

2019 Provincial Library Grant Report – Radium Hot Springs Public Library



Introduction:

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library can be found at the heart of the Village of Radium Hot Springs, located in the breathtaking Columbia Valley – nestled between the Purcell Mountains to the West and the Rocky Mountains to the East. Radium borders the Columbia River Wetlands - the largest continuous wetlands in North America.

Our Library would like to acknowledge that we operate on the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa and Secwépemc people.

The Radium Library is equipped to service the particular needs of our community and the outlying areas beyond. The Library is committed to improving access to information and expanded services. Our local population primarily consists of young families and retired seniors. Even though our service area consists of about 1,553 permanent residents, our Village is also a

“home-away-from-home” for a large population of second homeowners who reside in the area on a part-time basis, which can cause the population to swell to 5,000 residents. During the peak seasons, there is a substantial increase in both library usage and circulation of materials as a result of this part-time population influx. Radium is also home to tourist attractions such as the Radium Hot Springs Pools, world-class recreational activities, and of course, herds of the iconic Bighorn Sheep. The local economy is tourism focused, with a year-round forestry sector. The seasonal nature of the tourism industry makes economic stability unpredictable. In addition to this, there are limited affordable housing options in our area, and the cost of living is high. As a result, local businesses have been faced with labour shortages which can hinder economic development. There is also a prevalent rural transportation problem in our area, and residents who are affected by this issue heavily rely on our services.



Our library serves as a gathering place where locals, tourists and recreational property owners all have equal access to information and services. Our facility bridges the gap between these demographics and provides a level platform for interaction, education and accessibility to information and services.

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library is fortunate to have a strong working relationship with the local Village Council, and our facility is located inside of the newly built municipal building – the Radium Hot Springs Centre. We continue to nurture this relationship, and our relationship with the Regional District of East Kootenay, every year, to adhere to the goals set in our Strategic Plan.

Our Strategic Plan is a “living document” that provides a road map for where we want to be, from an assessment of where we are at present. We have made significant strides in the past year. We have explored opportunities to provide open and wider access to digital resources and work towards the Provincial digital library initiatives. In the latter half of 2019, our Library received a grant from the Columbia Basin Trust to fund the establishment of a Community Technology Hub in the Library. Once purchased, these new technological items will bring us even closer to meeting the provincial digital library initiatives.

The Radium Library effectively met a number of goals in 2019. This year the Library successfully built and maintained our presence in the community through regular participation in community events. We increased and maintained our regular service hours which contributed to an increase in library patronage and usage. Both staff and board members engaged in professional development opportunities, and staff and volunteers worked to increase their digital literacy.



In 2019, the Library increased its programming significantly, which has resulted in doubled, sometimes even tripled, attendance records. In addition to regular staff/volunteer run programs, the Library has also partnered with local organizations, such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, the Community Literacy Planning Committee, Wild Safe BC, the Radium Show and Shine Classics Car Show and the local elementary school to offer joint programming and/or joint community initiatives. Having been in our new space for a full year we were able to apply for more granting opportunities, which gave us the ability to extend our hours to include three more open hours per week, and increase support staff hours so that the Director had support for 14 of the 31 open hours per week. Even with this increase, the Library relied on volunteer support to keep up with the ever-growing operational demands. Annual increases in funding allow us to lessen our reliance on volunteers, and be responsive to rise up to meet the growing needs of our community. Without

government funding, we could not provide our community with adequate services, and we would not have the man-power to operate our facility. Finding the funding to meet growing operational demands continues to be a significant struggle for our library. Even though we are a small rural library located in Radium Hot Springs, we have become a vital and essential organization for all residents and visitors of the Columbia Valley.

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library is an active and proud member of the Kootenay Library Federation. This partnership allows for consortium purchasing and reduced costs for all member libraries, as well as the shared benefit of twice annual meetings to collaborate and work on mutually beneficial projects and initiatives. The reciprocal support from member libraries is invaluable, and it is essential for likeminded organizations to work together for the betterment of every community.

Alignment with Strategies of Provincial Priorities:

1) Library Priority #1: Improving Access:

Indicate what library goal, programs, and/or services, and partnerships you may have had that support the Provincial priority, and describe what outcomes were achieved.

Library Goal that aligns with strategy: Explore opportunities to provide open and wider access to physical and digital resources and provincial digital library initiatives.

