Board Report - For Information

October 22, 2026

RDCK Climate Action Work Overview

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Electoral Area/Municipality: All Areas
Services Impacted None

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report responds to Board resolution 503/25. It brings together, in one place, the RDCK's historical and current work toward the goals of the BC Climate Action Charter and the Partners for Climate Protection program. For each area of work, it summarizes the funding sources, scope, staff and external resources, milestones met, reporting completed, and the benefits realized for communities and for the organization.

> *503/25 That the Board direct staff to prepare a report for the Board that presents the historical and current project work undertaken to meet the program goals of the BC Climate Action Charter and the Partners for Climate Protection Program, including but not limited to the funding sources for each project, scope of work undertaken, staff and external resources required, milestones met, reporting completed and community and organizational benefits realized.*

This report is for information. Much of what follows has already come to the Board through State of Climate Action (SoCA) reports, Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) updates and the RDCK Climate Actions process. Rather than repeat that material, this report summarizes it and points to the attachments for detail.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND UPDATE

2.1 Two voluntary commitments

BC Climate Action Charter. The Charter is a voluntary agreement between the Province, the Union of BC Municipalities and local governments, and has been signed by almost every local government in BC. The RDCK signed on to the charter 2007. Signatories commit to:

- working toward carbon neutral corporate operations;
- measuring and reporting community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; and
- creating complete, compact, and more energy efficient communities.

Partners for Climate Protection (PCP). PCP is a voluntary program delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI Canada. PCP uses a five-milestone framework that applies to both corporate operations and the wider community:

- Milestone 1: create a baseline emissions inventory and forecast
- Milestone 2: set emissions reduction targets
- Milestone 3: develop a local action plan
- Milestone 4: implement the plan
- Milestone 5: monitor progress and report results

Neither commitment comes with penalties or dedicated long term funding. In practice, the provincial funding that followed the Charter, the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP) and then LGCAP from 2022, became the main source of money for climate work outside of service budgets and project grants. For that reason, funding detailing in this report is organized mostly around those two programs.

2.2 How the work has unfolded

RDCK climate work has grown in stages. Attachment A provides the full timeline. In brief:

- **2007:** Signed the BC Climate Action Charter.
- **2015:** Partners for Climate Protection.
- **2016 to 2017:** Completed the Strategic Community Energy and Emissions Plan (SCEEP) with the Community Energy Association, which set the first baseline and actions. Hired a Senior Energy Specialist in 2017 to implement it. Began reducing emissions at the three recreation centres, the RDCK's largest emitters.
- **2017 to 2019:** Accelerate Kootenays, which installed 13 fast chargers along Highways 1, 3 and 95. Committed to 100% renewable energy by 2050 with a midpoint of 50% GHG reduction by 2030 (Reso 257/18) and declared a Climate Action Imperative (Reso 272/19) Launched the Regional Energy Efficiency Program (REEP) and published the first State of Climate Action snapshot in 2019.
- **2020 to 2021:** Developed the 100% Renewable Energy Plan pathway for rural areas and held rural workshops with elected officials.
- **2022:** Board received the RDCK Climate Action Strategy, which set goals across ten pathways and proposed four-year action cycles.
- **2023 to 2024:** Released the draft RDCK Climate Actions and led region wide engagement. In April 2024 the Board endorsed RDCK Ideas for Climate Action and directed that priority ideas return with business cases before proceeding (231/24).
- **2025 to 2026:** Board approved an LGCAP spending framework (April 2025). Released the 2021 to 2024 SoCA report and a 2025 update. Began adaptation planning with Green Municipal Fund support (June 2026).

2.3 Progress on the Partners for Climate Protection milestones

The table below shows where the RDCK stands on each PCP milestone. It reflects staff's reading of the milestone criteria.

