



1.	Call to Order	
2.	Introductions	
3.	Adoption of Agenda	
3.1	Adoption of Agenda	
	<u>Recommendation:</u>	
	<i>THAT the agenda for the March 14, 2025 meeting of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.</i>	
4.	Adoption of Minutes	
4.1	May 31, 2024 Cultural Services Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes	3
	<u>Recommendation:</u>	
	<i>THAT the Minutes of the May 31, 2024 meeting of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.</i>	
5.	Cultural Services Advisory Committee	
5.1	Heritage Asset Inventory	8
	Purpose: For Information	
	<u>Attachments:</u>	
	1. Regional Cultural Plan 2023 to 2027	
	Purpose: For Information	
	<u>Recommendation:</u>	
	<i>THAT the report dated March 4, 2025 regarding “Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan” be received for information.</i>	
5.2	Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan	44
	Purpose: For Information	
	<u>Recommendation:</u>	
	<i>THAT the report dated March 4, 2025 regarding “Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan” be received for information.</i>	
5.3	Regional District Funding Update	46
	Purpose: For Information	
	<u>Recommendation:</u>	

THAT the report dated March 7, 2025 regarding “Regional District Funding Update” be received for information.

5.4 Argus Database

Purpose: For Information

48

Recommendation:

THAT the report dated March 7, 2025 regarding the “Argus Database” be received for information.

6. New Business

7. Roundtable

8. Next Meeting

9. Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CULTURAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER-FORT GEORGE HELD ON FRIDAY MAY 31, 2024 IN THE BOARDROOM GALLERY, 155 GEORGE STREET, PRINCE GEORGE, BC

Members Present: Director Lara Beckett, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Alyssa Gerwing, The Exploration Place
Danielle Alan, Whistlestop Gallery
George Harris, Two Rivers Gallery
Jim Wiens, Mackenzie & District Museum Society
Kathy Carlson, Central BC Railway and Forest Industry Museum Society
Krystal Leason, Huble Homestead/Giscome Portage Heritage Society
Maria Paulson, City of Prince George Civic Initiatives and Partnership
Rachelle Dumoulin, District of Mackenzie
Sarah Brown, City of Prince George Civic Initiatives and Partnership
Tracy Calogheros, The Exploration Place
Vivian Kenkel, Valemount and Area Museum and Archives

Members Absent: Director Cori Ramsay Alternate Chair, City of Prince George
Bridget Uhl, Valley Museum & Archives
Eric Depenau, Village of Valemount
Jeanette McDougal, Village of McBride
Paul Johnson, Valemount and Area Museum and Archives
Sheilagh Foster, Whistle Stop Gallery

Staff Present: Renee McCloskey, Manager of External Relations
Hilary Erasmus, Cultural and Communications Coordinator

Minutes Recorded and Produced by: Dayna Hegel, Confidential Assistant (Corporate Services)

CALL TO ORDER The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

The Regional District acknowledged the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh, on whose land we live, work and play.

The Chairperson advised that the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation will be hosting their third annual Moccasin Walk on June 28, 2024.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA *Mover: Wiens*
Seconder: Harris

THAT the agenda for May 31, 2024 meeting of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee be amended to include Discovery Pass under New Business, and that the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES *Mover: Leason*
Seconder: Carlson

THAT the Minutes of the April 9, 2024 meeting of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

FUNDING REVIEW A report was presented regarding funding review.

The Chairperson provided an overview of the Regional Cultural Plan noting that it had been in existence for 18 years and that it was remarkable what all the agencies have achieved in that time. She expressed her appreciation to Don Bassermann and Murry Krause who started the program. She also noted that a lot has changed in the last

UNAPPROVED

eighteen years and that the recommendations in the funding review will be presented to the Board which will give them a sense of the need and provide context to the Board on how they can continue to support these agencies.

Gaeby Abrahams (Senior Consultant) and Joy Pan (Consultant) from Nordicity NGL Limited were in remote attendance to provide a presentation regarding the Funding Review Report including:

- introduction to the funding review;
- balancing regional priorities;
- Nordicity's approach;
- operating context including environmental factors and RDFFG cultural objectives;
- analysis of operations and activities for the eight funded cultural sites including funding position and key take aways;
- recommendations including funding levels, prioritizing implementation, financial impact to cultural funding program, and additional considerations; and
- next steps including finalize report, deliver report to RDFFG, and consider recommendations as a part of the 2025 budget process.

G. Abrahams and J. Pan responded to questions on the funding review including what makes up the revenue, the requirement for a balanced budget and the percentage increase to the budget for small organizations.

Mover: Wiens

Seconder: Harris

THAT the report be received.

CARRIED

**NORTHERN ROUTES
2024 MARKETING**

H. Erasmus, Cultural and Communications Coordinator provided an update regarding the Northern Routes 2024 marketing plans including:

- minor refresh to the website – homepage layout and functionality on how the links to each of the sites are presented;
- update on campaigns including Route 16 managed by Tourism Prince George, Co-op Marketing Partnership Program by Destination BC, Google advertising campaigns with Splash Media to target people looking for things to do in the area;
- continue to have event support for sites looking to host an event, and
- a photographer will be taking summer photos of the sites in the McBride and Valemount area in June.

Mover: Paulson

Seconder: Kenkel

THAT the verbal update on Northern Routes 2024 marketing plans be received.

CARRIED

**NEW BUSINESS
DISCOVERY PASS**

H. Erasmus, Cultural and Communications Coordinator provided an overview of the Discovery Pass. It is a partnership with the region's libraries that has been in place for 12 years and the pass is issued like a library book and gives free entry to Northern Routes Cultural sites. She advised the Prince George Public Library has requested if they can have more copies of the pass.

Discussion ensued regarding the benefits of the pass and whether the time it is checked out could be reduced.

H. Erasmus, Cultural and Communications Coordinator responded to queries from Directors regarding the number of passes currently available to be signed out, the criteria to access the pass and how long the pass can be checked out for.

Mover: Leason

Seconder: Gerwing

THAT Administration provide 8 more Discovery Passes to the Prince George Public Library.

CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE

The Chairperson advised the committee that Renee McCloskey and Tracy Calogheros will be retiring in June, making this their final committee meeting. Tracy has dedicated 30 years to the Exploration Place, demonstrating remarkable leadership and making significant contributions to the community. Renee has been a valuable member of the Regional District for 16 years, offering substantial support and being a joy to work alongside.

The Committee Members wished Renee and Tracy all the best on their retirement.

R. Dumoulin provided an update regarding the District of Mackenzie summer events including:

- annual Rockin the Ridgeline on July 27, 2024 which will include some live performances and food trucks;
- Morphy Lake Scramble on August 17, 2024 which is a 15 km race around Morphy Lake and a dance in the evening with a live band.

V. Kenkel provided an update on the Valemout and Area Museum and Archives including:

- museum is opening June 1 with business as usual, and
- Canada Day Celebration on July 1 partnering with the Valemout Library.

A. Gerwing provided an update regarding the Exploration Place including:

- Little Prince Steam Engine is running;
- Origins Kitchen is getting busy;
- Thursdays in the Park are back again this year;
- Carrier Sekani Family Services, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, and the Exploration Place, in partnership with Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, will be bringing a new exhibit in early June called Spirit Bear and Children Make History;
- Earth in Focus exhibit will be coming in June, and
- summer camps are starting to gear up.

K. Leason provided an update regarding Huble Homestead/Giscome Portage Heritage Society including:

- Huble Homestead Historic Site opened again for the season on May 18, 2024;
- as of June 1, there were nine school tours, two weddings with two additional wedding booked, and one special event;
- initially had hired all summer staff early, but are now short by one;
- the full schedule of public events is out, and the next major event is Canada Day but there will also be the Sherlock challenge starting Saturday, June 22; and

- they were unsuccessful at acquiring a grant for the Huble Diary project, but will still continue on with the project.

M. Paulson provided an update regarding the City of Prince George Civic Initiatives and Partnership including:

- working on grant reviews;
- in the process of designing new grants and will be putting out a survey; and
- the City has introduced new branding including new colours and images.

K. Carlson provided an update regarding the Central BC Railway and Forest Industry Museum Society including:

- curator recently moved away so the position is currently vacant, but holding off on filling the position for at least three to six months;
- received the lost data from the server crash and are waiting for information on the next steps;
- currently doing a review of suppliers and contractors and a review on hospitality cost to best align with the types of programs offered;
- admission cost for the museum has increased as well as the cost to ride the train;
- summer students have started;
- hours of operation have changed to seven days a week;
- received a second intern;
- currently working on a restoration project
- tutorial intern's project is coming to an end with a nice report; and
- lots of tours scheduled, facility rentals and weddings on site.

G. Harris provided an update regarding Two Rivers Gallery including:

- Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration Exhibition opened in April and this is the only venue outside the US;
- recently hired Jessica Endress to fill the position of Director of Learning along with four summer students;
- hosting Community Art Days July 12 and 13, 2024;
- this year's travelling exhibition is Up Around the Bend, by Prince George artist Emily Wilson. It will travel to Mackenzie Community Arts Centre, Valemount and Area Museum, and Valley Museum & Archives in McBride, with an opening reception in Mackenzie on June 10 where it will run until July 10.

J. Wiens provided an update on the Mackenzie & District Museum Society including:

- in the process of moving to a new leased building located on the main street;
- old building is scheduled to be demolished sometime next year;
- received funding from a couple of sources for storage and to help move;
- moving to a digital display of all photos;
- part time assistant has left and having a hard time getting summer students;
- soft opening of the new location is set for July 2, 2024.

D. Alan provided an update regarding Whistlestop Gallery including:

- received funding for three summer students;
- embarking on a summer project using art to illustrate seven iconic stories about the Robson and Canoe Valleys and each piece will be collated into a booklet and put on the website; and
- working with the library on the summer fun projects.

