

Provincial Library Grant Report 2019



Salmo Valley Public Library

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Introduction

In 2019, the Salmo Valley Public Library continued to work to connect our community, deliver services people can count on, work collaboratively, build a strong sustainable community, commit to lasting reconciliation, and strive to sustain our success.

Incorporated in 1946, Salmo is a small rural community found in the central Kootenay region, in southeastern British Columbia. For the last many years Salmo has been known as the 'hub' of the Kootenays, Salmo is located at the junction of Highways 3 and 6. The Village is about a 30 to 45-minute drive to the surrounding communities of Trail, Castlegar, Nelson, and Creston. With a population of 1141 residents, the community relies on the forestry, tourism, agriculture and mining sectors in the area. The surrounding area, to which the library provides services, is part of the Regional District of the Central Kootenay Area G and has a population of 1624. Salmo and area offer an outdoor lifestyle with activities such as hiking, skiing, fishing, and canoeing in the nearby mountains, rivers, and lakes, as well as enjoying trails with ATV's.

In the 2020 OCP Economic Development Survey the top five reasons for choosing Salmo as home are its affordability, access to nature and outdoor recreation, the easy commute to Nelson, Trail and Castlegar, and the overall lifestyle.

These were strongly followed by the sense of community and that it's a great place to raise kids. In the survey done for developing this plan one Salmo Resident commented, "It is a great, safe place to bring up children. It has a great library. Everything is within walking distance. Best water in the world. The ski hill is close."

The median age of the Village of Salmo at 45.7 is just over average for the Kootenay region. This demographic could account for the historical priority that has been placed on seniors' concerns within the Village. Salmo is striving to be an age-friendly community with two seniors-oriented housing facilities, the Salmo

Health & Wellness Centre, and numerous resources for seniors. Salmo's flat


land, natural environment, and walkable distances to most amenities are also draws for this demographic.



*Library Board
Members*

The Village of Salmo and Area G also continue to see an increase in new families moving to the community. This area is still affordable for first time home owners, for this reason we are also seeing an increase in young families.

As the community grows so does the Salmo Valley Public Library and we continue to be a hub of activity. While the library remains a place to access information from the outside world, it is also a place to build connections between people. The library prides itself in being a welcoming and inclusive community gathering place that is accessible and convenient.



*Great collection of books, especially in the Children's section. Great, friendly staff open to innovation and input from library members.
~2019 Facebook comment*

The Salmo Valley Public Library is a vibrant, dynamic and engaging community-gathering place that strives to provide the Salmo Valley residents with information, education, technology, pleasure, and support for lifelong learning. We provide this by offering a broad range of reading and related resources, technology, support, and programs. The Salmo Library offers a physical space for many of the local volunteer non-profits to connect throughout the year. The material and non-material opportunities available through the Salmo Library are what make it central to the growing community it serves. By providing all of the above the Salmo Library is a community hub.

One of the challenges that the library and community face continues to be a substandard internet service. Many patrons live rurally and have inconsistent internet. The library is the only point of access to free internet in the area, so for this reason our Wi-Fi can get bogged down with users at high usage times. Another regular challenge is having insufficient staff time to provided programs and educational opportunities our community needs. We struggle to meet the demand for programming with an operating budget that can only handle a small staff. Every year it gets harder to create a budget that will grow with the demands of the community but stay within the limited amount of funding received - this has become a major challenge.

The Salmo Valley Public Library saw the end of our 2015-2020 strategic plan at the beginning of 2020. Our vision, mission and values have done well to articulate the rationale and inform all of our work over the last 5 years. This five-year plan included a focus on community engagement, use of technology, and responsive library service that utilizes the space, programs, and services to meet the diverse needs of the Salmo Valley residents. We have been successful in achieving all of our goals, but some of these goals will carry over into our new plan as we continue to build on them. We have started our new Strategic planning process and hope to have it in place for April 2020.

Aligning with Provincial Strategic Plan Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities

1 - Improving Access

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Community Engagement - The diverse and engaged SVPL membership highly values and utilizes the space, programs and services provided.

- *Objective: To expand residents' awareness of the library and the range of information services available.*
 - *Maintain a public face through participation in community events throughout the library's service area.*
 - *Investigate ways to attract new users to the library through innovative programming.*

Aligns with - Resource Sharing Grant & OneCard Grant

The Resource Sharing grant helps offset the costs public libraries incur for shipping out their library materials to other B.C. public libraries. The grant uses a piece rate for materials lent through various interlibrary loan programs during the last calendar year.

The BC OneCard grant enables libraries to expand library service to BC residents through participation in the BC OneCard program. The BC OneCard program ensures that active patrons of any public library in BC may use their card wherever they travel within the province

Programs and/or Services that connected with the priority and its outcomes:

Book Clubs: We now have 4 different book clubs running through our library. Each book club has an average of 12 people participating. That is 48 people a month using our Inter-Library Loan services. One of the book clubs is hosted by, and at the library. This group started in 2018 with 3 people participating, we now have 10 regulars. The success of all of these book clubs comes from collaborating with Kootenay Library Federation and the Book Club sets available, as well as using our Provincial resource sharing grant for the ILL's.

This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A stronger relationship between the library and members of the book clubs was developed, by sharing and promoting the Federation Book Club sets.
- The library was responsive to the request of starting a library book club. Which has double in size over 2019
- These book clubs have attracted new library users
- Supportive and positive feedback and engagement from the community as we work together to be responsive to the shifting needs of our community.
- Sharing of resources between libraries, which is creating a more sustainable access to resources for all.

