



EVR ELK VALLEY COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST ADVISORY INITIATIVE

Q3 Steering Committee MEETING

Sparwood Senior's Drop-In Centre
101 4 Ave, Sparwood, BC V0B 2G0

September 22, 2026
1:00pm –3:00 pm

Attendees

Anita Palmer	COIAI Chair RDEK area A
Tom Kramer	Recreational Users
Rosa Maria Roca	Seniors
Kim Kennedy	CBAL
Chrisy Hill	CBAL Community literacy outreach coordinator
Shelley Wedderburn	Michel Creek Road
Kathleen Dolan	Business/Housing
Creighton Glober	Human Resources EVR
Brandy Moriarity	Social Responsibility EVR
Tim Schoahs	College of the Rockies
Kerri Wall	Interior Health Representative
Courtney Baker	LGBTQ+ Fernie Pride
Jean Sulzer	Elk Valley Metis
Caitlin Henneker	NGO's Elk River Alliance
Shayden Xa	Social Responsibility Student EVR

COIAI Partners Meeting Minutes

Opening Remarks (1:00 PM)

Anita Palmer, Steering Committee Chair

- Welcome and housekeeping (emergency exits/restrooms)

- All Partners meetings will take place at SWO
- All Steering meetings will take place at the Sparwood Seniors Drop-In Center
- Land Acknowledgement

Safety Share

- **Shayden:** Financial Safety
 - Be aware of scams and do not share any information if you are unsure in any way
 - **Rosa:**
 - Keep in touch with your neighbours and check in on one another
 - Recent deaths in the valley highlighted concerns about isolated individuals not being accounted for
 - Interested in expanding this into a future safety share
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COIAI Housekeeping (1:20 PM)

Review of Action Items from June 24, 2026

Membership and Outreach

- Reach out to youth members and Sparwood Secondary:
 - Brandy will proceed now that school is back in session
- Reach out to BIPOC group: **Done**
- Indigenous representative:
 - Gene will serve in this role
- Committee Matrix to be updated as needed
- Brandy to update website and committee photos
- Recommendation sent through Community Investment and Feedback Portal: **Done**
- Feedback mechanism to be posted on Fernie Fix:
 - One post completed, additional promotion still underway
- Brandy to send email to Michelle: **Done**

Committee Membership

- Anita remains Chair
 - No further changes to the committee
 - No Chair vote required
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Annual Review of Terms of Reference

Discussion

- **Tom** asked whether the committee could receive a presentation on the **Cumulative Effects Management Framework**
 - Committee has been re-established
 - Brandy will determine whether the presentation should be government-led or EVR-led
 - Presentation to be added to a future Partners meeting

Goal Review

- Goals 1-4: No comments
 - Goal 5:
 - **Creighton Glober** suggested broadening wording from "new families to the region" to include family and childcare issues more generally
 - Goals 6-10: No comments
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Community Updates and Member Roundtable

Tom Kramer

- Success working with TC Energy to maintain recreational access by keeping bridges in place
- Hardened fords were installed to protect fish habitat, funded by TC Energy
- Alberta's Trails Strategy was highlighted as a good model
- Interest in pursuing similar fish-friendly ford crossings where possible
- Concern that Rock Creek is being heavily used and abused because it is easily accessible
- Update on local trails
- Cattle fencing east of Elkford has blocked some recreational access
- Looking at implementing more ATV/UTV-friendly cattle guards
- Hunting season is underway and related mine access restrictions are in effect

Kim Kennedy

CBAL

- 24 new EVR employees arriving from Zimbabwe
- Support services being offered
- Looking for volunteers to assist with English language tutoring

Chrisy Hill

CBAL

- Fresh Food Program entering a slower period
 - Continued outreach to seniors
 - 16th Annual Youth Literacy Program launching
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Shelley Wedderburn

Michel Creek Road Traffic

- Ongoing concerns regarding heavy truck traffic
- District of Sparwood reviewing traffic bylaw options
- Residents urged to continue providing feedback on heavy traffic use
- Concerns that residents are hesitant to report issues due to fear of repercussions
- Industry, including EVR, has pushed back on traffic restrictions
- EVR indicated only four complaints were received through the feedback line
- Shelly believes complaints may be underreported
- Discussion around public lease land and use of parking areas on Michel Creek Road
- Concern raised regarding removal of apple trees by EVR despite Sparwood's Wildlife Attractant Program
- Concern that pressure from industry could cause Council to reverse decisions limiting heavy truck traffic

