



wildsight
Invermere

WILDSIGHT INVERMERE ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

BAIBA MORROW

Nature has reinforced important lessons to us over the last year. Be adaptable, resourceful and ready to hunker down when a storm blows in. While 2020 will be remembered for the challenges (and much hunkering down), I am happy to report that, for Wildsight Invermere, there were also opportunities.

Through the dedication of our volunteer Board of Directors and the tenacity of our part-time Branch Manager, Karen Barkley, we have managed to keep our good ship afloat and to make things happen even though we weren't able to get together.

We received a significant boost in organizational capacity through various federal government grants. With special "green jobs in natural resources" funding, we hired our first-ever Climate Change and Resilience Coordinator. That's how Kat Graves, a recent graduate with a Masters of Science in Environmental Planning, came to us in September on an 8-month internship. She loves the Columbia Valley and will continue to work with us in a full-time position and, in her words, share her "passion for protecting the invaluable interspecies connections that constitute our biosphere." The correlation between biodiversity, community sustainability and resiliency has led us to focus more on climate change. This is where Karen and Kat have been able to effectively lead the charge.

Connecting with and protecting our wild spaces continues to be a priority for us. This is especially important with recreational trails becoming busier than ever. In collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Shushwap Indian Band and Ktunaxa Nation, we've launched a wetlands project to create new educational signs at the entrance to the Wilmer Unit of the Columbia National Wildlife Area. Also in the works is a mountain goat awareness campaign, designed to safeguard the future for an iconic species that both represents and requires wilderness.

Recently, I was pleasantly reminded that we've been trailblazers for a long time. In a stack of Wildsight's early newsletters (back when we were called East Kootenay Environmental Society), there was a call to action by the Invermere Branch around climate change. That was in 1998. While global progress around the issue has been achingly slow, we hope that we can continue to inspire our local community and government to make positive changes. As this pandemic has showed us, we're all connected and we all need to pitch in, no matter where we live on this big, blue planet.

In gratitude to you all,
Baiba Morrow

WILD CONNECTIONS

INSPIRE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE



PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Wild Connections, our core program area, aims to foster a culture of environmental stewardship through public education, hands-on events and workshops. As resource extraction, recreational use, and climate change continue to create pressures on sensitive alpine and sub-alpine areas, forests, grasslands, and wetlands, we believe that a better understanding of environmental issues will inspire citizens to take action in their own lives and live in mutual reciprocity with nature. Wildsight Invermere offers a community service not addressed by any other local NGO.

COMMUNITY, CONSERVATION, CLIMATE

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

COMMUNITY

Helping to support and build an environmentally resilient, healthy, and educated community

7th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival

Over 300 people tuned in to our virtual festival for an evening of nine films. The program was also made available to local schools, with 8 classes and **over 200 students** taking part.

BC Rivers Day

18 enthusiastic paddlers floated from Invermere to Radium on September 27 in this annual celebration of our waterways.

Ursus & Us: Bear Day

170 people learned more about living in bear country through this outdoor event in Pothole Park. There were opportunities to try out bear spray, make apple juice with Groundswell's fruit press (a reminder that fruit must be picked to keep bears out of our yards), speak with our local Conservation Officer, Greg Kruger, about keeping safe around bears, and hear stories and advice by guest speaker Reno Sommerhalder.

E-Bike Raffle

A successful combination of promoting emissions-free transportation alternatives for a healthy lifestyle and a fund raiser of **\$6,000!**



COMMUNITY, CONSERVATION, CLIMATE

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

CONSERVATION

Working to preserve and maintain our natural heritage and landscape, and ensuring a space and place for wildlife

Lake Enid Restoration

We replaced the damaged interpretive signs.

Wilmer Wetlands

In collaboration with Environment Canada, Shuswap Indian Band and Ktunaxa Nation, we are creating new educational signs at the Wilmer Unit of the Columbia Wetlands National Wildlife Area.

Community Engagement

We provided input into many issues arising in the Valley, including the Baltac Bay development proposal, DOI Transportation Plan, RDEK budgets, and logging in old growth forests and on private land.



COMMUNITY, CONSERVATION, CLIMATE

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

CLIMATE

Addressing the climate emergency with solutions-based programs and policy initiatives

To broaden our work in climate change, we have **hired a Climate Change Resilience Coordinator who is working full time** on this urgent issue, focusing on solutions, policy and education. Through our programs and videos we have reached **over 3,000 people** this year.

Solar Panel Learning Event

Our Branch Vice President Cam Gillies led a presentation about solar panels for home energy.

Solar Drive By Tour

Delivered a virtual tour of Columbia Valley homes that use solar energy.

Electric Vehicle Show

Showcasing local electric vehicles.

EV Webinar: Making the Switch

Webinar on everything you need to know about making the switch to an EV!

Live Electric Videos & Stories

Produced videos of local EV owner Chris Jones and Jessie Caza and family driving Spark. Wrote stories of local EV owners including Lorna Hogg, Tracy Flynn, and Braeden Fairburn.