R. McCloskey advised that the Regional Board just approved the 2024 Art and Culture Heritage Grants noting that there were some new applicants this year. She also advised that the Regional District is in the process of interviewing for a Cultural Coordinator and the posting for the Manager of External Relations closes May 31, 2024.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Mover: Wiens

Seconder: Calogheros

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

CARRIED

Chair

General Manager of Legislative and
Corporate Services



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

Main Office: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC V2L 1P8
Telephone: (250) 960-4400 / Fax: (250) 563-7520
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 / <http://www.rdffg.ca>

REPORT FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Members, Cultural Services Advisory Committee
FROM: Hilary Erasmus, Manager of Communications and Culture
DATE: March 7, 2025
SUBJECT: Heritage Asset Inventory
SUMMARY: Purpose: For Information

Attachments:
1. Regional Cultural Plan 2023 to 2027

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated March 7, 2025 regarding "Heritage Asset Inventory" be received for information.

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Member/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

When the Regional District Board of Directors approved the 2023 to 2027 Cultural Plan, they also approved undertaking a Heritage Asset Inventory. This inventory is now a part of the 2025 workplan and it will assess cultural sites' heritage buildings and rolling stock to help them determine which of their assets are in the most urgent need of restoration.

The project will involve working with a specialist heritage consultant and an RFP is expected to be issued this spring for work to be completed this summer.

This inventory could also be used by the cultural sites to seek additional funding for any conservation activities that are identified.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:

- Indigenous and Intergovernmental Partnerships
- Organizational Strength and Adaptability
- Quality Community Services
- Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action
- Awareness and Engagement
- Statutory or Routine Business

SERVICE RELEVANCE:

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

There are no financial commitments involved in receiving the Heritage Asset Inventory Report.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

N/A

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendations.
 - Receive for information the Heritage Asset Inventory Report.

COMMENTS:

An initial, informal review of tangible heritage assets is attached as background information. It indicates that the project scope will be focused on heritage assets at the Huble Homestead, The Exploration Place, the Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum and the Valemount Museum sites. This review will be formalized in the initial phase of the project.

Respectfully submitted,

“Hilary Erasmus”

Hilary Erasmus
Manager of Communications and Culture

HE

BACKGROUND

Initial Review of Cultural Sites' Tangible Heritage Assets

The following is a working list of tangible heritage assets defined as heritage building and rolling stock at cultural sites funded by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George:

Huble Homestead

- Huble house and kitchen
- animal barn
- blacksmith shop
- general store
- Giscome animal shelter
- implement shed
- Lheidli T'enneh Fish Camp
- meat cache
- root cellar
- Salmon Valley post office
- Seebach cabin
- warehouse
- welcome barn

The Exploration Place

- Little Prince Train
- train station
- Fort George schoolhouse

Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum

- Penny Station
- over 50 rolling stock and locomotives
- bunkhouses and heritage buildings

Valemount Museum

- rolling stock

Regional Cultural Plan 2023-2027

Final Report

September 29th, 2022

Prepared for

Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

Prepared by

Nordicity



Contents

1. Background	1
2. Context	2
3. Progress to Date: Key Highlights	7
4. Shared Strengths	12
5. Shared Challenges	13
6. Priorities	17
Collaboration	17
Training and Knowledge-Building	19
Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities	20
Conserving Tangible Heritage	22
Capital Upgrades	22
7. Implementation Plan	24
Appendix A. Bibliography	27
Appendix B. Regional Arts and Culture Funding Case Studies	29

1. Background

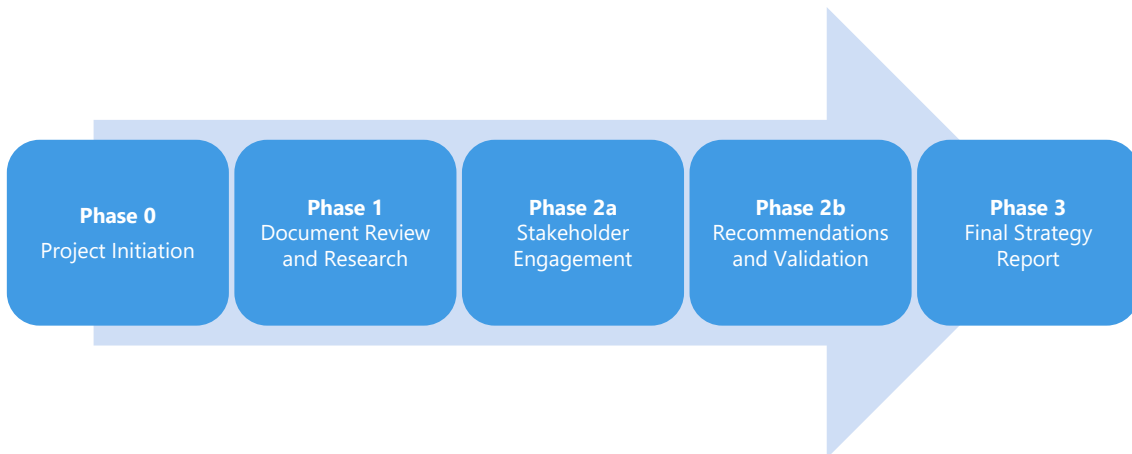
The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) enlisted Nordicity to develop a **Regional Cultural Plan for the period 2023-2027**. This plan succeeds the two-year Cultural Plan 2021-2022 which addressed the unique consequences of COVID-19 on the arts, culture, and heritage sector. The Regional Cultural Plan 2023-2027 also follows five-year Cultural Plans which have been developed for the District since 2006. These strategic documents provide direction to eight of the District’s cultural sites and specify their funding allocations from RDFFG. The eight cultural organizations funded by the RDFFG are:

- The Exploration Place Museum & Science Centre (The Exploration Place)
- Two Rivers Gallery
- Central BC Railway & Forestry Museum
- Huble Homestead Historic Site (Huble Homestead)
- Mackenzie & District Museum
- Valley Museum & Archives
- Whistlestop Gallery
- Valemount & Area Museum & Archives

The aim of this plan is to guide the Regional District’s continuous support of cultural sites in the region, and to promote collaboration and mentorship between them.

1.1 Approach

Nordicity’s Project Team followed a three-phase process between July and August 2022, as illustrated:



In **Phase 1**, the Project Team conducted a thorough literature review. This review included the current and previous RDFFG Regional Cultural Plans, strategic plans from the RDFFG-funded cultural sites, municipal plans, and existing regional studies, policies, and strategies relevant to arts, culture, and heritage. See the bibliography in Appendix A for a complete list of documentation reviewed.

The purpose of the literature review was to place the Regional Cultural Plan into context and to ensure its alignment with the RDFFG’s vision for arts, culture, and heritage in the region, as well as other initiatives in progress or in development.

During **Phase 2**, the Project Team consulted with the eight cultural sites mentioned above, visiting each site in person, and conducting interviews with executive directors/curators. Additionally, the Team conducted online interviews with 10 further participants, including municipal partners and external stakeholders:

- **Municipal:** City of Prince George, Tourism Prince George, District of Mackenzie, Village of McBride, and Village of Valemount
- **Regional:** Cultural Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) Chair and Vice Chair
- **Provincial:** BC Arts Council, BC Museums Association, Heritage BC, Northern BC Tourism Association

The Project Team also contacted Lheidli T’enneh First Nation, Simpcw First Nation, and McLeod Lake Indian Band. The team did not receive a response given the short timeframe for the project. In consultation with the RDFFG, it was agreed that the focus should be on relationship building over time between the CSAC and the First Nations (see Section 6).

The Project Team used findings from the literature review and interviews to develop preliminary priority areas and recommendations. The Team then hosted a virtual Validation Session with CSAC members to agree on the priorities included in this plan, before progressing to Phase 3, reporting.

2. Context

This section considers the RDFFG’s cultural landscape within the local context. It provides a short summary of the geographical context, shared strengths, the impact of COVID-19, and work towards Truth and Reconciliation. It then provides an overview of the funding landscape for arts, culture, and heritage, explaining how it has evolved over time. Additionally, this section points towards key examples of local government support and funding models for the sector.

2.1 Geographical Context

The RDFFG extends from the Rocky Mountains in the East to beyond the Fraser River in the West, covering a land mass of over 50,500 km.² It encompasses four municipalities – the City of Prince George (Prince George), the District of Mackenzie (Mackenzie), the Village of McBride (McBride), the Village of Valemount (Valemount) – and seven electoral areas – Electoral Areas A, C, D, E, F, G, and H. It is situated on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T’enneh, McLeod Lake Indian Band, and the Simpcw First Nation. Approximately 100,000 residents call the region their home.¹

¹ Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census.

2.2 Common Strengths

Through the diverse region run many common threads. Communities within the RDFFG boast **strong community pride**, a wealth of **outdoor and recreational opportunities** in **spectacular natural landscapes**, and **unique touristic offers**. These strengths are interwoven and complementary. For example, the 2021-22 Regional Cultural Plan identified the wide positive health, social, and educational impacts of local arts and culture – impacts that outdoor recreation also offers in different ways. This synergy begs the question of how siloes between sectors can be broken down for the benefit of all.

Within the RDFFG, cultural sites are sources of community pride, providing opportunities for shared identity building, and contributing to the uniqueness of each municipality.² The **Northern Routes marketing strategy** is a key way that visitors can learn about and discover the region's unique touristic offers. The strategy was developed originally in 2008 by the RDFFG as a print-based marketing strategy called Golden Raven. In 2018, it was rebranded as an online marketing focused program known as the Northern Routes Cultural Experience. This strategy has allowed RDFFG-funded cultural sites to promote their events and engage audiences on a wider spectrum through social media, e-newsletters, and major publications like The Milepost.³

2.3 Impact of COVID-19

The RDFFG's 2021-22 Cultural Plan was developed during the first year of the pandemic, and it sought to address the overwhelming uncertainty. **For the arts, culture, and heritage sector, COVID-19 meant a drastic decline in tourism and consequential decline in revenue**. The most pressing concern among the District's eight funded cultural sites was to establish and secure reliable funding for the coming years. For the smaller facilities, some wondered whether they would survive in the long term.