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library undertook several activities to provide ongoing support to this goal in 2019. The Library applied for several grants to update and expand our digital resources to meet the growing demands of the community, and keep up with the ever-

changing digital world. This year we implemented a Technological Enhancement Project, funded the Columbia Basin Community Initiatives Program, to improve digital accessibility at our facility.

This project enhanced the usability of our services by providing the supplies and equipment necessary to expand our programs and services. Following this, we started to apply for a second project to improve digital literacy in our community – the Community Technology Hub Project. Funding for this project will largely come from the Columbia Basin Trust Community Technology Program, with a few smaller supporting grants to come from the Regional District of East Kootenay Discretionary-Grants-In-Aid Program, the Columbia Valley Community Foundation and the Village of Radium Discretionary-Grants-In-Aid Program. The grants for this project were approved in 2019, but the project will be implemented in 2020. This upcoming project will give us the opportunity to provide our patrons with wider access to the latest technology and digital resources to accommodate their educational, entrepreneurial, and personal needs.

We have also partnered with local organizations, such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), to offer more comprehensive one-on-one programs. Patrons can schedule appointments to have their technological questions answered to further develop their digital literacy.

In 2019, the Library also improved access to Legal Materials through a grant from Law Matters program through Courthouse Libraries BC, made possible with funding from the Law Foundation of British Columbia. This \$2,500 grant gave the Library the means to purchase a robust legal collection, suitable to the specific needs of our community. This provides our patrons with direct access to essential legal resources. Because of this grant, we were able to more than triple the number of legal books in our collection. In addition to collection support, libraries in our area also received additional training and educational tools so that we are better able to serve our communities legal information needs with the goal of improving access to justice.

These granting opportunities have given us the ability to work towards purchasing the items necessary to meet this goal; however, we continue to struggle with finding enough funding to cover the operational costs required to mount these significant initiatives.

2) Library Priority # 2: Developing Skills

Indicate what library goal, programs, and/or services, and partnerships you may have had that support this priority, and describe their outcomes

Library Goal that aligns with strategy: Support professional development initiatives to enhance the skills of library staff.

Several initiatives were developed in 2019 to support this goal. In 2018, the Library Director enrolled in the *Building Futures – Strategic Skills for Library Management Certificate* at Royal Roads University. This professional development initiative was supported by the Kootenay Library Federation, the Province of BC through the Ministry of Education and the Radium Library board. The second course in this certificate focused on Strategic Succession Planning, the Director completed it in the first half of 2019. The skills learned from this course were then applied by the Director to the current procedures at the Library to ensure future stability during transitional periods. The certificate program was cancelled by the University in the second half of 2019.

The RHSPL had its first ever interactive drop-off Summer Reading Club program in the summer of 2019. In June 2019, the Assistant Library Director and the Library Director received training from KLF member libraries to gain a better understanding of the Provincial guidelines and objectives. Prior to summer 2019, the Summer Reading Program at the Radium Library was very minimal, due to the fact that, for many years, we were a largely volunteer-run library with one part-time staff member, and we did not have the hours or capacity to mount a significant program. 2018 was still a transition year for the library moving into a new space with a new Director, so it was not until 2019 that the Library had a chance to turn the Summer Reading Club into an interactive weekly program with activities and stories that tied into the Provincial weekly themes and special guests. The training in Cranbrook was tremendously beneficial, and gave staff a more in-depth understanding of the Provincial initiative and how to create a successful program. As a result, attendance increased, as did participant and parent satisfaction with the program. Children gained increased confidence, and benefitted both socially and emotionally. In addition to this, circulation of children's materials in the summer months doubled from the year before.



In October 2019, the Library Director and Assistant Library Director attended a conference for children's and teen services (CATS). The conference consisted of a programming roundtable, various lectures and hands-on activities. It gave the two staff members the opportunity to collaboratively develop, review and analyse youth programming ideas with staff from other libraries in the Kootenay Library Federation, and the Okanagan Regional system. The CATS conference provided staff with invaluable knowledge about successes and failures with youth programming. The conference gave the Radium Library staff new ideas for programming and methods to apply to current programs. Our Story Time program underwent some recommended changes that were successfully applied at other libraries. We now incorporate more interactive and physical elements. One success has been 'Felt Story Time' which encourages hands-on learning and helps to develop fine motor skills. We also put together a sensory story time box filled with items to create a more inclusive atmosphere.

