



Frequently asked questions

RDCK Climate Action

How is the RDCK moving forward with climate action?

In April 2024, the Board directed staff to explore climate action priorities that are practical and affordable and based on [RDCK Ideas for Climate Action](#). In order for an idea to move forward, staff would need to do a business case and bring it to the Board of Directors to vote on at a public meeting.

How was RDCK Ideas for Climate Action developed?

In 2023, RDCK held an extensive community engagement process on a draft RDCK Climate Action Plan. We developed [RDCK Ideas for Climate Action](#) in response to what we heard.

Much of the initial RDCK draft Climate Action Plan was built on feedback that came through the [100% Renewable Energy Plan process](#). It was also built on four years (2019-2023) of internal and external engagement, as well as review and integration of community plans and strategies, including the RDCK Resource Recovery Plan, West Kootenay Transit Plans, and Official Community Plans. All of these plans required extensive community engagement in their development.

What changes were made to the climate action documents following the engagement process?

The following changes have been made in response to feedback from the engagement process.

- We condensed the previous Climate Action Plan into a two-page document called [RDCK Ideas for Climate Action](#).
- The initial document contained a list of current and potential climate actions. The revised document is a list of new ideas only. (Current climate actions are included in the annual [State of Climate Action](#) report.)
- We simplified the content and removed problematic wording.
- We removed some of the proposed ideas and revised the wording for a number of others.

Which ideas have been removed?

We removed the following proposed ideas following the public engagement process.

- Develop policies/bylaws to support the EV transition.
- Provide education (internally & externally) around how to achieve regional emission targets.

- Collaborate with relevant organizations to develop support programs for marginalized people who wish to farm or develop food businesses.
- Build in-house climate action expertise.
- Develop an internal carbon budgeting tool.
- Develop a Trip Avoidance Policy for staff.

Staff also removed ideas the Board previously voted on from the list of proposed ideas.

What impact would the new ideas have?

The new ideas proposed in the previous draft Climate Action Plan support a 25% reduction in carbon pollution by 2026. The level of reduction is necessary to achieve a 50% reduction by 2030. The actions were modeled by Community Energy Association.

Some of the ideas were removed as a result of feedback from the engagement process. The remaining items proposed in [RDCK Ideas for Climate Action](#) would only meet a portion of our targets.

How will the ideas in RDCK Ideas for Climate Action be funded?

Staff anticipate that a significant portion of the costs can be funded through the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP) and the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP), with the remainder being covered primarily through grants. Staff will prepare business cases for each new idea for the Board to consider that will identify available funding.

When will the subject meetings take place?

The subject meetings that were planned as part of the climate action engagement process could take place as part of the business case analysis on individual actions. This could be in the form of community meetings or included within Community Sustainable Living Advisory Committee (CSLAC) meetings.

How does climate change impact us here in the RDCK?

Climate change impacts in the RDCK include:

- Hotter, drier summers
- Warmer, wetter winters
- Increasing area burned in the region
- Increasing length of the smoke season
- Increasing maximum, mean and minimum temperatures
- Longer and more intense heatwaves
- Declining snowpack and receding glaciers
- Declining late-season stream flow
- Increasing extreme precipitation
- More frequent mass-movement events
- More frequent floods

- Increasing area burned due to wildfires - The last decade has seen the area burned in the southern West Kootenays increase from around 600 hectares a year between 1941 and 2000 to around 9,500 hectares a year between 2011 and 2022.

The following local events are tied to climate change.

- Extreme early spring and June precipitation combined with rapid snowmelt resulted in the Johnsons Landing landslide in 2012, which destroyed houses and waterlines and killed four people. It also resulted in flooding around Kootenay Lake.
- Extreme flooding in Hamill, Fry, Campbell and Shroeder Creeks in 2013 was a continuation of the rain-on-snow event that flooded Calgary.
- There were health impacts due to the extreme heat event and smoky skies in 2021 associated with the heat dome that resulted in the wildfire that consumed Lytton.
- Flooding of downtown Grand Forks in 2018 was caused by rapid snowmelt with possible contributions from extensive clearcutting upstream.

Events that may not have been tied specifically to climate change but that will increase in frequency with climate change are debris torrents and debris floods caused by high-severity wildfires creating hydrophobic (water-repellent) soils in combination with subsequent high-intensity rainfall events:

- A series of debris torrents in Springer Creek in the Slocan Valley from 2008 to 2010 resulted in a number of highway blockages and the death of one person.
- A debris torrent in Kuskanook in 2004 resulted in destroyed buildings and blocked the highway.

The RDCK Climate Action Plan is based on peer-reviewed international research, including the efforts of those involved in the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) reports.

Have you been collecting local area GHG emissions through the years so that we have baseline data?

Yes, both community and corporate GHG profiles have been tracked since 2017. Information on the origins of this data collection process can be found in the [Strategic Community Energy and Emissions Plan](#).

The Province also collects and reports on various [sources of community carbon emissions](#).