Caitlin Henneker

Elk-Kootenay Watershed

- International Joint Commission undertaking the Elk-Kootenay Watershed Reference
- Focus areas include:
 - Water quality status and trends
 - Mitigation measures
 - Comprehensive watershed assessment
 - Comparison reports
 - Cumulative Effects Framework
- Water health continues to be hot topic in the region
- Encouraged by EVR's efforts to go above and beyond on the issue

Kathleen Dolan

Housing and Social Issues

- Housing remains very active in the fall
- Limited supply of subsidized housing

- Market rentals remain unaffordable
- Few options for residents who are no longer suited to independent living
- Trinity offers independent seniors housing but gaps remain
- More investment is needed in seniors housing and assisted living
- Reports increasing rates of domestic violence in Fernie

Creighton Globber

EVR Workforce Update

- 726 people hired this year (excluding students):
 - 571 haul truck operators
 - 94 trades positions
 - 101 staff positions
- At least 273 vacancies remain
- Ideally targeting 976 haul truck hires this year
- Haul truck operations continue to be the primary entry-level pathway
- Constant turnover remains a challenge
- 24 Heavy Duty Mechanics recruited from South Africa this year
- Housing construction by EVR is helping but not enough to significantly shift the housing situation
- Elkford camp was intended for contractors but continues to be used as transitional housing
- Housing shortages remain a significant recruitment challenge
- Many workers still prefer living in larger urban centres

Kerri Wall

Interior Health

- Appreciates continued plans and regular updates
- Upcoming elections may cause confusion for voters with Provincial and Municipal coming up.
- Interested in helping dispel misinformation where possible

Jean Sulzer

Elk Valley Métis Association

- Continued focus on cultural education and support for Métis members
- Many members continue to live below the poverty line and require additional support accessing services
- Affordability pressures contributing to:
 - Substance use issues
 - Crime
 - Domestic violence

- Indigenous graduation rates in SD5 reportedly declining
 - Belief that consultation is decreasing as governments fast-track project approvals
 - Concern that Indigenous priorities are receiving less attention, affecting available funding opportunities
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Courtney Baker

- Bench installation project completed in Elkford
 - Concerns raised about vandalism specifically in the Elkford community
- Some social media comments required removal
- Concern regarding reduced support for 2SLGBTQ+ initiatives in schools
- Rural Pride appears to be losing momentum
- Asked whether DEI/EDI efforts within Glencore/EVR have been reduced

Response

- **Creighton**
 - Old DEI coordinator moved to a new role
 - Director of HR currently overseeing EDI responsibilities
- **Brandy** noted the old coordinator continues to support EDI work

Tim Schoahs

College of the Rockies

- MAST Program continues for students
- New safety certification being implemented for all individuals working at EVR sites
- Continued work with Komatsu on training opportunities
- Collaborating with Kootenay Employment Services
- Skilled Workers for Tomorrow (SWT):
 - Launching new course opportunities
 - Trade sampling program allows students exposure to multiple career paths
 - Includes a two-week vetting process

Anita Palmer

Regional Infrastructure

- RDEK bridge discussions
- Significant public opposition remains regarding a bridge crossing
- Dickin Road was determined to be a poor option

- Alternative solutions to be explored
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Other Business

Fernie Fix Advertising (Q4)

- Discussion regarding Q4 advertisements
 - Home preparation for Winter (Exterior outlets for ice, CO detectors, Smoke Alarms)
 - Winter Driving

Community Feedback Results (Q2)

- Shred with the group, will email the latest Feedback Mechanism reporting with graphs (sending with minutes)

Complaints Received

- 28 dirty vehicle complaints
 - EVR employees and contractors
- 7 traffic complaints:
 - Primarily dangerous passing/overtaking incidents involving contractors and other drivers
- 4 railway dust complaints
 - Trains continue to be sprayed, but dust suppression can dry and become ineffective
- Land access complaints:
 - Primarily hunters
 - Camping concerns related to the two-week occupancy rule
- Noise complaints:
 - Related to bird deterrent systems at Elkview and Line Creek
 - Mitigation measures have since been adjusted
- Dust complaints:
 - Only two complaints received regarding Sparwood and Elkview

Discussion

- Michel Creek noted there was noticeably less dust in the area, could leave windows open
 - Shelly Wedderburn. this is a significant improvement and a move in the right direction

Community Recognition

- Michel Creek Pez Park looks excellent
- Community members are actively using the space

Closing Remarks (2:56 PM)