

# Looking Back on 2018

*A Month-by-Month Journey Through the BCRC Website*



# January



We started off 2018 with a report noting that [small farmers in BC were holding their own](#), in spite of unpredictable weather and other challenges.



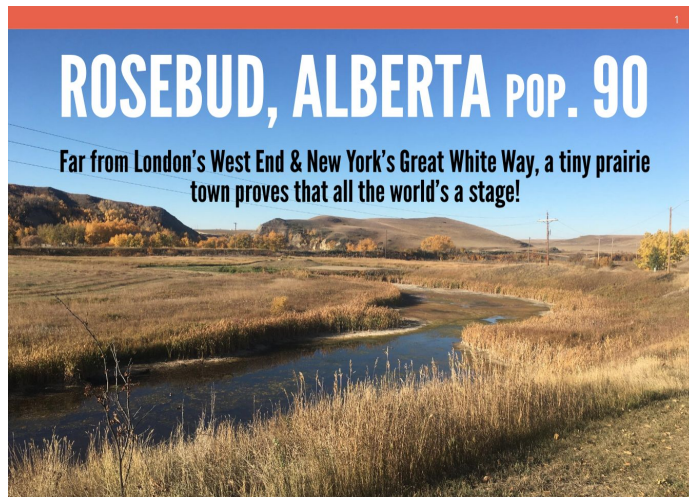
Community — pulling together collectively to affect real change — is often the key in small town turnarounds. In an [informative article written by Spotify's Dayna Winter](#), we're introduced to [Almonte, Ontario](#), a town of 5,000 that has managed to revitalize itself through developing a collaborative consensus around development.



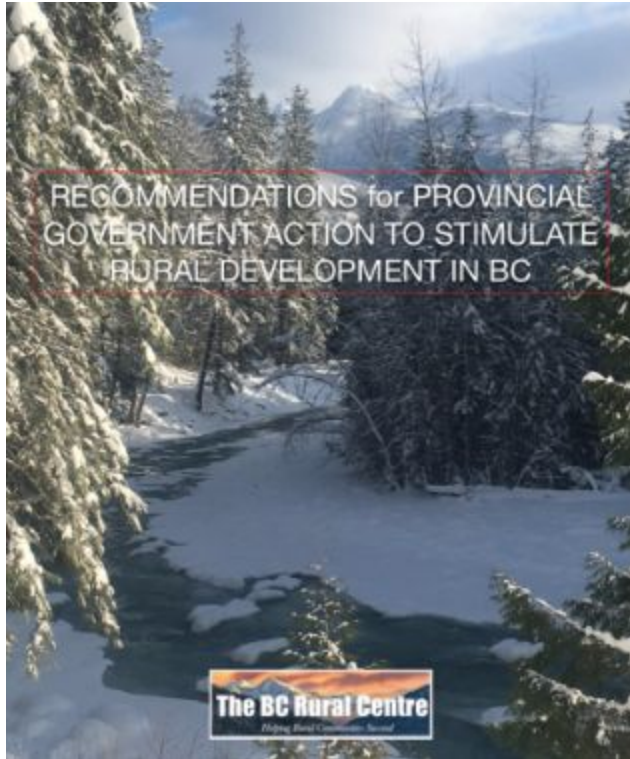
## 10 GREAT REASONS TO INVEST LOCALLY!

1. **KNOW WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES:**  
Get connected to your investments.  
Support local businesses. Celebrate their successes.
2. **RECEIVE MORE THAN JUST A FINANCIAL RETURN:**  
Invest locally and receive a social, environmental, community and financial return on your investment.
3. **INVEST LOCALLY, SUPPORT YOURSELF:**  
Local businesses and their employees pay taxes.  
This adds infrastructure, amenities and services to our community, increasing the value of local assets.
4. **REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:**  
Local businesses make local products.  
They also make significant local purchases.  
This means less transportation and pollution.
5. **IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH:**  
Investment into local agri-food businesses adds variety and sustainability to our healthy food supply.  
Vibrant communities also attract and retain medical professionals and services.
6. **SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**  
Entrepreneurs and skilled workers invest and settle in communities that encourage their business goals, and appreciate their unique character.
7. **CREATE LOCAL JOBS:**  
Start-up and expanding businesses create new jobs.  
This increases opportunities for individuals and families to stay, re-locate, and make a living in our community.
8. **SUCCESSION PLANNING:**  
Local investment assists the transition from one generation of business owners to the next. It supports these new owners to keep existing businesses thriving.
9. **BUILD A UNIQUE, DIVERSIFIED & RESILIENT COMMUNITY:**  
Local businesses are owned by people who live here.  
They're less likely to leave and more invested in our future.
10. **TAKE PART IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT:**  
Each of us brings capital, skills, and knowledge to our community. Let's pool these resources together and add a new element of economic vibrancy at home!

