

Provincial Library Grant Report 2020



Salmo Valley Public Library

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Introduction

In 2020, the Salmo Valley Public Library pivoted and worked hard to continuing connecting and serving our community. We continued to deliver services people can count on, despite the challenges we faced with COVID. The staff and Board spent much of the year working to build a strong sustainable library for the communities we serve. We did not let the pandemic stop us as we strived to sustain and provide service.

The direct funding, we receive from the province is very much appreciated and well managed. These funds help us be responsive to the specific needs of our community, which was an extra challenge this year. With that said, we continue to see our local funding not increasing as well as the provincial, which has meant it is becoming harder to meet the ever-growing needs of the community, along with the extra challenges we all faced in 2020.

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."



*Book donations
for food
hampers*

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 what draws this demographic to the community.

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, and for this reason we are also seeing an increase in young families. Every year the community seems to welcome many new families.



*So wonderful to have
this great library and
its wonderful staff in
our community
~2020 Facebook
comment*

As the community grows so does the Salmo Valley Public Library and we continue to be a hub of activity. The library is situated right in the middle of the community and we pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive community space that is accessible and convenient.

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 material and non-material opportunities available through the library are what make it central to the growing community it serves.

One of the challenges that the library continues to face is insufficient staff time. We struggle to meet the demand for programming, tech support and professional development 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. Staff are overwhelmed with work and the demand to meet the challenges and changes needed for these times.

As for many, 2020 has been a year with many significant changes and challenges. One of the positive things that happened for staff was a regular connection with ABCPLD and other Library Partners, as well as the strengthening of support and connection within the KLF. Further positive changes are how well we were able to adapt and play a positive roll within our community during these challenging times. We were able to provide services, when others could not - digital collections, online learning, databases, and then we were able to quickly set up to provide take away (curbside) services. It was wonderful to be able to work to provide these services.

People are now able to come back to the library and are using our traditional services, but they are also still expecting the extra services we provided. This has highlighted our concerns that our funding does

not allow for staff time to provide the required operational technology and infrastructure management. These concerns were already apparent; however, the pandemic has brought them to the forefront.

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 years. We were successful in achieving most of our goals, with some of these goals being carried over into our new plan as we continue to build on them. We put our new Strategic Plan in place at the beginning of March 2020 and now know that it may need some adjustments due to unforeseen changes we are now aware of due to COVID-19.

Our new five-year plan includes a focus on increasing operation funding, building on community awareness, and adapting and evolving the library programming to meet the communities needs.

Aligning with Provincial Strategic Plan Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities

1 - Improving Access for British Columbians

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Community Engagement - Adapt and evolve library programming to meet community needs

- *DESIRED OUTCOME: Library programming continues to be responsive and adaptable to community needs.*
- *Objective:*
 - *Examine the library's role as a "Community Hub." Efforts could be taken to promote the resources and programming of other agencies in Salmo and area (i.e. SCRS), but not reproduce the programs they are delivering.*

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

GALE Course: We saw a steady increase in online learning during 2020, as many people had the time while staying home.

This program saw multiple outcomes:

- Life long learning happening within the community
- The library was actively promoting GALE courses online, which not only brought people to the GALE course but introduced many to the other services provided through the library online databases.
- One program allowing us to promote other programs

- During 2020 a parent in the community took a GALE course about writing children's stories. This led them to self-publish a children's book and they will soon be doing a virtual reading for the community.
- Supportive and positive feedback and engagement from the community for the opportunities to enhance their skills while staying home during 2020.
- Sharing of resources and subscriptions between libraries (KLF), which is creating a more sustainable access to resources for all. SVPL would not be able to provide these courses without the support of the KLF

Partnerships:

- Kootenay Library Federation
 - Salmo Schools
-

#2 - Building Capacity

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Increase community awareness and Increase operational funding

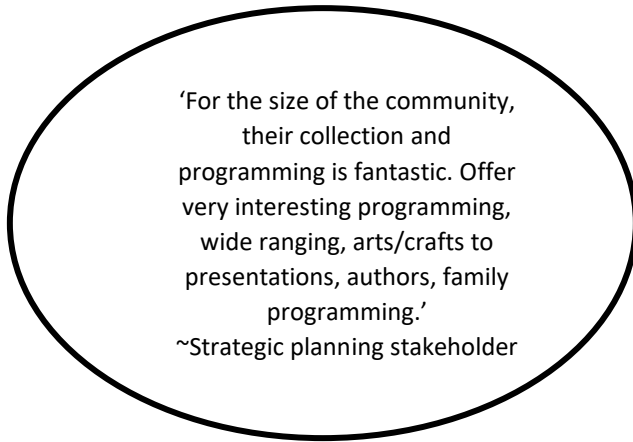
- *DESIRED OUTCOME: The diverse and engaged SVPL membership values and utilizes the space, programs and services provided.*
- *DESIRED OUTCOME: Library funding is adequate to meet evolving programming needs, and staff are suitably compensated with wages and hours that are consistent with those of other Kootenay region libraries standards.*
- *Host community service provider meetings*
- *Recognizing the Village's commitment to sustainability, position the library as a valued partner for the Village.*
- *Investigate the per capita funding given to the SVPL compared to other libraries in the area.*
- *Work alongside the Village to determine how taxes are disbursed in the Village and Area G*

