

Minutes of Meeting		
Location: Sparwood Chamber of Commerce	Date: September 29, 2022	Time: 10:00 AM
Purpose: Steering Committee Meeting		
Attendees: See below	Issue Date: October 12, 2022	

Welcome and Introductions

- Everyone introduced themselves.
- Safety Share – winter tires as of Saturday, 3.5mm tread and mud and snow.
- Land acknowledgement and note that tomorrow is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Housekeeping

- Denise is no longer on the steering committee so we need a new vice-chair and new rep for outdoor recreation.
 - Terry will be the vice-chair for this year. He also has a neighbour who may be interested in joining. Mariah and Terry will coordinate on connecting with him.

Updates from Steering Committee Members

Shelley – MCR and GN Road

- MCR is very busy. With the issues at the plant there is an increase in traffic. They have been staying in contact with Teck to try to mitigate some issues. Speeding is still a huge issue and road infractions.
- Yesterday work started on the trail and hopefully will be completed this year.

Scott– Community Safety

- Fire season – there were a lot of efforts behind the scenes. Scott was involved with planning for that.
- Idea for November Fernie Fix – thank you to first responders and everyone who was involved in the fire season!
- Hunters are out there. It is getting darker a lot sooner so be careful when out on the land.
- Comment: the meetings at the rec centre were really helpful to get information and helped with people's frustrations. Well done!
- Something neat is that the Elk Valley works together, it is not just on individual municipalities. There are also a lot of plans in place that came out of that.

Anita – Education

- Full time programs right now, but most programs are not full. We are lacking in international students because a lag in getting student visas.
- Continuing education department is busy with first aid and safety courses. Good uptake of those.
- COTR and Elk River Alliance work together on camps in the summer.
 - Comment: One example is FACES in Alberta. May be worth connecting with. They do programming for high school students in Alberta. Livingstone Range School Division is involved in that as well.
 - Elk River Alliance Camps – kids were coming home with huge smiles and best camp they have ever been to. Well done!

Creighton – Employment



- Teck is struggling to find and recruit employees. Coal BU has 364 active vacancies. 52 trades, 74 haul labourers, 180 staff, and 58 students. Looking for a lot of people. We have hired 730 people into the Valley this year and have brought on 183 students this year.
 - Local hires – 184 local hires
 - Of people who have declined roles – often we don't know (30%) and the folks we are able to get info from we hear other competing offers and accommodations.

Chad – Environment

- We had Elk River cleanup – 100 people came. 80 bags collected.
- A few other environmental initiatives – Elk River Watershed Collaborative Monitoring Program.
- Cottonwood Project - looking to improve riparian areas and improve flood mitigation. If you know anyone with riverside property who would like an assessment and potential help with that reach out to Chad. Anything within 50 to 100m of a stream. You can't put a price on fish in the river but is big because of tourism, fishing, bringing people into the valley. The knock-off effect is large, not just environmentally but economically as long as we don't destroy it.
 - Fish barrier work being done – looking to remove barriers to fish movement. There is a west slope cutthroat trout population study going on in the valley right now.
 - Wildsight is championing wildlife corridor program to improve rail strike and vehicle strike.

Terry – Metis Nation

- Noted that they attended the housing meeting in Elkford recently. It is difficult to attract people because we have no places so they cannot move here. In Elkford there isn't much available land. Teck should be acquiring land and partnering with groups in the valley. What needs to happen first is you need to have affordable land. Mariah will pass that feedback on and Teck will respond directly to Elk Valley Metis.
 - Comment: Over the years the mining companies have acquired non-mining lands - the last standarea between upper elk valley road and lower elk valley road for example.
 - Comment: Many houses being built for people who live out of town and then they aren't being used.
 - Comment: We can't expect private companies to build affordable housing at their cost. They can't do it at the expense of the companies.
 - Comment: Feedback that big companies are the key players in the housing solution.
- Feedback: The berm at the Elk Valley Lodge is not a very welcoming look in Elkford. Need to cut down the thistles at least or do some planting.
 - Feedback was communicated to Teck facilities team and this information was shared: *One of the conditions of Teck's Temporary Use Permit for the lodge is that we were to improve the landscaping at the Lodge to beautify it and re-direct views away from the parking lot as you drive into Elkford. This week (Oct 3-7) they are scheduled to add an irrigation system and plant Scotch Pine, Blue Spruce, Schubert Chokecherry, Trembling Aspen, Beauty of Moscow Lilacs, Royal Preston Lilac, Silver leaf Dogwood, Wolf Willows, and Goldfinger Potentilla on the berm.*
- Metis are people that also attended residential schools even though it can be forgotten.
- About 200 Metis people in the Elk Valley who have applied for cards, but that is just adults so estimate would be 500-600 in the Elk Valley.

