

The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities



2013

Final Report for Tumbler Ridge, BC

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Acknowledgements

In the summer of 2013, our research team visited Tumbler Ridge to conduct interviews about the transformative role of voluntarism in aging resource communities on various aspects of the community. We wish to thank all of the residents, community groups, service providers, and leaders who took the time to help out and to answer our many questions.

We would like to extend our special thanks to our community partners within the District of Tumbler Ridge.

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Availability

The project work reported here was carried out by a research team from the UNBC Community Development Institute, in collaboration with colleagues from Trent University and the University of Guelph, in the spring of 2013 with the goal to explore a range of roles in the voluntary sector and in community development in order to explore how seniors' engagement and voluntary initiatives are reshaping and changing the community. Copies of this report have been provided to the Tumbler Ridge Public Library and the District of Tumbler Ridge. Copies of the report have also been provided to all participants. Reports have also been posted on the UNBC Community Development Institute's website: <http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects>.

Project Reports

- A Review of Socio-Economic Characteristics in Tumbler Ridge, BC
- A Review of Socio-Economic Characteristics in Quesnel, BC
- The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities: Community Report for Tumbler Ridge, BC
- The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities: Community Report for Quesnel, BC

Past Project Reports

- Dimensions of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Towns: Preliminary Scan of Tumbler Ridge, BC
- Dimensions of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Towns: Preliminary Scan of Quesnel, BC
- Voluntarism, Ageing and Place: A Critical Review

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The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities

FINAL REPORT FOR TUMBLER RIDGE, BC

Project Description

Originally planned to address the needs of resource industries and their younger labour force, many northern communities undergoing economic and population change are experiencing the relatively new phenomena of 'resource frontier aging' in which people are growing old in places that have never dealt before with population aging. This situation is complicated by the fact that many communities have attempted to market surplus housing to retirees as a means of offsetting the out-migration of younger residents. These communities must now meet the needs of growing numbers of longer-term elderly residents and in-migrant retirees who are aging in place and create the conditions for positive community development. As many communities have experienced a restructuring of industries, jobs, and service supports, the voluntary sector and volunteers have been expected to step-up to both support individuals aging in place and the development aspirations of their communities. Very little is known, however, about the evolving role of voluntary (non-profit) organizations, community groups and volunteers in supporting older people and influencing community development trajectories in the unique context of Canada's aging resource hinterland. This project examines the role that voluntary organizations, community groups and volunteers play in both supporting older people and in influencing community development in aging resource communities. In BC, Tumbler Ridge and Quesnel have been two communities participating in this project.

The project work reported here was carried out by a research team from the UNBC Community Development Institute in the spring of 2013 with the goal to explore a range of roles in the voluntary sector and in community development in order to explore how seniors' engagement and voluntary initiatives are reshaping and changing the community. Understanding changes, pressures, and actions in the voluntary sector is important to inform policies, programs, and infrastructure investments that can support voluntary and aging initiatives.

Table 1: Timeline

April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNBC Research Ethics Board process completed.
May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research team established. Project logistics schedule completed.
June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews completed.
July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of interview data.
August 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed draft project reports.
September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of draft reports by community partners. Final reports completed and distributed.

Methodology

The data and information for this report was conducted through key informant interviews with community clubs and organizations in Tumbler Ridge, BC.

Selecting Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted during May 2013. The purpose was to examine the role that voluntary organizations, community groups and volunteers play in both supporting older people and in influencing community development in aging resource communities. Previous visits and conversations with leaders and groups in the community were used to identify key voluntary initiatives that are shaping community development and aging experiences in Tumbler Ridge. Based on these recommendations, participants were recruited using publicly available lists of community organizations and groups. A total of 17 residents were interviewed. While many participants were long-time residents of the community, we also spoke with participants who had moved to Tumbler Ridge within the last ten years (Table 2). To explore the role of voluntary groups in various community development initiatives, we spoke to a range of volunteers, service providers, and leaders. A general breakdown of participating stakeholders is included in Table 3.

Table 2: Length of residence – Tumbler Ridge

	Number of Participants	% of Participants
21-30 years	6	35.3
11-20 years	7	41.2
10 years or less	4	23.5
Total	17	100.0

Source: The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities 2013.

Table 3: Sector of interview respondents – Tumbler Ridge

Sector	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Arts and Recreation	7	41.2
Community Services	7	41.2
Local Government	2	11.8
Housing	1	5.9
Total	17	100.1

Source: The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities 2013.

Many of these participants were also involved with multiple community organizations, such as community services, community groups, food and agriculture, business groups, sports and recreational, government, service clubs, and arts and cultural groups (Table 4). When we asked people about the role they had within these groups, most noted that they belonged to these groups either as volunteers or general members, followed by people who were involved as executive members, management staff, board members, and committee members (Table 5). Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and one hour.

Research Ethics

Research conducted by the Community Development Institute is bound by protocols at the University of Northern British Columbia that require all survey or interview guides be submitted to UNBC's Research Ethics Board for review. A key component to this protocol is to provide research participants with a copy of the consent form (Appendix B) that outlines the purpose of the study, how the research process will protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and that their participation is voluntary.

Interview Questions

The purpose of this project was to explore the roles, activities, and issues associated with voluntary groups involved in a range of community development initiatives. This report assembles a summary of key issues and lessons that emerged from our interviews. A detailed description of questions asked in each section of the interview guide is provided in Appendix C. In general, participants were asked questions in the following areas:

- Background questions;
- How the initiative began;
- The key activities that were involved in the early stages of development;
- The key activities and processes that shaped the implementation of the initiative;
- The impact of the initiative on the community;
- Challenges and lessons learned; and

- How the organization’s capacity, partnerships, and relationships helped or hindered the overall project or program.

Table 4: Do you belong to any local clubs, committee, associations, etc.? –Tumbler Ridge Respondents

Community Services (15)	Arts and Culture (9)
TR Cares (4)	Museum Foundation (6)
TR Hospice/Palliative Care (4)	Arts Council (1)
Community Gardens (1)	Maritime Comedy Club (1)
Emergency Social Services (1)	Night of Laughter (1)
Meals on Wheels (1)	
Measuring Up the North (1)	Government (7)
Restorative Justice Program (1)	Seniors Needs Task Force (6)
Salvation Army (1)	District of Tumbler Ridge (1)
Search and Rescue (1)	
Sports and Recreation (12)	Community Groups (5)
Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society (4)	Forever Young Society (2)
Emperor’s Challenge Committee (3)	49 Forever (1)
Geopark Steering Committee (2)	Kids Program (1)
Grizzly Valley Saddle Club (1)	The Garden Club (1)
Track and Field (1)	
Tumbler Ridge Indoor Swimming Pool Society (1)	Service Clubs (4)
	Lion’s Club (3)
	Legion’s Ladies Auxiliary (1)
	Religion (1)
	Fellowship Baptist Church (1)

Source: The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities 2013.
 Note: respondents could provide multiple answers.

Table 5: Community roles – Tumbler Ridge respondents

Sector	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Volunteer	17	100.0
Member	14	82.4
Executive	13	76.5
Management	7	41.2
Committee member	5	29.4
Board member	4	23.5
Council	1	5.9
N=	17	

Source: The Transformative Role of Voluntarism in Aging Resource Communities 2013.
 Note: respondents could provide multiple answers.

Analysis

During each interview, comments were recorded and notes were taken. After a final summary file was created for each interview, qualitative analysis was done to identify, code, and categorize patterns and themes that emerged from the data. A profile of each initiative is provided in order to share information about the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned from each organization. The goal is to share the constructive experiences that have been acquired by different volunteers and voluntary organizations in order to strengthen the capacity and supports for these groups in the future.

HARTFORD COURT SENIORS' HOUSING

Origins

In the early 1980s, Tumbler Ridge was a mining town designed to attract young workers and their families. Much of the housing stock contained stairs and were not wheelchair accessible. Following the housing sale and the mine closures in the early 2000s, there was an influx of older residents in the community. At the same time, the workforce was aging. Despite a growing number of older residents, Tumbler Ridge had no seniors' housing units in the community. If seniors wished to downsize and move into housing that was more accessible, their only option was to move out of the community.

In the mid-2000s, the mayor formed the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force to assess seniors' needs in the community. A strategic plan for the community indicated that developing accessible seniors' housing was a key priority in the community. Soon after, in 2009/2010, Blair Lekstrom, MLA, contacted the District to inform them about a joint federal-provincial program to develop seniors' housing around BC. Due to the work of the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force, the MLA felt that the program would be a good fit for the community.

Early Stages of Development

The Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force and the seniors' needs coordinator worked with the District to apply to BC Housing for the program. BC Housing visited the community to negotiate the number of seniors' housing units that could be developed. The key goal with developing Hartford Court was to provide seniors with housing options in Tumbler Ridge in order to reduce out-migration. There were a number of organizations and individuals involved in the early stages of Hartford Court, including members of the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force, such as long-time resident George Hartford, members of the Lion's Club, and Dave Price, the seniors' needs coordinator; Mayor Larry White and the District Council; and BC Housing.

Early planning activities for Hartford Court were carried out at the District of Tumbler Ridge. The types of tasks and activities that were involved during this early phase of development included:

- Lobbying the provincial government;
- Lobbying Northern Health;
- Facilitating a visit by BC Housing to assess possible sites;
- Negotiating the number of units to be built (they lobbied for, and obtained, 12 units vs. 6);
- Obtaining Council vote on possible sites;
- Completing the rezoning for the selected site;
- Completing a long-term lease agreement with BC Housing (99 years) for the site;
- Exempting BC Housing from municipal taxes for the site;
- Meeting with BC Housing, engineers, and consultants during site visits; and

- Providing assistance to contractors (i.e. obtaining gravel for the site, hooking up the sewer and water, and assistance with digging).

The housing facility was constructed in a wooded area close to the District office in the downtown core. The District also offered to allocate and designate the land behind Hartford Court (between town hall and the current units) in order to support additional housing units in the future. Once the foundation for Hartford Court was completed, the District fulfilled its' role in the project. The facility's design was based on a template that BC Housing adopted for many seniors' housing projects around the province.

Implementation

Once Hartford Court opened in 2011, the facility was managed by a contractor from Fort St. John. Key administrative decisions, such as awarding the management contract, were conducted by BC Housing staff in Prince George. While, no local stakeholders have been involved in the maintenance and ongoing operations of the units, the Lion's Club raised \$14,000 to install outdoor exercise equipment next to Hartford Court. The task force, however, is lobbying BC Housing to have the next contract managed locally in order to have local concerns addressed more timely. While some local stakeholders have felt excluded from the decision-making process concerning how the units are managed and operated, communication has improved with more routine meetings with BC Housing's area manager from Prince George.

Impact

Hartford Court has had several positive impacts for seniors living in Tumbler Ridge. It has helped to retain older residents in the community by demonstrating that the District, partnering stakeholders, and volunteers were actively working to address seniors' needs. It has also allowed seniors with low-incomes to live comfortably in the community. Some stakeholders also felt that the development of Hartford Court has helped to improve the appearance of an area that was not well maintained.

