

Introduction

The Kaslo and District Public Library (KDPL) Association, incorporated in 1920, has operated from all three floors of the '1898' City Hall National Historic Site, pictured right. Our small library, accessed between curving staircases on the ground floor, is a welcoming place to meet friends, borrow items, learn new things, conduct business or recreate via services and programs. We strive to make improvements whenever possible. A recurring comment is that the *Kaslo library card is the **most important card owned***. Our goal is to keep hearing that sentiment!

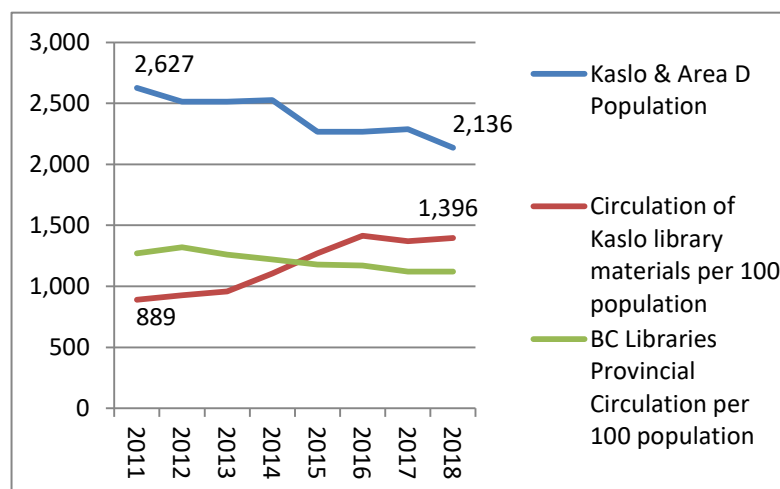


We are a community hub because we provide a wide variety of interesting programs for different groups as well as a welcoming place to study, read, visit or use the Internet. In 2019, the 145 programs offered included family story time, teen book club, poetry group, STEAM and Scratch programs, Indigenous storytelling and drumming, various book clubs, our 11th annual book review event, several author visits, Summer Reading Club with several additional activities, teen summer reading challenge and more. Thanks to the BC Libraries Branch Equity Grant, local partnerships and additional grant funding, the number of programs we could plan and deliver increased by 23% compared to the previous year and participation increased by 32%. It was an eventful year!



We serve a population of 2,136 from the Village of Kaslo and most of Central Kootenay Regional District Area D which, has been decreasing steadily since 2011. Using the library annual statistics to compare the change in population over time with the corresponding change in circulation of library materials per 100-population, shows that non-resident property owners (31% of property owners who are not included in local population) are also using the Kaslo library. If this group of library users were to become residents of Kaslo & Area, our circulation would be similar to the BC Average. Without this explanation, it looks like fewer locals read significantly more each year.

Although about 70% of the population lives



close to the library, our vast service area (5,786 sq. km) also includes members who live over 50 km away in Johnson's Landing.

The Village of Kaslo, adjacent to beautiful Kootenay Lake and surrounded by mountains, is a popular recreation and vacation area with the majority of visits in summer. Visitors often use the library too. A challenge for Kaslo & Area D continues to be a lack of affordable housing and full time jobs for young families due to work that is often seasonal or part-time.

The main occupations in Kaslo according to the 2016 census data include: sales and service (23%); trades, transport & equipment operators (18%); management (18%); business finance and administration (11%); health (10%); and education (8%). Most residents are European or Asian descent and 5.3% of the population identifies as First Nations or Metis according to the 2018 Community Profile Report published by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute. The median age in Kaslo is 56 compared to 43 in BC. 30% of the population is at retirement age (65+) compared to 18% in the province contributing to a strong and skilled volunteer base.