According to the District's 2020 Annual Report, **the pandemic caused tourism to drop by almost 75% across the region**.⁴ Cultural sites necessarily reduced their staffing numbers while enhancing their digital offers. The Exploration Place, for instance, started providing online workshops, while the Whistlestop Gallery increased its social media presence, and the Mackenzie & District Museum expanded its gift store offers.

The **Northern Routes** marketing initiative equally adapted to the COVID-19 environment and began sending online newsletters with content submitted by the cultural sites. Since all eight RDFFG-funded cultural sites closed at the height of COVID-19, the focus was on supporting cultural sites' online activities and promoting their online posts.⁵

² Millier Dickinson Blais. (2015). Taking it to the Next Level: Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Cultural Plan 2016-2020.

³ Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020a). 2020 Annual Cultural Report.

⁴ Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020a). 2020 Annual Cultural Report.

⁵ Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020a). 2020 Annual Cultural Report.

2.4 Truth and Reconciliation

In the region, and across the country, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is an urgent and significant priority. The provincial, regional, and local documents reviewed for this research address this theme. The RDFFG and the RDFFG-funded cultural sites also strongly recognize the importance of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is especially important in the RDFFG given the large Indigenous population. **The population of Prince George is 14.9% Indigenous** – over twice the province-wide representation of 5.9%.⁶ First Nations heritage is the “foundation for understanding subsequent development”⁷ and is a key component of an updated Regional Cultural Plan. By integrating reconciliation into the Plan, the RDFFG aligns with strategic priorities on all levels.

The first Regional Cultural Plan (2006-2010) noted that First Nations culture was not well represented in the regional arts, culture, and heritage sector. From then until present day, changes have occurred. The 2016-2020 Cultural Plan addressed reconciliation as a top priority, and **the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan reports successes in Indigenous programming.**

The Exploration Place has been working towards decolonization since the early 1990s and continues to make progress towards this goal in partnership with the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation. **In 2017, The Exploration Place and the Lheidli T’enneh signed a Memorandum of Understanding** to establish the museum as steward over Lheidli cultural objects, with the Lheidli T’enneh as owners. Further reconciliation efforts include digitizing oral histories and providing a permanent position on the Board for an appointment from the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation’s Chief and Council.

Two Rivers Gallery’s strong focus on truth and reconciliation has included **recruiting Indigenous staff, exhibiting the work of Indigenous artists, and hosting cultural programs.** For example, Beads and Bannock invites participants to learn traditional Indigenous arts through social gathering.

Please refer to Section 3.1 for an expanded discussion of regional cultural contributions to reconciliation.

2.5 Funding Landscape

Over the last 15 years, funding for arts, culture, and heritage has much evolved. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the **critical need for cultural sites to secure stable sources of adequate income.** As tourism and onsite visits declined, consistent revenue streams disappeared.

According to the 2021-22 Regional Cultural Plan, securing stable funding ranked as a top priority for cultural sites both before and during the pandemic. Contracts with the RDFFG that commit funding for a five-year period are thus essential to the stability and long-term viability

⁶ Statistics Canada. (2016). Census Profile, 2016 Census.

⁷ British Columbia Heritage Branch. (2010). Prince George Heritage Context Study: A Report to Guide the Development of the Community’s Heritage Planning Program. 8.

of the cultural sites. Throughout the research for this plan, cultural site representatives noted that the RDFFG has provided them with stability. The stable funding envelopes allow for a steady and reliable source of income that can support ongoing operations. Table 1 indicates RDFFG funding to the cultural sites from 2016 to 2021. Of note, funding levels from did not increase from 2020 to 2021.

Table 1. RDFFG Cultural Site Funding from 2016 to 2021

Cultural Site	Funding Allotment Received (\$)					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
The Exploration Place	750,000	770,000	780,000	780,000	800,000	800,000
Huble Homestead Historic Site	190,000	190,000	195,000	195,000	205,000	205,000
Mackenzie & District Museum	32,000	35,000	35,000	37,000	39,000	39,000
Central BC Railway & Forestry Museum	190,000	190,000	195,000	195,000	205,000	205,000
Two Rivers Gallery	490,000	500,000	500,000	510,000	520,000	520,000 ⁸
Valemount & Area Museum & Archives	36,000	38,000	38,000	40,000	43,000	43,000
Valley Museum & Archives	32,000	35,000	35,000	37,000	39,000	39,000
Whistlestop Gallery	38,000	40,000	40,000	42,000	44,000	44,000

This funding model and arts and culture support is relatively unique to the RDFFG. Across the province of BC, the RDFFG, the Capital Regional District (CRD), and the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) appear to be the only three regional districts with clear responsibility for the regional arts and culture sector.⁹ CRD and RDNO take different approaches to the RDFFG. The CRD, for example, provides grants to non-profit organizations via its Arts & Culture Support Service to support operations, projects, equity initiatives, among other areas.¹⁰ In the RDNO, the regional district offers financial support in the form of operating grants, grants-in-aid, and project grants.¹¹ It is notable that these municipal bodies do not provide five-year operational funding envelopes as the RDFFG does. See Appendix B for some further examples of regional approaches to funding arts, culture, and heritage.

⁸ Two Rivers Gallery funding was shared between a General Grant with a value of \$461,000 and an Outreach Program Grant with a value of \$59,000.

⁹ Radloff, B., & Adamson, D. (2020). City of Prince George Downtown Arts Strategy. 21.

¹⁰ Capital Regional District (n.d.). Arts Funding | CRD. Retrieved from <https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/arts-funding>

¹¹ Regional District of North Okanagan (2016). Greater Vernon Cultural Plan.

Arts organizations across the province are reliant on numerous sources to finance their activities. Province-wide organizations such as the BC Arts Council, BC Museums Association, and Heritage BC provide funding via a range of channels. BC Arts Council, for example, provides project and operations assistance based on artistic discipline (e.g., performing arts, literary arts, etc.),¹² and the BC Museums Association provides grants for cultural institutions engaging in repatriation of Indigenous artifacts.¹³ Along with its in-house grants, Heritage BC lists numerous external funding opportunities to support heritage activities across the province.¹⁴

In addition to these provincial sources of funding, numerous funding opportunities exist from the federal government, local organizations, and other institutions. The above examples provide only a brief snapshot of the numerous funding sources available across the province. Note, cultural sites within the RDFFG have expanded their funding support base and identified relevant opportunities at the local, provincial, and national levels. Over the past two years, they have acquired financial support beyond the RDFFG, including:

- BC Gaming
- British Columbia Arts Council (BCAC)
- Canada Council for the Arts (CAC)
- Canada Summer Student Grants
- Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidies (CEWS)
- Local community foundations
- Local municipalities/districts
- Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program (PCH MAP) – Digital Access to Heritage
- RBC Foundation
- The Vancouver Foundation

Of note, all eight sites have sought Canada Summer Student Grants to support internships and summer students.

As the cultural sites and other arts, culture, and heritage organizations in the RDFFG look to support their activities financially, the above list provides an entry point for identifying new areas for financial support. We return to some of the associated challenges and solutions related to funding in later sections of this report – see Section 5.4 (Shared Challenges) and Section 6 (Priorities).

¹² BC Arts Council (n.d.). Grant Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.bcartscouncil.ca/program/>

¹³ BCMA (n.d.). BCMA Grants. Retrieved from <https://museum.bc.ca/funding-opportunities/bcma-grants/>

¹⁴ Heritage BC (n.d.). Funding Opportunities | Grants for Heritage and Cultural Projects in BC. Retrieved from <https://heritagebc.ca/resources/funding-opportunities/>

3. Progress to Date: Key Highlights

Since the first Regional Cultural Plan was adopted in 2006, the arts, culture, and heritage sector of the RDFFG has evolved greatly. Recently, the Regional Cultural Plan for 2021-2022 and the Annual Cultural Report for 2020 highlighted progress made towards diversifying revenue streams, securing staff and summer students, and successes with the Northern Routes Cultural Experiences marketing initiative.

However, information collected over 2021 shows that activities in the RDFFG that year had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels (see Table 2). Visitor numbers in 2021, for instance, were at less than half (-58%) of what they had been in 2019. Other outreach contacts had fallen by more than a quarter (-27%), and summer students by a comparable amount (-30%). Memberships had dropped by almost two-thirds (-65%), and school visits were also down by a large share (-62%). The number of volunteers had decreased by more than half (-56%), and volunteer hours were therefore down. On the other hand, jobs at the cultural sites were back up to 2019 levels, and the number of artifacts donated had only fallen by 10%.

Table 2. Combined Statistics for the RDFFG’s Eight Funded Sites

Indicator	2021	2019	Change
Visitors	74,920	178,561	-58%
Outreach Contacts	27,773	38,231	-27%
Memberships	683	1,957	-65%
Jobs	65	66	-2%
Summer Students	32	46	-30%
School Visits	3,958	10,532	-62%
Volunteers	141	323	-56%
Volunteer Hours	4,618	10,969	-58%
Artifacts donated	477	531	-10%

At the time of this report, complete data from 2022 remains to be collected, but preliminary evidence suggests that visitor numbers, school visits, and other indicators are gradually shifting towards 2019 levels. That is, activities at the cultural sites are returning, and they are again actively engaging with the public.

The impact of travel restrictions, facility closures, and other COVID-19 induced changes cannot be overstated. Despite the many challenges, the arts, culture, and heritage sector of the RDFFG has proved resilient and documents successes across multiple areas.

3.1 Progress towards the Regional Cultural Plan 2021-2022

This section presents progress made towards implementing the 2021-22 Cultural Plan, followed by other key highlights.