There were a number of factors that contributed to the success of the Hartford Court seniors' housing project. Local leaders would engage with the construction workers. This helped to develop a good rapport with the workers and to obtain good quality work. Perhaps the most important factor that contributed to the success of the project was persistence. Local leaders and volunteers can encounter a number of barriers when undertaking such projects and it is important not to become discouraged. While this independent living facility is an important first step to retaining older residents in the community, there is an interest to examine assisted living needs in the near future.

Challenges

During the development of Hartford Court, local stakeholders and volunteers encountered a number of challenges. Early in the planning phases, some concerns were raised about the site that was selected for the housing facility due to the site's potential to support commercial development in the downtown core. Some advocated to locate seniors' housing in the lower

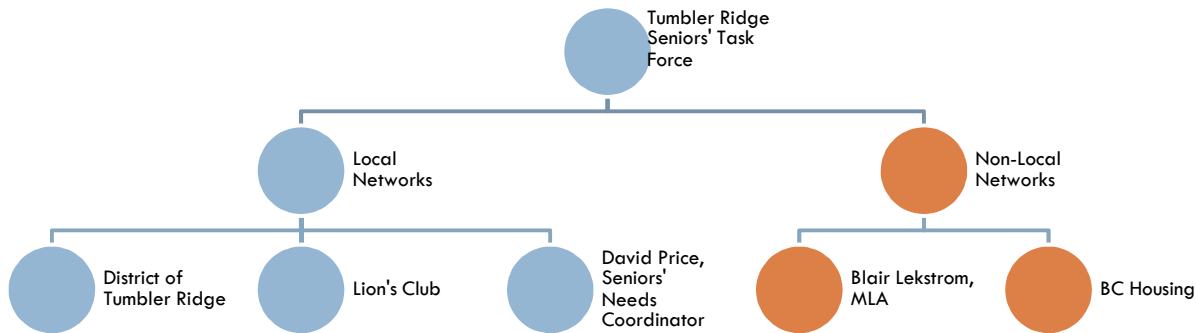
bench. It would be difficult, however, for seniors to walk up hill to access services, particularly during the winter months. As a result, the facility was located centrally in the downtown core close to services.

After opening, two key challenges emerged. First, once the facility was completed, there was limited local capacity to manage and maintain Hartford Court locally. A range of organizations and clubs were approached to pursue this opportunity; however, it was a significant undertaking with the limited voluntary capacity and resources that were available to these groups at the time. As a result, the contract to manage and maintain the facility was awarded to a business in Fort St. John. With BC Housing’s processes and policies already in place, and due to the distant location of the facility’s contracted manager, local groups felt excluded from, and limited to influence, the management and operations of the facility. Local stakeholders have worked with the area manager for BC Housing to improve routine communications. Second, as a result of the facility being maintained remotely, residents in the Hartford Court facility have experienced difficulties having repairs and maintenance attended to on a timely basis. These challenges have prompted local stakeholders to advocate for the next management and maintenance contract for Hartford Court to be awarded locally.

Place Integration

Hartford Court is currently managed remotely by a contractor from Fort St. John for BC Housing. However, the District worked with BC Housing during the planning and construction of the seniors’ housing facility in order to allocate land, facilitate rezoning, provide assistance with installing sewer and water lines, and other related tasks. There was a general sense that the project benefitted from strong community support for the project.

Figure 1: Tumbler Ridge Seniors’ Task Force’s Networks for Hartford Court



Their working relationships with stakeholders in other communities have shaped the project. After MLA Blair Lekstrom contacted the task force about the potential funding opportunity to support seniors’ housing, local stakeholders felt that it was straight forward to work with BC Housing during the planning and construction process. Once Hartford Court opened, however, some felt that local stakeholders were excluded from involvement in the management and oversight of the operations. Some suggested that there is a need for BC Housing policies and procedures to become more flexible in order to facilitate ongoing local input, particularly for communities that have facilities that are managed remotely. In the context of Tumbler Ridge,

their relationship with BC Housing has been improved with more routine communication and visits by the BC Housing representative. With the contracted manager living in the distant centre of Fort St. John, it has also been difficult for residents to have issues addressed in a timely manner. For those who have been involved in the planning and construction of Hartford Court, there has been tremendous pride to see a completed project benefitting people who are living in the community.

LION'S FLATBED CREEK CAMPGROUND

Origins

When Tumbler Ridge was built, the local government wanted to have a park and campground near the townsite. In response, the Lion's Club built a campground at Flatbed Creek in 1986. The campground is owned by the local government; however, it has been operated by the Lion's Club. When the Lion's Club membership declined following the mine closures in the early 2000s, the club no longer had the capacity to look after the campground. The club turned the campground over to the District.

New Beginnings

The District had been contracting out the operations of the campground for approximately six years. Three years ago, the Lion's Club membership increased to between 35 and 40 members. This provided the club with the volunteer capacity needed to operate the campground again. The District of Tumbler Ridge was very supportive to have the Lion's Club reassume the management of campground. Since then, the Lion's Club has continued to have the contract to operate the Flatbed Creek campground facility. Frank and Grace Walsh have been key members involved in the day-to-day operations. Other members have also provided support during the weekends. To re-establish its role to operate the campground, key planning and operational tasks have been conducted at the campground, Lion's Club meetings, and at the Walsh residence. The money raised through operating the campground during the summer months is used to support the campground's operations and to support community projects.

Implementation

The Lion's Club volunteer base consists of a mixture of retirees and people with families. When organizing volunteers, the Lion's Club strategically recruits couples who are able to spend a week at the campground together. Volunteers are switched each Sunday afternoon. There has been a broad range of tasks involved in operating the Flatbed Creek Campground, including:

- Board meetings to address emerging issues;
- Keeping club members informed about the operations of the campground;
- Obtaining membership input on how to disburse the money raised;
- Collect camping fees;
- Completing upgrades and renovations to the campground washrooms and other campground buildings (i.e. siding and eaves troughs, installing automatic flush systems, installing fans, painting the washrooms, etc.);
- Cutting the grass;
- Providing firewood;
- Cleaning the washrooms;
- Completing repairs around the campground (i.e. to picnic tables);

- Maintaining and replacing fire pits;
- Replacing the playground equipment (\$70,000);
- Maintaining communication with the RCMP who monitor the campground;
- Obtaining support from District staff to empty holding / sewage tanks; and
- Working with District staff to complete end of season tasks (i.e. shutting off the water, maintenance, etc.).

As a part of their contract with the District of Tumbler Ridge, the Lion's Club pays 30% of their net income to the District at the end of each year (approximately \$4,000 - \$5,000). In return, the District provides sewer and garbage services. When needed, the District has also provided valuable access to staff and heavy equipment. The District, for example, worked with the Lion's Club to replace the playground equipment by providing access to heavy equipment for digging, as well as access to staff and a truck to haul the gravel.

Impact

The work of the Lion's Club has provided many long-term benefits to the community, including more and improved infrastructure through the playground and campground facilities, as well as access to another source of fundraising to support community initiatives. The funds raised have been distributed to obtain tables for the schools, picnic tables for parks, and to provide assistance for those in need in the community. People we spoke with attributed the success of the Lion's Club to its visibility in the community. By organizing barbeques and supporting other community events, they were able to recruit new members, increase their capacity, expand their work within the community, and reassume their role to manage and operate the campground. Their success has also been attributed to the diversity of their membership, which consists of people who work at both mines, a councillor, retirees, and various members from the business community. There is also a strong level of cohesion amongst the membership.

Due to their success operating the Flatbed Creek Campground, the Lion's Club has been contacted by BC Parks to operate the campgrounds at Moose Lake Park and Monkman Park. In the past, the club has also been contacted concerning the operations of the District's RV park. However, the club decided not to become involved in the management of those facilities due to long distances and gravel road conditions. More recently, however, the mines have approached the Lion's Club to use the gazebos at the Flatbed Creek Campground for their employee family days.

Challenges

Since the opening of the campground in 1986, the Lion's Club has overcome a number of challenges. For instance, following the mine closures, the club experienced a decline in their membership that impeded their ability to be able to continue to operate the campground. As a result, they transferred the management and operational duties back to the local government. By maintaining their visibility within the community, they were able to increase their membership as the community experienced new growth and have since taken over the operations of the Flatbed Creek Campground.

Since the Lion's Club has reassumed its role to manage the Flatbed Creek Campground, there have been new challenges that have influenced their operations. In addition to attending to dead trees around the campground, there has been a need to address issues with aging equipment and facilities. For example, the playground equipment needed to be replaced due to weathering. The Lion's Club also replaced the vinyl siding and fans in the buildings on the campground site. Volunteers have also needed to respond to noise concerns as a result of people who wish to party in the campground. They've also had break-ins to the wood storage unit.

Lessons

The most critical lesson offered by the people we spoke with concerned the renewal of their volunteer base. Following the decline of their membership and volunteer base after the mine closures, the Lion's Club took an initiative to get to know new residents, such as seniors, who moved to the community following the housing sale. Rather than trying to recruit new members overtly, the club invited people to volunteer for odd projects, events, and initiatives. There was no commitment or requirement to be a member of the Lion's Club. For the few that remained with the club, it was important to be open and honest about the focus of their mandate and the tasks that were being undertaken. It was also important to maintain routine visibility in the community. Once the summer ended, the Lion's Club had a volunteer appreciation barbeque on the Labour Day weekend. By the end of the evening, they had 8 new members. They were then able to draw upon the social networks of those new members to further expand their membership. To strengthen the renewal of their club, they have also benefitted from a diverse membership. They have been able to recruit members from the mines, the business community, and even local council.

Place Integration

Since the opening of the townsite, the Lion's Club has experienced considerable change. Following the mine closures and an influx of new residents after the housing sale, the Lion's Club has been able to renew its membership to approximately 35 members. Their board consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and 6 directors. The board meets monthly and there is also a general meeting with members each month.

The Lion's Club has drawn upon a number of partnerships and sources of support in order to manage and maintain the Flatbed Creek Campground, including:

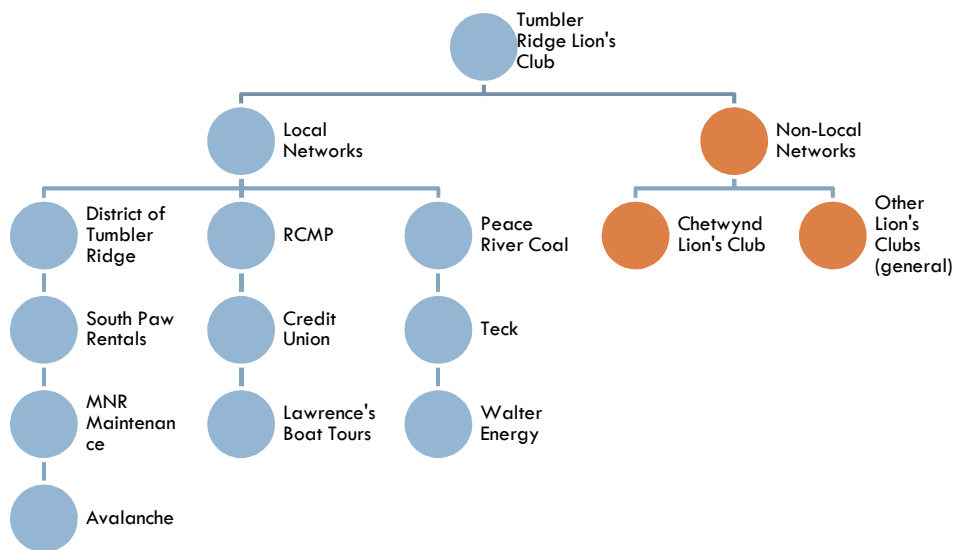
- The District of Tumbler Ridge (i.e. sewage, garbage, access to heavy equipment, and assistance with season end tasks);
- Peace River Coal (sponsorship);
- Teck (sponsorship);
- Walter Energy (sponsorship);
- Avalanche (donations);
- The Credit Union (donations for playground equipment);
- South Paw Rentals (donations for playground equipment);
- MNR Maintenance (donations for playground equipment); and
- Lawrence's Boat Tours (donations for playground equipment).