We [announced a series of information sessions](#) in January intended to inform communities throughout the **Kootenays** about “community impact investment,” and to gauge the level of interest in those communities to form one or more local or regional community investment vehicles (as it turned out, interest was high!).



We published [an interactive look](#) at how tiny (pop. 90) **Rosebud, Alberta**, became an arts mecca, in the process transforming its economy.



Finally, in addition to a number of additional news stories published throughout January, [we released a document](#) that provides a summary discussion of five recommendations we put to the provincial government, focused on suggested actions designed to accelerate rural development in the province.

## February



Early in the month, we hosted an informative webinar featuring **Heather Pritchard**, a founding member of FarmFolk CityFolk, the Vancouver Food Policy Council, and the BC Food Systems Network, and the current Chair of [Slow Food in Canada](#) on BC food-related issues.



We published [a blogpost on the formation of a new land trust cooperative](#), described by Heather in our webinar, founded by FarmFolk CityFolk Society, Vancity Community Foundation, Fraser Common Farm Cooperative, and the BC Farmer's Market Association, called the [Foodlands Cooperative of BC](#).



Farmers have a future. At least according to **Lindsey Lusher Shute**, Executive Director and co-founder of the [National Young Farmers' Coalition](#), (NYFC) a membership-based organization dedicated to the success of the next generation of sustainable farmers in the United States.

NYFC's supporter network includes thousands of farmers and consumers from all fifty states, who work together to advocate for change in Federal policy, develop new farm technology through the [Farm Hack project](#) and



solve local issues through regional NYFC chapters. We showcased [a video featuring Lindsey](#) discussing the decades-long migration away from the family farm, and how bringing young people back to farming is critical for the future of food, agriculture and rural places.



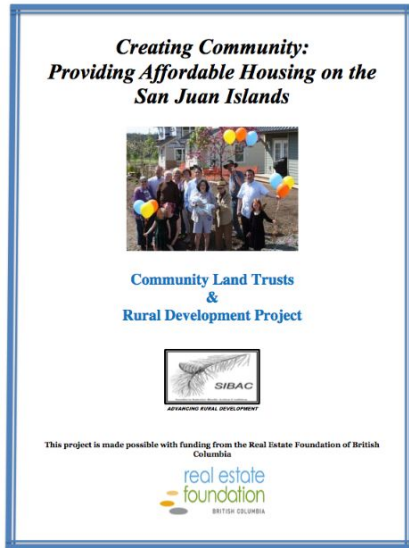
Then, after publishing blogposts on the BC government's invitation to the public for ideas on a new rural strategy for the province, and an intriguing post about a small Cape Breton business offering free land to attract workers, we launched an ambitious initiative called [Escape the City](#).

We wanted to discover whether there was any interest among creative, entrepreneurial urban Millennials in pulling up their city stakes and moving to rural BC. So we launched an online contest, inviting young urbanites to tell us why they might be interested in moving to the small West Kootenay town of **Kaslo**.

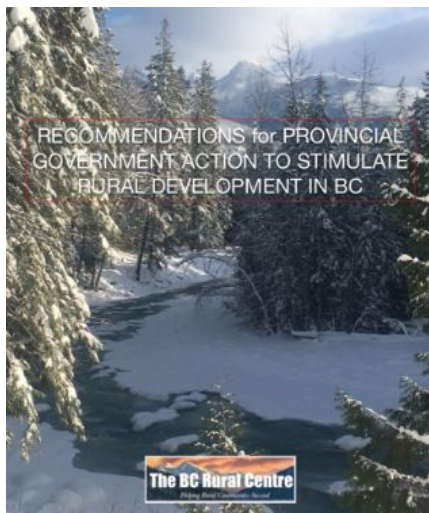
The response was overwhelming! Out of hundreds of entrants, we selected two winners — the **Stober family**, from **Victoria**, and the **Longvals**, from **Calgary**. The contest served to [shine a spotlight](#) on the challenges — and opportunities — facing rural BC communities wanting to retain and attract bright young people. As a footnote, the Longvals promptly returned to Calgary, sold their home, and have now moved to Kaslo!



# March



Accessing affordable housing continues to challenge many rural communities. We published a [report](#) in March, completed with the support of the **Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia**, on the experiences of community land trusts on Washington State's **San Juan Islands**, providing useful background and detail for BC communities wishing to tackle this vexing problem.