There is a deep love for arts, culture, recreation, sport, and heritage in Kaslo & Area D and a large volunteer base that supports it. Volunteers have:

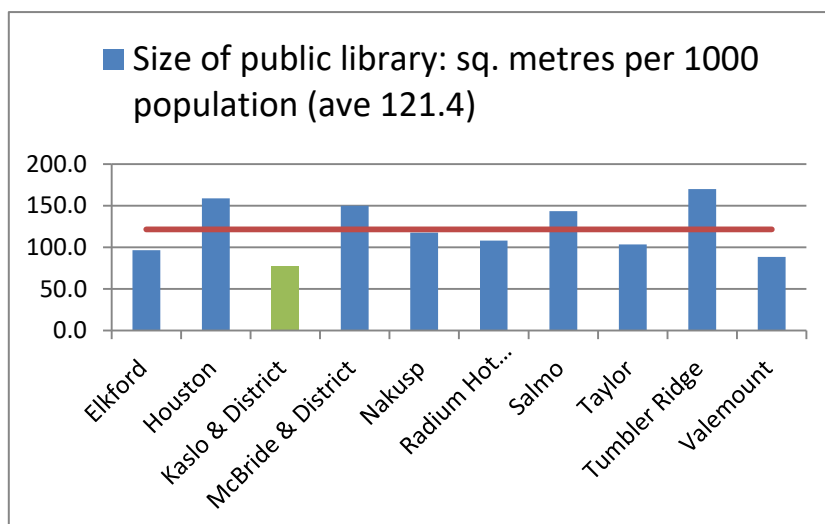
- Built and maintained the Kaslo River Trail (including construction of 2 spectacular bridges)
- Restored the oldest intact passenger sternwheeler (S.S. Moyie c.1898),
- Sustained the Concert Society, Arena, Curling Club and Tennis Club,
- Resurrected the 1896 Langham Cultural Centre for art shows, entertainment, offices,
- Hosted the popular Kaslo Jazz, Etc. Summer Music Festival for over two decades, and
- Developed a community fund that grew to over \$1,000,000 in a decade.

The above list of volunteer accomplishments is far from complete. Our library also has a dedicated team of over 30 volunteers helping with day-to-day operations, governance, and special projects. Some of our volunteers have donated their time for over a decade!

Challenges at KDPL:

Lack of space (ongoing): Interior renovations and new furniture have really improved our library, but after almost 4 decades in the same location, several aspects of operations cannot be addressed or improved due to lack of space.

When comparing our library to other libraries serving similar populations in BC AND adjusting for population, our library is the smallest. The library collection is cramped and there is no room to expand or introduce new collections. We juggle with one shared office and very little storage space. Teamwork is a challenge with our staff of 2 only working together for 2 hours per week. There are no designated spaces for meetings or programs, so creating maker spaces,



hosting programs, or holding meetings can only be done after hours with extra cost. We do our best.

Radon: In 2017, we learned that the radon levels at the library are above the recommended levels of 200 Bq/m³, which is not safe for staff according to Health Canada. It is recommended that remediation take place within 2 years of the test period. More testing and a 3-part plan was worked out with the Village for an in-house radon solution that included putting positive pressure on the air circulation system (completed January 25, 2019), installing a pipe & fan to remove radon from the building (in process for Spring 2020), and conducting another formal test to see if these strategies worked. The long term average during the winter of 2019-20 is 371 Bq/m³, so we expect that remediation will be successful at lowering the value to a healthy level.

Local & Provincial government funding: Other than infrastructure issues, our long term strategic goal (challenge) has been to increase our financial support from local government to approach the BC public libraries average funding per capita to better serve our community and maintain a healthy organization. Our local government has been very supportive with modest increases the last decade that have reduced the funding gap from 65% below average to 19% below average in 2019. This has made it possible to 'catch-up' in many areas such as staffing and other operating expenses; however, there is still work to be done.

It would also be beneficial to see regular cost of living increases to Provincial grant funding for libraries to better support essential library services. Presently we are competing with other local non-profits for small amounts of money to sustain programs.

MISSION STATEMENT
The Kaslo & District Public Library
is your community gateway to
lifelong learning and enjoyment

Strategic Plan:

In 2019, the Board & Staff worked closely with a consultant to update the KDPL strategic plan. We are excited to focus on fun projects such as celebrating our centennial year in 2020 and to work with the community to develop a new library for the next 50 years. Progress in 2019 is limited to the initiation of a few projects since the plan was approved in September. Goals and progress report so far:

Goal 1: Strengthen our role and services to better support our community

Created a centennial celebration plan and budget estimate for 2020

Goal 2: Move into a new facility

The Board requested to form a working group with the Village of Kaslo with the goal of building a new library and establishing an administrative structure. Approved by Council Sept 17 and announced in the Valley Voice. Monthly meetings commenced in November – drafted a Terms of Reference. Also consulted with Libraries Branch regarding library types and current legislation.