The relationships that the Lion’s Club has had with community groups have shaped their ongoing activities in a number of ways. First, the encouragement and positive support that the club has experienced across the community has inspired them to do more in the community. Their interaction with other people and groups in the community has provided them with new perspectives. The club has also benefitted from a diverse membership that has broadened their networks of support. In this respect, they have good connections within the club to the mines, the business community, local government, and various residents throughout the community. They also have a good working relationship with the RCMP who routinely monitor the campground.

In terms of the campground, the Lion’s Club has relied primarily on the District for support. They do not have any formal partnerships with BC Parks or any groups in other communities to support the ongoing operations of the Flatbed Creek Campground. However, the club has strong connections with other Lion’s Clubs in order to share advice and obtain assistance for a broader range of activities. For example, they have received advice from the Chetwynd Lion’s Club.

They have also done joint barbeques and catering for various events with the Chetwynd Lion’s Club. When the regional district held their one of their meetings in Chetwynd, the Tumbler Ridge Lion’s Club provided support to the club in Chetwynd by transporting their barbeque and by providing extra volunteers for the event. They have also drawn upon their relationships with Lion’s Clubs in other communities for motivation and encouragement. In particular, people spoke about the camaraderie that has developed between the Lion’s Clubs in Tumbler Ridge and Chetwynd. Each year, the two clubs jointly attend a New Year’s potluck in Tumbler Ridge and a Christmas party in Chetwynd. They also invite members from both communities to routine steak dinners that further nurture interaction and cooperation.

Figure 2: Networks for the Lion’s Flatbed Creek Campground



When we asked people how their involvement in the Lion's Flatbed Creek Campground has affected them personally, there was a general sense that it has brought them closer together with other club members. By working routinely together, they have developed strong networks of support that can be drawn upon when needed.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Origins

Tumbler Ridge has experienced a growth in the number of older residents who are living in the community. Some of these older residents have limited supplies of fresh vegetables or have struggled to continue cooking for themselves. This prompted the Seniors' Needs Task Force to develop a Meals on Wheels program within the community in 2010.

Early Stages of Development

By developing the Meals on Wheels program, the Seniors' Needs Task Force hoped to provide nutritional meals to older residents or people with limited mobility. In the early stages of development and operations, there were a number of residents involved, including Dave Price, the Seniors' Needs Coordinator; Frank and Grace Walsh, Lion's Club; Vinny's Café; and members of the Seniors' Needs Task Force. During the early stages of development, the tasks that needed to be completed included:

- Approaching Vinny's Café to provide meals,
- Creating an application process, and
- Recruiting volunteers to deliver the meals.

Early planning activities were conducted at town hall during meetings of the Seniors' Needs Task Force, as well as through various meetings at local restaurants. Records of applications and related paper work were stored in a home office of the seniors' needs coordinator. While the District offered to cover any supplemental costs, the Meals on Wheels program has never needed to obtain local government funding as the restaurants have provided meals to the program at base cost.

Implementation

In Tumbler Ridge, the Meals on Wheels program started once volunteers from the Lion's Club began transporting meals from Vinny's Café to clients in the community. Once Vinny's Café closed, though, there was a need to approach other restaurants to support the Meals on Wheels program. Since it began, a number of people and businesses have been involved with the Meals on Wheels program, such as Frank and Grace Walsh, Dave Price, Nellie Meredith, Tim Snyder, Vinny's Café, Kinuseo Café, Ferne's Finery, and Dad's Café.

The process begins when a resident is assessed by a doctor concerning their need for support from the Meals on Wheels program. If there is a victim of abuse, the applicant is assessed by the safe home. Those professionals then send their recommendation to the seniors' needs coordinator who then works with the Lion's Club volunteers and the local restaurants to ensure meals are provided to the new client. The Meals on Wheels program currently has three clients; although, they have had as many as five clients participating in the program. Meals cost \$5 each and are delivered around 5 pm, three times each week on Mondays,

Wednesdays, and Fridays. Different participating restaurants are scheduled to provide meals for one of those days in order to reduce the workload or burden on any one restaurant. It also helps to provide a variety of food to the clients. Each restaurant is also available to provide back up support for other restaurants when needed (i.e. due to family emergency, etc.). The types of tasks that have been involved to implement the Meals on Wheels program have included:

- Approaching new restaurants to support the program,
- Recruiting and coordinating volunteers,
- Processing applications, and
- Transporting meals to clients.

Volunteers use their own vehicles to transport the meals to clients. The volunteer pays the restaurant upfront for the meal and then is reimbursed by the client once the meal is delivered. Records are kept by each of the participating restaurants, as well as by the seniors' needs coordinator and the Lion's Club. Those records contain information about food preferences and allergies.

Impact

Despite the small group of residents that use the Meals on Wheels program, there is a general sense that it has had a positive impact on the community. To start, it has provided immediate support to those in need by ensuring they have access to nutritional meals. It has also helped to reduce the number of people in need in the community.

There have been a number of factors that have contributed to the success of the program. For example, each restaurant has been willing to provide back-up services for other restaurants when needed. This has helped to provide continuous service to the clients. The Lion's Club has also been successful to recruit back-up volunteers to step in and deliver meals when needed. Overall, people we spoke with felt that local stakeholders involved were creative to develop a simplified approach and process to deliver the Meals on Wheels program in Tumbler Ridge.

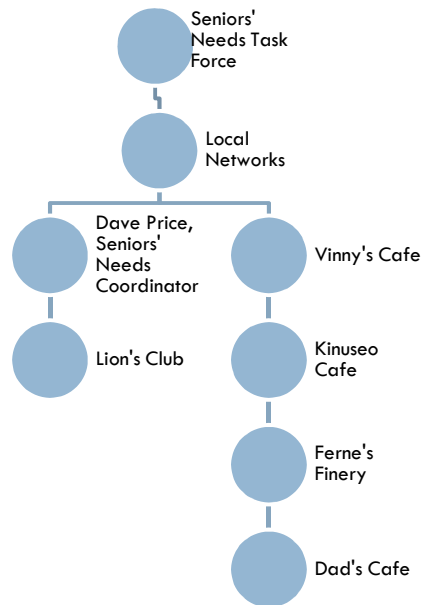
Challenges

Since the early planning stages, the Seniors' Needs Task Force had few challenges to overcome as they worked to put the new Meals on Wheels program into action. In the early development stages, Northern Health was contacted to provide assistance in order to develop the Meals on Wheels program in Tumbler Ridge. After a number of conversations, however, local stakeholders were unable to secure the assistance that they were looking for. There was also a general sense that the limited assistance that could be obtained came with bureaucratic tasks that would consume the limited staff and voluntary resources. As a result, the Seniors' Needs Task Force decided to create the Meals on Wheels program on their own. With the ability of local restaurants to cover meal costs with the \$5 that is collected from clients, there has been no need to pursue additional funding for the program.

Place Integration

The Meals on Wheels program is coordinated by the seniors' needs coordinator and delivered with the support of three restaurants (Kinuseo Café, Dad's Café, and Ferne's Finery) and four volunteers from the Lion's Club.

Figure 3: Networks for the Meals on Wheels Program



The relationships across community groups and businesses have helped to provide continuous services to clients as restaurants and volunteers have offered to provide back-up support for each other when needed. Local stakeholders were also able to draw upon their relationships across the community to adopt a simplified process to deliver the Meals on Wheels program. Overall, people have found their involvement in the Meals on Wheels program to be rewarding as they are able to help those in need.

SENIORS' CORNER

Origins

Following the mine closures and the housing sale in the early 2000s, there was an influx of older residents in the community. Many of these new older residents had a range of service needs. At the same time, the workforce was aging. In the mid-2000s, the mayor formed the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force to assess seniors' needs in the community. A strategic plan for the community indicated that developing a seniors' drop-in centre was a key priority in the community. Soon after, the Seniors' Corner was established by Donna Mendaville, a member of the Seniors' Needs Task Force, with support from Dave Price, the seniors' needs coordinator.

Early Stages of Development

There were several goals that drove the development of the Seniors' Corner. The first goal was to develop a central location where seniors could obtain information about services to support healthy aging in the community. A second goal was to provide a space where seniors could get together to talk or have meetings, to play games, or to have coffee or tea. It also provided a space where seniors could go to get help from other seniors on how to solve problems.

In the early stages of development, Donna Mendaville, George Hartford, and members of the Lion's Club were all identified as residents who played a key role to develop the drop-in centre. Dave Price also pursued and received a New Horizons grant to support the seniors' drop-in centre during the early development stages when space was shared with the youth centre at the community centre. Soon after, the Seniors' Corner moved to a space in the top level of the community centre. On occasion, other rooms in the community centre were also used to support planning and ongoing activities. In the beginning, the District provided the Seniors' Corner with access to space in the community centre with an understanding that services would be provided to older residents in the community.

Implementation

Since the Seniors' Corner opened, there have been a number of residents and organizations involved to support ongoing services and activities for seniors, including Donna Mendaville, Lloyd Frank, Nellie Meredith, Ellen Sager, Maureen Sywolos, Melody Kingswell, Carol Poff, Carey Garner, Dave Price, and the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Task Force. There have been a number of key tasks involved to support the operations of the Seniors' Corner, including:

- Opening up the seniors' corner;
- Providing coffee, tea, and snacks;
- Moving furniture (i.e. tables, chairs, couches, etc.) if needed;
- Coordinating potluck dinners at the high school;

- Purchasing utensils, pots, and pans to support potluck dinners;
- Providing seniors with transportation to potluck dinner events;
- Obtaining door prizes for potluck dinners (i.e. pool passes);
- Providing information about healthy aging, access to services, estate planning, etc.;
- Delivering programs such as Literacy and Newcomers;
- Providing assistance to help seniors make travel arrangements and access travel supports for out-of-town appointments (www.ellensmedicaltravelaid.pris.ca);
- Taking pictures of hazards that impact seniors' mobility that can be shown to council;
- Pursuing improved accessibility to buildings;
- Developing partnerships with the college to provide seniors with access to computer training, assistance with how to scan pictures, and how to use Microsoft Word;
- Delivering information sessions about Facebook;
- Delivering information sessions about Genealogy;
- Distributing a newsletter;
- Developing a calendar for the Seniors' Corner;
- Writing newspaper articles;
- Contacting members about upcoming events;
- Conducting raffles;
- Applying for society status for the Tumbler Ridge Forever Young Society;
- Writing general grant applications;
- Obtaining letters of support for grant applications;
- Applying to the District for a grant-in-aid; and
- Obtaining funding to support a part-time information coordinator.

