have literary and computer competency enough to be trained.
2. Offering enough hours to attract staff.
3. Training is available through a volunteer from a fellow Federation Library at their convenience and travel restrictions made training difficult and was only available by Zoom.
4. Limited space in our building restricts our availability to the public.

One bright spot of the year was in February when we were awarded the 2020 R. Wallace B. and Madeline Chung prize for the Chinese Canadian Community in our archives collection. A dinner had been planned in Vancouver to present this to the Library representatives but it had to be postponed because of the Pandemic.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: ALERT BAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$7,072.00

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
<div>Choose an item.</div> <div>Digitalizing our Historical photo collection</div>	Sharing our large local photo collection of the history of Cormorant Island and the surrounding areas .	Easier access to collection of historic photographs	Reliable public connectivity supports the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians	Purchasing new software program and converting present Excel spreadsheet program into archival quality collection areas.	Partnered with B.C. Libraries Cooperative to access grant to improve internet access over a 3 year term	\$405 for the next 3 years to upgrade internet and provide wifi to building from the B.C. Libraries Cooperative.	\$10,000	\$2,523 from reserve fund	We hope to start this project in November but it will be an ongoing project because of the complexities of bringing our collection up to archival standards and improving preservation methods