PCP Milestone	What the RDCK has done	Status
1. Baseline inventory and forecast	Community: SCEEP baseline and forecast (2016); provincial community energy and emissions inventories; Community Energy Association modelling for the 100% Renewable Energy Plan and for the 2023 draft Climate Actions. Corporate: annual inventories for CARIP and LGCAP reporting; all corporate buildings reporting through Energy Star Portfolio Manager.	Corporate: complete and updated yearly. Community: complete, but relies on provincial and regional data that is published irregularly.
2. Reduction targets	100% renewable energy by 2050 and 50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 – adopted in 2018 and 2019 respectively	Complete
3. Local action plan	SCEEP (2016); 100% Renewable Energy Plan (2019 to 2021); Climate Action Strategy (2022); draft RDCK Climate Actions (2023); RDCK Ideas for Climate Action (endorsed April 2024).	In place in a modified form. Ideas for Climate Action guides the work, with each idea returning to the Board as a business case.
4. Implement the plan	See Section 2.5. As of March 2025, 19 of 31 Ideas for Climate Action were underway, 7 were in research or business case development and 5 were not being pursued.	Ongoing
5. Monitor and report	SoCA since 2019, including the 2021 to 2024 four-year report and the 2025 update; annual CARIP and LGCAP reporting to the Province; two years of reporting to Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).	Ongoing

2.4 Progress on the Climate Action Charter commitments

Carbon neutral corporate operations. The RDCK tracks corporate emissions every year. In 2022, corporate emissions were 1,775 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e): 1,659 from facilities, 116 from vehicles and 5 from contracted services. In the same year, landfill gas flaring at Creston (1,012 tCO2e) and composting at Creston (819 tCO2e) avoided a combined 1,831 tCO2e. On paper this balances the RDCK's own emissions. Staff note that these avoided emissions are not the same as reductions within RDCK buildings and fleet, which remain mostly driven by natural gas heating in recreation facilities. The provincial recognition program that once assessed carbon neutrality under the Charter ended when CARIP was replaced.

Measuring and reporting community emissions. Community emissions are measured through provincial inventories and Community Energy Association modelling and reported through SoCA. The RDCK does not run its own regular community inventory. Modelling shows that vehicle fuel is the largest source of emissions in rural RDCK areas, at roughly 70% (SOCA, 2025).

Complete, compact, energy efficient communities. This commitment is carried mainly through land use planning and building regulation: Official Community Plan updates (including the Area I update), wildfire Development Permit Areas, floodplain mapping and bylaw work, joint growth planning between neighbouring areas such as Area F and Nelson, and the BC Energy Step Code. During the 2023 engagement, many rural residents said they did not want climate action delivered through new land use rules. Staff have since focused on voluntary, supportive and locally shaped approaches in rural areas and on being clear about what is regulated and what is not.

2.5 Summary of projects

The table below summarizes the main projects that have advanced the Charter and PCP goals. Dollar amounts reflect Board resolutions and the March 2025 funding summary (Attachment B) and may not match actual spending in a given year.

Project and years	Scope and milestones met	Funding sources	Staff and external resources	Benefits realized
A. Planning, inventory and reporting (PCP Milestones 1, 2, 3 and 5)				
Strategic Community Energy and Emissions Plan (SCEEP) 2016	First regional baseline, forecast and corporate and community actions. Led directly to hiring a Senior Energy Specialist in 2017.	FortisBC and BC Hydro	Community Energy Association; Sustainability staff	Set the direction for the building and energy work that continues today.
100% Renewable Energy Plan 2019 to 2021	Board commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2050. Rural pathway and rural elected official workshops (333/21). Kootenay Clean Energy Transition pilot (123/20).	CARIP: $3,200 workshops; $15,000 a year for two years to CEA	Senior Energy Specialist; Community Energy Association; partner municipalities	A shared regional target with member municipalities and a rural pathway to 2050.
Climate Action Strategy, draft RDCK Climate Actions and engagement 2022 to 2024	2022 Strategy. 2023 draft Climate Actions and Workbook, region wide engagement and Climate Action Ambassadors. 2024 Board survey and workshop. Ideas for Climate Action endorsed April 2024 (231/24).	CARIP and LGCAP: $80,000 (259/22), including $40,000 for Ambassadors; $121,700 for communication and engagement (391/23); workshop costs (90/24)	Sustainability Planner, Community Resilience Coordinator, Climate Action Assistant; Wildsight Youth Climate Corps; Community Energy Association modelling	A locally shaped list of actions. A much deeper understanding of rural concerns. Meets funder requirements for a climate action document.
State of Climate Action (SoCA) 2019 to present	Indicator framework across ten pathways with 0 to 2 scoring. 2019 snapshot, annual updates, 2021 to 2024 four-year report, 2025 update.	LGCAP: $5,000 a year plus $15,000 every four years	Community Sustainability staff with input from all departments	One public place to track progress. Reduces duplicate reporting and supports grant applications.
Corporate inventory and provincial reporting 2016 to present	Annual CARIP (to 2021) and LGCAP (2022 onward) reports. Carbon measurement software and Energy Star Portfolio Manager (2021).	CARIP and LGCAP: reporting costs, including $36,000 finance fees and $8,632 GHG accounting over three years	Senior Energy Specialist; Finance; consultant	Keeps the RDCK eligible for provincial funding. Building level energy data for planning.
B. Corporate operations (Charter commitment 1)				
Facility energy upgrades and Better Building Policy 2016 to present	Emissions reductions at three recreation centres. Better Building Policy and project manager training. Heat pumps at 3 fire halls and 5 resource recovery sites. LED lighting at 5 fire halls. 96 solar panels (44 kW) at Creston and District Community Complex. Lakeside office HVAC and roof (267/22). Asset management review to integrate carbon goals.	CARIP: $50,000 (267/22); grant funding for Creston solar from Columbia Basin Trust; various services capital budgets	Senior Energy Specialist; Facilities; Community Services; consultants	Lower energy use and costs in the RDCK's highest emitting buildings.