The Library Director and two assistants also completed the *Librarian's Guide to Homelessness* Tutorial on Niche Academy, thanks to the Kootenay Library Federation. Staff now have a better understanding of how to use an empathy-driven approach to solving problems and preventing conflict, and have the ability to accommodate and serve everybody. Thanks to the Kootenay Library Federation, our library is able to participate in professional development opportunities that we would not otherwise have access to.

3) **Library Priority #3: Collaborating on Shared Goals**

Indicate what library goal, programs, and/or services, and partnerships you may have had that support the Provincial priority, and describe what outcomes were achieved.

Library Goal that aligns with strategy: Strengthen partnerships within the community and surrounding area.

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library supported this goal in 2019 by continuing to foster and grow relationships with organizations within the Columbia Valley such as Family Dynamix, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Edgewater Elementary School and the Columbia Valley Maker Space Society. This year we extended our reach to new organizations such as WildSafe BC and the Community Literacy Planning Committee. By establishing new partnerships in the community, we were able to extend our reach in the community, while simultaneously using our position to help other organizations with promotion and collaboration.

In April of 2019, we partnered with CBAL to host a Block Builders program for children ages 5-10. This after-school program ran weekly for 8-weeks, and was a big hit with local children. Attendance was strong, and children incorporated Lego and Literacy in a fun creative environment. Snacks were provided so that a nutritional component could be included. This partnership worked seamlessly – it allowed CBAL to extend their presence in Radium, and it helped to bring more programming to our library, with minimal output for our already limited staff. They also ran a summer S.T.E.A.M camp, that followed our Summer Reading Club.

In 2019, we continued to support the CBAL's *Book Under Every Tree* initiative whereby we collected book donations for CBAL to distribute. Our partnership with CBAL is also integral in that we can work together to create literacy programs for the community. We are complimentary organizations to our partners and each relationship is mutually beneficial and ultimately creates more opportunities for the community to have equitable access to literary materials and services.

The Director also participated in both the *Buddy Reads Family Literacy Event* and *Welcome to Kindergarten Event* at the Edgewater Elementary School. Here the Director provided story time for students and parents, and engaged with parents to let them know about the resources

offered at the Radium Library. In December of 2019, Library staff also designed a program to host a grade 2/3 class from the Edgewater Elementary School. The class was provided with a fun day of planned activities at the Library. They received a tour of the Library and Community Centre, participated in various activities and crafts, and partook in a festive story time. This trip provided students with a deeper understanding of what libraries do for their communities, and gave more children the opportunity to visit the Library.

In addition to this, one of our main partnerships is with our Federation – the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF). Working towards mutually shared goals and projects with other libraries in the Kootenay region is tremendously beneficial for all parties. As an active member of the KLF, the Radium Library participates in consortium purchasing and benefits from reduced costs. Member libraries have the shared benefit of meeting twice per year to work towards shared initiatives and collaborate on ideas. Throughout the year, member libraries connect with one another by way of an email thread. This allows Directors to bring up immediate questions or concerns relating to public libraries and their inner workings with fellow colleagues. Being a member of the KLF has substantial benefits for member libraries, both collaborative and fiscal. We have continued to work towards strengthening our relationships with member libraries, and work together on shared goals and challenges.

4) Strategy #4: Enhancing Governance:

This strategy focuses on enhancing governance and supporting the library community.

Library Goal that aligns with strategy: Practise open governance through strong planning and clear reporting.

The Library took on several initiatives to support this goal 2019. The Radium Library Board worked towards enhancing governance through clear and concise reporting. At the beginning of 2019, two new board members attended a Board governance training workshop to learn the fundamentals of board governance. The board also reviewed a Trustee Orientation Handout, which highlighted the importance of evaluations, transparency and modernization. The board then developed Key Messages for the Library to provide guidance, monitor management, advocate for the Library, fundraise and plan for the future.

The board and Director also developed and posted the 2019 Annual Library Report for the Community on the Radium Hot Springs Public Library website. The report was then shared with Village Council at a monthly meeting to profile our activities and results. The annual report addresses accomplishments for the year, lists the Board of Trustees, gives budget highlights, and provides statistics at-a-glance (such as number of volunteers and volunteer hours). Similar to the previous year, the report consists of data provided by the province and the KLF. Posting the Community Annual Report is a way to clearly display library statistics, and show a financial summary of responsible fiduciary management. We also continue to post our board meeting minutes on our website as a way to provide transparency to the

public. The board completed an annual review of our policy manual, and made the necessary changes.