Over time, there were some changes to the direction of the Senior's Corner's organization and operations. As the key hostess, Donna Mendaville remained instrumental in the ongoing operations of the drop-in centre until she moved away from the community. This prompted seniors to form the Tumbler Ridge Forever Young Society so that seniors could pursue funding opportunities to support ongoing initiatives. The focus of the Seniors' Corner may also be changing. This includes a shift to focus more on the provision of social activities for seniors (i.e. luncheons and tournaments). In the past, the Seniors' Corner was a registry point for access to supports (i.e. Meals on Wheels). The Lion's Club, however, now plays a central role to provide access to supports such as the Snow Angels program, yard maintenance, and Meals on Wheels. Furthermore, TR Cares is working with the United Way to explore opportunities to deliver the Better at Home program in the community. The Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force and the Tumbler Ridge Forever Young Society are currently revisiting the intent and mandate of the Seniors' Corner.

Impact

The Seniors' Corner has had several impacts on seniors living in Tumbler Ridge. To start, the drop-in centre has helped to connect seniors throughout the community through potluck dinners and other activities associated with the Seniors' Corner. It has also provided seniors with improved access to information and assistance from other seniors to support healthy aging. There was a positive sense that the Seniors' Corner has been successful as many older residents have attended dinners, and dropped by the Seniors' Corner to access needed

supports. As volunteers have gotten to know seniors in the community, it has become easier to address local needs. However, some stakeholders have felt that there has been a missed opportunity for the Seniors' Corner to become a focal point to deliver a range of services to seniors in the community (i.e. home care supports, Meals on Wheels, Snow Angel program, etc.).

Other new opportunities, however, that have emerged since the Seniors' Corner opened. For example, seniors have formed informal walking groups on Friday nights. They have also formed informal groups to visit different waterfalls or marshes in the area. Through a partnership with the Northern Lights College, seniors have been able to obtain computer training. In the past, the Seniors' Corner also partnered with the high school to obtain a New Horizons grant to support potluck dinners throughout the year. All of the utensils, pots, and pans were purchased and stored at the high school. While the dinners were cooked by high school students, the Arts Council provided a musician for the evening. For seniors who were unable to come to the dinner, arrangements were made to deliver meals to seniors in their homes. In the future, the Seniors' Corner is also hoping to partner with the high school to have students conduct oral histories with seniors in the community.

Challenges

Since the Seniors' Corner opened, volunteers have faced a number of challenges at the drop-in centre. First, there has been a lack of funding to support ongoing operations. At times, the Seniors' Corner has also struggled to maintain consistent hours due to a lack of volunteers. At times, it has been difficult recruiting seniors to write articles for the Seniors' Corner newsletter. The ability to network with other groups and develop effective working relationships across volunteers and organizations has also been a challenge. It can be difficult to get volunteers to work together, for example, if they have different ideas. With busy schedules and short grant deadlines, it has also been difficult to secure support letters and partners for grant applications. In response, the Seniors' Corner requested and secured municipal support for a paid coordinator position for the Seniors' Corner.

There is uncertainty concerning the future availability of the space that the Seniors' Corner currently uses in the Tumbler Ridge Community Centre. In the past, the seniors' drop-in shared space with the youth centre. With a pool table and climbing wall, however, the space was more suited to the needs of youth. This prompted the drop-in centre to be relocated upstairs. There have also been challenges to determine the scope and mandate of the Seniors' Corner's activities. For example, there have been conflicting levels of interest to coordinate social activities versus additional services and supports such as Meals on Wheels or Better at Home. The Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force has been working with the Seniors' Corner to negotiate the types of supports provided through the Seniors' Corner in exchange for access to space at the community centre. However, concerns have also been expressed about the proximity of the drop-in centre to the children's indoor playground that can create user conflicts due to noise.

The Seniors' Corner has also experienced other infrastructure and equipment challenges that have impacted their ongoing operations. For example, the drop-in centre previously had inadequate software and technology to support information services. The computer did not

have Internet access and was equipped with an older version of Word that could not operate compatibly with other systems. There also seemed to be confusion and miscommunication about the possibility to have access to free Internet. The telephone was also only set up to make local calls. In response, grant money was used to upgrade the infrastructure at the Seniors' Corner.

There have also been transportation barriers as some members have not been able to get to the seniors' centre to access supports. While a taxi service is provided within the community, there are no wheelchair accessible vehicles to provide transportation for those with limited mobility. In response, some volunteers have provided informal transportation to and from the drop-in centre and related events. If some seniors are unable to attend an event, such as a seniors' dinner, volunteers have brought meals to seniors' homes. In the past, parking around the community centre was also deemed to be inconvenient. People are now able to park in front of the community centre if they have a handicap parking pass. There have also been concerns, however, that seniors are spending less time at the Seniors' Corner. For example, some activities have not been well attended if there are costs involved. There is also a general sense that during the summer months, seniors would rather engage in outside activities than spend time inside at the drop-in centre. There can also be challenges to reach out and connect seniors with supports available through the Seniors' Corner. Some seniors are very independent and may be reluctant to admit or request assistance when needed.

Lessons

Over the years, volunteers who have been involved with the Seniors' Corner have acquired many lessons that can be applied to many voluntary groups. The first set of lessons concerns how to effectively engage in collaborative relationships. It is important to maintain a good relationship with council. It is also important for board members to work well together and make decisions as a board. Volunteers have learned that it is not possible to please everyone all of the time. However, it is equally important to be tolerant of different approaches and ideas. They have also learned the value of investing in a paid staff member to bring stability to the organization's operations. There was also a general sense that a paid employee will have a different status than a volunteer in order to move initiatives forward. They have also learned how to cater dinners to large groups of people (i.e. size of pots, amount of coffee, etc.). They also realized that they needed to change their approach with what was cooked for senior / community dinners as seniors eat differently than other younger residents.

Place Integration

The Seniors' Corner is currently operated by the Tumbler Ridge Forever Young Society. The TRFYS consists of 43 members and there are five individuals on the board of directors. However, they are working to make the seniors' information coordinator position a paid position rather than a volunteer position.

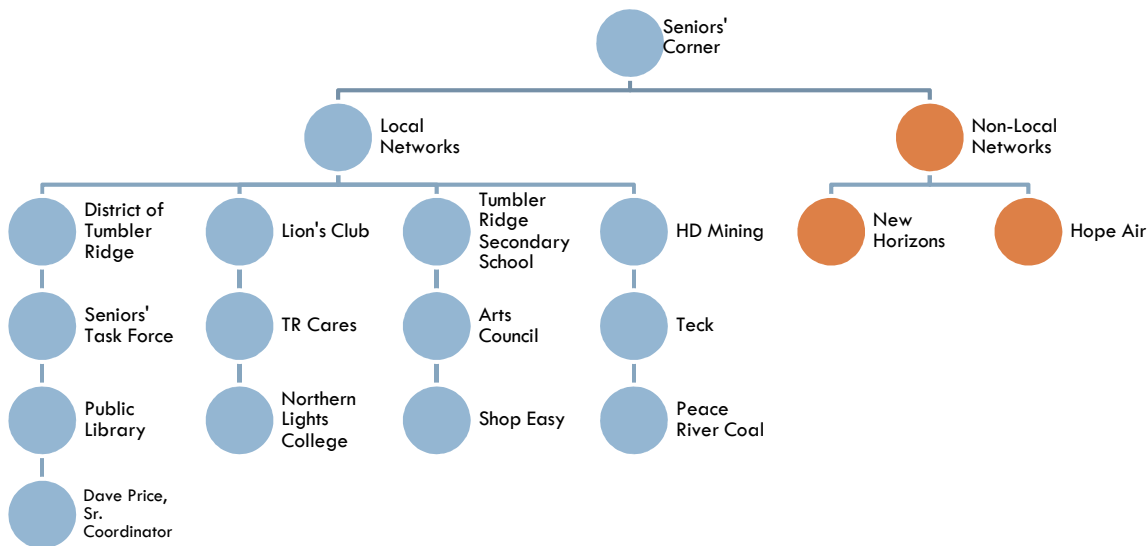
Over the years, the Seniors' Corner has had a number of partnerships to support ongoing activities, including:

- New Horizons (grant for potluck dinners);

- Tumbler Ridge Secondary School (teachers / students provided assistance with the dinners);
- Arts Council (provided musician for dinners);
- HD Mining (donation for Seniors' Day);
- District of Tumbler Ridge (access to space);
- Northern Lights College (computer training);
- Tumbler Ridge Public Library;
- TR Cares (\$1,000 to cover directors' liability);
- Hope Air;
- Peace River Coal (donated freezer and food);
- Shop Easy (donates coffee);
- Teck (donated lunch for seminar); and
- The Lion's Club.

When we asked volunteers how relationships between community groups helped or hindered the Seniors' Corner's initiatives, people spoke positively about the assistance provided for a range of social activities and supports. For example, the high school became an important partner to deliver community dinners. The Seniors' Corner has also referred older residents to the Lion's Club who have helped to connect seniors with youth who provide assistance with yard maintenance and obtaining firewood. In terms of non-local organizations, the Seniors' Corner has also benefitted from support received from New Horizons. When the United Way approached the Seniors' Corner to be a potential partner to deliver the Better at Home program, though, the Seniors' Corner decided not to pursue this endeavor.

Figure 4: Networks for the Seniors' Corner



Since the Seniors' Corner opened, there have been various changes in leadership that have influenced the direction of programs and initiatives. Once the original hostess moved out of the community, the remaining members formed the Tumbler Ridge Forever Young Society and focused on delivering social activities and providing information. This was a change from the

past when there was a stronger interest to pursue opportunities to deliver services. Overall, the priorities changed depending on who was involved in the organization.

Involvement in the Seniors' Corner has impacted participants in different ways. Volunteers have positive feelings from helping people who express their appreciation for the supports that are provided to them. With a limited number of volunteers, however, there can also be signs of burn out as one volunteer even noted that their involvement had altered their sleep patterns.

TR CARES

Origins

TR Cares formed after the mine closures and housing sale in the early 2000s. The affordable housing sale prompted an influx of people that had a range of service needs. Some residents had disabilities, which impacted their mobility around the community, particularly during the winter months. There was also an influx of low-income residents that had limited resources to access needed supports (i.e. health, family supports) both in the community and in more distant regional centres. Many came to the community without a vehicle. Unfortunately, many supports had been closed or reduced after the mine closures were announced. With no public or private transportation options available to take people to other centres, residents were unable to access needed services.

Service needs continued to emerge as the economy improved. The re-opening of the mines increased the demand for hotel rooms. This made it difficult to provide safe housing for women and children on short notice. If accommodations could not be found, residents needed to be driven to another community to access safe housing. Furthermore, while there was a taxi service in Tumbler Ridge, the taxi service was frequently busy transporting people to the mine. This made it difficult for people with limited mobility to access supports at the local health centre.