Project and years	Scope and milestones met	Funding sources	Staff and external resources	Benefits realized
Fleet electrification and charging 2017 to present	Accelerate Kootenays: 13 fast chargers. Basin Charge Up: first electric fleet vehicle and first corporate charger at Lakeside (2023). Fleet zero emission feasibility in the Senior Energy Specialist workplan.	LGCAP: up to $20,000 matching to leverage $55,500 in external funding (603/22)	Senior Energy Specialist; Fleet; Columbia Basin Trust and Accelerate Kootenays partners	A regional charging network for residents and visitors. A first step toward the 2035 zero emission fleet objective.
Landfill gas management ongoing	Landfill gas flaring at Creston. Feasibility study on future landfill gas management at Creston and Ootischenia (67/24).	Resource Recovery service; LGCAP: $7,000 + $28,000 from GMF	Resource Recovery staff; consultant	1,012 tCO2e avoided at Creston in 2022, with about a 23% increase expected from the system expansion.
C. Community emissions (Charter commitments 2 and 3)				
Regional Energy Efficiency Program (REEP), now HomeSave Central Kootenays 2019 to present	Home energy assessments, coaching and rebate navigation. 348 homes registered in 2023. Growth of the local qualified contractor network.	CARIP: $37,500 reserve transfer (677/17); Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM): $190,000; FortisBC $240,000	Senior Energy Specialist; Community Energy Association; local contractors	40 homes completing retrofits in 2022 cut 52.8 tCO2e, mostly from reduced natural gas use. Lower energy bills and local jobs.
BC Energy Step Code regulated	Applied through building permits. In 2023, 54 Part 9 buildings were built to Step 1 through Step 5.	Building service	Building Department	Higher performing, lower energy new homes.
Organic waste diversion 2022 to present	Composting facilities at Creston and Salmo. Curbside collection engagement (1,290 survey responses). Waste composition study. Rural diversion initiatives.	Operations funded by Resource Recovery services and tipping fees; OIP: $2,525,561; OICP: $900,350; CBT: $538,085	Resource Recovery staff	819 tCO2e avoided at Creston (March 2022 to March 2023); an estimated 2,784 tCO2e at Salmo in 2024; 1,683 tonnes composted in 2025.
Rural mobility and low carbon transportation 2022 to present	Transportation Think Tanks and Tamarack Institute coaching. Rural Mobility Community Advisory Committee (384/24). Support for the New Denver to Silverton active transportation corridor feasibility study. Over $200,000 in rural transportation funding secured in 2025.	LGCAP: up to $15,000 (384/24); Columbia Basin Trust: $75,000 requested for the corridor study (unconfirmed); CRIS: $20,000 for Alternative Transit Model Study	Climate Action Assistant; Community Resilience Coordinator; Planning; Transit; Rural Mobility Community Advisory Committee	Transit ridership up 30% in 2023 and 36% in 2025. Work targets the largest source of rural emissions.
D. Resilience and adaptation (LGCAP climate resilience stream)				
Watershed Governance Initiative and water stewardship 2020 to present	Scoping and service case analysis for a drinking water watershed service. Mapping and storymap. Surface water monitoring with Living Lakes Canada. Slocan Lake and River Partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance. Flow monitoring support for Yaqan Nukiy.	CARIP: $14,723 (846/20); CARIP and LGCAP: $25,000 (86/22) and $45,000 (717/22)	Sustainability and Resilience Supervisor; GIS assistants; Living Lakes Canada; Indigenous governments	Better water data. Working relationships with Indigenous governments on shared watersheds.

