



BC RURAL CENTRE
vibrant & sustainable rural
communities

Keeping it Rural Conference 2024

TUESDAY, MAY 21ST

- 12:00PM REGISTRATION
12:45 WELCOME & SYILX BLESSING
1 - 2:30 INNOVATION PANEL
2:30 BREAK
2:45 - 3:45 ECONOMIC TRUSTS Rural Champions for Communities
4:00 - 4:20 BC RURAL CENTRE UPDATE
4:30 - 6:00 WATER STEWARDSHIP
6:15 - 7:15 SOCIAL HOUR

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND

- 8AM BREAKFAST
9AM WELCOME & SYILX BLESSING
9 - 11:00AM AGRICULTURE PANEL (NOTE 2 HOURS LONG)
BREAK
11:15 - 12:00 RURAL HEALTH with BC Rural Health Network
12:00 - 1:15 LUNCH
1:15 - 1:45 ROLY RUSSELL - What's Rurally Happening
2:00 - 3:45 WORKFORCE/HOUSING PANEL
4:00 - 6PM 13 WAYS | KEYNOTE

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD

- 8AM BREAKFAST
9AM WELCOME & SYILX BLESSING
9 - 10:45 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PANEL
11:00 - 11:30 COMMUNITY FUTURES BC
11:45 - 12:30 CHIEF CLARENCE LOUIE | KEYNOTE
12:30 CLOSING

There are 15-minute breaks scheduled throughout the conference



Keeping it Rural Conference 2024

Tuesday, May 21st

Welcome:

First Nation land acknowledgment Syilx

Welcome to BC Rural Centre's Keeping it Rural Conference! We are thrilled to have you here as we come together to explore innovative solutions, share insights, and build stronger communities in rural areas. Over the next few days, we look forward to engaging discussions, inspiring panels, and valuable networking opportunities. Thank you for joining us in our mission to support and sustain rural communities.

We have reserved the Gulf Stream Lounge & Grill from 6:15-7:30 for some socializing time.

introduce Roly Russell - moderator of the Innovation Panel Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development. Roly holds a PhD in ecology, specializing in biodiversity, sustainability, and decision-making amid uncertainties like climate change.

Innovation Panel

Welcome to the Rural Innovation Panel, "Sowing Seeds of Change: Exploring Rural Innovations and Cultivating Creativity." In this session, we will delve into the groundbreaking ideas and innovative practices that are transforming rural communities across various industries. Our panel of experts will share their insights and experiences, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by rural innovators. Join us as we explore how creativity and ingenuity are driving progress and fostering sustainable development in rural areas.

Kevin Pennock - Co-Founder & Executive Director of KORE, a Kootenay non-profit organization dedicated to makers and creators in the outdoor recreation manufacturing and design sector.

Kevin has been a lifelong outdoor adventurer and has made a career through the outdoors, both as a filmmaker and as a project manager, including creating the Ride Guide TV series and working as the Nordic Sport Manager for the Calgary 1988 Olympic Winter Games.

Louise Pedersen - Executive Director of Outdoor Recreation Council of BC Louise joined ORCBC in 2019 with a vision to enhance the impact, diversity, and sustainability of the organization. She holds an M.Sc. in natural resource management and a post-graduate diploma in public relations. She has a long resume in the philanthropic and communications fields for nature organizations in Canada and the UK. Louise lives in Revelstoke and is an outdoor enthusiast, to say the least: kayaking, nordic skiing, gravel biking, fishing, and camping.

Rebecca Richards - Director of Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation Rebecca has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and in Economics from the University of Calgary, and a Master of



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Arts in Political Studies from Queen's University. She is passionate about her career in economic development where she can make a positive impact in the local West Kootenay communities and help bring sustainability to industry and the economy. Recently, Rebecca has worked on supply chain challenges, researching the impacts of global supply chain disruptions on West Kootenay businesses and looking for local solutions. She is excited to be working with food sector partners to address a long-standing distribution problem faced by the agriculture & food sector in the Columbia Basin.