Goal 3: Strengthen long term fiscal sustainability

The KDPL Board, Village of Kaslo, and the RDCK each wrote letters to express the urgent need for to increase provincial support to '\$20 million in 2020' during 2020 budget deliberations.

Advocated for average per capita local government funding with small annual increases to the operating budget at the October budget presentation meeting.

Goal 4: Further enhance the library as a workplace

Worked with the Village to resolve the radon issue – met in November to view a remediation set-up that may work for the library.

Evaluated volunteer scheduling and duties – Held meeting with volunteers to communicate concerns and share ideas – Implemented new workflows and procedures.

HR committee began work to review staff benefits with goal of adding pension and sick days.

The following report shows how our library used provincial and other grants to achieve Libraries Branch priorities and align with Provincial Government key commitments.

Priority 1 – Improving Access:

Aligns with KDPL goals 1 & 4: Strengthen our role and services to better support our community – and – Further enhance the library as a workplace:

Aligns with Provincial Government key commitments to making life more affordable and delivering services people can count on, and a commitment to true reconciliation with First Nations.

We improved access in 2019: by inviting & welcoming greater member participation, updating the collection with new items related to First Nations, adding more technology, and by updating some furnishings.

As mentioned in the introduction, program offerings increased by 23% by leveraging the BC Equity Grant to increase funding via additional grants and using the BC Resource sharing grant to access books/resources to support various book groups and programs. Some of the programs added were 'challenges' rather than 'events' such as creating a Summer Reading Club (SRC) Passport for older children and a 'Where's Percy' hunt for a clue for younger children as well as a (doable) Teen Reading Challenge that included a 'Book-face' contest. We made our library more accessible by having afterschool Lego Crafternoons even though we were open and do not have a program space per se. We invited families to participate to 'make things' at stations to celebrate Family Literacy Week, held Family STEAM events, changed pre-school storytime to Family Storytime, invited the whole community for our first SRC Launch Party, participated in the Local Light-up celebrations by having a family storytime with crafts and snacks, and finished the year with a family-friendly Christmas Sing-a-long with maker stations to keep active children busy. We also added special storytime visits for the Periwinkle Children's Centre (daycare) and challenged the JV Humphries grade 8 Life Skills Class to a scavenger hunt when they came to learn about the library.

There is much interest in our community in reconciliation and materials written by First Nations authors. Each year it is a priority to keep adding new material to our collection to maintain that interest in the spirit of achieving true reconciliation.

Through the 2019 Columbia Basin Trust Technology Grant, we were able to purchase 4 laptops, software, and rolling tables so that we could set up a tech lab instantly and offer coding and other technology-based learning programs. The project is still in process, so we have only completed one program for children with 6 sessions of SCRATCH. Teen tech programs are planned for 2020 and we also plan to lend the laptops in the library to increase access to Internet/technology.

OUTCOMES:

- The Teen Book Group decided to make beautiful bookmarks and initiated a fundraising effort to sell them 'by donation'. This generated a lot of community spirit and \$41.70, which was then used to purchase a board for their section of the library so that they could share favorite quotes. We received a lot of positive feedback on the quote boards - that it is enjoyable to read favourite quotes from teens.
- A strong culture of reading was nurtured for four local bookclubs for over 30 individuals via resource sharing.

- On average, each item in our collection exploring reconciliation circulated 7 times.
- Increased access to programs & resources via exciting challenges and additional fun events. For example, SRC saw a 39% increase in attendance to Friday sessions over last year, children proudly displayed their Lego creations from the one-cup of Lego challenge, and teens ended up reading the book they took home for the Book-Face challenge. The challenges really increased participation and enthusiasm!
- Families read more: scavenger hunt clues introduced new titles to families. With a focus on STEAM activities in SRC, 68% more juvenile non-fiction books were borrowed in July 2019 compared to July 2018.
- Two families, who just moved to the area, enjoyed meeting other moms/families via Family Storytime.
- Parents got involved more this year enjoying crafts, celebrations, challenges, and singing with their children via 'family' library programs. There was a 30% increase in participation by changing preschool storytime to the more inclusive family storytime (not including adults).
- The library is even more wheelchair accessible plus it is easier for staff to set up and take down various programs with the two 'rolling' tables.