Project and years	Scope and milestones met	Funding sources	Staff and external resources	Benefits realized
Food systems and agriculture 2023 to present	Central Kootenay Food Policy Council Grow and Connect project (431/24). Agricultural extension through Kootenay Boundary Farm Advisors. Farm water leak detection.	LGCAP: $20,000 (431/24); S100 annual KBFA contribution $45,000 (209/20) and annual KFC contribution $30,000 (04/26)	Community Resilience Coordinator; CKFPC; KBFA	Stronger local food distribution.
Community Resilience Coordinator 2024 to December 2026	Term position advancing Ideas for Climate Action, partnerships and links with emergency management (490/24).	LGCAP: $70,981 a year; $138,600 for April 2025 to December 2026	Community Sustainability	Capacity to develop business cases and partnerships without new taxation.
Wildfire, flood and emergency preparedness ongoing	FireSmart assessments - over 3,000 assessments since 2018 and rebates. Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program. Wildfire Development Permit Area. Floodplain mapping (16 of 29 high risk areas). Selous Creek fuel treatment. Prescription development and fuel modification treatments at six sites throughout the RD to be completed in 2028.	UBCM and provincial program, FireSmart Community Funding Supports: $1.6 million July 2025-July 2027 and $639,500 from CBT's Columbia Basin Wildfire Resiliency Initiative	Emergency Management; Planning; Selkirk College and FPInnovations	411 FireSmart assessments in 2023 and 357 in 2025. 27 FireSmart neighbourhoods and 13 NEPP neighbourhoods in 2023.
Regional Invasive Species Working Group 2024	Support for regional coordination (379/24).	LGCAP: $15,000	Community Sustainability; regional partners	Coordinated response to growing climate-related pressure.
Climate Readiness through Adaptation Planning June 2026 to December 2027	Baseline climate risk and vulnerability assessment using local data, Indigenous knowledge and regional projections. Engagement with Indigenous governments, member municipalities and community groups. Adaptation plan.	Green Municipal Fund: $94,000 grant (LLCA-25-0774); RDCK in kind and LGCAP staff time	Community Sustainability; consultants; Indigenous and municipal partners	Underway. Will give the RDCK its first region wide climate risk baseline.

2.6 Funding summary

Provincial climate funding received since 2016 is summarized below. Attachment B provides the year by year detail, including Board resolutions.

Source	Amount received	Notes
CARIP, 2016 to 2021	$423,087	From 2016 to 2018, $144,469 of CARIP funding was absorbed into general surplus rather than held for climate work. From 2019 the balance was placed in reserve and carried forward to LGCAP ($181,153).
LGCAP 1, 2022 and 2023	$268,164	$134,082 a year. Fully committed by March 2025.
LGCAP 2, years 3 to 5	$392,869	One time payment in March 2024. Must be spent by March 31, 2027, under the April 2025 framework.

Source	Amount received	Notes
Total provincial climate funding since 2016	**$1,084,120**	The funding requires that the RDCK prepare the strategic climate documents and reporting.
External funding leveraged (examples)		Basin Charge Up $55,500; Columbia Basin Trust corridor study $75,000; Green Municipal Fund $70,000; rural transportation funding over $200,000 (2025)

The RDCK's 20% LGCAP matching contribution ($132,174) is met through Sustainability and Resilience Supervisor and Senior Energy Specialist staff time over the five years of the program.