Partnerships:

- Kootenay Library Federation
- Local Book Club groups

#2 - Developing skills

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Library Collection and Core Operations - Responsive library services and a high-quality collection meet the diverse needs of Salmo Valley residents. The following is one of the four objectives under this goal.

- *Objective: To continue responsible and accountable governance practices that support the library's goals and objectives.*
 - *Strengthen Board members' skills through professional development, both in-house and using provincial support services.*

Aligns with - Literacy and Equity Grant

The Literacy and Equity grant supports the promotion of literacy and life-long learning within B.C. public libraries. Libraries may use these funds to:

- Work in collaboration with other public **libraries** or library federations on related projects.

Programs and/or Services that connected with the priority and its outcomes:

Trustees Orientation Program (TOP): Two of our new library trustees attended TOP's training. This program is made possible in partnership with Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) and BC Libraries Trustees Association (BCLTA). It provides a comprehensive look at the roles and responsibilities of library trustees in BC. This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A deeper understanding of a trustee's role and the library board's organization and structure. Allowing for a deeper understanding of their new role as a trustee, the impact they and their board can have on the quality of life in their community.
- Knowledge on how to access support for continuing education opportunities.
- Connections with other board members within the federation.

Partnerships:

- Kootenay Library Federation (KLF)
- BC Libraries Trustees Association (BCLTA)

'Big fan of library, such an open and welcoming space, meeting place for people, such a wealth of volunteers, strong organization with staff and volunteers, one of the hubs of the community, people come out to the events.' ~Community Stakeholder feed back during 2020-2025 Strategic Planning

#3 - Collaborating on shared goals

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Use of Technology - Emerging technology is mindfully embraced in order to best serve and support patrons in their pursuit of information, learning, and entertainment. The following is one of the four objectives under this goal.

- *Objective: To expand library programming to educate and support our patrons in safely using emerging technology.*

Aligns with - Literacy and Equity Grant

The Literacy and Equity grant supports the promotion of literacy and life-long learning within B.C. public libraries. Libraries may use these funds to:

- Expand their collections and services to support literacy in their community; or
- Work in collaboration with other public libraries or library federations on related projects.

Programs and/or Services that connected with the priority and its outcomes:

Drop-in Tech Support: CBAL Salmo and the Salmo Valley Public Library teamed up to provide drop in tech support. The Tech Learning Place helps answer questions about tablets, computers, and other devices. It helps community members with questions about formatting resumes and completing online forms, among other questions. It fosters problem solving skills, life long learning, and innovation.

The Salmo Library maintains a strong relationship with our local CBAL representative. This collaboration allows us to engage with a broader segment of our population and provide access to literacy and technology-based activities.

- Continuing to build on our relationships within the wider library sector and those who support literacy.
- The purchase of tech equipment that is now being used for further programming, as well as provided a base for us to build from.
- Builds confidence around the use of technology
- Informs the community of other library services.
- Fostered lifelong learning

Partnerships:

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)
- Salmo Seniors Group



4 - Enhancing governance

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Community Engagement - The diverse and engaged SVPL membership highly values and utilizes the space, programs and services provided. The following is one of the four objectives under this goal.

- *Objective: To expand the collection of high-quality materials across different information platforms.*
 - *Be responsive to shifting user needs and demands.*
 - *Be sustainable.*

Aligns with - Literacy and Equity Grant

The Literacy and Equity grant supports the promotion of literacy and life-long learning within B.C. public libraries. Libraries may use these funds to:

- Expand their collections and services to support literacy in their community; or
- Work in collaboration with other public libraries or library federations on related projects.

Programs and/or Services that connected with the priority and its outcomes:

Ymir Book Mobile and Drop Box - The Salmo Valley Public Library has many rural users. The people that are living outside of the Village proper have not always had equitable access to the library. We continue to engage with the rural community of Ymir 13 KM north of Salmo with a population of about 300.

The returns Drop Box, which is situated at the local convenience store, continues to see regular use. Library staff pick up the books on a scheduled basis. Due to our regions lack of public transportation and the difficult winter driving months, this outreach is especially appreciated.

The Library's Book Mobile Service has greatly benefited the small rural community of Ymir and those living in its surrounding area. Every two weeks a librarian takes a mixture of library items and travels to this small community preschool family group. This service has received much positive feedback from users. The families that partake in these programs are incredibly grateful and often remark that they would not be able to borrow books for their early readers, nor themselves without this service. Furthermore, these outreach programs support equitable access, sustainable living, education, jobs, social connection and health in the small rural communities we serve.

. This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A deeper understanding of the needs and wants of the community.
- Successful programming
- An understanding in our programming partnerships on successes and challenges.

Partnerships:

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy CBAL
- Ymir Community Association

Summary

The library continues to be a hub of activity. More and more it is becoming a place of building community connections. When we look back at 2019 and reflect on the impact, we have on the communities we service it is truly amazing what we, as a small library of 3 part time staff, 15 volunteers, 8 board members, and 10 active Friends of the library can accomplish.

With the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan being completed, SVPL is feeling proud to see that almost all of our goals set have been achieved. We are looking ahead to working with our new Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, a plan that will continue to build on the strengths we have, as well as challenge us to reach new places. SVPL will be able to meet the growing and changing needs of the RDCK Area G, and the Village of Salmo because our staff and volunteers are interested and willing to learn and grow with the needs and demand of our community's goals. We look forward to developing and implementing a strong framework to guide the library forward.

A struggle that we continue to have is the lack of staff and hours in a week to meet the demand we are seeing from the community for library focused and literacy supporting activities. Our community is eager to learn and they are asking for programs and support, but we don't have the staff or funds to keep up. This challenge has also given us great opportunity to collaborate in creative ways both inside and outside of our community.