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

Engagement with Village of Salmo: The Library Board and staff have actively been pursuing an increase in support from the Village and Regional District. This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A deeper understanding of some of the challenges regarding taxation and differences between the District and the Village.
- Pursuing an Alternative Approval Process to increase some of the library service area
- Creation of a 'Annual report card' that went out to all residents
- Connections and a deeper presence in the community and with the Village council.
- Stronger relationships with the Village

- Library spearheading a meet up for other non-profits in the community who running programs. This helped foster connections and eliminate overlap and competition between community providers



Partnerships:

- Friends of the Library
- Community Services
- Youth Center
- Village of Salmo
- RDCK

#3 - Advancing Citizen Engagement

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Community Engagement - Increase Community Awareness

- *DESIRED OUTCOME: The diverse and engaged SVPL membership values and utilizes the space, programs and services provided*
- *Objective:*
 - *Continue to engage community partners in Trivia Night 3 x / year and strengthen the fundraising activities associated with this*
 - *Continue to support the Friends of the Library and all volunteers through meaningful experiences, volunteer recognition activities*

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


Community trivia Night: Salmo CBAL, the Friends of the Library and the Salmo Valley Public Library teamed up to provide community trivia night at the local pub. This program really helped build community awareness of the library. Furthermore, it fostered life long learning, and built bridges in the community.

During COVID we have also hosted some online trivia events with great success as well, and plan to provided this online gather place throughout the coming year.

- Continuing to build on our relationships within the wider community
- Maintains a strong relationship with our local CBAL representative
- Informs the community of other library services.
- Fosters lifelong learning and healthy living experiences
- Successful 'fun'raiser
- Helps with eliminating social isolation with in the community

Partnerships:

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)
- Friends of The Salmo Library
- Salmo Hotel & Pub



WOW! Thanks millions to our wonderful library staff ... Taylor and Marianne ... for pulling this together. Heard they had to run back across the street to get extra tables and chairs for all of the participants. Thanks too to the Salmo Hotel and Pub for hosting. Congrats to the winners!

Community member comment about Trivia Night

4 - Enhancing governance

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From Strategic Plan: Increase operational funding and community awareness

- *DESIRED OUTCOME: Library funding is adequate to meet evolving programing needs, and staff are suitably compensated with wages and hours that are consistent with those of other Kootenay region libraries standards.*

- *DESIRED OUTCOME: The diverse and engaged SVPL membership values and utilizes the space, programs and services provided.*
- *Objective:*
 - *Invite Village Council into the library for meetings and public presentations / discussions*
 - *Improve community connections and coordination of services by involving library board members and staff in regular meetings with other organizations*
 - *Create some communications collateral such as bookmarks, brochures that can be used throughout the community, ie. Friends "Booksale".*

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

Strategic Planning - The Salmo Valley Public Library spent the early part of 2020 working to develop a new strategic plan.

This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A new strategic plan with focused language and goals to help drive the staff and board forward into the next 5 years
- A deeper understanding of the needs and wants of the community and the library stakeholders
- Successful programming planning
- Focused grants for programming support
- An understanding in our programming partnerships and the successes and challenges.

Partnerships:

- Friends of the Library
- Non-profit groups in the community

'Full ramp up of what they offer, they are filling important gaps, and not stepping on toes. They create opportunities for kids to come in and feel welcome, keep up the good work and try to be more sustainable'

Stakeholder feedback from

TECHNOLOGY GRANT - FINAL REPORT

As a community, Salmo's Official Community Plan highlights the need for sustainability by giving equal consideration to social, environmental and economic factors and by taking a long-term view to developing and implementing strategies that integrate social, environmental and economic dimensions. As with many community libraries, the Salmo Library is a hub when it comes to accessing information to help develop these sustainable qualities, and more and more this information is being accessed with the use of technology.

For this reason, much of the TECH funding we received was spent on supporting the community's use of, and access to, technology. We spent much of the funding on adding to our digital collection, as well as improving access to the digital collection. SVPL now has loanable eReaders and iPads to support those who don't have access to digital information, as well as an enhanced online collections that meet our community's specific interests.

Some of the challenges we have faced with implementing these new additions to the library come to the challenges mentioned in our PLGR - staffing and time. With that said, the Salmo Valley Public Library is grateful for this funding to help increase access for our community to technology and information.

Summary

The library continued to be a hub of activity, just in a different way for 2020. SVPL continued to build community connections, even when faced with the challenges. When we look back at 2020 and reflect on the impact that we have on the communities we service it is truly amazing what we, as a small library of 3 part time staff were able to accomplish all the amazing things we did under the circumstances of the year.