Robyn Peel - Economic Development Manager - Community Futures East Kootenay Robyn is a community builder, connector, and facilitator and is a keen supporter of social enterprises and all things community-based. Robyn is passionate about ensuring rural communities are vibrant and thriving places to live and work and is driven by collaboration and connection. Within her regional role, she is always looking to share good practices to help reduce duplication and get to beneficial outcomes faster. She believes in the power of community and networks to support and enable change and is always looking to "do things better".

Moderator Questions: 15 minutes (2:15-2:30) followed by a 15-minute break.

15-minute break - set up for the Economic Trusts Panel

Moderator - GRACE MCGregor

2:45 - 3:45 Economic Trusts of BC - Championing Rural Communities

Introduction: Welcome to the "Economic Trusts of BC: Championing Rural Communities" panel. This session will focus on the vital role that our economic trusts play in supporting and revitalizing rural communities in British Columbia. Our distinguished panelists will discuss the strategies and initiatives that have successfully driven economic growth, enhanced local infrastructure, and improved quality of life in rural areas. It is always a pleasure to have all three trusts in the room together and to learn how they are championing rural development and fostering sustainable prosperity for future generations.

Today's panelists are:

Laurel Douglas - CEO Etsi-BC CEO of Economic Trust of the Southern Interior. A community leader and champion of small businesses, she has led organizations with regional and BC-wide mandates for over 25 years.

Brodie Guy - CEO ICET CEO of Island Coastal Economic Trust. He has served in executive roles with funds investing in Indigenous, rural, and sustainable development across BC for 15 years.

Jordan Barrett Program Manager NDIIT - Partner Programs at NDIIT and oversees several funding programs that support projects throughout the North ranging from transportation, agriculture, housing, childcare, and more.

Moderator Questions: if time permits



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15-minute break

BC Rural Centre update on projects and strategic planning in September

Introduction: The BC Rural Centre is dedicated to fostering resilient and vibrant rural communities across British Columbia. Through collaboration, research, and community engagement, the Rural Centre provides invaluable resources and support to address the unique challenges faced by rural areas. By promoting innovative solutions and collaborative efforts, the BC Rural Centre plays a crucial role in enhancing the social, economic, and environmental well-being of rural communities throughout the province. We are proudly rural and excited to look for ways to ensure rural life remains sustainable.

Some of our current and upcoming projects:

REDIP - Action Coalition for Rural Engagement - starts with this conference!

RCCBC- Rural Health Linked Sectors \ Rural Partnerships with Rural Doctors and Perspectives. (RTVS and PHRP)

Cache Creek Flooding & Bonaparte First Nation Water Stewardship Society - support

BCEDA - rural downtown revitalization presentation

Southern Okanagan Chamber of Commerce - co-creation of joint ventures to engage surrounding rural communities.

RURAL 911 - continues to be the go-to for rural residents and local government/First Nations for input and support on unique challenges, we offer strategic partnerships, connections, and capacity.

5-minute break - set up for Water Stewardship

Water Stewardship

Moderator - Judy Wilson - Neskolith Nation founding member of BCRC.

Introduction: Welcome to the Water Stewardship Panel, featuring river scientist Jeff Anderson and enthusiastic water steward Kayla. In this session, we will explore the critical importance of water stewardship in maintaining healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities. Jeff Anderson will share his scientific expertise on river systems, while Kayla will bring her passionate perspective on grassroots water stewardship efforts. Together, they will provide valuable insights into protecting and preserving our vital water resources for future generations. Join us for an engaging discussion on the challenges and opportunities in water stewardship.



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Kayla - enthusiastic water steward, consultant, nature lover. Kayla has worked with Cache Creek and Bonaparte First Nation on flooding challenges and ways to effectively work together for better water stewardship.