The previous Regional Cultural Plan was designed to respond to the COVID-19 induced uncertainty. Rather than cover a five-year period as had been the case with earlier RDFFG

cultural plans, it spanned only two years – 2021 to 2022. This Cultural Plan recognized the unpredictability of these years with regards to the arts, culture, and heritage sector. When designing the plan, it was unclear what restrictions would remain in place and whether tourism to the region would be possible. Through an extensive research process, the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan identified four priority areas:

- Collaboration;
- In-Person Experience;
- Virtual Experience and Technology; and,
- Operations.

Despite the unprecedented times, the RDFFG and its local cultural organizations document progress in each of the four priority areas over the past two years.

Collaboration

Although the eight specific actions identified in the previous Regional Cultural Plan have not been implemented, cross-site collaboration remains nonetheless a notable strength and achievement in the region. There is a clear desire to continue current collaborative activities and to find more ways to work together. We return to this in Section 4 (Shared Strengths) and again in Section 6 (Priorities).

In-Person Experience

The previous Regional Cultural Plan listed two actions that respond to the need to maintain in-person activities at the cultural sites. Action 10 has been successfully implemented:

- **Action 10:** Share information about what is working for in-person events and promote other cultural sites' events on social media.

To advance Action 10, cultural sites celebrated each other's successes by cross promoting their activities. They embraced the spirit of collaboration that has grown in the RDFFG and organically shared materials on social media.

Virtual Experience and Technology

Cultural sites felt the need to enhance their virtual offers and technology, for which six actions were identified. Of these, two actions have been successfully implemented:

- **Action 11:** Complete an Online Content Audit and Strategy for all eight cultural sites to identify gaps in online platforms and recommend actions to improve digital infrastructure, reach, and quality of online content.
- **Action 14:** Develop a revised strategy for increasing brand awareness and online traction for Northern Routes and align Northern Routes with other regional tourism and marketing initiatives.

The RDFFG directed an Online Content Audit for the websites of all eight cultural sites to make progress on Action 11. The RDFFG also connected the sites with a program that could further support web development, the DER3 program run through Hubspace. Certain organizations, such as the Huble Homestead and the Exploration Place, were able to leverage the DER3

program and improve their online presence, whereas other sites had limited capacity to continue work in this area.

In terms of Action 14, the Cultural Coordinator developed a revised strategy for the Northern Routes marketing initiative. There is broad agreement that Northern Routes has been a success.

In addition to these two actions, the “transition to the centralized enhanced database shared by all eight cultural sites (to be led by the Exploration Place),” was identified within the Cultural Plan. The Exploration Place has since set up a centralized enhanced database using the Argus collections management system, which hosts the museum’s own digital collection as well as those from most of the other sites. Two Rivers Gallery and Valley Museum and Archives are using their own systems.

Operations

Under the priority area “Operations,” the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan identified six actions related to mental health and staff well-being, strategic and succession planning, and capital improvements and renovations. The latter remains a critical theme for cultural sites and is to be carried over to the updated 2022-2027 Cultural Plan.

Specifically, “Aging infrastructure and building costs” was one of the top three most frequently mentioned themes identified when cultural site representatives were asked about pre-COVID challenges. They desired clarity from the RDFFG on how major infrastructure replacements were to be managed and paid for, as well as expressed concerns around who is responsible for financing major repairs and replacements associated with aging infrastructure. Research findings conclude that this remains a priority for the upcoming period and is discussed further in Section 6 (Priorities).

3.2 Contributions to Reconciliation Efforts

Beyond the priority areas included in the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan, reconciliation is an increasingly important focus for the RDFFG and the cultural sites alike.

The 2021-2022 Cultural Plan provided limited content related to reconciliation.

Reconciliation is first identified in the “Pre-covid Context, Growth, and Achievements,” section of the Plan, outlining one of the major achievements since the 2006 introduction of five-year cultural plans as, “Cultural sites have partnered with local First Nations to share Indigenous histories and advance reconciliation in their communities.” Reconciliation is then identified within the Cultural Plan priority area of “Collaboration,” and subtheme of “collaboration with organizations outside of the RDFFG Cultural Plan,” to, “Use the CSAC galleries and museums as a venue for reconciliation dialogue by hosting First Nations exhibits, programs, and community conversations (virtual during COVID).” Notably, there is no mention on repatriation in the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan.

Actions identified in the 2021-2022 Cultural Plan included having the cultural sites lead reconciliation for their own sites. Interview findings suggested that some cultural sites need greater support and direction. Furthermore, keeping the “status quo” for funding could affect cultural sites’ capacity to pursue relationship building with Indigenous communities.

Although there is still much work to be done, it is worthwhile highlighting key actions that have been taken to advance reconciliation efforts. From hiring Indigenous staff members to

programming Indigenous activities and featuring Indigenous exhibits, cultural sites have been active in this area. Table 3 details reconciliation efforts in the RDFFG.

Table 3. Reconciliation Efforts in the RDFFG

Category	Cultural Site	Highlights
Repatriation	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repatriation of objects which have not been identified as belonging to the local First Nation communities
	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired an Indigenous Curator and Archaeologist Hired a local Indigenous Educator and Councillor to develop Indigenous Programming for the Museum
Staffing	Two Rivers Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired an Indigenous Programmer Working with Indigenous guest curators
	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lheidli T'enneh member on museum board
Board	Central BC Railway & Forestry Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Indigenous leader on museum board
	Two Rivers Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gallery's board matrix requires that there are at least two members who self-identify as Indigenous
	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborating with Lheidli T'enneh, who are developing an Indigenous daycare near the museum that will feature Indigenous programming
Programming	Central BC Railway & Forestry Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers elementary school programming
	Two Rivers Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Beads and Bannock Program Weaving Words Celebration workshop series
	Valley Museum & Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers elementary school programming
	Whistlestop Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers Arts in the Park programming Offers some school programming
	Huble Homestead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing a children's book with Lheidli T'enneh about an Indigenous child's experience at a fish camp
	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits include the Lheidli T'enneh Indigenous Collection
Exhibits	Huble Homestead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits include the Fish Camp with the Lheidli T'enneh
	Two Rivers Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has exhibited many Indigenous-focused exhibits over the years Example: "Lheidli: Where Two Rivers Meet – Decolonizing Cultural Safety"
	The Exploration Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits include the Lheidli T'enneh Indigenous Collection

Category	Cultural Site	Highlights
		Education Through Cultural Connections” in collaboration with Emily Carr University (ECUAD), the Executive Director Marlene Erikson of Aboriginal Education at the College of New Caledonia (CNC) and the Vancouver Foundation
	Valemount & Area Museum & Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Museum displays a Simpcw exhibit ▪ Exhibits a small collection of Indigenous artifacts
	Whistlestop Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sells artwork by local Indigenous artists
Other Activities	Mackenzie & District Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building friendships with members of McLeod Lake Indian Band
	Huble Homestead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revamping language on homestead’s signage to include First Nation interpretation following best practices and Indigenous style guides (i.e., ‘settler’ versus ‘pioneer’)
	Central BC Rail & Forestry Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pursuing incorporating Indigenous plants into the site’s forest gardening/landscaping

4. Shared Strengths

Conversations with cultural sites, municipalities, and other stakeholders alike celebrated the shared strengths of the region’s arts, culture, and heritage sector. The most prominent strengths are:

- Spirit of collaboration and camaraderie felt among cultural sites
- Diversity of cultural site offers
- Contributions to the region’s identity and narrative

4.1 Spirit of Collaboration and Camaraderie Felt Among Cultural Sites

Participants expressed that relations between the cultural sites have moved from what once was “a spirit of competition”, to “a spirit of collaboration”. For example, the Northern Routes Cultural Experience has brought cultural sites together to share their events and exhibits collectively to a broader audience, bolstering each cultural site’s existing advertising through a collaborative effort. There is a willingness to continue collaborating between the sites and to seek new opportunities where possible.

“Northern Routes is one of the most tangible aspects – besides funding – of the relationship with RDFFG and other cultural sites, and we are very grateful for the support.”

– Cultural Site Representative

4.2 Diversity of Cultural Site Offers

The cultural sites are places that preserve the heritage and history of their communities. They offer an extensive range of experiences for locals and visitors alike, relating (but not limited) to nature and the environment, traditions, art, and anthropology. Their cultural offers include permanent exhibits, rotating or seasonal exhibits, programming, and special events. The rich array of cultural offerings attract individuals with different interests and backgrounds to engage with culture in diverse ways. The cultural sites are also recognized as having a larger role in the community by leading advocacy, education, and contributing to tourism efforts.

“Museums now have such a larger more holistic role to play for a community than traditional purposes such as leading advocacy, education and knowledge sharing.”

– Interview Participant

4.3 Contributions to the Region’s Identity and Narrative

Strongly related to the theme above, the cultural sites play a rich role in contributing to the region’s narrative. For example, many of the cultural sites house artifacts that are uniquely from the area, and interpret regional stories from local people via exhibits and programming. The cultural sites are uniquely placed to tell the story of the region, and to paint a picture of its history.

Additionally, the cultural sites create impact that extends beyond their physical spaces. Many cultural site facilities host programming and initiatives that are community-oriented and give back to the region. While this can include recreational programming, cultural sites are also well placed to encourage important and difficult conversations, building new bridges of understanding. For example, many of the cultural sites are working (or starting to work) with local First Nations to create exhibits or programming to advance truth and reconciliation. One representative of a cultural site described a program, for example, where school groups have the opportunity to listen to a local Elder describe the historic injustices which occurred alongside the railway industry.

“Our museum has its own book which highlights several artifacts and photos unique to the area. It was originally produced in the 1980s, and 1,500 copies were made. Community members contributed to sections of the book. Since, we’ve had grants to continue the reproduction of this book. This is an example of the museum and local community to come together, contributing to the regional narrative.”