Rosa - Seniors

- The hall in Sparwood has been struggling since the Pandemic due to a drop in bookings. They are trying to encourage more activities at the hall and bring in more meetings.
 - Mariah to bring this information to the team at Teck.



- Comment: Noted that a resident in Fernie has an Air quality sensor on their balcony and that info is publicly available. Might be worth expanding that.
 - Noted that Teck has air quality monitoring stations and will provide details of that
 - Response: *Teck has a robust air monitoring program in place in the Elk Valley. As a part of the Regional Air Quality Monitoring Program, two of the Teck air monitors are included in the British Columbia Air Quality Database (BCAQDB) where monitored data is available to public continuously (live) and allows for transparency. The monitors which feeds into BCAQDB are as follows:*
 - *Sparwood Centennial Square – located in Downtown Sparwood – Continuous streaming of PM10, PM2.5, Ozone (O₃) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) (we also monitor other pollutants in Sparwood Centennial Square like TSP, CO and SO₂ – these are not required by ENV to stream in the website).*
 - *Elkford Rocky Mountain Elementary School – located in Rocky Mountain Elementary School in Elkford – Continuous streaming of PM10, PM2.5*
 - *Here are the websites:*
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality>
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/current-air-quality-data>
Click Sparwood Centennial Square
<https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/station.html?id=E262137>
Click Elkford Rocky Mountain Elementary School
<https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/station.html?id=E290310>
Click on Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-quality/aqi>
AQHI by Region - <https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/bcairquality/data/aqi-table.html>

Mariah – Teck

- The Exterior House Cleaning Program has finished for the 2022 year. It was the largest season yet with 226 homes cleaned in Sparwood, 119 in Elkford, and 11 at Grave Lake.
- The SCEEAC committee in Sparwood is looking for community members to join. Mariah will send copy of SCEEAC ad.
 - <https://sparwood.ca/sceeac-seeking-volunteer/>
- Elkview Operations has put together a dust mailout with information about their dust mitigations. It is currently being printed and then will be send out to all residents of Sparwood. Members of the committee were provided with a preliminary printout of the information. They can contact Mariah if they have any questions about it.
- Every year Teck updates their access maps for hunters. These maps specifically show the No Unauthorized Entry boundaries for each of the five Elk Valley sites. The maps can be found and downloaded at teck.com/coalmaps

Update to terms of reference



- To be added to objectives: Identify and support initiative that protect and improve environmental health and associated ecosystem services.
- Changes to strategies: CEMF one add “and other appropriate environmental monitoring, analysis and enhancement initiatives.”
- To do: Update website with new pictures of members.
- The Health Care Task Force was discussed, specifically because it is not currently meeting. It has been decided that at the next meeting we will add this topic to the agenda to get more perspectives on whether it should remain, or potentially be revised to align with other group priorities like affordability or housing.
- Potential idea for Partner’s meeting - Elk Valley Suicide Task Force.
- Change last one to “support the enhancement of post-secondary education in the Elk Valley through programming.”
- Schedule – avoid the first week of December.
- Hybrid would be preferred. Let’s keep meeting in person.
- Mariah: Will look into tech options

Next Meetings: Steering Committee on November 24, Partner’s meeting in January

Present

Name	Representing
Terry Anonson	Metis Nation of BC, Elk Valley Metis, Elkford
Mariah Besplug	Teck
Anita Palmer	Education/COTR/RDEKA/Chair
Rosa Rocca	Seniors, Sparwood
Creighton Globber	Teck
Scott Robinson	Community Safety, Fernie
Shelley Wedderburn	Residents of MCR and GN Road, Sparwood

Action Items

Description	Responsible
Cottonwood Project - If you know anyone with riverside property who would like an assessment and potential help with that reach out to Chad.	Everyone
Coordinate on finding a new Outdoor Recreation Rep	Mariah and Terry
Put thank you to first responders in the Fernie Fix- “Thank you to first responders and everyone who was involved in keeping our communities safe this fire season!”	Mariah and Scott (Done)
Communicate feedback to Teck about housing and land availability in the valley and provide a response to Terry on it.	Mariah (In progress)
Communicate feedback to Teck about the Elk Valley Lodge Berm.	Mariah (Done – see in meeting minutes)
Share information about having less bookings at the Senior’s hall internally to Teck and follow up with Rosa on it.	Mariah (In progress)
Provide details about Air Quality monitoring stations with committee (locations, link, and if they are continuous).	Mariah (Done – see in meeting minutes)
Circulate information about SCEEAC committee looking for members.	Mariah (Done – see in meeting minutes)
Update website with new pictures of committee members.	Mariah + everyone



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Put Health Care Task Force on the agenda for the next meeting.	Mariah
Explore better options for Hybrid Meetings.	Mariah
Update Terms of Reference with changes discussed.	Mariah