Jeffrey Anderson is a river scientist with 20 years of experience in water resources consulting. He attained a Bachelor of Science degree in hydrology, geomorphology, climatology, and river ecology; followed by a Master of Science degree that investigated sediment transport and wood dynamics; and is now pursuing a [Ph.D.in](#) the Department of Watershed Sciences at Utah State University where he is focusing on creating balance between people and nature through riverscape restoration.

Jeffrey's experience has spanned the hydropower, mining, oil and gas, and transportation, and forestry sectors. Like many British Columbians, he began his career in the forest industry, working in the bush in northern BC. Jeff went on to spend nearly a decade working for international engineering firms as a senior hydrologist and senior fluvial geomorphologist before transitioning to the conservation sector where he worked as a senior freshwater manager for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Presently, Jeffrey is a principal consultant at Geomorphic Consulting Ltd. based out of Smithers, BC where he and his wife Melanie are raising their two young boys.

Al Midgley - Bonaparte First Nation Water Stewardship Society

Closing comments for the day and invite to the lounge for shared social time.

Dinner options - there are plenty of restaurants within walking distance.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND

8-9 breakfast

: Welcome & Introduce First Nation land acknowledgment

LEONARD Hiebert Moderator for the Agriculture Panel

Leonard Hiebert is the Peace River Regional District Electoral Area 'D' Director and Chair of the Regional Board. As well as a volunteer board member of the BC Rural Centre.

Leonard has a vast range of experience, focusing on management, agriculture, and a paramedic in the oil and gas industry. He has managed various hog farms in Canada and now focuses his spare time developing his own farm. Leonard has lived in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta as well as in Dawson Creek before settling in Tomslake, BC in 2008.

He is always interested in learning new concepts for farming.



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Agriculture Panel

Introduction: Welcome to the Rural Agriculture Panel, "Growing Forward: Sustainable Practices in Rural Agriculture." In this session, we will explore sustainable agricultural practices that are shaping the future of rural farming. Our panelists will share their knowledge and experiences on enhancing and promoting resilience in rural agriculture. Let's delve into the strategies and solutions that are driving sustainable growth and ensuring long-term viability and food sovereignty.

Pascale Schittecatte Pascale is the current BC Land Matching Program Manager of Young Agrarians. Pascale previously worked in the wine industry as a winemaker and farmhand in small-scale, permaculture-style operations. Young Agrarians (YA) is a farmer-to-farmer educational resource network for new and young ecological farmers in Canada. We recognize the Indigenous lands and territories that we work on and alongside and are committed to providing programs that are inclusive and available to farmers and friends of diverse backgrounds. The land matching program pairs farmers who are ready to access land with landowners who have space to share or are no longer farming themselves.

Eva-Lena Lang is the Executive Director of Organic BC. She grew up on a diverse organic ranch and gained farming experience in the agricultural sector in BC and Europe. Recognizing the complexity and interconnectedness of our world, and to increase her capacity to support farmers and grow the regional food system she co-founded a food systems network. This work led her to pursue a master's studying network development in food systems. Her experiences in and observations of the food system led her to pursue the work she is doing today. Eva-Lena sits on the North Okanagan Land to Table Network (L2T) steering committee and on the regional agricultural advisory committee in her community.

Dixon Terbasket is a syilx Nation community member, born in the Similkameen, and currently residing there. He has been involved as an activist since the early 1980s and is deeply passionate and knowledgeable about the protection of syilx Title and Rights. He cares about the future of syilx lands, waterways, air, and animals. Dixon has spent his career working in the areas of wildlife management, land use planning, and the recognition and protection of syilx Title and Rights. Additionally, Dixon has done extensive work as a natural resources community liaison conducting interviews with Elders, and Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge holders, as well as engaging with chiefs and council members on issues affecting the Okanagan territory. Dixon works as a syilx Cultural Research Coordinator, Natural Resources, with the Okanagan Nation Alliance. He also serves as a member of the Bringing the Salmon Home Indigenous Knowledge Counsel.