– Cultural Site Representative

5. Shared Challenges

Cultural sites also share several common challenges. The most prominent themes that emerged were:

- **Insufficient staff training and skills development** in a range of areas
- **Lack of capacity for organizations to pursue initiatives** beyond core responsibilities
- **Ageing infrastructure** in need of maintenance and repair
- **Challenges accessing adequate funding**
- **Lack of clear steps to support reconciliation with Indigenous communities**

5.1 Insufficient Training and Skills Development Opportunities

Several participants noted a need for more staff training and skills development opportunities. Some individuals desired training on the preservation of museum artifacts and archives, grant writing, and social media skills. Others felt that training on non-profit governance and reconciliation with Indigenous communities would be helpful. The need for training was especially felt in the smaller cultural sites, as staff tend to be generalists working across all areas of the institution and may lack specialized knowledge or formal training (e.g., museums management).

“A long time ago, we talked about having someone come into our site to help provide training on managing archives – this has not happened.”

– Cultural Site Representative

Overall, there were gaps in the knowledge and skills of staff in the different cultural sites. Participants clearly expressed the desire for the RDFFG to support staff learning. That said, many individuals noted barriers that have made it challenging for them to access training in the past, including:

- **Centralization in Prince George:** In-person training sessions tend to take place in Prince George. Some participants from the other municipalities expressed feeling that they receive less attention from the RDFFG. They would like to see greater support throughout the region.
- **Financial cost:** The location of training sessions presents a financial barrier to organizations located in other municipalities. In some cases, their staff would need to cover accommodation costs to participate (e.g., to stay overnight in Prince George).
- **Scheduling challenges:** For smaller sites with fewer staff, participating in training sessions can present scheduling challenges. Organizations may not have the staffing capacity to cover absences. Many opportunities thus remain inaccessible to them.

5.2 Lack of Capacity to Pursue Initiatives Beyond Core Responsibilities

For smaller cultural sites with limited staff capacity, activities tend to focus on day-to-day operations. This often makes sites unable to expand to new activities, such as writing grant applications, contributing to initiatives that advance truth and reconciliation, or developing projects to support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

“We have struggled with the continuity of staff, so pursuing initiatives beyond our core responsibilities can be challenging.”

– Cultural Site Representative

5.3 Ageing Infrastructure

Most of the cultural sites work out of and/or maintain significant cultural and/or heritage infrastructure and buildings. These buildings require continual maintenance.

Additionally, some interview participants described challenges in accessing consistent funding or skilled labour. Infrastructure planning is necessary for cultural sites to maintain the range of cultural and historical capital in the region. However, stretched budgets and lack of clarity around asset management responsibilities (e.g., owner versus operator responsibilities) pose a challenge when planning capital upgrades and repairs. Two participants described having been able to complete repairs in recent years (such as repainting a building or repairing a roof) but that they cannot finance major upgrades that are needed. For example, a barn roof needs to be fixed at Huble Homestead, but it requires specialized labour, and therefore a significant budget.

“There are organizations that have buildings that need huge repairs, but we haven’t done asset management, so we don’t know what’s down the road.”

– Interview Participant

Finding skilled labour in the region is also a challenge. There are limited contractors within the region who can do specialized work in historic and heritage restoration. For some of the smaller sites such as the Mackenzie and District Museum and Archives, even if there are trained workers in the region, it is very costly to bring them to town.

5.4 Challenges Accessing Adequate Funding

Most cultural sites face challenges accessing adequate funding, particularly operational funding. While the five-year funding envelopes provided by the RDFFG are highly valued, covering operational expenses is very difficult. At current funding levels, sites cannot recruit additional staff. The lack of staff, in turn, creates the lack of capacity to pursue new initiatives described above.

Beyond funding from the RDFFG, available funding sources mainly focus on project-specific grants. Such funding does not support fundamental needs of the cultural sites, such as paying staff salaries, heating costs, and maintenance. Additionally, certain participants felt that external

"If you want to follow Canadian Museum Standards, materials can be expensive to get."

– Cultural Site Representative

grants and funding opportunities were inaccessible to them due to detailed and time-consuming application processes.

Additionally, covering material costs is an issue that many cultural stakeholders are experiencing post-COVID. Examples included specialist materials needed to preserve artifacts (e.g. gloves, folders, archival paper) and print cartridges, which are very costly.

5.5 Lack of Clear Steps to Support Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities

It is clear that RDFFG cultural stakeholders are at very different stages in advancing truth and reconciliation. While all participants recognized the importance, some described being unsure where to begin.

Overall, the larger cultural sites such as the Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery are at more advanced stages of work than the smaller regional cultural sites. For example, over the course of 20 years, The Exploration Place and the Lheidli T'enneh have worked together to preserve and showcase the living culture of the Lheidli T'enneh, resulting in the permanent home for the exhibit "Hodul'eh-a: A Place of Learning." Several interview participants noted that they look up to these larger sites for the progress they have made in advancing reconciliation.

"Museums are like the kitchen table of the community. Everyone that comes to the table doesn't necessarily get along, however, the table is where you keep coming back to talk, convene, and have difficult conversations."

– Cultural Site Representative

Several cultural sites appear to be in the early stages of relationship building. One participant described how "non-Indigenous groups are scared, and Indigenous groups don't know where to start", making it challenging to move forward. Participants recognized that the First Nations are busy working on their own priorities, and often do not have the capacity to take on more work.

Another significant challenge highlighted by interview participants in the Robson Valley (Valley District and Museum, Whistlestop Gallery, and Valemount Museum and Gallery) was that the lines between different First Nations are disputed. Given this context, the two museums in the

Robson Valley expressed the desire for guidance on how to advance reconciliation efforts given the context of the area.

There is a strong desire to build relationships with local First Nations and expand knowledge of what cultural sites can do to support reconciliation work. Steps suggested by participants include forming and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships for both parties on sharing the use of cultural sites, learning about and incorporating Indigenous practices, and including Indigenous members in cultural site decision making. However, further guidance is desired to push forward with reconciliation efforts.

"Until there are Indigenous leaders working on the Cultural Plan, I do not feel I can follow it. It seems backwards to be talking about reconciliation without their involvement."

– Cultural Site Representative

6. Priorities

Taking into account the context of communities within the RDFFG and the diverse needs of the eight cultural sites, **five priority areas** emerged. They draw on the shared strengths of regional cultural actors, and they address challenges felt by local cultural organizations. Although not an exhaustive list, these five priorities stand out as the most critical areas to address for the period 2023 to 2027:

- **Collaboration**
- **Training and Knowledge-Building**
- **Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities**
- **Conserving Tangible Heritage**
- **Capital Upgrades**

The following sections examine each priority in turn, highlighting key actions to be undertaken in the short, medium, and long term. Actions are designed to be **realistic and achievable** to ensure implementation of the updated Regional Cultural Plan. The action plan also identifies quick wins and activities that can be undertaken with little additional time or financial cost. A total of 32 actions are listed, of which nine are identified as high priority actions (indicated with a star ★).



Collaboration

Collaboration is a theme running throughout previous editions of the RDFFG's Regional Cultural Plans. From providing curatorial expertise to sharing information on COVID-19 responses, staff at the cultural sites are proud of their collaborative spirit. As described in Section 4, this mutually beneficial atmosphere celebrated in the RDFFG is one of the greatest strengths of the region's arts, culture, and heritage sector.

Building on the progress made, we recommend continuing current cross-organizational projects and establishing certain new initiatives. Collaboration supports knowledge transfer and increases organizational efficiencies. Key areas of consideration include:

- **'Internal' collaboration and planning** within CSAC to take a coordinated approach to addressing shared challenges;
- **Knowledge sharing around promising funding streams**, and joint grant applications;
- **Continuing Northern Routes** marketing strategy and building on its strengths; and,
- **'External' collaboration** with others in the region, to boost visitation and increase diversity and inclusion.

Short-term actions (2022 to early 2023)

- ★ **Planning:** Organize a CSAC planning session to discuss the priorities identified in this plan, who could/should provide support in that area, how, and when.
 - Aim to set specific goals and dates for key priority actions. Agree the roles and responsibilities of organizations and individuals to help ensure that the priority is actioned.

- **Compile a list of grants.** Task one (or more) parties to compile a list of relevant granting streams in a cloud document that can be accessed by CSAC members (e.g., a Google Sheet). Ask CSAC members to share information on grants that they have found beneficial, to be added to this list. Look especially for collaborative funding opportunities, and grants for capital upgrades and conservation of tangible heritage.

Medium-term actions (2023 to 2024)

- ★ **Nominate one party to provide guidance on funding beyond RDFFG support.** Organize a CSAC planning session to discuss the priorities identified in this plan, who could/should provide support in that area, how, and when. Guidance could include directing cultural sites to promising grant streams and possibly providing advice on grant writing (but not writing the grant application). The organization responsible for providing guidance could also maintain and update the list of grants described above. This support could be offered by the RDFFG. An alternative path forward could be to work this responsibility into the Exploration Place or Two Rivers Gallery's contracts, but only if these sites were provided adequate funding to cover this additional responsibility.
- **Collaborate on joint fundraising activities.** Possible avenues to explore include submitting group funding applications, collaborating on grant writing, sharing knowledge of relevant granting streams ongoing (to be added to the shared list), and advocating at the regional or provincial level for increased funding.
- **Identify cost efficiencies across sites.** Financial strain was a common challenge felt across the cultural sites. Many of the sites purchase similar products, such as materials to preserve and store archival collections. Purchasing such products in bulk could allow for cost savings across the organizations.
- **Increase the frequency of Northern Routes social media posts.** Some participants noted that it would be beneficial for the Northern Routes' social media channels to be more active. More frequent posts could increase engagement and to deepen storytelling about the region. However, there is also a need for cultural sites to share more content. One approach could be for cultural site directors/curators to look at what content is gaining most engagement on their respective social media channels, and discuss with the Cultural Coordinator how it could be shared via Northern Routes in line with the regional narrative.

