All because of you

Thank you for your generous support throughout 2022. Your contributions to Neighbours United is invaluable to us and helps further our mission of protecting the natural environment while building just, equitable, healthy, and livable communities. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions or feedback.

Montana Burgess, Executive Director

Josh Drozda, Deputy Executive Director
We updated our name this year to partner on programs beyond the West Kootenay region and connect with even more people who are outside of the environmental movement. Our new name, Neighbours United, presents new and exciting opportunities to have a bigger impact with our programs.

Did you know this is our 4th name update?

- In 1994, the organization started as the EcoCentre
- West Kootenay Community EcoSociety was incorporated in 1997
- West Kootenay EcoSociety was the next name used
- Now, we’re Neighbours United

Expanding support for environmental protection means we need to meet people where they are at, hear their concerns, and bring them into the movement. We found our previous name, West Kootenay EcoSociety, limited the types of people we could start conversations with. Neighbours United opens the door so more people can come in and join the environmental movement.

Thank you to our members, volunteers, supporters, and donors for coming on this challenging & exciting journey with us.

BY THE NUMBERS

We met with 42 engaged longtime members
85% agreed that a name update would be beneficial
6% were indifferent
9% disagreed

Recent polling shows over 50% of rural & small town BC residents think negatively of terms like green & eco.

75% of members surveyed supported a name update
83 members participated in name options vote
201 supporters voted in our logo contest
85% chose our new updated logo out of 4 options
Office Reopening in Castlegar

Like many other organizations and businesses, during COVID, we made the tough decision to close our offices in Nelson and Trail and transition our staff to work from home. We’re excited to reestablish a community presence in the heart of the West Kootenays, in downtown Castlegar.

"It’s been exciting to see how Neighbours United’s new, more inclusive name has not only helped more people engage with the organization, but also contributed to more and more success. I feel optimistic about our future because of it, and I’m proud to be a part of Neighbours United."

-- David Reid, member & former Executive Director

Our team looks forward to welcoming volunteers, donors & supporters back into our community hub.
100% RENEWABLE KOOTENAYS

WE'RE BUILDING MORE SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE ACTION BY HELPING COMMUNITIES COMMIT & SUPPORTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO IMPLEMENT 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

BY THE NUMBERS

- 2 new communities said yes to 100% renewable energy
- 13 Kootenay local governments committed to the energy transition
- 30 outreach meetings with local governments
- 46 community events & workshops
- 1 fair energy transition report released
- 105 low-income people interviewed for the report
- 4 doctors & nurses published columns supported
- 15 groups coached to support collective climate action

Town of Golden commits to 100% renewable energy by 2050

Golden is the 12th Kootenay town to commit to renewable energy

CLAIỀ PALMER / Feb. 23, 2022 9:10 a.m. / NEWS
DEEP CANVASSING OVERCOMES POLARIZATION

We’re using deep canvassing, developed from US social movements, to help more than 1 in 3 rural and small town people resolve their internal conflict to shift their beliefs and behaviours in a lasting way and support more government action on climate and sustainable land-use.

PERSON-TO-PERSON EMOTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

We’ve had 502 deep conversations about ending fossil fuels subsidies with Cranbrook residents.

This deep community engagement supported 1000+ people to want local action in Trail. In April 2022, Trail City Council voted unanimously to transition to 100% renewable energy no later than 2050.

We knocked on doors in Revelstoke and 50% of the people we deep canvassed became more supportive of sustainable land-use practices, like ending old growth forest logging.

BY THE NUMBERS

3 deep canvassing campaigns
3 communities
6,342 phones called
484 doors knocked
745 conversations
36% people shifted their beliefs
58 trained volunteer canvassers
60 Deep Canvassing Playbook & Toolkit downloads
Neighbours United completed the first deep canvass program in Canada & the first successful volunteer deep canvass on climate & energy anywhere

The program’s success was covered far and wide

- in the National Observer
- in the Globe & Mail
- shared on Instagram by famed climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe
- heard by tens of thousands on Gimlet’s “How to Save a Planet” Podcast
- shared on an influencer’s TikTok, reaching over 650,000 people
- local media
I mean you could also keep arguing with each other in my comments section that might work eventually. The pod is How To Save A Planet btw #climatechange #politics #debate #canvassing #changinglives #sustainable #capitalism

ShmelonMelon
Yes!!!! This episode made me so exited! I signed up immediately!
5:18  Reply

Hazel Thayer · Creator
SAME
5:18  Reply

Canvassing for Climate Action: Here’s How to Make it Work
How to Save a Planet

Apr 21 · 40 min 53 sec

Trail council green-lights 100 per cent renewable energy transition
“This is a very important step for Trail, and all communities,” says Mayor Lisa Pasin.