Vicki Gee Vicki brings 14 years of experience in public office, including 6 years as a School Trustee for School District 51 Boundary (2008-2014) and 8 years as the Elected Official for Area E (West Boundary) in the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (2014-2022). She currently volunteers her time between the development of a Food Hub in the Boundary as a director of



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Boundary Community Ventures Assn and as Community Services Coordinator for Trails to the Boundary. In this role, she works to bring a variety of social, educational, and governmental services to small rural communities. She is a director on four other non-profits, including Kettle Valley Bursary & Scholarship, Vela Canada, and two person-centered societies for her special needs nephew and sister. Most of her working career was spent as a software developer. She started working for a private company in the early 1980s. In 1989, Vicki incorporated her own company to carry on the development of custom software for clients of large IBM business computer systems. In this role she also worked on system control and workflow management before winding down the company in 2017.

Kevin Boon is the General Manager of the BC Cattlemen's Association. The BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) has been the official voice of cattle ranchers throughout British Columbia since 1929. For more than 80 years, the Association - whose membership is close to 1,200 ranchers - has represented the interests of beef cattle producers in the province of BC. BCCA is proud to work on behalf of approximately 72% of the provincial cattle herd.

The purpose of the BC Cattlemen's Association is to promote, encourage, protect, and develop the cattle industry in British Columbia, in an environmentally responsible manner. Although times have changed since 1929, the BCCA's direction remains the same: To maintain and strengthen the sustainability of the BC beef industry.

Moderator Questions: 15 minutes

15-minute break - set up for **Rural Health**

Rural Health

Paul Adams is the Executive Director of the BC Rural Health Network. He has spent the past 40 years living in and working from the Upper-Similkameen region on the traditional and unceded lands of the Syilx First Nation and has been an advocate in both business roles, non-profits, and industry. The Network represents non-partisan, solutions-based approaches to healthcare for all rural and remote residents in our Province.

Phoebe Lazier is the BC Rural Health Network's Community Engagement Coordinator. Growing up in the Kootenays fostered her love of the outdoors and an acute understanding of the healthcare landscape in rural BC and the need for equitable access to quality healthcare for all BC residents. She is passionate about understanding and addressing the social determinants of health. She is grateful to live, work, and play on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx People in the Nicola Valley.

Julia Hayos is the Operations Lead with Foundry Virtual, supporting the ongoing development and implementation of Foundry's virtual services for young people and their families across BC. Julia has a background in public health and health administration and has been working in the field of health promotion, prevention, and early intervention



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throughout her career. She works, lives, and enjoys the beautiful outdoor lifestyle with her partner and kids on the traditional, and unceded territories of the Syilx Okanagan People.

Raelene Hodgson works in Rural and Remote Community Development at Foundry BC. She comes to this work as a mental health clinician with a background in working with Indigenous youth through land-based programming. Raelene currently resides on the lands of the Lil'wat people in Pemberton BC and is passionate about increasing accessible services to youth in rural and remote communities.

Cuauhtemoc is the Cross Cultural Health Broker for the Latin American Community of the Mobile Clinic at Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop. He works very closely with migrant farmworkers who come from Latin America. With his background as a lawyer and professor in Mexico, he brings over 15 years of advocacy and empowering people. Cuauhtemoc is a cultural bridge between the community and the health system, supporting migrants and newcomers to access and understand the Canadian health system. He is not only a translator, he also builds trust and understands the cultural differences to find the best approach to get the best health outcomes. He works in a holistic way that includes multiple perspectives, such as medical, social, and cultural while understanding that his job requires confidentiality, ethics, and great communication skills. He also tries to uncover the multiple layers of the social determinants of health that affect patient health. Always with cultural awareness, he connects with other organizations that can help guide the patients through their journeys in Canada

Lunch

Roly Russell- What's Rurally Happening in BC?!

Roly Russell - Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development. Roly holds a PhD in ecology, specializing in biodiversity, sustainability, and decision-making amid uncertainties like climate change.