2.7 Reporting completed

Report	Years	Audience
CARIP annual public report	2016 to 2021	Province and public
LGCAP annual survey and report	2022 to 2025	Province and public
State of Climate Action	2019 snapshot; annual updates; 2021 to 2024 four year report; 2025 update	Board and public
PCP milestone documentation	Milestone 1 and 2 were submitted in 2017 and 2018	FCM and ICLEI Canada
Board reports on climate direction and funding	2022 Climate Action Strategy, 2024 Climate Actions, 2024 Ideas for Climate Action, 2025 LGCAP framework, and project reports	Board and public

2.8 Staff and external resources

RDCK climate action planning and coordination is supported by a small team within Community Sustainability: the Sustainability and Resilience Supervisor, the term positions of the Senior Energy Specialist, Community Resilience Coordinator funded by LGCAP, and Climate Action Assistant. However, extensive delivery happens in other departments, including Facilities, Resource Recovery, Water Services, Planning, Building, Emergency Management, Community Services and Finance.

External partners have been essential. They include the Community Energy Association, Columbia Basin Trust, Accelerate Kootenays, Wildsight, the Tamarack Institute, Living Lakes Canada, Kootenay Boundary Farm Advisors, the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council, Selkirk College, BC Transit, UBCM and FCM, as well as member municipalities, neighbouring regional districts, and Indigenous governments.

2.9 Community and organizational benefits realized

- **Lower emissions where the RDCK has direct control:** facility upgrades, solar generation, landfill gas flaring, and composting.
- **Household savings and local jobs:** home energy assessments and retrofits through REEP and HomeSave, and a growing network of qualified local contractors.
- **Safer, better prepared communities:** FireSmart, neighbourhood emergency preparedness, floodplain mapping and water stewardship, which residents consistently named as priorities during engagement.

- **More transportation choice in rural areas:** transit growth, a regional community working group and feasibility studies for transportation alternatives.
- **Money brought into the region:** provincial funding kept flowing because reporting obligations were met, and that funding was used to leverage grants from Columbia Basin Trust, FCM and others with limited impact on taxation.
- **Relationships and trust:** closer working ties with member municipalities, neighbouring regional districts, community organizations and Indigenous governments.

2.10 What staff have learned

Programs designed for larger urban centres do not always fit rural and remote communities where distances are long, housing stock is older, and many homes rely on propane, wood stoves, or heating oil. The 2023 engagement showed that residents want clear communication, clarity on what is voluntary and what is required, local solutions, and a focus on resilience. Staff have carried these lessons into how ideas are developed and brought forward.

Reporting to several programs with different requirements takes significant staff time. SoCA has helped by giving one framework that can feed CARIP, LGCAP, and other provincial reporting requirements.

Work on shared lands and waters is strongest when it is relational and respects Indigenous authority. Staff draw on the idea of ethical space, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing and deciding meet on equal footing, as it has been explored in land-based reconciliation work across the Kootenay region.

Finally, much of this work depends on funding constraints. LGCAP 2 must be spent by March 2027 and the Community Resilience Coordinator term ends June 2027 The Province has not confirmed funding beyond the current LGCAP period.

3.0 NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

- Continue to bring climate action ideas forward to the Board with business cases
- Deliver the Climate Readiness through Adaptation Planning project through December 2027 and update the Board at key milestones.
- Continue to use SoCA as the main vehicle for future Charter and PCP reporting to the Board, to avoid duplicate reports.

Respectfully submitted,
Paris Marshall Smith, Sustainability and Resilience Supervisor

CONCURRENCE

Chief Administrative Officer - Stuart Horn
General Manager of Development and Community Sustainability Services - Amy Wilson

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment A: Climate Action Timeline 2024-02-15-History-RDCK-Climate-Action.pdf
Attachment B: Summary of CARIP and LGCAP Funding and Expenses (March 20, 2025)
Attachment C: RDCK Ideas for Climate Action, Status Update (March 2025)

Attachment D: State of Climate Action 2021 to 2024
Attachment E: State of Climate Action 2025 Update