Introduction

In 2018, the Salmo Valley Public Library continued to work to connect our community, build capacity, work collaboratively, 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.

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.

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. In the current Official Community Plan for Salmo there are three main visions, the following two are very much in line with the Salmo Library vision and current strategic plan.
'We celebrate our community. Volunteers ensure that all residents have the services and activities needed to remain socially connected no matter what age.'

‘Residents work together to reduce hazards and risks to keep Salmo safe. We encourage business, employment and educational opportunities that help to build a vital and thriving community for generations to come.’

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.

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 Salmo Library are what make it central to the growing community it serves. The Salmo Library is a community hub that offers a physical space for many of the local volunteer non-profits to connect throughout the year.

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.

The Salmo Valley Public Library is seeing the end of our 2015-2020 strategic plan. 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 includes 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 are successfully achieving all of our goals and for most of them we are well on our way to achieving them by the end of this strategic plan in 2020. ‘Community Engagement’ and ‘Use of Technology’ and ‘Library Collection and Core Operations’ are the three set goals for our current plan, which are all well aligned with the provincial goals.
Aligning with Provincial Strategic Plan Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities

# 1 - Fostering equitable access to information and services

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

Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment:

Fostering Connected Communities: Advancing access to information and resources.

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

Books for Reconciliation Project: A group of students from the high school, many of them having indigenous heritage applied for funding that enabled us to add more items in the collection that focused on reconciliation, as well as seeking our presenters to help educate the community on reconciliation. Through funding from Columbia Basin Trust, the Salmo Valley Fund, the class and the library were able to host Sinixt Elder for a presentation of her book ‘Not Extinct’ as well as purchase $1500 in items for the collection. This program saw multiple outcomes:

- A stronger relationship between the library and the high school was developed. Due to this many of the students feel much more comfortable at the library and are coming on a more regular bases outside of school.
- Supportive and positive feedback and engagement from the community as we work together to be responsive to the shifting needs of not only our community but the country.
- Sharing of resources between the school and library, which is creating a more sustainable learning resource for all.

Partnerships:

- Salmo Secondary School
- Blood of Life Collective: a group of settler and Sinixt activists collaborating to support Sinixt resurgence.
#2 - Developing skills and knowledge - Building Capacity

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.

**Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Building Capacity: Enabling inspiration and innovation. “Facilitating strategic opportunities for professional development, collaboration and knowledge exchange, so library trustees, staff and volunteers can learn from each other’s successes, build best practice and respond to the evolving needs of users.”

**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 Kootena 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:**

- Kootena Library Federation (KLF)
- BC Libraries Trustees Association (BCLTA)
#3 - Working together: Creating lasting and sustainable partnerships

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.

**Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Working together to creating lasting and sustainable partnerships. “Exploring further opportunities across the wider library sector and with other jurisdictions to share best practices and realize cost-savings and other efficiencies”

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

**Family STEAM Programs:** CBAL Salmo and the Salmo Valley Public Library teamed up to offer a new program for kids aged 7-12 and their parents/caregivers to learn about science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM). These activities help families learn about STEAM through hands-on play. They help make abstract concepts come to life and relatable. They also foster problem solving skills, team work, creativity and innovation.

The Kootenay Library federation provided a grant for the library to purchase materials for these STEAM programs. This program saw multiple outcomes:

- 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.
- Built confidence in a new branch of library services.
- Fostered coding and STEAM literacy skills

**Partnerships:**

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)
- Selkirk College
- Dakota Literacy
- Kootenay Library Federation (KLF)
# 4- Sustaining our success: Enhancing governance and demonstrating impact

“SVPL has been my go-to place for learning, entertainment, and the pure pleasure of books since I was a child growing up in a small town.”

### 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 responsibly plan, implement and evaluate library programs and services.*
  - *Conduct needs assessments in order to inform the development of programs and cultivation of audiences.*

### Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment:

Continuing to encourage the use of strategic planning and reporting, including the use of community needs assessments.

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

**Suggestion Boxes, Feedback Forms, & 2017 Survey:** We now have a suggestion box in which patrons can provided anonymous feedback and/or wishes for what they would like to see at the library. May of our programs are joint efforts with other groups in the community, for this to be successful we have been collecting feedback from program participates. Our 2017 Survey has continued to support the library board and staff in developing informed programing. This program saw multiple outcomes:

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

### Partnerships:

- Friends of the Salmo Library
- Salmo Valley Community Resource Society
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy CBAL
- Salmo Family of School
- Salmo Seniors & Salmo History Group
**Summary**

The library continues to be a hub of activity. More and more it is becoming a place of building community connections.

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.

With the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan coming to an end next year, SVPL is feeling proud to see that almost all of our goals set have been achieved. We are looking ahead to developing and new Strategic Plan for 2020 that will be able to meet the growing and changing needs of the RDCK Area G, the Village of Salmo, the Kootenay Library Federation, BC Library Association and our many partners that we work with to maintain sustainable library services. We look forward to developing and implementing a strong framework to guide the library forward.