



wildsight

Kimberley | Cranbrook

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Wildsight Kimberley-Cranbrook Branch 2021 AGM - President's Report

From January 2020 to this spring has been like riding a roller coaster. Every challenge before us had the added hurdle of dealing with the pandemic protocols. Yet, there have been rewarding moments as well.

The branch was forced to move our office in March during the first shutdown of the pandemic. The move to a smaller space made us realize that we have more stuff than we have room to house. We are still looking for a solution for that. Our branch manager, Andrea Chapman, went on maternity leave for a year and a half. We've hired two Interim Branch Managers since then, which created multiple logistical, administrative and financial implications to be dealt with. Our major fundraising event, the Banff Film Festival, had to be held on-line and the results were not sufficient to support our operational and programming needs.

In 2020, we hired a Sustainability Coordinator to take on the Farmers' Market, Apple Capture and some of the Community Garden. Chad Kile has also been very creative in reaching out to our community to inform and educate around food security.

One of our blessings was that we had some reserved funds, which enabled us to move forward in October 2020, with the hiring of an Outreach & Fundraising position, Courtenay Holden. She did an amazing job in reaching out to businesses, volunteers, doing communications, outreach, and helping with grant writing.

Another gift was the hiring of our second Interim Branch Manager, Corrine Highwood, who had a very steep learning curve in training. Her bubbly personality and energy level were an asset. There were so many worthy and inspiring opportunities for projects and events, but we simply did not have the capacity to undertake more than what we were already doing.

Wildsight is an environmental society. We care about our Mother Earth. In order to restore the earth's balance, it was time to rethink our corporate board structure and reframe it, because it was no longer working. As a branch, operating at the grassroots level, how do we do that? We can create a



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symbiotic relationship in a people context and an organizational context. We could bring more people together from within our community that have a specific passion to restore the earth's balance, and give them the power to work at what attracts them, like food security or gardening in a cold climate, green energy opportunities within our community, fund raising, home retrofits, habitat restoration, etc. We can organize the work in service of purpose and trust that personal purpose will also align with the organizational purpose.

On February 3rd, 2021, I attended a webinar on Board Table Disruption, which was a roundtable for not-for-profit boards exploring a new model that is outside the historical corporate model that boards generally operate under. I proposed to our board that we consider doing some reimagining of what our board could be. Corrine was very interested because of her recent Leadership training and she helped us with the process by which to reformat our board meetings. It meant that our board meeting business section was shortened to allow for the visioning portion. The entire board agreed that this type of meeting was the way forward in helping us redefine our future, with more capacity, more community engagement, which in turn, will allow us to move ahead with more projects that fulfill our mandate and create the change that best serves our communities.

Personally, I feel an urgency to do more and do it quickly, because of the climate emergency and the exploding need for social change.

This new board approach will help us build capacity within our organization through various committees, to do more of that good work.

Staff have been putting out the call for volunteers in several areas, and the response has been very encouraging.

Stay tuned, as this is much like a birthing process.

We are grateful to Wildsight Regional for their ongoing support both financially and technically for our operations. Andy Miller's frequent check-ins with Corrine and Courtenay were very much welcomed and we were sorry to see him leave.

There have also been numerous pandemic related funding opportunities that we've been able to take advantage of to help us overcome our financial hurdles.



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Thanks to all the funding organizations such as CBT for supporting local organizations.

The pandemic has taken its toll on many of us, myself included. I was able to rise above the sadness through the practices I've learned over the years and find pockets of Hope scattered around the world, made possible by organizations such as ours. The capacity our branch is building will continue to give myself and others the inspiration for a healthier, more just, and more food secure planet.

At the end of the day, I am grateful for the diversity of experience and knowledge of those I have the privilege of working with. In my bones I feel that our branch is on the cusp of doing even more inspiring work within our communities.

For the Planet,

Sharon Cross, President,
Wildsight Kimberley-Cranbrook Branch