Early Stages of Development

Following the mine closures in the early 2000s, a thrift store was started in the community. The funds that were raised from the thrift store were used to assist families. Subsequently, a food bank was also developed to provide assistance to low-income families and residents. As the economy recovered, housing and rental prices increased. Residents with a fixed income were having a difficult time to meet their daily needs. This prompted the development of TR Cares.

In 2002/2003, the last meeting of the Tumbler Ridge Umbrella Committee (TRUC) was held due to a shortage, out-migration, and turnover of professional staff in the community. This prompted Rose Colledge, a former member of TRUC, to form a committee group, and pursue society status for a new organization called TR Cares. The goal was to address support gaps that existed following the mine closures; to provide transportation assistance to regional centres; and to address the needs of low-income residents, seniors, and other vulnerable people in the community. There were a number of residents involved in the early stages of development with TR Cares, including Rose Colledge, Bill Hendley, and Brian Sipes.

Over the years, TR Cares has developed many different types of services and supports. Each of those supports has its own unique development story. Some supports started to be offered on an informal basis before having more resources and formal processes developed to guide the delivery of those services. For example, Dr. Helm used to contact the committee to inquire if anyone was travelling to a regional centre that could provide transportation assistance to

someone who needed a CT scan. At the same time, Rose Colledge served as a council alternate on the regional district board. During one of those meetings, Northern Health introduced a new program called the Connections Bus to provide patients with transportation to connect with regionalized medical services. However, Tumbler Ridge was excluded from the list of places to be served by the Connections Bus at the time. Nine years ago, TR Cares approached Northern Health with a proposal to deliver medical transportation services in order to connect Tumbler Ridge residents with regionalized medical services in the Peace River region, as well as to connect them with the Northern Connections Bus that travelled to more distant centres. TR Cares started to provide a medical shuttle service after obtaining an older van that was donated by the local government; although, several volunteers also use their own vehicles.

TR Cares also started a safe shelter program about 5 or 6 years ago. There was no safe shelter in the community at the time because all the houses were sold after the mines closed. In response, TR Cares started a safe home program by fundraising enough funds to be able to rent a home.

There were a number of tasks involved in the early stages of developing the TR Cares medical shuttle service. The two most critical tasks, though, concerned negotiating the contract with Northern Health, as well as obtaining donated or good lease rates on shuttle vehicles. During the early stages of development, the District of Tumbler Ridge was selling their van. This happens every ten years when the District sells outdated vehicles by auction. This provided an opportunity to send a letter to request that the vehicle be donated to TR Cares. They were successful obtaining the vehicle, and this provided TR Cares with its first medical shuttle service vehicle. Most of the planning activities for TR Cares took place in the home of Rose Colledge.

Implementation

TR Cares started to deliver their programs through the thrift store and food bank. TR Cares now functions as an umbrella organization for a number of groups and services, including:

- Work In Progress (special needs group),
- Medical shuttle service,
- Police-based victim's services,
- Citizens on Patrol,
- Restorative Justice,
- Legal assistance,
- Family assistance,
- Medical / prescription assistance,
- Food and basic shelter assistance,
- Utilities fund, and
- HOURS (Housing Our Responsibility Shelter) – a safe home program.

Over the years, there have been many individuals involved in the delivery of TR Cares programs, such as Rose Colledge, Tim Snyder, Bill Hendley, Lloyd Frank, and others. There

have been a range of tasks required to implement these programs. For example, to operate the medical shuttle service, tasks have included:

- Continuing to negotiate contracts to deliver the medical shuttle service for Northern Health (currently in the 3rd contract);
- Obtaining support from Northern Health to maintain the vehicles (i.e. fuel, gas, oil, tires, insurance, etc.);
- Completing paperwork for Revenue Canada;
- Completing paperwork to obtain wheelchair accessible stickers for the vehicles;
- Monitoring messages daily to receive requests for rides;
- Coordinating multiple, and sometimes simultaneous, pick-up and drop-off locations across various places;
- Recruiting volunteer drivers;
- Completing background criminal checks for volunteer drivers;
- Obtained extra liability insurance for the volunteer drivers;
- Providing financial assistance for volunteer drivers to obtain BCAA coverage and first aid;
- Providing honorariums to volunteer drivers to cover incidentals while they are out-of-town (i.e. for lunch, coffee, etc.); and
- Providing funding for the drivers to cover meal costs of clients if needed.

Northern Health makes lease payments to TR Cares. The lease rates are based on the usage of TR Cares vehicles as negotiated in the contract. However, a new vehicle is usually purchased with each new contract. The contract stipulates that TR Cares should not operate a vehicle that is more than a few years old at the beginning of the contract as an older vehicle is more likely to break down. The medical shuttle service is provided to residents on a donation basis. There have been many times when TR Cares has needed to coordinate multiple, and sometimes simultaneous, pick-up and drop-off locations across various places. However, ongoing fundraising allows TR Cares volunteers to make more frequent trips than is negotiated in their contract. There are also forms for each passenger that must be completed for Northern Health.

The TR Cares shuttle service is supported with the assistance of four regular volunteers. Each volunteer rotates and is responsible for providing the shuttle service for one week each month in order to prevent burnout. The schedule depends upon the volunteer's availability. Volunteers pick up the passengers from their homes and drive them to their appointments. Transportation is also provided to a pharmacy if needed. The shuttle vehicle can accommodate up to six passengers. Sometimes, there is room to take a companion if needed; however, priority is given to passengers that have medical appointments. To support the ongoing operations of the safe house, TR Cares has:

- Obtained funding to maintain one rental agreement for one of the safe shelters;
- Negotiated good rental rates for the safe homes.

The safe house locations have been used to respond to the needs of domestic violence and homelessness.

Furthermore, TR Cares has pursued a range of other fundraising tasks to support their programs, including:

- Writing grants,
- Conducting raffles,
- Bartending for various events,
- Dog sitting,
- Organizing entertainment events (i.e. vagina monologues), and
- Organizing golf tournaments.

Over the years, the golf tournament has been the most important fundraising event. However, there are numerous tasks that are involved to put on the event each year. Volunteers travel around the Peace River region looking for prizes, donations, and sponsorships for various golf holes. In the past, they have had success obtaining golf course passes and hotel accommodations in the same destination. They have also done a Texas Holdem draw for a trip to Kelowna. One volunteer has donated the use of their condo in Kelowna that is located on a championship golf course. Their successful fundraising efforts have enabled them to purchase a second vehicle to support the medical shuttle service.

A lot of the ongoing operations for TR Cares are conducted and stored out of the home of Rose Colledge and Tim Snyder. For example, the TR Cares line is based out of their home. Some tasks are also conducted in an office at the health care centre where there is a fax line. However, the medical shuttle vehicles are parked at the house of the volunteer who is driving for that week.

The overall purpose or direction of TR Cares' programs has not changed over time. However, they did change how they approached their operations. For example, their board of directors changed the frequency of their meetings. Instead of meeting on a monthly basis, the board now meets once every three months. They have also added a few more programs to the umbrella of their organization. This reduces the need for multiple organizations to apply for charitable status. Instead, many services and supports are streamlined under one organization. Lastly, since purchasing a second vehicle, TR Cares has been able to provide some transportation to medical appointments both out-of-town and within the community.

Impact

With a broad range of programs and supports, TR Cares has had several positive immediate and long-term impacts in the community. Without TR Cares, there would be many residents who would be unable to access supports in distant regional centres. TR Cares has also provided an alternative transportation option for those who do not wish to drive during the winter months. The availability of supports has also impacted the working environment in Tumbler Ridge. By providing assistance for people to connect with medical appointments, they have been able to help people get back to work sooner.

There have also been benefits for volunteer drivers who are able to complete errands while they drive residents to their appointments in regional centres. In terms of long-term impacts,

there was a general sense that the medical shuttle service has helped to retain residents. Without the shuttle service, many seniors and low-income residents would need to move out of the community.

TR Cares has been successful for many reasons. To start, the organization consists of a very tight knit group of people. While there is a core group of 4 or 5 people who do the majority of the work, there is also a broader group of 20 residents that can be called upon when needed. There is also a mutually beneficial and supportive relationship between TR Cares and the groups that are underneath their umbrella.

Some new opportunities have been created as a result of TR Cares. Local volunteers realized that residents were having a difficult time to connect with local medical appointments. While there was a taxi operating in Tumbler Ridge, it was frequently busy transporting people to the mines. As a result, TR Cares negotiated with Northern Health to provide transportation once a week to connect residents with local medical services. TR Cares is currently working with the local doctors' offices to coordinate medical appointments with this scheduled day for transportation.

Overall, several factors have influenced the success of TR Cares programs. First, the medical shuttle service delivered through TR Cares has saved the Northern Health Authority money. Without the volunteers, fundraising, and local coordination efforts through TR Cares, participants noted that Northern Health would have to assume the costs of hiring a union driver and the full costs of maintaining a vehicle. By using a smaller vehicle rather than the larger Northern Health Connections bus, TR Cares is able to deliver a more cost effective service. They have also paid careful attention to managing their volunteer resources. By rotating volunteers each week, they have been able to reduce volunteer burnout. Furthermore, people we spoke with attributed the success of TR Cares to the dedication and commitment of its executive director, Rose Colledge, to invest the time needed to coordinate and assist residents in need.

Challenges

Since the early stages of development, TR Cares has worked through a number of challenges as they delivered their services and supports. At times, there can be a lack of volunteers to support various programs. In some cases, they have lost good volunteers who were unable to afford to volunteer. Some volunteers have fixed incomes and have been unable to afford meals while they are out-of-town driving the medical shuttle. In response, TR Cares now provides volunteers with an honorarium to cover incidentals incurred through volunteering (i.e. meals, coffees, etc.). However, there continue to be challenges recruiting younger volunteers who have busy work and family schedules. Also, they may not have access to volunteer drivers on short notice. In this context, the dedication and commitment of a core group of volunteers has played an important role as people have stepped up to use their own personal vehicles to provide transportation when needed. Often, though, limited access to volunteers has increased the workload for others within the organization. To avoid volunteer burnout, TR Cares rotates their volunteer drivers on a weekly basis, and they have also recruited relief volunteer drivers who are ready to step in when needed. Many of the relief drivers work at the mine, but are able to volunteer when their shift rotation ends.

There have also been challenges transporting clients who have addictions. This can create dangerous situations for volunteer drivers and other passengers if the person becomes violent. As a result, TR Cares no longer transports clients with serious drug addiction issues.

TR Cares has also experienced funding pressures to support their programs. These funding pressures have been exacerbated by government transitions that have impacted the planning of some fundraising events. For example, this year, they were unable to book the golf tournament until May due to a transition in government staff. The late booking, however, was not conducive to obtaining major sponsors. As a result, they have postponed this year's event. The paperwork for grant applications can also consume a considerable amount of volunteer and staff resources for a small amount of funding. More recently, through the District of Tumbler Ridge, they have been able to obtain access to a grant writer to provide assistance with developing grant applications. Furthermore, during the early stages of developing the medical shuttle services, TR Cares experienced a challenge to obtain an affordable lease for a vehicle. After the lease for one vehicle was approaching the end of its term, the payout was more than the vehicle was worth. As a result, TR Cares was able to obtain their next vehicle at Fort City Chrysler at almost cost. Other challenges include poor weather conditions and high rental and housing costs in the community.