We also released [our recommendations](#) regarding possible rural development actions to the provincial government. In addition we published a number of News blogs, on topics ranging from [an explanation of community land trusts](#), to [a new fibre optic bandwidth rollout on Haida Gwaii](#).

# April



In April, we published a number of rural education-themed items, including a Featured Report titled [Rural Schools, Why They Close & How They Can Be Saved](#), a look at rural Saskatchewan's Sun West Distance Learning Centre, [a podcast with Kootenay school principal Dan Rude](#) who argues for the importance of rural schools, and a Rural Success Story chronicling [how Wells-Barkerville managed to save their school](#).

# May



With an eye toward **Peter Kenyon's** British Columbia ABCD sessions slated to begin in late May, we shared information about Peter's Australian-based [Bank of I.D.E.A.S.](#), and published a useful community asset mapping toolkit, developed by [DePaul University's ABCD Institute](#),





We hosted [a series of asset-based community development workshops](#) beginning in late May and extending into June, featuring renowned Australian community development champion, **Peter Kenyon**.



Also in May, we released news of a new provincial broadband funding program, and published [a blogpost](#) and [accompanying video](#) on the spread of the **Small Town Love** campaign in northern BC.

# June



In June, we published [a thoughtful article](#) by **Rupert Downing**, titled *Rural Innovation — Communities As Engines Of Change*, that suggests we look to Scotland's [Highland and Islands Enterprise](#) as a model for place-based community development in rural BC.



The same month saw us publish [an extensive report](#) (including videos and several audio interviews), on the experiences of three Interior towns — **Salmon Arm**, **Revelstoke**, and **Trail** — in using new and emerging technologies to drive innovation and positive change in their respective communities

Also in June, [we announced the winners](#) of our Escape the City contest.

# July



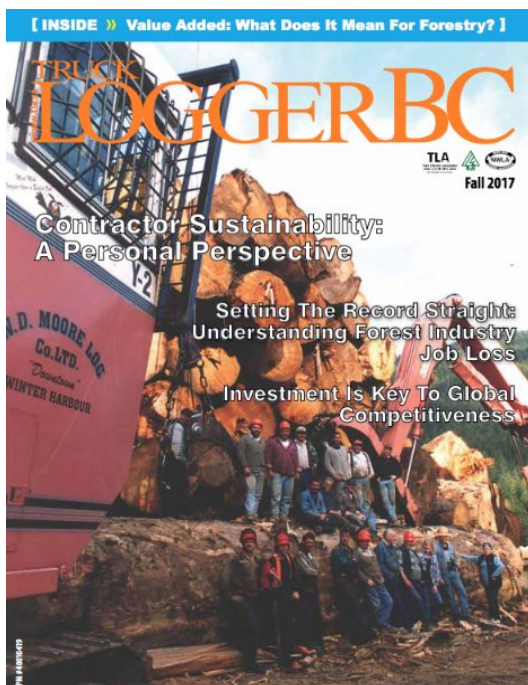
July saw [the rollout of Escape the City](#) in Kaslo, an event that galvanized the community and led one of the winning families, the Longvals from Calgary, to move to Kaslo with the intention of starting a new outdoor recreation business.



We released a [Featured Report](#) on the healthcare situation in the **Village of New Denver**, chronicling one small town's struggles to retain a decent level of healthcare services.



We followed a summer-long CBC series on [how Canada's small towns are trying to survive and thrive in changing times](#).



We also re-published [a sobering article](#) that appeared originally in *Truck Logger BC* magazine, by **Graham Lasure**, the final owner of a family business founded in **Winter Harbour** in 1927. Lasure's suggested future changes to the current regulatory environment is must reading for anyone interested in the sustainability of BC's logging contractors.

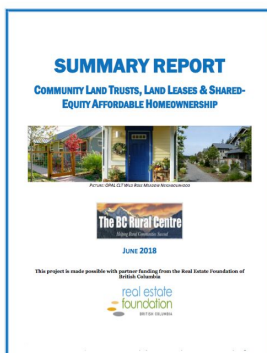


## August



In August, our Success Story provided [a look back at the Escape the City contest](#), in words, photos, and videos.

## September



In September, we released [a report on Community Land Trusts, land leases, and shared equity approaches](#) to creating affordable rural housing, written by BCRC's **Gordon Borgstrom**. The report was based on research completed by Borgstrom, as well as

consultants retained by the BC Rural Centre to work on the project. This report is one of several documents created as part of the Community Land Trusts & Rural Development Project created and managed by the BC Rural Centre. The other reports and documents created as part of this project are available on our website's [Housing & CLTs page](#). BCRC gratefully acknowledges the [Real Estate Foundation of BC](#) as a funding partner on this project.