15-minute break - set up for **Workforce and Housing**

Moderator BRAD Sperling, Peace River Regional District Director for Electoral Area 'C'. Brad has lived in Charlie Lake for over ten years and in Fort St. John for over thirty-five years. Brad worked for BC Rail for ten years and continues to work as a self-employed carpenter. Brad is a volunteer board member of the BC Rural Centre Society.

WORKFORCE & HOUSING

Welcome to the Workforce and Housing Panel, "Homegrown Solutions: Fostering Rural Workforce and Housing Stability." This session will look at the critical issues of workforce development and housing stability in rural communities. Our expert panelists will discuss innovative strategies and practical solutions for attracting and retaining talent, creating affordable housing, and supporting the economic growth of rural areas. Let's explore how



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local initiatives and collaborative efforts are making a significant impact on building strong, sustainable rural communities.

Today's Panelists Are:

LUKE PANEK Community Success Director of YOLO Nomads. Yolo Nomads helps smaller communities leverage the current trend of people leaving big cities in search of a better quality of life by creating captivating educational resources tailored to their ideal audience. There are three core audiences YOLO Nomads markets to: Remote Workers, Relocators (Labour), and Investors (Economic Development). YOLO Nomads also develops custom embeddable maps that help visitors and residents alike discover the best the region has to offer.

Yolo Nomads also creates interactive maps that can be embedded on any website that helps visitors and locals alike, discover the businesses and amenities within the community. These maps include filters that can be tailor-made to adapt to each individual community's needs.

Dr Farhad Moghimehfar is the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development for Vancouver Island University. In his role as the BC Regional Innovation Chair, Farhad leads a comprehensive research program aimed at enhancing the resilience of rural tourism communities in British Columbia, Canada. Over the course of five years, this program will undertake multiple projects to explore the adaptive capacity of various rural tourism communities and implement strategies to bolster their resilience in the face of changing dynamics and challenges.

SALIK KHAN Chief Chief Experience Officer and co-founder of Rohe Homes. Rohe Homes is a BC-based construction technology company founded by Rohan Kulkarni and Salik Khan. Their mission is to increase global housing availability and ensure housing security. They specialize in prefabricated foldable structures which are rapidly deployed and set up in communities throughout Canada.

KYLE WHITE Kyle is the Director of Education with Co-operatives First, where he leads the development and delivery of start-up support services on online courses for Co-operatives First. Originally from Newfoundland and Labrador, Kyle has worked his way across Canada, focusing on community economic development in rural and Indigenous communities. With degrees in Geography and Public Policy, Kyle's educational background has focused on community development, corporate governance, and public policy. Aside from his work with Co-operatives First, Kyle stays busy as a volunteer, history enthusiast, and long-distance runner.

Moderator Questions:

15-minute break - set up for Keynote 13 Ways to Kill Your Community with Doug Griffiths



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Keynote 13 Ways to Kill Your Community with Doug Griffiths

Doug Griffiths is a wildly popular community strategist and author of two best-selling editions of "13 Ways to Kill Your Community". He has supported, guided, and inspired hundreds of communities to create effective change. Whether through speaking and presentations or through advising and consulting, he is dedicated to helping communities across North America find their own pathway to success.

He grew up on a ranch outside a small town where he learned the value of hard work, critical thinking skills, and the value of community. That background led him into politics, but he insists he has since been through rehab and is fully recovered. His experience in politics gave him a deep understanding of how to move people and get things done. He deliberately retired from politics in January 2015, after serving for 13 years, to return to his passion for community building.

Griffiths has an Executive MBA and Honors B. A Philosophy Degree, as well as his Bachelor of Education, all from the University of Alberta where he has taught community and municipal leadership courses for elected officials and administration.

Questions:

Closing comments

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD

8-9 breakfast

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

Moderator: Scott Kershaw is a councilor for the town of Barrier and a BC Rural Centre board member following in the footsteps of his father William, who was a founding member of the BCRC.