With our new 2020-2025 Strategic Plan in hand, SVPL is feeling ready to bring some of our new goals to fruition but we are also aware that this plan was developed before the many changes and challenges 2020 brought bubbling to the surface. We look forward to developing and implementing this framework to guide the library forward, but are also more aware of the changes we will be facing and how we will need to continue to be adaptable in the coming years.

When facing these challenges and changes, the struggles we face have become very real. SVPL has continued to have a lack of staff and hours in a week to meet the regular demand we had been seeing and now we have extra challenges brought to our attention in 2020.

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.



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October 15, 2020

Attention: BC Libraries Branch

RE: 2020 Library Technology Grant Interim Planning Report

First off, I would like to say, the staff and members of the Salmo Valley Public Library are grateful for this funding to help increase access for our community to technology and information.

As a community, Salmo's Official Community Plan highlights the need for sustainability by giving equal consideration to social, environmental and economic factors and by taking a long-term view to developing and implementing strategies that integrate social, environmental and economic dimensions. As with many community libraries, the Salmo Library is a hub when it comes to accessing information to help develop these sustainable qualities, and more and more this information is being accessed with the use of technology.

The community of Salmo and area has many people without access to the internet, or the technology to access the internet. We see this technology grant as an opportunity to help provide that equal access to all members of the communities we serve.

When planning for the projects that would best support our unique communities to increase equitable access to technology and information, we looked at both the macro and the micro of our library technology.

For this reason, on the macro level we chose to bring in a local Kootenay IT company to help us better understand the unique issues we face when it comes to providing access to the Internet. Then on the micro level, we have chosen to focus on providing lendable devices and technologies that will help people amplify their voices, as well as the community voice. Some of these devices will help our community access information and others will help them create or share content. Furthermore, during this time of a pandemic we are seeing an increase in access to our digital collection and to meet that need we have added to this collection.

Sincerely,

Taylor Caron, Library Director SVPL

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: SALMO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$8902

| Area of Need | Outcome | Metrics | Strategic Links | Actions | Collaborative Links | Timeframe | Project Budget | In-Kind/Leveraged funds | Comments |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|---|--|
| Patron loanable devices eReaders, iPads, headphones | Loanable devices help reduce barriers as well as provide equity access to technology for all community members | We will be adding our first ever loanable eReaders/tablets See an increase in access to digital collection as well as usage of loanable equipment | Accessible, loanable devices support the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians | Purchase 2 eReaders and 2 iPads; setup eReaders with a selection of books; set up iPads to be usable as readers and/or to go along with loanable tech equipment | CBAL; Salmo Seniors Group; Community Center Youth programs | Fall 2020 | \$2100 | In-kind staff hours to create learning tools to go with these loanable items | |
| Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) IT assessment | Increased knowledge about how we can better serve our growing demands for internet access; increased usage; better analytical records of usage | Increase internet access and speed; allow for staff to better manage IT and analytics of usage | Provide access to intellectual, human, social and career development opportunities through libraries. | Contracted local IT company to review our system in person (summer 2020); review report & implement suggestions (winter 2020) | Connected with other local non-profits to see if we can work together to help increase our local internet | Fall/Winter 2020 | <u>\$3020</u> <i>\$1520 assessment</i> <i>\$1500 (not spent) new wifi hotspots throughout library</i> | In-Kind - Staff hours to help IT company learn about our system | We are still waiting for the IT report and their suggestion for how to increase WiFi connectivity throughout our space |
| Electronic collections (licensing) Overdrive advantage | Shorter wait times for popular items and books that meet the local reading interests | Increases in digital books usage; shorter wait times for popular books | Enable seamless access to online collections in formats that best suit people’s information, learning and recreational needs. | Purchase digital items that are being requested or have higher hold numbers by our local patrons | BC Libraries Coop | Summer 2020 | \$2050 | In-kind Staffing hours to select item purchases | We have already seen a major increase in the digital collection usage - A big jump during COVID and again then when we add more to our local collection of items |
| Digital programming Recording equipment | Staff able to create better online programming; community groups able to create content and share stories; community connection | Simpler equipment will enable staff to create better and more robust online content; patron usage; other community groups usage for their programming | Accessible, loanable devices support the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians | Purchase equipment; setup and create templates for usage and learning; develop loaning policy | CBAL; Salmo Seniors Group; Community Center Youth programs; schools | Fall 2020 | \$732 | In-kind staff hours to create learning tools to go with these loanable items | |
| Digital programming Projector/Screen for programs | Simple system that allows for ease of access to the tools to provide training, workshops, and programming | No more errors in set up or connection when using a projector for programming. Increase in usage | Support library services that are flexible, inclusive and responsive to people’s needs | Purchase new equipment; hire someone to install and set up | Salmo Arts Society; Salmo History Group; | Winter 2020 | \$1000 | Salmo Valley Fund (SVF) to top up this purchase In-kind staff hours to create learning tools to go with these loanable items | Waiting to see if we are successful with the SVF |