SPARK

RURAL CANADA'S FIRST ELECTRIC VEHICLE SHARE



Wildsight Invermere officially launched the first electric vehicle share program in rural Canada in 2020. Having an EV share in the Columbia Valley allows residents and visitors alike to try out an EV and have all of their usage and maintenance questions answered before leaping to purchase – an enormous advantage given that an EV represents a serious investment for many. For both individuals and businesses, it is an opportunity to drive emissions-free and contribute to a carbon-free future.

In the past year, although we were challenged to launch Spark during the pandemic, we have had 46 new users sign up since August 2020. We continue to promote the use of Spark to local businesses and both Alpenglöw Bakery and the Outdoor Learning Store have seen the benefit.

TRY IT OUT AT [GOSPARK.CA](https://gospark.ca)

OUR TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



BAIBA MORROW
BOARD CHAIR



CAM GILLIES
VICE PRESIDENT



JESSIE CAZA
SECRETARY |
EDUCATOR



MIEL DUBIELEWICZ
TREASURER



TAOYA SCHAEFER
DIRECTOR



TRACY FLYNN
DIRECTOR



MASHA STICH
YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE



KAREN BARKLEY
BRANCH MANAGER



KAT GRAVES
CLIMATE CHANGE
RESILIENCE COORDINATOR

MEMBERS

ENGAGED, PASSIONATE AND SUPPORTIVE



Wildsight Invermere members are the backbone of the organisation, from the engaged volunteer Board of Directors, to all those who support the work, read the newsletter, attend events and speak out on issues.

Our members care about the natural world and want a resilient, healthy environment into the future. We thank you for inspiring us and supporting us with your time, energy, and donations!

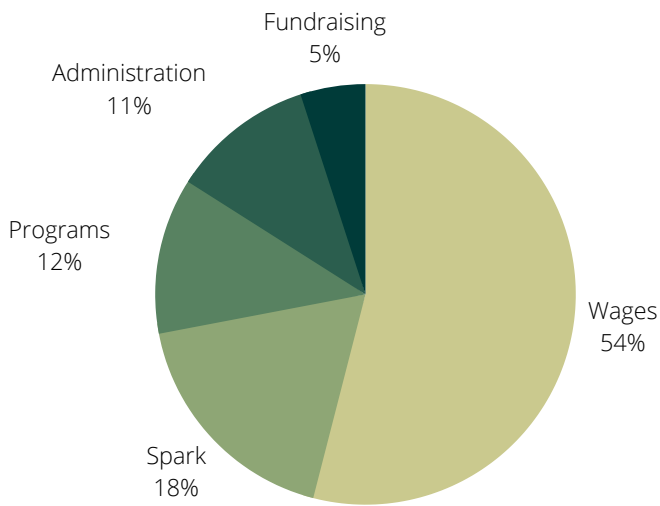
**WILDSIGHT INVERMERE
MEMBERS ARE THE
BACKBONE OF THE
ORGANIZATION.**



FINANCIALS

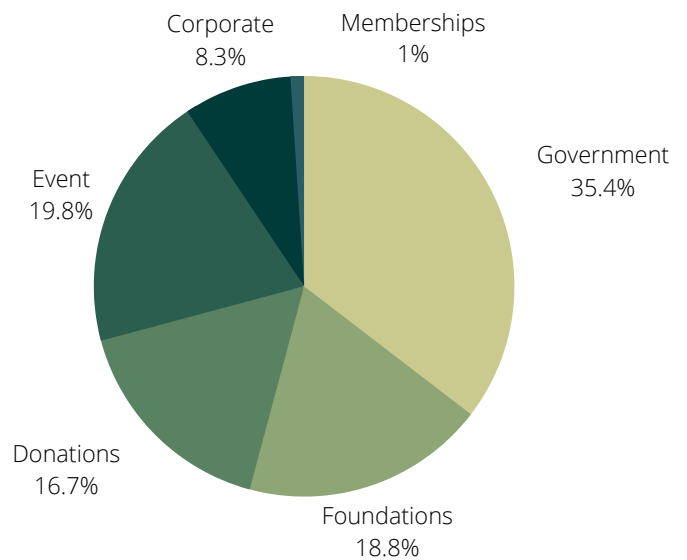
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR COMPLETE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

EXPENSES



\$95,000

REVENUE



\$95,000

THANK YOU TO OUR PROGRAM FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

PROGRAM FUNDERS

BC Gaming
Columbia Basin Trust
Columbia Valley Community Foundation
District of Invermere
Environment Canada
Plug in BC - Emotive
Regional District of East Kootenay

COLLABORATORS

Groundswell Network
Lake Windermere Ambassadors
WildSafe BC
Wildsight Regional
Wings Over the Rockies

ADDITIONAL THANKS

Columbia Valley Sign Artists
Elemental Cycle

7TH ANNUAL WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL SPONSORS

thinkBright Homes - Visionary Sponsor
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Cleanline Automotive
Columbia Valley Law
Copper City Dental
Invermere Optometry
Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine
Peppi's Pizza

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Columbia River Paddle
Plain of Six Glaciers Teahouse
Radius Retreat
Rocky Mountain Books
Rocky River Grill
Talus Lodge
TEAetc
Valley Zipline Adventures
Wild Mountain Chocolate

Thank you to all community members who donated to Wildsight Invermere in 2020, especially those who donate monthly.