SHERI REGNIER / May 10, 2022 10:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS
LIVING HERE
SMALL TOWNS, BIG STORIES

Living Here tells solution stories about healthy living, clean energy, land stewardship, and strong rural economies. Sometimes our different perspectives overshadow our shared values. It’s that polarization that we want to tackle.

Living Here builds on our common values and shows we are all in this together. It reinforces and amplifies the messages that connect with residents from our deep canvassing project by telling personal stories of people relatable to audiences not already supporting the environmental solutions we need.

“I just wanted to say how much I love reading the latest stories from Living Here. Please keep them coming!”

-- Raquel, Living Here subscriber

BY THE NUMBERS

13,000 story views
8,000 readers
632 print editions delivered in Trail
12 stories
8 published in local papers
Readers in 66 countries
Since the beginning of Farms to Friends, over 4,000 bags of fresh, local food have been delivered each week to the doorsteps of families and seniors in-need. The program has invested over $200,000 in local farmers and food producers. Households from Balfour, Nelson, Castlegar, Rossland, Warfield Trail, Fruitvale, Montrose, Salmo, and rural communities in-between have been enjoying access to healthy foods grown and produced locally.

"I think Farms to Friends fosters a sense of togetherness throughout small businesses and generous community support. Without programs like this, many individuals and families would not be able to share and enjoy delicious, wholesome meals year-round."

-- Emily, F2F Volunteer

Going into its third year, we made the tough decision to temporarily pause the program. Although not an easy choice, it was necessary as the COVID relief funds that helped launch the program are no longer available. We are working with our team, the families, and our partners to determine a sustainable and resilient model that will allow us to relaunch the program in 2023.
Defending Nature

Community in Nature

Healthy natural environments help prevent the worst effects of climate change and naturally keep drinking water clean. We worked with communities in RDCK Area E, Indigenous Peoples, and scientific experts to create preliminary Nature-Directed Stewardship plans for water-users in the Glade and Laird watersheds to plan for the long-term resilience of their communities and the water systems that support them.

Old Growth Forests

We submitted a letter signed by 50 West Kootenay businesses urging the BC Provincial Government to uphold campaign promises and defend at-risk old-growth forests. The letter was sent to Premier John Horgan and 10 MLAs with related portfolios.

By the Numbers

- 2 Preliminary Nature-Directed Stewardship plans released
- 7 watersheds had ecosystem data collected
- 98 water-users engaged
- 15,000+ people rely on these watersheds
Our People and Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI)

We aim to make Neighbours United a safer space for staff & volunteers to be able to show up as themselves & work together productively.

**By the Numbers**

- 22,192 supporters
- 584 members
- 91 volunteers
- $44 Average one-time donation
- $17 Average monthly donation
- 28 Business sponsors
- 19 Staff positions
- 7 Board members
- 9 Queer identifying staff & board members
- 7 Indigenous, Black, People of Colour identifying staff
- 1 Staff & board Truth & Reconciliation Committee
- 1 Living Wage Employer

2 JEDI trainings developed for new staff
5 JEDI workshops
2 Pride events co-hosted
40 completed deep interviews with marginalized local people on their priorities for poverty reduction and the renewable energy transition
2 Indigenous days of learning
"For the past four years, I’m grateful to be part of an organization that is committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for our most vulnerable communities. This year, I worked with staffer Dea Lewsaw on the “Implementing a Just Transition” report, where low-income and racialized people across the region were interviewed to identify their priorities on housing and transportation in implementing the 100% renewable energy transition. This is essential input for governments to use to build more just and fair communities moving forward.”

--Natasha Edmunds, Organizing Director

"I have spent decades in the struggle for human rights and I am proud of the leadership shown by Neighbours United management and staff in prioritizing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion as an integral part of the work.

The quality of the training has been exemplary and the enthusiasm of staff and volunteers to participate and put the teachings into action proves Neighbours United is a progressive partner in the struggle to build an inclusive society that respects the environment and all who live in it.”

--Cindy McCallum-Miller, Board Member

"Learning how to deep canvass taught me how to have conversations about controversial topics in a productive, engaging, and respectful way. It’s also taught me to listen in a way that allows me to actually hear and understand varying perspectives. Through Neighbours United, I’ve built connections with people 1700 miles away from me -- many of my conversations felt like I was talking with an old friend."

--Riya Bhatia, Deep Canvassing Volunteer

GET OUT THE VOTE

2022 CIVIC ELECTIONS

We sent an election survey to 224 Kootenay local government candidates to understand their support for:

- local food security
- sustainable land-use practices
- transitioning to 100% renewable energy
- guaranteed livable basic income

2900+ people read our survey