This year our board Chair also wrote a letter to the Minister of Education on behalf of the Library and BLCA to highlight the outstanding achievements of BC public libraries in their communities. This letter highlighted the breadth and depth of the work that public libraries do through the BC Summer Reading Club, and the significant impact it has on quality of life for participants. Writing a letter to the Minister on important topics is a way for our library to show what libraries achieve collectively, and raise our profile and importance to the Province.

The library also extends an invitation to our Mayor annually to attend one of our board meetings. This ensures transparency with our municipality, and encourages our local council to take an active interest in the library and what we offer the community.

Summary:

In summary, 2019 was another successful year at the Radium Hot Springs Public Library. This year, we faced new opportunities along with new challenges.

One of our biggest opportunities was receiving the funding to employ two support staff for a combined total of fourteen hours per week. This gave us the ability to lessen our reliance on volunteer support for operational means. It also allowed for an increase in more interactive programming, and more in-depth services. Having trained employees alleviated burdens for the Director, and provided her with more free time to apply for grants to further improve our resources and services. As a result of this increased functionality in the staffing department, the library saw major benefits statistically in terms of library usage and the circulation of materials for all age groups. Even with this opportunity, our library still faces the challenge of finding the funds to operate at full capacity. In the future, we would like to operate at a minimum with two staff on duty at all times, and continue to increase our hours to accommodate the requests of the public.

2019 was also the first year that we were in our new facility for an entire calendar year. Over this time, we were able to solidify our presence in the community. Our new offerings and expansion in open hours made us more noticeable to residents and second-homeowners, and as a result, we have become the focal point of our community.

This year the library took advantage of various granting opportunities to work towards achieving Provincial and Strategic goals. Most notably, we received two different grants from the Columbia Basin Trust, both working towards increasing digital literacy and improving access to digital resources. Supporting grants for our Community Technology Hub were also integral to help fund the project. A sizable grant from the Law Matters program at Courthouse Libraries BC

and the Law Foundation of BC helped to improve access to legal resources by providing us with the funds to create a robust legal collection specifically designed for our community.

Professional development continues to be an important goal for our library to work towards. Each year we take advantage of opportunities for board and staff members to expand their knowledge and improve our services and governance structures.

Our partnerships with local organizations are integral and mutually beneficial. They are a tremendous asset to the community, and we are fortunate to have strong relationships with organizations working towards shared goals in our community. Rather than working in competition with one another, we choose to work together to expand our services and the resources available to the community. Our partnership with our Federation is essential to maintain and expand our services. Without this membership, all of our libraries would be at a major disadvantage, and as a result our patrons and communities would be the ones to suffer.

Patron Quotes/Anecdotal Evidence:

“Beautiful facility and friendly staff. The Radium Library is a much-needed addition to the Columbia Valley!” – Anonymous community member

“Thank you so much for hosting our class. We really enjoyed the stories, crafts and amazing toboggan hill!” – Teacher and Students, Grade 2/3 class at the Edgewater Elementary School

“Great selection of reading materials!” – Anonymous patron

“Thank you for being a strong female role model for children to look up to!” – Compliment made to a staff member by an anonymous patron

“We schedule our trips out to Radium based around your children’s programs.” – Anonymous recreational property owner.



RHSPL Library Hours:

Sunday: Closed
Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 1:00pm-8:00pm
Wednesday: 10:00am-4:00pm
Thursday: 10:00am-4:00pm
Friday: 10:00am- 4:00pm
Saturday: 10:00am-4:00pm

RHSPL Vision:

A welcoming and inspiring community meeting place for all ages, and a vital community hub for connecting with others and for providing information about our valley, life in general, and topics of interest to our patrons.

RHSPL Mandate:

The Radium Hot Springs Public Library will strive to offer programs and materials that reflect the needs and interests of the community and its service area, and will provide Library services and programs to inspire life stories and to promote literacy, education and community relationships.

RHSPL Values:

• All of our Library Patrons • Involvement and Innovation in our Community • Intellectual Freedom • Literacy, Lifelong Learning, and Personal Growth • Our Volunteers • Sustainability for the Future