Lessons

TR Cares has acquired a number of key lessons from their experience delivering a broad range of programs. The most important set of lessons concerns how they have changed their approach to their operations. They have learned over time that sometimes it is better to have fewer volunteers with a common mindset than to have many who have conflicting interests and approaches. This can help to complete ongoing tasks in a more efficient manner. They also reduced the number of board meetings from once a month to quarterly meetings in order to reduce the commitment on some volunteers. This was an important response to some board members who felt they did not have time to sit on another board or meet for the sake of meeting. They have also looked at the structural models of other charitable organizations, such as Arts Councils, that are home to several different arts organizations. This prompted TR Cares to become an umbrella organization for many groups and programs in order to reduce the need for many organizations to acquire charitable society status. With experience, they have also learned how to become more organized in order to complete administrative tasks efficiently. This is a particularly important skill when dealing with various government agencies. At the core, it is about learning the processes and requirements to operate non-profit programs that are funded by government.

After being awarded multiple contracts by Northern Health to operate the medical shuttle service, TR Cares now has a better understanding of what is needed and how to shape their budget accordingly. They have also adjusted their operations to respond to the needs of their clients. For example, Northern Health originally requested that TR Cares operate the medical shuttle service with an eight passenger van. They found, however, that some residents stopped taking the shuttle because the days became longer as more people took the shuttle. Long days can be particularly difficult for patients receiving chemotherapy. One participant talked about how TR Cares has adjusted how they operate in order to respond to the needs of

those residents. TR Cares has allocated a separate vehicle to transport chemotherapy patients in order to reduce their exposure to other viruses and to reduce the amount of time they are away from home.

Place Integration

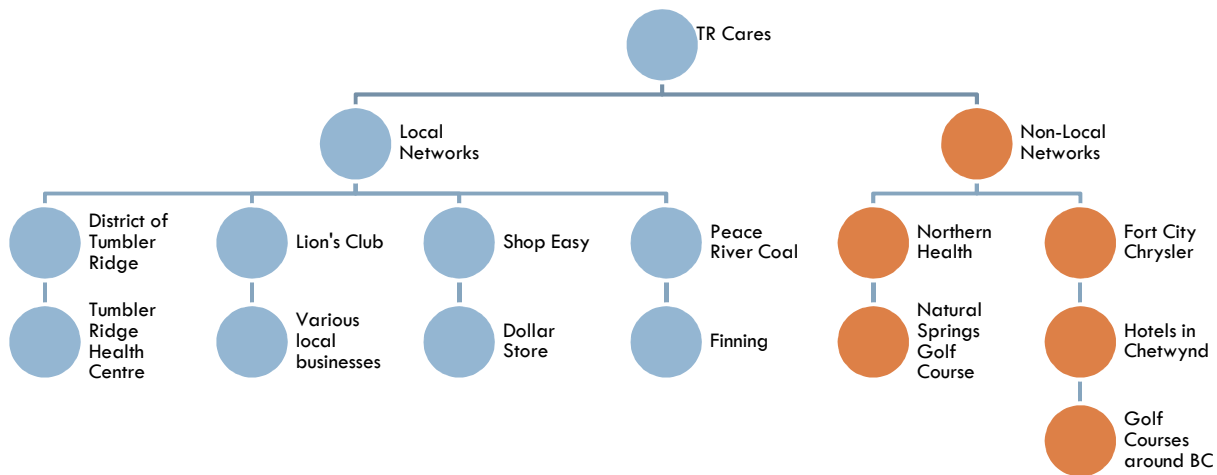
With many programs and services under its umbrella, TR Cares has a more complex structural framework than other organizations in Tumbler Ridge. TR Cares has a 7 member board of directors. There can also be between 6 and 8 committees with various volunteers to address specific initiatives. Each organization under the umbrella of TR Cares also has its own volunteers and staff members. For example, the medical shuttle service is supported by the work of four regular volunteer drivers; although, there are now also two to three alternate drivers who are on call each month. Overall, there is a broader group of more than 20 volunteers.

TR Cares has drawn upon a number of partnerships to deliver their programs and supports, including:

- Fort City Chrysler (sponsor for golf tournament, discount for vehicles);
- Shop Easy (sponsors hole in one for golf tournament, prizes for silent auction);
- Finning (sponsors hole in one for golf tournament - \$10,000);
- Peace River Coal (sponsored hole for golf tournament);
- The Dollar Store (prizes for the silent auction);
- Northern Health (funding for medical shuttle);
- the Natural Springs Golf Course in Chetwynd (golf pass);
- the District of Tumbler Ridge (access to grant writer);
- various hotels in Chetwynd (prizes for the golf tournament);
- various golf courses in other communities (prizes for the golf tournament); and
- various businesses around Tumbler Ridge.

When we asked participants how their relationships with community groups helped or hindered their work, TR Cares noted that they have received positive support from many sectors of the community. For example, when TR Cares has encountered someone in need, they have worked with the Lion's Club to obtain some financial resources to address that individual's needs (i.e. new dentures, clothes, etc.). In terms of funding, the mines have provided sponsorship for the golf tournament and have encouraged their workers to form teams for the event. They have also had several small donations from various residents and business around the community. For example, Dr. Charles Helm provided donations to TR Cares from his books' proceeds. Key individuals, such as Rose Colledge and Tim Snyder, have also been able to leverage their networks to broaden their access to resources when needed. Furthermore, the District has provided TR Cares with access to a grant writer who has been successful in broadening their access to funding resources.

Figure 5: Networks for TR Cares



TR Cares has also benefitted from several businesses and organizations in other communities. There are many businesses around the Peace River Region, for example, that have provided sponsorship and prizes for the golf tournament. Northern Health has also accommodated many requests that have been made to support the medical shuttle program. TR Cares has also benefitted from the networks of some key members. Through their different roles in local government and community services, they have developed many connections in other communities and with various provincial government ministries. This has allowed them to conduct their operations more efficiently and to connect with additional resources when needed.

Involvement in TR Cares has impacted the people we spoke with in various ways. One participant felt that it has made them more compassionate. There is also a sense that volunteering brings out the best in people. At the same time, however, it can expand the worries and concerns that volunteers have about the people in need throughout their community. People can come forward with needs at any time of day or during any day of the week. As a result, volunteers must be ready to respond at any time. There is also considerable paperwork that must be completed as a part of delivering so many supports. Sometimes, this can mean that other personal tasks become less of a priority. For some volunteers to take a break, they must take their holidays in distant locations in order to avoid burnout. The importance of the dedicated work that TR Cares has done throughout the community, though, has been recognized through awards from the Governor General of BC and the Queen’s Jubilee.

Over the years, there have been few changes in the leadership with TR Cares. While Bill Hendley once played a large role to manage the operations of the medical shuttle service, Tim Snyder took over this coordinating role once Bill and his wife moved away from the community. TR Cares has also reduced the meetings and time commitments of its board members.

TUMBLER RIDGE HOSPICE AND RESPITE CARE SOCIETY

Origins

Tumbler Ridge has an aging population. While there are currently not many residents seeking hospice or palliative care, the list is growing. As multiple generations have been aging-in-place, more youth have experienced the loss of a parent. Unfortunately, there have been no grief seminars or supports in place to guide residents through the loss of a loved one. This prompted the 49 Forever Club to invite a guest speaker from the Dawson Creek Palliative Care Society to deliver a workshop. Following that workshop, some members from the 49 Forever Club decided to form a hospice and palliative care society in Tumbler Ridge. The goal was to develop a society that could provide support for people who were terminally ill. It would also provide family members with a place to call if they needed support. This was deemed to be particularly important since many did not have extended family support near the community.

Early Stages of Development

By forming the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Palliative Care Society (now the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society), residents hoped to develop a more proactive approach to provide support to ailing residents and their family members. There were several people involved during the early stages of developing the society, including Doug Foerster, Linda Helm, Clay Iles, and BC Housing. With the assistance of the Dawson Creek Palliative Care Society, the group formed a society with the BC Hospice Association. During the early stages of development, the Society felt that it was important to ensure they had representation on the Tumbler Ridge Umbrella Committee (now TR Cares) in order to be networked with other groups in the community. Many early planning activities took place at the community centre and the home of the President, Doug Foerster.

By working with BC Housing, there was an early interest by society members to provide a place for ailing residents to stay in their home community rather than being waitlisted for 2-3 years at other facilities. Shortly after, this interest broadened to provide accommodations for out-of-town family members to stay while they were in Tumbler Ridge visiting a terminally ill resident or looking after arrangements following a death in the family. There were several tasks involved in the early stages of planning and developing hospice and palliative care supports in Tumbler Ridge, including:

- Working with the Dawson Creek Palliative Care Society to obtain advice about forming a society in Tumbler Ridge;
- Delivering workshops on how to train volunteers to provide grief support;
- Attending conference about hospice and palliative care;
- Identifying a location to provide accommodations; and
- Working with BC Housing to obtain one of the former co-op housing units.

BC Housing purchased one of the former co-op units on Chamberlain Crescent and completed all the renovations. This ensured that the units were wheelchair accessible. They then leased

the unit at half price to the society. Soon after, a second unit was obtained in the same location.

Implementation

Several individuals have continued to be engaged to guide the activities of the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society, including Doug Foerster, Lloyd Frank, Linda Helm, Rose Colledge, members of the Ministerial Association, and various nurses in the community. Ongoing activities and tasks have included:

- Attending grief seminars in Vancouver;
- Delivering local workshops on grief supports at the community centre;
- Learning about how to keep volunteers engaged;
- Learning and promoting the purpose of hospice and palliative care through workshops, newspaper advertisements, and word of mouth;
- Coordinating with nursing staff who take care of the units;
- Obtaining grant-in-aids from the District of Tumbler Ridge;
- Obtaining funding to assist residents to have help buttons at home;
- Installing electronic beds;
- Moving beds;
- Providing accommodations for health care professionals and visiting family;
- Providing first-aid courses to assist families to keep their loved ones at home longer;
- Providing respite care; and
- Developing grief counselling.

Over the years, however, the original intent and expectations for the hospice and palliative care units did not materialize. While the units have been used for respite care, they have only been used to provide palliative care a couple of times within the last couple of years. The units have been used more to provide accommodations for family members who are unable to book a hotel given the growth in industry activity. The units have also been used to provide accommodations for health care professionals.

Impact

While there has been a limited need for hospice and palliative care services, the society has been able to provide accommodations for family members and health care professionals. The society has also had a positive impact on the community by being able to provide information and skills to assist individuals to keep their loved ones at home longer. There is a general sense that the society's activities have been successful due to broad community support. Clay lles was also instrumental to obtain the support of BC Housing in order to eventually obtain two of the former co-op units. New opportunities have emerged to address other needs in the community as a result of the planning and investments made by the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society. For example, it can be difficult and expensive to obtain a hotel for locum doctors due to increased industry activity. Arrangements have been made to allow locum doctors to use the palliative care facilities during their stay in Tumbler Ridge in

exchange for a donation to the society. New equipment, such as electric beds, can also now be loaned out to individuals in the community.