In an effort to make what for some may seem a complex approach to affordable home ownership based on the land lease + shared equity model, we created [an animated video](#) that explains, step by step, how this method works in entertaining fashion.

## October



With municipal elections looming in October, the subject of public participation was timely. In [two podcasts](#), we reached out to **Cowichan Valley Regional District** Chief Administrative Officer **Brian Carruthers**, who offered his insights on his regional district's UBCM award-winning efforts to boost and support civic engagement, and for another perspective, chatted with **Natasha Horsman**, **North Cowichan's** Manager of Communications & Strategic

Initiatives, and **Tammy Isaachsen**, the municipality's Community Liaison Officer, who shared their views on public participation.



We covered [a new provincial/federal program](#) to assist Indigenous communities in BC interested in expanding their agricultural businesses and supporting local food security.

We also published a piece announcing the launch of [a new provincial government website](#) that expands access to information and public engagement on applications for Crown land use in B.C.



The future of rural life was the subject of [an extensive Maclean's article](#) that provocatively stated that crime, opioid abuse, boarded-up businesses, and fleeing populations are destroying Canada's heartland, and posed the question: can small-town life be saved?





We also published blogposts in October on [the BC government's clarification of new cannabis regulations](#), and [the results of the 2018 municipal elections](#) across the province.



The [decline of Greyhound service](#) in October, and its implications for rural BC didn't escape our attention, either.

## November



We began a busy November with [an intriguing Success Story](#) on the launch of a new initiative in **Kimberley, BC** — the [Kimberley Outdoor Alliance](#), with the goal of attracting outdoor-related businesses and entrepreneurs to this mountainous East Kootenay community.

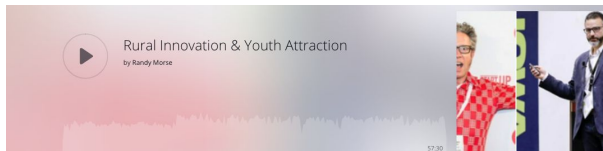
The post was accompanied by [a podcast](#) featuring an interview with the Alliance's chairman, **Matt Mosteller**.



We reported on the Government of BC's release of its [action plan](#) in response to the government-commissioned, independent **Abbott/Chapman report** on the unprecedented 2017 wildfire and flood seasons in British Columbia.



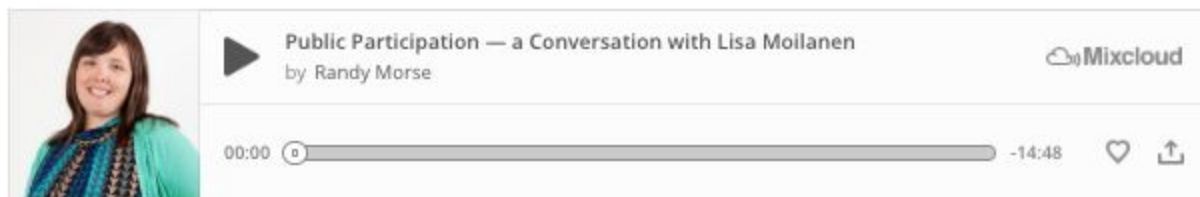
We [published a report](#) on the challenges rural communities face in retaining and attracting creative, entrepreneurial Millennials.



On the same topic, we hosted a webinar in late November featuring Kootenay-based tech entrepreneur and visionary **Jean-Marc La Flamme**, and one of America's leading exponents and practitioners of rural revival, Iowa's **Zachary Mannheimer**, then [published a podcast](#) of their lively and informative discussion.



Also in November, we noted that renowned Australian asset-based community development advocate, **Peter Kenyon**, [might be available for workshops](#) and sessions in BC next year.



We finished off the month with [an interview](#) on civic engagement with the outgoing president of the BC chapter of the International Association of Public Participation, **Regional District of Nanaimo's** Communications Consultant, **Lisa Moilanen**.



# Conclusion

2018 saw us greatly expand the extent and breadth of our online — and live — efforts to help inform and inspire rural British Columbians and First Nations. We look forward to building on this solid base as we move into 2019 and beyond.

From all of us here at the BC Rural Centre, please accept our best wishes as we enter the upcoming holiday season, and our hope the coming year will provide plenty of health and happiness for you and yours!