Priority 2 – Developing Skills

Aligns with KDPL goals 1 & 4: Strengthen our role and services to better support our community – and – Further enhance the library as a workplace:

[Aligns with Provincial Government key commitments to making life more affordable, delivering services people can count on, and a commitment to true reconciliation with First Nations.](#)

We developed skills by offering programs that encourage learning new things, supporting community members by teaching as needed, and by participating in training to get inspired and work better.

Programs that encourage learning include:

Reading Programs: Family Storytime, SRC, Teen Book Club

Making Programs: Tech Up coding games, Family STEAM challenges, Lego challenges, Maker Day, STEAM truck visit, artistic card making for teens, and the Scratch program for children, and

Guest speakers/performers/authors: Liam Fitzpatrik from the Circle of Indigenous Nations Society, Fiona Daniels and an interactive talk about horses, Picos Puppet Palace, and 5 author visits

(Ongoing) – Staff and volunteers support library users by teaching how to use word processing, printing, editing, copying, faxing, and how to access e-resources on devices. We do this as needed whenever possible.

Training with successful outcomes includes: the Summer Reading Club training in Castlegar, the Law Matters training in Nelson, the C.A.T.S Conference in Kelowna, and the online Homelessness training.

OUTCOMES:

- Participants learned listening skills, sharing equipment/supplies, and working together during activities

- Reading skills: One parent commented that ‘you really turned him around’ because her child now loves books and reading thanks to Family Storytime. Another parent said that the SRC program directly encouraged her reluctant reader to read more books than ever over the summer. Another comment from a parent was that her children preferred to read at night rather than watch TV due to this [SRC] program. These children (and other participants) are developing literacy, appreciating books, and on the road to lifelong learning.
- Creativity and problem solving skills: Children learned to think creatively and code through Scratch. They were so excited and inspired to see that one of their favourite games was actually developed in Scratch. One participant appreciated learning how to simplify his coding and that there is more than one way to solve problems. Children learned to solve problems at STEAM stations like how to build a catapult, windmill, or tree with limited or specific materials.
- Cultural sensitivity: Children and adults enjoyed learning Indigenous songs, drumming, respect for each other, the drums and the sticks, the ‘7 Sacred Teachings’, and a traditional craft and offering to nature from the First Peoples of Mexico called Sikuli.
- Hands-on science: Children and adults learned about the horses’ digestive system by building/mapping it on the floor with materials like hoses, clothes, and a real skull. One child, who has read every horse book we own, was deeply engaged during this hands-on experience featuring her favourite subject.
- Families learned about environmental issues, alternative energy, and creating props and puppets using re-purposed and recycled materials through a puppet show and storytelling.
- Staff were inspired to implement several new ideas for Summer Reading Club including the launch party, scavenger hunts and passports thanks to networking opportunities at the SRC training and C.A.T.S. As noted throughout this report, the learning really had a positive impact on community enthusiasm and participation. We received many comments on the good quality of our program. Summer staff (via Canada Summer Jobs) also benefited greatly from the provincial SRC training as it increased their enthusiasm and interest in delivering a memorable program, which also led to the 39% increase in attendance to Friday SRC sessions.
- Both staff participated in the Law Matters training and the Homelessness webinar. The first increased our awareness of the online resources available that we could direct patrons with legal questions to; the latter helped us to develop empathy when working with homeless people and/or difficult people with powerful examples to demonstrate how challenging life is for them, why certain behaviors are misunderstood, tips to lead others into acceptable behavior, and to practice everyday kindness & fairness. This homelessness course is (so far) the best training experience we’ve had and applicable to all interactions.

Priority 3 – Collaborating on shared goals

Aligns with KDPL goals 1 & 4: Strengthen our role and services to better support our community – and – Further enhance the library as a workplace:

Aligns with Provincial Government key commitments to making life more affordable, delivering services people can count on, and a commitment to reconciliation with First Nations.