Challenges

Since the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society formed, there have been various challenges that have impacted ongoing operations and activities. First, there has been a lack of human resources. In recent years, there has been an exodus of seniors, which has reduced the number of members in the society. Some seniors left the community after the re-emergence of industry activity, while others left the community due to health reasons. There were concerns about their ability to access services locally. Some left due to an uncertainty that an ambulance service would be available to transport them to the closest regional centre. Sometimes, an ambulance must be sent from Dawson Creek. Several of these individuals were long-term residents and volunteer assets in the community.

In terms of communication, there are many groups in Tumbler Ridge and it can be difficult, at times, to know which groups are still active and what they are providing. For example, while the Mayor's Seniors' Task Force used to play an important role to distribute information throughout the community, they are no longer as active in the community as they used to be, particularly since the seniors' needs coordinator recently resigned. Overall, it can be challenging to know who should have various types of information and who should be responsible for providing that information to the community. At times, there has also been infrequent communication with, or engagement from, the Ministerial Association. Finally, there have been political barriers due to strained relationships between the society and the local council, as well as due to division within council.

Lessons

Over the years, the society has learned some important lessons that have guided their ongoing operations. They have learned, for example, how important it is to keep friendship and politics separate. The society has also worked hard to develop networks with various health care professionals and organizations in order to deliver workshops, seminars, and supports related to hospice and palliative care. They have also learned how important it is to invest in volunteer education through various training opportunities and workshops as this also helps to keep volunteers engaged in the organization.

Volunteers have also learned how to provide better grief support.

Place Integration

The Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society consists of 9 members. The types of these members vary and include professionals such as nurses, an RCMP victim's abuse worker, members of the Ministerial Association, and general residents. The executive includes a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The society has benefitted from several partnerships with other organizations both within and outside of the community in order to assist residents in need, including:

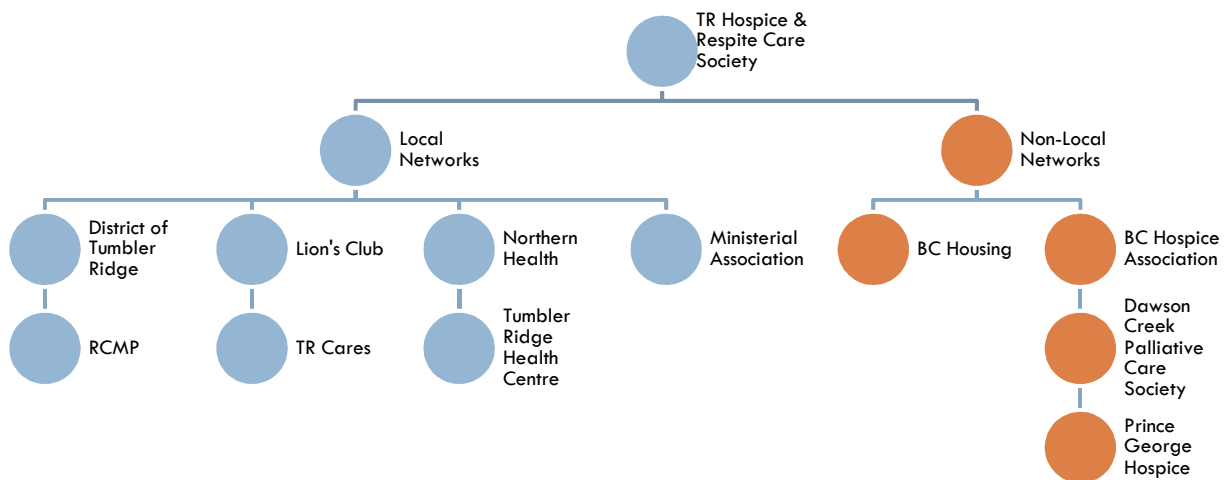
- The Dawson Creek Palliative Care Society (advice and information);

- District of Tumbler Ridge (funding);
- The Ministerial Association;
- Northern Health (to provide first-aid, alert lines, etc.);
- TR Cares;
- Lion's Club (hospice society donated snow blower); and
- BC Housing (to obtain / renovate two former co-op units).

By working with other community groups, the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society has broadened its networks and expanded the supports available for ailing residents and their families. For example, the society provided support to assist TR Cares to purchase a new vehicle for the medical shuttle service. The society also donated a snow blower to the Snow Angels program that is operated by the Lion's Club. There are times, however, when limited or infrequent communication across groups has impeded efforts to deliver various types of support.

The Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society also has a positive relationship with Northern Health. They have worked together to deliver hospice and respite supports when needed, as well as to deliver educational programs, such as first-aid and alert lines, in order to assist residents to remain in their home longer. They also received considerable assistance from BC Housing to obtain and renovate two units for hospice and respite care within the community.

Figure 6: Networks for the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society



The volunteers we spoke with have had a very positive experience with the Tumbler Ridge Hospice and Respite Care Society. Some have found their experience to be very enabling as they engage with others in the community. By holding workshops and seminars, they have been able to keep in touch with other stakeholders and seek support for those in need. Over the years, there have been few changes in the executive and leadership of the society. As younger individuals become involved, they can bring a different approach. However, the overall purpose of the society has not changed.

TUMBLER RIDGE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Origins

In 2000, two young boys, Daniel Helm and Mark Turner, found some dinosaur tracks at Flatbed Creek – an area just outside of Tumbler Ridge. Soon after, Charles Helm sent photos of the tracks to Rich McCrea, a PhD student at the University of Alberta. In the summer of 2001, Rich McCrea came to Tumbler Ridge to look at the tracks that were found by the two local boys during the previous year. The tracks were confirmed to be made by an ankylosaur. They also found a dinosaur bone next to the track way. This was the first confirmed dinosaur bone found, and recorded in the context that it was found, in BC. Photos and notes were taken in the location of the finding. This prompted Rich, Charles, and other residents to explore other creeks in the area. A track site was discovered at Wolverine River – the site of the current lantern tour that was started in 2004. Through their exploration, they found 50 tracks of footprints. Dinosaur bones have also been discovered. These findings were enough to warrant an excavation. A key problem, however, was that there was no institution in BC that had the capacity to do the excavation.

These events prompted local residents to work with Rich McCrea as they formed the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and began to develop the Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre (PRPRC). An important goal of the foundation was to acquire the resources and equipment needed to excavate and properly store the dinosaur tracks and bones found in the area. With an estimated budget of \$36,000, the first excavation was conducted in the summer of 2003. Another goal was to further expand tourism opportunities in the area in order to diversify the economy. This second goal was particularly important since closures were announced at both the Quintette and Bullmoose mines in the early 2000s.

Early Stages of Development

The long-term vision of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation was to develop the Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre and the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery as a facility that would operate year-round with full-time staff. A number of residents were involved during the early stages of development with the foundation, including Charles and Daniel Helm, Rich McCrea, Lisa Buckley, Carolyn Golightly, Jerry Newman, various members of the Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society, and the District of Tumbler Ridge. Wayne Sawchuk was also present for the discovery of the dinosaur bones.

A very broad range of tasks were pursued during the early stages of development. In terms of human resources, the museum foundation:

- Wrote a contract to hire Rich McCrea and Lisa Buckley to conduct the excavation and guide ongoing efforts related to the museum,
- Recruited several volunteers from the WNMS to systematically explore areas around Tumbler Ridge and the broader Peace River Region, and
- Recruited and maintained a membership database for the museum foundation.

They needed to ensure they had adequate financial resources in place to support the early excavation work and to develop an appropriate working, storage, and display area for these unique assets. As a result, the foundation:

- Submitted a proposal for \$326,000 to the SICIEA (Softwood Industry Community Economic Development Initiative) government program to assist communities impacted by the softwood lumber dispute,
- Obtained some matching funding from the District of Tumbler Ridge to support their grant application to SICIEA,
- Obtained a grant from the BC Living Landscapes (BC Royal Museum), and
- Obtained donations from industry.

There were also a number of additional fundraising initiatives that were pursued in order to raise money for the work. For example, Dr. Charles Helm donated proceeds from books written about hiking in the area. These funds allowed the foundation to hire Lisa Buckley for the 2003 excavation work in the area.

They were also able to secure in-kind support, such as:

- \$10,000 in helicopter support from Canfor in order to transport the equipment and materials out of the canyon location where the dinosaur bones were located, and
- A truck was provided by the University of Alberta.

In the fall of 2008, the District of Tumbler Ridge offered to donate a building to the museum foundation. Prior to this period, a warehouse located in the light industrial park was used to support operations. With limited financial and operational resources in place, however, the foundation did not feel it was ready to acquire infrastructure that would need investments for ongoing maintenance and repairs (i.e. for plumbing, roof, etc.). Instead, the foundation worked with the CAO of the District of Tumbler Ridge to negotiate a ten year lease for the building at a rate of \$1 per year. The foundation also wanted to continue working towards the long-term goal of developing a purpose built facility. As a result, they have worked to identify what should be included in the museum and have worked on architectural plans for a facility between 120,000 and 150,000 square feet. The ability to lease the former Claude Galbois Elementary School, however, significantly expanded their access to space from approximately 5,000 square feet to nearly 30,000 square feet.

In addition to forming the foundation, a number of policies and procedures were established in order to ensure that a high level of work was conducted in the field. For example, they developed a no alcohol policy for the excavation site. They also drafted a code of conduct for collecting fossils. Volunteers also worked to promote the opportunities and ongoing activities.

During the early stages of development, many excavation activities were conducted in the field. However, many planning activities were conducted in the home of Dr. Charles Helm.

Implementation

Since the museum foundation was formed, several people have been involved to support ongoing activities, including Rich McCrea, Lisa Buckley, Charles Helm, Daniel Helm, Linda Helm, Jerry Newman, Carolyn Golightly, Hazel Peters, Charissa Tonneson, Larry White, Jerrilyn Schrembi, Jim Kincaid, and many other individuals who have explored the area looking for discoveries. When we asked participants how they started to implement various programs and initiatives, some felt that it really started when they found the footprint tracks and bones that prompted the excavation. Other people spoke about the importance of acquiring space in the light industrial park. Eventually, however, they moved to occupy a larger space at the recently closed Claude Galbois Elementary School. These sites became the basis of their operations and allowed them to develop the Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre.