Longer-term actions (2025 to 2027)

- **Grow collaboration between Northern Routes and municipalities to boost visitation,** building on the [Route 16](#) tourism initiative and existing collaboration with Tourism Prince George. It may be beneficial to identify additional, complementary initiatives between municipal and regional tourism campaigns – which often focus on nature and outdoor recreation – to break down siloes. Northern Routes could also collaborate with municipalities on marketing tactics to encourage visitors to Prince George to explore further afield.
- **Consider partnerships with organizations that welcome newcomers,** such as the Immigrant & Multicultural Services Society of Prince George, Connect PG, and Robson Valley Community Services. Building such partnerships could help to boost inclusion

and diversity. Offering volunteer opportunities to newcomers presents an opportunity for immigrants to gain valuable Canadian work experience while also helping to address the labour shortage.

- **Explore how IT support could be provided to cultural sites** by their local municipal IT departments/providers. Several cultural sites lack access to sufficient IT support. Learning about digital systems or software can present an additional burden to stretched staff. If support from municipalities is unviable, the CSAC group could consider enlisting an IT consultant to offer support to the sites on a retainer basis.



Training and Knowledge-Building

To further support cross-organizational activities, we recommend an **increased focus on providing training opportunities** to the cultural sites. Participants noted the need to develop capacities in a range of areas: governance of boards and committees, anti-bias training, repatriation of Indigenous artifacts, intersectional accessibility, and archive digitization, to name a few. This list is non-exhaustive and will certainly change over the course of time. Actions to formalize feedback will ensure that training programs remain relevant to and useful for the cultural sites and their staff.

Beyond developing individual capacities, training can help attract and retain staff at cultural organizations. Continued learning opportunities contribute to personal development. Additionally, in-person workshops and sessions increase the interaction between cultural sites, allowing for improved communication and leading to new collaborative initiatives. To build staff skills and knowledge, we recommend a series of actions to formalize training activities.

Short-term actions (2022 to early 2023)

- ★ **Agree on the highest priority training topics** and preferred delivery methods. This discussion could be part of the CSAC planning meeting, recommended above (under Collaboration). There is a need to agree whether the training budget should be predominantly used towards funding travel to the BC Museums Association, and/or for training workshops specifically for the CSAC group.
- ★ **Review the dedicated training budget** and increase where possible to cover training opportunities and associated travel costs (e.g., to cover hotels in Prince George for the more remote sites). By building upon the current training budget and including travel costs, the RDFFG could make it more feasible for smaller sites to participate.

Medium-term actions (2023 to 2024)

- **Organize day-long in-person training session in 2023**, if agreed in the CSAC planning session. Most CSAC members outside of Prince George expressed wanting more opportunities to meet in person, but some find it difficult to justify a trip to Prince George unless it is for a full day. Having a CSAC meeting in the morning, followed by a workshop in the afternoon, would be desirable to some parties. The session would likely need to be held in the off-season when schedule conflicts are less likely.
- **Compile a list of relevant training resources from provincial arts, culture, and heritage organizations.** Organizations consulted in the research process, namely the BC Arts Council, BC Museums Association, Destination BC, and Heritage BC, each

highlighted a range of resources targeted specifically at regional communities. These range from reports and webinars to online courses and in-person training sessions. A CSAC member, such as the Cultural Coordinator, could draw on the challenges indicated in this Regional Cultural Plan to identify helpful resources. CSAC members could also share useful resources, to be added to a collaborative document such as a Google Doc.

- **Organize bi-annual in-person training sessions**, if agreed in the CSAC planning session. If costs allow, the RDFFG could consider holding training sessions in each of the four municipalities, as well as inviting professionals from outside the RDFFG to deliver workshops or presentations. For example, representatives from the BC Arts Council, BC Museums Association, Destination BC, or Heritage BC could present material.

Longer-term actions (2025 to 2027)

- **Arrange for delegation of CSAC members to attend conferences together annually.** For example, in previous years, the group has attended the BC Museums Association conference together – most recently hosting in Prince George in 2019, and attending the Kelowna conference in 2018. While each site has different priorities, being at the same event at the same time allows for increased discussion, networking, and collaboration.



Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities

Across the RDFFG, reconciliation was recognized as a critical priority. However, several participants were unsure how to approach this topic. Some cultural sites, for instance, desired guidance on how to approach First Nations partners and how to represent Indigenous perspectives within the sites' offers.

The Exploration Place and Two Rivers Gallery are already leaders in prioritizing reconciliation. For example, a BC Museums Association praised the Exploration Place for showing "great leadership for repatriation and forming partnerships with local Indigenous groups to create mutually consensual management plans." Such expertise could be further leveraged within the RDFFG to promote efforts towards reconciliation with the Lheidli T'enneh, Simpcw, and McLeod Lake First Nations, and support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Short-term actions (2022 to early 2023)

- **Start each CSAC meeting with a thoughtful land acknowledgement.** Beginning meetings by acknowledging the land is an important expression of recognition and respect towards the Indigenous communities who currently and historically reside in the region. CSAC could consider inviting a different attendee to lead the land acknowledgement each time.
- **RDFFG to reach out to Lheidli T'enneh, Simpcw, and McLeod Lake First Nations,** seeking to learn more about each community's priorities. The RDFFG could let them know about the Regional Cultural Plan, but should seek to ensure that the conversation is not perceived as an "ask". Instead, the meeting could seek "to put a face to a name" and make a connection, so that RDFFG is increasingly aware of each community's

priorities. The RDFFG can consider if it is appropriate to offer an honorarium for each nation's representative's time.

- **Consider having CSAC members enroll individually in an online reconciliation course.** Online courses are offered by institutions such as the First Nations University ([4 Seasons of Reconciliation](#)) or the University of Alberta ([Indigenous Canada](#)). Such programs explore the histories of Indigenous peoples within Canada, providing students with an understanding of how historical events continue to impact Indigenous communities in the present day.

Medium-term actions (2023 to 2024)

- ★ **Start building stronger relationships** with local First Nations at an individual level by learning about each community's priorities and attending ceremonies that are open to visitors.
- ★ **Work together to develop a Repatriation Policy** to facilitate the return of Indigenous ancestral remains, burial items, and artifacts from museums to their home communities. While each museum is likely to require its own policy, it could be helpful to create an adaptable framework or template that different organizations can customize. Creating a Repatriation Policy would align the RDFFG with the BCMA's Call to Action, as well as objectives outlined in UNDRIP and the TRC Call to Action 67. It must be recognized that currently this is unfunded work, and the financial burden must not rest with the Indigenous communities.
- **Offer free membership of cultural sites to Indigenous individuals.** CSAC member sites could consider offering free entry to all Indigenous peoples. Two Rivers Gallery has already undertaken this action and provides complimentary membership to all Indigenous peoples.

Longer-term actions (2025 to 2027)

- ★ **Continue to build relations and foster ongoing dialogue** between CSAC and local First Nations representatives. Fostering communication channels between individual organizations and local First Nations representatives presents an opportunity to address the issue of turnover at the highest levels of governance. For instance, new relationships between municipal Mayors and First Nations Chiefs are continuously needed following election cycles. CSAC members, on the other hand, retain their positions and could work towards building long-standing, trust-based relationships with Indigenous partners.
- **Actively pursue the repatriation of artifacts and objects to affirm cultural sites' commitment to advancing reconciliation.** Repatriation was recognized as a long-term objective for cultural sites to advance reconciliation efforts. The Exploration Place noted that they could support smaller cultural sites with repatriation in the future. However, RDFFG support would be needed to help the Exploration Place carry this out.
- **Consider inviting First Nations representatives to join CSAC and partner on future Regional Cultural Plans, if appropriate.** This action must be led by the priorities of the Lheidli T'enneh, Simpcw First Nation, and McLeod Lake Indian Band rather than

CSAC priorities. Participating individuals should be remunerated for their time with honoraria.



Conserving Tangible Heritage

Physical maintenance is needed at the heritage sites to restore and conserve tangible heritage assets, such as rolling stock and heritage buildings. Currently, it is unclear which regional assets are in most urgent need of restoration. The following recommended actions seek to create more clarity, to help cultural sites to plan conservation activities.

Short-term actions (2022 to early 2023)

- ★ **Create a tangible heritage asset inventory.** The CSAC group could consider enlisting a specialist heritage consultant to conduct an asset inventory of major tangible heritage assets in need of repair across cultural sites, such as heritage buildings and rolling stock. This inventory would describe the condition of tangible and built heritage and identify required conservation activities.

Medium-term actions (2023 to 2024)

- **Use the asset inventory to help identify urgent needs and to advocate for funding.** Cultural sites could use the findings on the assets in need of urgent repair to seek funding, for example from local municipalities, and/or provincial or federal funding streams.

Longer-term actions (2025 to 2027)

- **Review and update the asset inventory ongoing,** provisionally every five years.



Capital Upgrades

Almost every one of the RDFFG's cultural sites is pursuing, or looking to pursue, capital upgrades to their buildings. Capital upgrade projects can be complicated, and fundraising can be challenging. The following points seek to address these challenges.

Short-term actions (2022 to early 2023)

- ★ **Consider ways that the CSAC can support Mackenzie Museum** as it plans next steps for a future building. For example, could some CSAC members become part of a Working Group to help the Museum plan next steps?
- **Conduct an informal review of cultural site buildings in need of upgrades or repair** and compile a list of which are most urgent. This list could be used by cultural sites to help advocate for support from their respective municipalities.

Medium-term actions (2023 to 2024)

- **RDFFG to incorporate provision for capital repairs and upgrades** into contracts with cultural sites where the RDFFG owns the building. Sites with buildings owned by other municipalities could also consider what provision is included within their contracts, and potentially seek to renegotiate terms.