Everything discussed up to this point has been made possible through collaboration. The Provincial Grants support daily work, collection development, resource sharing and library programs. This report

shows aligned goals to improve access, develop skills, and collaborate. The Libraries Branch also supports Library Federations, the BC Library Cooperative, and various organizations that organize conferences to improve professional development, programs, governance and advocacy.

The Kootenay Library Federation helped to make Summer Reading Club and STEAM programs a success with relevant training opportunities, support to attend training, and support for programs such as STEAM equipment in 2018 and the 2019 Puppet Performance.

Law Matters provided a large grant (\$2500) to improve the collection in 2019 and also provided relevant training to help patrons find resources to answer legal questions. This collaboration allowed us to update the legal collection with 27 new titles for our community with the most current information on: Aboriginal law, business law, cannabis law, criminal law, dispute resolution - courtroom procedure topics, employment law, family/children/youth law, housing law, local government, non-profit management, restorative justice, taxes, victim law, and wills and estates.

Local partners helped to make everything from developing a new strategic plan, creating a tech-enabled space, and being able to offer a variety of informative and engaging programs. They include: Regional District of Central Kootenay, Village of Kaslo, Columbia Basin Trust, Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake, Columbia Basic Alliance for Literacy, North Kootenay Lake Community Services, Kootenay Up the Lake Youth, Kaslo Food Hub, Kaslo & Area Chamber of Commerce, JV Humphries Public School, and Periwinkle Children's Centre.

OUTCOMES:

- Free access to resources and programs at the Kaslo & District Public Library makes life more affordable for residents of Kaslo & Area D
- Financial support from the Province of BC means we can deliver many programs that people count on
- Financial support, partnerships, and training with local and regional groups enables us to deliver additional programs and services that people count on
- KDPL was able to increase program offerings by 23% thanks to provincial and local support.
- Note that purchases for the Law Matters project did not begin until the end of 2019, so not all of the items have been processed. Out of 13 titles available, there have already been 15 circulations.

Priority 4 – Enhancing Governance

Aligns with all KDPL strategic goals

Aligns with Provincial Government key commitments to making life more affordable, delivering services people can count on

Currently, everyone on the KDPL Board has taken the Trustee Orientation Program (recently renamed BCLTA Governance Workshops) offered by the BC Library Trustees Association. KDPL trustees encourage all new trustees to complete this valuable training and the outcome is that dedication and productivity increases to ensure quality services and programs for the community and a healthy

organization. In 2017-8, the KDPL Board participated in a Non-profit advisory program offered by Columbia Basin Trust consultants that affirmed organizational/governance well-being and led to financial support to hire a consultant for renewal of the strategic plan in 2019. Trustees have also taken the Columbia Basin Trust Grant writing workshop.

Projects that the KDPL Board engaged in to enhance governance in 2019 included: participating in individual interviews & a day-long workshop to develop a new 5-year strategic plan, continuing the work towards a new library facility, appointing a second representative to serve on the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) Board, and further stepping up to accept appointment to the newly formed KLF Executive (representing small libraries within the Federation).

OUTCOMES:

- We have a new plan that prioritizes celebrating 100 years, community engagement, working towards a new library facility, sustainability, improving the workplace. Progress is summarized above in the Introduction
- We are ready for KLF REP succession
- We are informed and have a voice on KLF direction, initiatives, and progress at regular KDPL meetings

Thank you

We are grateful to the Province of British Columbia for the various supports in place that connect BC libraries and help to share resources. Our small library is much bigger as a result. This includes the 4 provincial grants, the BC Library Cooperative, the Kootenay Library Federation, and the many other support organizations and provincial initiatives that exist to keep library services sustainable, accessible and relevant for the population. We use our Provincial Grants to carry on with programs & services that Kaslo & Area D library users enjoy and expect. We also use our Provincial Grants to find ways to improve what we do or introduce something new. The KDPL staff and board express thanks to the Libraries Branch for continued support.

This report has been approved by the KDPL Board at the February 25 regular Board meeting.

Submitted by

Eva Kelemen, Library Director
Kaslo & District Public Library