Emergency Preparedness, Energy & Forestry Enhancement Panel

Welcome to the panel on "Emergency Preparedness, Energy, and Forestry Enhancement in Rural BC." This session will focus on the unique challenges and opportunities in preparing for emergencies, advancing energy solutions, and enhancing forestry practices in rural British Columbia. Our panel of experts will share their insights on developing resilient strategies, innovative energy initiatives, and sustainable forestry management. Join us for an engaging discussion on how rural communities can better prepare for emergencies and harness the potential of their natural resources for a sustainable future.

Today's Panelists Are:



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Carol Suhan leads FortisBC community-based conservation and efficiency programs delivery for First Nations, local governments, and community and educational organizations. With more than twenty-five years' of experience leading sustainability behaviour change programs, Carol works to support local energy efficiency and conservation initiatives. She is passionate about working collaboratively with public and private sectors to design and implement high-impact projects.

Katheleen Dixon is a program specialist for conservation and energy management at FortisBC. Her work includes a number of initiatives designed to reduce the impact of energy poverty for British Columbian households. She has been working within community programs and supports low-income households as well as social service organizations. She has more than 15 years of experience in marketing and communications. Recently, her focus has shifted to the challenges of energy inequity and program design, and is completing a Sustainability & Behavior Change certification through the University of California.

Steve Kozuki RPF, Executive Director of the Forest Enhancement Society of BC. Steve has worked in the forest industry since 1984. He graduated with his Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1994 and has held various positions from Timber Valuation Coordinator for Weldwood and General Manager of Forestry for the Council of Forest Industries, to working in BC Timber Sales and Timber Pricing for the BC Public Service. He is passionate about the work FESBC does to advance the environmental and resource stewardship of B.C.'s forests.

Julia (Trudy) Peterson regional preparedness and response specialist for First Nation Emergency Services Society of BC. FNESS is a charitable non-profit organization. With the support of the First Nation Leadership Council, FNESS is the organization that communities reach out to for support and delivery of essential emergency and forest fuel management programs and services.

15-minute break - set up for Community Futures with Troy Dungate

COMMUNITY FUTURES BC - CULTIVATING RURAL SUCCESS

Troy Dungate Troy is the Chair of Community Futures Pan West (4 Western Provinces), the Chair of Community Futures British Columbia (CFBC), and the Chair of Community Futures Fraser Fort George (Prince George)

Troy was born and raised in Prince George. He is a graduate of the University of Victoria's Bachelor of Commerce program and the University of Saskatchewan's Bachelor of Law program. Troy has previously managed offices focusing on business development in Prince George, Langley, Victoria, and Vancouver for TD Waterhouse. He now practices law with his family at their Prince George-based law firm.

Community Futures is a community-based economic renewal initiative, established by the Federal Government in 1985. Our main objectives are to help rural Canadians start or expand a business and to help sustain and improve communities and their local economies.



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15-minute break - set up for Chief Clarence Louie

KEYNOTE: Chief Clarence Louie Keynote

Introduce Chief Clarence Louie

Chief Clarence Louie Chairman of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, and the Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band for over 36 years is a sought-after speaker and a successful entrepreneur.. Chief Louie is one of six First Nations leaders to emphasize economic development in American Indian communities as a means to improve people's standard of living. Louie is one of the longest-running chiefs in Canada, elected in 1984, leading his community for four decades. He is known for focusing on economic and business independence to strengthen his community.

Closing comments for the conference

Thank the sponsors, speakers, attendees, volunteers, board, and staff

Volunteers: Arin Krivsky and Darren Toth

Etsi-BC

Co-operatives First

FortisBC

Real Estate Foundation of BC

Regional District East Kootenay

Regional District Kootenay Boundary

Peace River Regional District

Christina Gateway

Rural Coordination Centre of BC

Rural Health Network

KORE

Organic BC

THANK YOU - see you next year!

You can reach us at: info@bcruralcentre.org