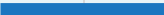


- **Identify sources of professional support or guidance in relation to capital developments.** For example, Heritage BC welcomes questions from municipalities and cultural sites on heritage conversation questions such as how to interpret the Local Government Act. Additionally, could a cultural site's local municipality provide guidance on topics such as the process for conducting a feasibility study?




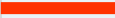









Longer-term actions (2025 to 2027)








- **Consider fund development strategy training** for capital asset fundraising campaigns.

7. Implementation Plan

The table below outlines a provisional implementation plan for priority actions. The highest priority actions are indicated **in bold**.

Action	Short term (2022-early 2023)	Medium term (2023-2024)	Longer term (2025-2027)
Collaboration: Organize a CSAC planning session to discuss the priorities identified in this plan and who will lead.			
Training & Knowledge: Agree highest priority topics, and how they should be addressed (e.g., conference vs. CSAC workshop).			
Reconciliation: Start each CSAC meeting with a thoughtful land acknowledgement.			
Reconciliation: Enroll individually in an online reconciliation course.			
Capital Upgrades: Consider how CSAC can support Mackenzie Museum to find new building.			
Training & Knowledge: Review training budget.			
Collaboration: Compile shared list of relevant granting streams.			
Reconciliation: RDFFG to reach out to Lheidli T'enneh, Simpcw, and McLeod Lake First Nations.			
Capital Upgrades: Conduct informal review of cultural site buildings in need of upgrades or repair.			
Conserving Tangible Heritage: Create an asset inventory.			
Collaboration: Identify cost efficiencies across sites, such as for purchasing goods.			
Training & Knowledge: Organize day-long in-person training session.			

Action	Short term (2022-early 2023)	Medium term (2023-2024)	Longer term (2025-2027)
Training & Knowledge: Compile a list of relevant training resources.			
Capital Upgrades: RDFFG to incorporate capital repairs/ upgrade provision into contracts with cultural sites where the RDFFG owns building.			
Capital Upgrades: Identify sources of professional support or guidance in relation to capital developments.			
Reconciliation: CSAC members to work together on Repatriation Policy.			
Reconciliation: Start building stronger relationships with local First Nations at an individual level.			
Reconciliation: Offer free membership of cultural sites to Indigenous individuals.			
Collaboration: One party to provide guidance on funding.			
Collaboration: Collaborate on joint fundraising activities, such as joint grant applications.			
Collaboration: Increase the frequency of Northern Routes social media posts.			
Training & Knowledge: Organize bi-annual in-person training sessions.			
Conserving Tangible Heritage: Use the asset inventory to help identify urgent needs and to advocate for funding.			
Collaboration: Explore how IT support could be provided to cultural sites.			
Training & Knowledge: Arrange for a delegation of			

Action	Short term (2022-early 2023)	Medium term (2023-2024)	Longer term (2025-2027)
CSAC members to attend conferences together annually.			
Capital Upgrades: Consider fund development strategy training.			
Collaboration: Grow collaboration between Northern Routes and municipalities to boost visitation.			
Collaboration: Consider partnerships with organizations that welcome newcomers.			
Conserving Tangible Heritage: Review and update the asset inventory ongoing.			
Reconciliation: Continue to build relations and foster ongoing dialogue between CSAC and First Nations representatives.			
Reconciliation: Actively pursue the repatriation efforts.			
Reconciliation: If appropriate, consider inviting First Nations representatives to join CSAC and partner on future Cultural Plans.			

Appendix A. Bibliography

- Babicz, W., & Bone, C. (2021). Downtown Arts Strategy.
- BC Museums Association (2022). Repatriation Call to Action! <https://museum.bc.ca/repatriation-call-to-action/>
- British Columbia Heritage Branch. (2010). Prince George Heritage Context Study: A Report to Guide the Development of the Community's Heritage Planning Program.
- C4 Strategies. (2021). 2021-2026 Tourism Plan.
- Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute. (2021). 2020 Community Profile Report: Valemount. <https://stateofthebasin.ca/reports-resources/community-profiles>
- Destination BC. (2017). North Thompson and Nicola Valleys: Destination Development Strategy.
- Destination BC. (2019a). Northeastern BC: 10-Year Destination Development Strategy Highlights.
- Destination BC. (2019b). Northeastern BC: Destination Development Strategy. Brepols Publishers.
- District of Mackenzie, By-law No. 1304, *District of Mackenzie: Official Community Plan*, (2014).
- District of Mackenzie. (2021). Mackenzie 2.0: Community Economic Development Strategy.
- Economic Planning Group. (2010). Cultural Strategic Plan 2011-2015 for the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. www.epgvictoria.com
- EcoPlan International. (2021). Let's Go! Downtown McBride: Main Street and Downtown Area Revitalization Plan.
- Expedition Management Consulting. (2020). McBride Tourism Master Plan.
- Farrell, S. (2016). The Community Arts Council of Prince George & District: Presentation to City Council of Prince George.
- Government of British Columbia. (2022). Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act: Action Plan 2022-2027. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf
- Lions Gate Consulting. (2018). Village of McBride Economic Development Action Plan.
- Millier Dickinson Blais. (2015). Taking it to the Next Level: Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Cultural Plan 2016-2020.
- Morgan, H., & Dragowska, L. (2020). Regional Cultural Plan 2021-2022.
- Province of British Columbia. (2022). Strategic Framework for Tourism 2022-2024: A Plan for Recovery and Resiliency.
- Radloff, B., & Adamson, D. (2020). City of Prince George Downtown Arts Strategy.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2016). 2016 Annual Cultural Report.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2017). 2017 Annual Cultural Report.

- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2018a). 2018 Annual Cultural Report.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2018b). Strategic Priorities 2019-2023.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2019a). 2019 Annual Cultural Report.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2019b). Northern Routes Cultural Experience.
<https://www.northernroutes.ca/>
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020a). 2020 Annual Cultural Report.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020b). Exploration Place 2021-2022 (Draft 3).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020c). Huble Homestead 2021-2022 (Draft 3).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020d). Mackenzie District Museum 2021-2022 (Draft 3).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020e). Railway Forestry Museum 2021-2022 (Draft 3).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020f). Two Rivers Gallery 2021-2022 (FINAL).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020g). Valemount & Area Museum & Archives 2021-2022 (Draft 1).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020h). Valley Museum & Archives 2021-2022 (Draft 2).
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. (2020i). Whistle Stop 2021-2022 (Draft 3).
- Statistics Canada. (2016). Census Profile, 2016 Census. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- TANEx Engineering Corporation. (2021). Regional Broadband Strategy.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2012). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.
- Two Rivers Gallery. (2017). Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (2007) (testimony of United Nations).
- Varcoe, C. M., Browne, A. J., & Einboden, R. (2014). Prince George: Socio-historical, Geographical, Political, and Economic Context Profile. www.britishcolumbia.com/Maps/?i
- Village of McBride, By-law No. 682, *Village of McBride: Official Community Plan* (2008).
- Village of Valemount. (2019). Resort Municipality Initiative: 2019/20 to 2021/22 Resort Development Strategy.
- Village of Valemount, By-law No. 843-2021, *Valemount: Official Community Plan* (2021).

Appendix B. Regional Arts and Culture Funding Case Studies

This section introduces some case studies of how other municipalities are approaching funding for regional arts, culture, and heritage.

7.1 Case Study: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, AB

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) provides grants to support the prosperity of residents in the Wood Buffalo region. Grants include support for social, cultural, and recreational programs as well as amateur sport, artist development and strategic priorities of the RMWB's Strategic Plan.

Currently, RMWB offers "Sustaining Funding" (i.e., operational funding) to several arts and culture organizations. Recipients include Keyano Theatre & Art Centre, which receives approximately \$560,000 annually, Fort Chipewyan Historical Society, which receives approximately \$150,000 annually, Fort McMurray Heritage Society, which receives approximately \$460,000 annually, and Arts Council Wood Buffalo, which receives approximately \$653,000 annually.

Furthermore, an important grant to highlight is the [Arts, Culture and Heritage Pilot Grant](#), which provides funding to individuals or groups to support arts, culture and heritage projects which contribute to realizing the priorities of the [Wood Buffalo Culture Plan](#). This pilot funding initiative has a total value of \$50,000 to respond to identified needs from the Wood Buffalo Culture Plan in order to support the Plan's vision of RMWB as a place of culturally diverse and socially inclusive municipality where arts, culture and heritage are essential part of its social, economic and environmental well-being. Applicants are required to describe how their activities align with one or more priorities from the Wood Buffalo Culture Plan including: 1) foster healthy environment for culture: arts and culture, 2) further develop cultural facilities and resources, 3) support collaboration and innovation, 4) encourage diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility, and 5) improve awareness of the value of culture. Successful individuals or groups will receive a maximum of \$5,000. Other funding streams available to non-profits (including arts and culture organizations) include [Community Impact Grant](#), [Community Capital Grant](#), and [Games Legacy Grant](#).

RMWB projects that may be of interest to CSAC for reference:

Heritage Resources Management Plan:

The [Heritage Resources Management Plan](#) (HRMP) is a plan for preserving and protecting local historical resources. The aim is to provide a framework to support heritage conservation activities in Wood Buffalo and guide future initiatives to identify, stewardship, and manage heritage resources. The management plan is a three-phased process: 1) Identify what resources are here, 2) evaluate what is important and why, and 3) manage discoveries by deciding what we do with findings. Developing this plan required the involvement and participation of the community in Wood Buffalo. The plan is still in development and is now (as of August 2022) completing phase 2 of engagement.

Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment:

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is presently conducting a [Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment](#) to know more about the current status of cultural facility provision in each

community and recognize the enhancements needed for the future. The aim is to inform future planning, resource allocations, and partnership discussions with relation to cultural infrastructure. Assessing existing spaces and engaging with the community in Wood Buffalo will help identify possible future opportunities which will enhance cultural spaces. RMWB completed consultations on this project in March 2022 and the feedback from the community can be found in the [What We Heard Report](#).

7.2 Case Study: Cowichan Valley Regional District, Vancouver Island, BC

The **Cowichan Valley Regional District** (CVRD) plays a crucial role in enhancing the arts and culture scene of the Cowichan Region. The CVRD's Arts and Culture Division service function was established to provide annual funding for sub-regional arts councils, give opportunities to arts organizations through grants, and increase collaboration and partnerships between arts and cultural organizations on regional, provincial, and national initiatives.

The CVRD's biggest expenditure is providing operational funding for the [Cowichan Performing Arts Centre](#) which is a function of the Arts & Culture Division of the Cowichan Valley Regional District's Recreation & Culture Department. Funding for the Cowichan Performing Arts Centre comes from throughout the Cowichan Region with a value of approximately \$2,320,000 in 2021 and approximately \$2,340,000 in 2022 for operational costs. Furthermore, the CVRD offers annual funding to five sub-regional arts councils and grants in aid for non-profit arts and culture organizations at the value of \$130,000 annually.

The CVRD also provides regional [Arts and Culture Grants](#) for arts and culture organizations with the aim of assisting community groups within CVRD to provide artistic programs for residents, build community and organizational capacity to deliver artistic programs, and promote partnerships and sharing of financial costs in CVRD. Arts & Culture organizations will need to meet the criteria listed within the [Arts & Culture Disbursement Policy](#). The grants provided can be used for annual operational funding or special one-time project funding for organizations. In 2022, the total value of the Arts & Culture Grants was approximately \$39,000 and was awarded to a number of [recipients](#) including Chemainus Theatre Festival Society (\$5,000), Cowichan Valley Public Art Gallery Society (\$2,000), and Ladysmith Little Theatre Society (\$4,200).

7.3 Case Study: Strathcona County, AB

Strathcona County is a specialized municipality located between Edmonton and Elk Island National Park in central Alberta. The County comprises the urban area of Sherwood Park and a large adjacent rural area of eight hamlets and farms, with a total population of 98,000 residents (2016 Census).

Arts and culture services at Strathcona County Council are managed by the Recreation, Parks and Culture department in the Community Services Division. The Department's a budget is approved by the County Council for the delivery the services to both a rural and urban population. The cultural team includes the department Director, a Community Liaison Officer for Culture and a Public Art Coordinator, supported by an Art Collection Advisory Committee to guide the County Council on matters relating to public art.

In July 2019, the County Council launched a [Recreation and Culture Strategy](#) outlining plans for the next 12 years. The Strategy's priorities are aligned with the County's overall strategic goal "to become Canada's most livable community." A [Recreation and Culture Strategy Advisory](#)

[Committee](#) was established at the outset to guide the develop of the strategy, comprising 11 community members, five agency members and the strategy's Executive and Project Sponsors.

The Recreation and Culture Strategy is designed to be delivered through combined efforts and investment by local government, non-profit organizations and community groups, as well as private businesses. Strathcona County Council issues \$100,000 in grants each year to the local museum and other arts, culture, and heritage groups and organizations. The Community Liaison Officer for Culture supports this annual grants program, as well as dialogue between the Council and local arts, culture and heritage organizations.

Strathcona County also owns and operates three arts and culture facilities: Festival Place for performing arts, Gallery@501 and Smeltzer House Visual Arts Centre. However, information on municipal spending on these institutions does not appear to be publicly available.



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

Main Office: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC V2L 1P8
Telephone: (250) 960-4400 / Fax: (250) 563-7520
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 / <http://www.rdffg.ca>

REPORT FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Members, Cultural Services Advisory Committee
FROM: Will Peters, Cultural Coordinator
DATE: March 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan
SUMMARY: Purpose: For Information

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated March 4, 2025 regarding "Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan" be received for information

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Member/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

Northern Routes Cultural Experience is the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George's cultural marketing program that works to enhance and promote activities at the region's eight funded cultural sites, and two out of region sites that pay to be a part of the program.

At the March 14, 2025 Cultural Services Advisory Committee meeting, there will be a presentation on the Northern Routes program performance and marketing initiatives planned for the spring and summer.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

N/A

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:

- Indigenous and Intergovernmental Partnerships
- Organizational Strength and Adaptability
- Quality Community Services
- Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action
- Awareness and Engagement
- Statutory or Routine Business

SERVICE RELEVANCE:

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

There are no financial commitments involved in receiving the Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan Report.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

N/A

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendations.
 - Receive for information the Northern Routes 2025 Marketing Plan Report.

COMMENTS:

The presentation will include an update on social media metrics since a full-time Cultural Coordinator was hired in September 2024. Plans for expanded marketing programs, including a partnership with CKPG Today, digital billboards, new brochures and a visitor passport program will also be discussed. Any feedback from cultural sites will be assessed to ensure their individual needs are being addressed in the marketing program.

Respectfully submitted,

“Will Peters”

Will Peters
Cultural Coordinator

WP



**REGIONAL DISTRICT
of Fraser-Fort George**

Main Office: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC V2L 1P8
 Telephone: (250) 960-4400 / Fax: (250) 563-7520
 Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 / <http://www.rdffg.ca>

**REPORT FOR
COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

TO: Chair and Members, Cultural Services Advisory Committee
 FROM: Hilary Erasmus, Manager of Communications and Culture
 DATE: March 7, 2025
 SUBJECT: Regional District Funding Update
 SUMMARY: Purpose: For Information

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated March 7, 2025 regarding “Regional District Funding Update” be received for information.

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Member/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

The Regional District of Board of Directors approved the following funding increases that will be adopted as part of the 2025 Financial Plan at their March 20, 2025 meeting:

Cultural Site	Total operational funding	% increase over 2024
The Exploration Place	\$916,542*	4%
Two Rivers Gallery	\$596,178*	4%
Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum	\$257,631	14%
Huble Homestead	\$248,591	10%
Mackenzie and District Museum	\$47,080	7%
Valley Museum and Archives	\$50,960	4%
Whistle Stop Gallery	\$56,160	4%
Valemount Museum and Archives	\$49,920	4%

* The total amount for The Exploration Place includes mortgage, loan and insurance payments and the total amount for Two Rivers Gallery includes operating and outreach funding.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

N/A

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous and Intergovernmental Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Strength and Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Community Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness and Engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statutory or Routine Business | | |

SERVICE RELEVANCE:

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

There are no financial commitments involved in receiving this report.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

N/A

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendation.
 - Receive for information the Regional District Funding Update Report.

COMMENTS:

The 2025 funding increases implement the recommendations of Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Funding Review that was conducted in 2024. The increased amounts will be reflected in operating grant payments from April 1, 2025 onwards.

Respectfully submitted,

“Hilary Erasmus”

Hilary Erasmus
Manager of Communications and Culture

HE



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

Main Office: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC V2L 1P8
Telephone: (250) 960-4400 / Fax: (250) 563-7520
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 / <http://www.rdffg.ca>

REPORT FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Members, Cultural Services Advisory Committee
FROM: Hilary Erasmus, Manager of Communications and Culture
DATE: March 7, 2025
SUBJECT: Argus Database
SUMMARY: Purpose: For Information

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated March 7, 2025 regarding the “Argus Database” be received for information.

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Member/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

The Exploration Place has developed and maintains an Argus database to provide the public with online access to search their collection. The Exploration Place also provides Argus licenses to five other cultural sites funded by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George in order for them to house their individual collections online.

The collective database system was accessed over 13,000 times during 2024 and hosting the collective database costs The Exploration Place approximately \$2,350 per month before tax. This includes the costs for the additional individual licenses for the Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum, Huble Homestead, Mackenzie and District Museum, Valley Museum and Archives and the Valemount Museum and Archives collections.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

N/A

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:

- Indigenous and Intergovernmental Partnerships
- Organizational Strength and Adaptability
- Quality Community Services
- Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action
- Awareness and Engagement
- Statutory or Routine Business

SERVICE RELEVANCE:

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

There are no financial commitments involved in receiving the Argus Database Report.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

N/A

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendations.
 - Receive for information the Argus Database Report.

COMMENTS:

A breakdown of the database views from 2024 is attached as background information for the additional licensees to understand how the collective database and their individual collections are being view by the public.

Respectfully submitted,

“Hilary Erasmus”

Hilary Erasmus
Manager of Communications and Culture

HE

BACKGROUND

Argus is an online database that digitally categorizes museum collections from photographs and artifacts to heritage assets and other assorted categories.

The program is hosted by The Exploration Place and they have issued licenses to the Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum, Huble Homestead, Mackenzie and District Museum, Valley Museum and Archives, Valemount Museum and Archives, and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation.

In 2024, Argus was accessed 13,032 times. Most searches in the program were done through the general portal search as opposed to accessing content through individual sites' collections.

2024	Total Views	The Exploration Place	Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum	Huble Homestead	Mackenzie and District Museum	Valemount Museum and Archives	Valley Museum and Archives	Lheidli T'enneh First Nation	Portal Search
January	982	67	29	18	1	1	2	1	863
February	977	62	19	23	5	-	2	3	705
March	712	87	50	30	2	2	3	2	536
April	1,034	44	23	15	3	-	-	-	949
May	1,162	57	20	13	13	1	1	-	1,057
June	868	42	95	37	7	2	5	1	679
July	1,463	32	38	24	2	-	-	-	1,367
August	1,445	42	20	35	-	-	8	-	1,340
September	716	44	19	12	1	20	9	-	611
October	1,413	62	26	12	4	1	2	-	1,306
November	1,468	39	19	4	3	3	19	4	1,377
December	792	47	40	11	4	2	5	-	683
Total	13,032	625	398	234	45	32	56	11	11,473