Several tasks and resources were required to deliver the museum foundation's ongoing programs and initiatives, including:

- Coordinating volunteers;
- Recruiting permanent staff and part-time summer staff through public advertising, federal job creation programs, and word of mouth;
- Conducting board meetings to monitor the objectives, financial management, and operations of the centre;
- Developing souvenir molds to support fundraising initiatives;
- Writing grant applications for local, regional, provincial, and federal government programs;
- Continuing to pursue industry donations;
- Continuing to search for trackways and dinosaur bones;
- Continuing excavation activities;
- Safely preparing and storing specimens that have been excavated in the collections;
- Carefully documenting and developing records for the specimens in the collections;
- Developing a dinosaur display and photographic exhibit of the region's history at the community centre;
- Developing the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery at the Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre;
- Installing household blue foam insulation to make the fabricated track surface for the main gallery exhibit;
- Obtaining several display mounts, including an Acrocanthosaurus display mount for \$60,000;
- Creating a reception area at the PRPRC;
- Developing and promoting visitor, research, and educational programs;
- Adapting an earlier dino camp model developed by Rich McCrea and another colleague from Saskatchewan to be used in Tumbler Ridge;
- Working with the Northern Lights College to develop the dino camp program for youth;
- Working with the school district to bring kids to the centre;
- Working with the public library to host the fossil roadshow;
- Holding a free annual open house for the gallery and tours of the research centre;
- Obtaining financial support to develop and deliver educational programs;

- Managing the railway museum at the tourist information centre's box car (i.e. about the electric train, transporting coal to Prince Rupert);
- Working with the WNMS volunteers to build trails to key tourist sites;
- Tracking visitation trends;
- Conducting lectures and field trips;
- Developing brochures for the exhibits;
- Developing and maintaining partnerships;
- Writing newspaper articles;
- Obtaining exposure and building a reputation through articles in Canadian Geographic and BC Tourism magazines;
- Attending conferences and providing consulting expertise in places such as Australia, Turkmenistan, and China;
- Attending paleontological and geopark symposia in Germany, England, the US, and Italy;
- Delivering an annual presentation to council; and
- Developing a renovation plan for the facility.

The overall vision of the museum foundation has changed over time. While it has been a more recent history-oriented organization, the foundation has broadened its focus to take advantage of the opportunities created from physical and paleontological assets in the region. The museum foundation is now focused on developing a comprehensive geo park that celebrates that human history, as well as the physical assets of the region.

The PRPRC is also currently in a larger facility than originally envisioned. The original goal was to operate in a smaller facility due to the costs involved. The original museum plan was designed for approximately 12,000 square feet. There were concerns about being able to obtain adequate support from the provincial government and other stakeholders to support a larger facility. At the same time, however, they did not want to build a facility that was too small, thus requiring the foundation to request more financial support for an expansion. There was also a recognition that museums have a better chance to obtain everything they need during the construction of a facility, particularly since these types of facilities can cost up to \$50 million to build. As a result, the museum foundation is considering the development of a permanent facility that is approximately 130,000 to 150,000 square feet with 50,000 to 60,000 square feet for exhibits (i.e. 10 main galleries). The rest of the space would be allocated for collections.

The museum foundation has also worked with industry to obtain additional financial resources. As they have engaged with various investors, they have been careful to make sure that any support that was acquired did not alter the direction or vision of the organization. Some companies have requested information about the number of Aboriginal youth that were attending the dino camps. The PRPRC, however, does not profile or track the ethnic composition of kids in their programs. They have been careful to ensure that all youth have a level playing field to participate in the dino camps and other educational programs.

Impact

The Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and the PRPRC has had several positive immediate and long-term impacts on the community. To start, there have been several educational initiatives to expand the awareness of the history and types of assets that exist in the region. For example, they have developed a range of dino camps and educational programs, including school programs that have brought students from other schools in the region, such as Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. They have also held week-long dinosaur camps in Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, and Grande Prairie. As more people have become aware of what to look for, this has prompted more people to go hiking and explore the area. This, in turn, has led to new findings of fossils and trackways. It has also provided another opportunity for residents to become engaged in the community as volunteers provide assistance with the search and excavation of bones and fossils.

The discovery of dinosaur footprints and bones in the region has also helped to diversify the tourism and economic development opportunities for Tumbler Ridge. For example, the PRPRC has experienced a spike in visitations during the summer between May and September. Overall, there are about 3,000 to 4,000 visitors to the centre each year (and over 4,300 in 2013), with roughly 90% of those visitors coming from outside of the community. It has also helped to raise the profile of the community by attracting positive media attention through magazines such as Canadian Geographic.

In terms of long-term impacts, they have been working to influence the development of provincial legislation that would protect and manage fossils in BC. They have also been developing protocols for working with resource-based industries in order to manage fossils without eliminating resource-based development. These protocols are intended to assess the value of a discovery in a timely manner. If an industry or road construction team, for example, discover a fossil or bone, they are hoping to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place, that companies have a way to report findings, and that they can work together to mitigate the impacts on these assets.

A number of important factors have contributed to the success of the museum foundation and the PRPRC. First, the foundation benefitted from the in-kind contributions provided by Rich McCrea who waived fees during the early stages of development since he already had a research stipend provided by the University of Alberta. Many people we spoke with also felt that the organization benefitted from the leadership of Dr. Charles Helm who has played an important role to coordinate volunteers and guide ongoing activities. In fact, the strong working relationship between Rich McCrea and Charles Helm was deemed to be integral to the success of this initiative as Charles had considerable credibility and local influence and Rich brought expertise and national and international credibility to the initiative. They have also preferred to use small committees to work efficiently and get things done. The foundation has benefitted from the determination of volunteers and key staff to remain invested in this long-term development goal.

By demonstrating progress and high quality work, they have been able to develop trust, broaden their networks, and strengthen their reputation – all of which has made it easier to access a broader range of resources in order to get things done. They have also benefitted

from being located in a region that is an industrial powerhouse in the province, which has enabled them to obtain timely in-kind helicopter time and financial contributions by industry. Despite all of the successes, however, it has been difficult to convince residents in Tumbler Ridge about the value of continuing to invest in this initiative. Due to public pressures, some volunteers feel that there can be struggles maintaining local political support. However, for every dollar that the District of Tumbler Ridge has provided, the foundation's volunteers have been able to leverage that support and obtain roughly two dollars of external funding from the regional and federal governments, as well as industry.

Several new opportunities have emerged as a result of the work done by volunteers of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and staff at the PRPRC. In the fall of 2002, Rich McCrea provided Daniel Helm, one of the boys who found the original set of footprints, and his classmate with tips on paleontology. With that information, they developed a project that won a science fair award. When WNMS volunteers worked on one excavation site, they were disappointed not to find more tracks. Applying lantern light at night, however, revealed more tracks and led to the development of a new evening lantern tour.

Perhaps most significantly, the Turkmenistan government invited Rich McCrea and Lisa Buckley to provide an assessment of the paleontological significance of some fossil sites which included dinosaur tracks. Two UNESCO representatives were present and one became interested in the museum and the Tumbler Ridge area as a result of private conversations. Rich and Lisa were asked to make a couple of informal presentations concerning the inclusion within UNESCO's Global Geopark Network. The proposals were well received and they brought back the idea to the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation. After returning to Tumbler Ridge and discussing the concept with members of the museum foundation, they quickly realized that it was a good fit for the community. Unlike UNESCO sites that are fully protected from any development, a geopark is considered to be a living landscape and does not come with any protective designation that would disrupt resource-based development. Recognizing the importance of mining to the history and current employment of the area, a geopark would allow the museum foundation to continue to develop positive working relationships with industry. Currently, Stonehammer is the only geopark in Canada located in Saint John, New Brunswick; although, there are ten aspiring geoparks in Canada.

Recently, in the fall of 2013, the Tumbler Ridge Aspiring Geopark Committee submitted their geopark proposal. Several key individuals were involved to develop the proposal of a geopark in Tumbler Ridge, including Charles and Linda Helm, Sarah Gamble, Larry and CrysWhite, Kevin Sharman, Rich McCrea, and Lisa Buckley. Several tasks were completed to strengthen and support the development of their proposal, including:

- Presenting the geopark concept to council;
- Consulting with the Canadian international committee for geoparks to find out how to properly put together a proposal;
- Consulting with representatives of the Stonehammer Geopark in St. John, New Brunswick in order to learn more about the process required to obtain approval for a geopark;
- Working with the mines to redevelop their mine tours to take visitors to the dinosaur tracks near the mines;

- Obtaining \$540,000 to renovate the museum;
- Sending a board member to a geopark conference in Italy;
- Publishing a set of three books to highlight the human history, waterfalls and trails, and palaeontology assets of the area;
- Hosting a symposium to raise the profile of their work to develop a geopark (July 2013); and
- Obtaining feedback from representatives of the Canadian committee at this symposium about the strengths and merits of their proposal.

Participants also spoke about the advantages of being located in a smaller community. With a more limited bureaucracy, volunteers and various stakeholders have been able to work efficiently to develop the geopark proposal.

The geopark is expected to have several positive impacts on the community. It is expected to develop long-term economic development opportunities that can help to further strengthen and diversify the economy. The geopark has the potential to attract visitors from around the world. It can also expand opportunities for commercial businesses to become involved by providing direct facilities and visitor services, such as tours, for the geopark. Employment opportunities are expected to be created during construction work related to the geopark. It can also help to preserve the history of the First Nations, the town, and resource development in the area. Furthermore, the geopark has the potential to further enhance the local quality-of-life and retain residents in the community.

Challenges

Over the years, the museum foundation's volunteers and the staff at the PRPRC have worked through a number of challenges. To start, there has been a limited set of institutional, regulatory, and financial resources at the provincial level to support paleontology initiatives around BC. For example, the BC Royal Museum does not have staff or resources dedicated to paleontology. More specifically, while they accept fossils from volunteers, there are no staff dedicated and trained to manage and interpret the specimens. In general, there is a lack of provincial expertise in paleontology. This prompted the museum foundation to recruit Rich McCrea and Lisa Buckley. The lack of provincial expertise has meant that, in the past, some paleontology materials have been excavated and displayed in other provinces. A few years ago, the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology led the expedition to recover what was at the time the largest ichthyosaur (marine reptile) in the world. At the time, there was no organization with such expertise and resources in BC. The materials are now on display in Drumheller instead of a facility in BC. In response, the PRPRC has been pushing the provincial government to designate the facility in Tumbler Ridge as a repository for paleontological resources. There is now a second larger specimen and the PRPRC has the expertise to recover it. There are limited resources, however, to obtain logistical support and more highly trained staff for the initiative. As a result, the recovery of such massive finds continues to be conducted by larger, well-funded institutions.

Concerns were also expressed about the limited culture of paleontology in BC. While some stakeholders may be aware that paleontology resources exist, they may not be aware of the magnitude or potential of those resources. There has been a lack of political will to provide

funding and establish adequate provincial legislation or protocols in order to ensure that industry reports any paleontology findings so that they can be preserved. With a strong, positive reputation across the region, the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and the PRPRC have been able to nurture their relationships with industry who have provided them with maps of where resource development will take place (i.e. wind project) and have contacted them when any potential paleontology materials have been uncovered. Based on this experience, the PRPRC has been working to develop a protocol that could support provincial legislation. Volunteers and staff continue to encounter challenges engaging provincial government stakeholders. At times, the provincial government has not been contactable; and while they have obtained funding from local, regional, and federal levels of government, they have been unable to obtain provincial support.

Another key challenge concerns financial resources. There is a need to raise a significant amount of funds to support the development of the facility and an endowment. However, there have also been limited funds to support excavation and marketing tasks. While applying for federal grants, the foundation originally documented the in-kind contributions that volunteers provided through their labour. When the government grant rules were changed to disallow such in-kind contributions, the foundation needed to raise those additional funds to support the application. At the same time, there are public concerns about the level of district support for the facility and the potential geopark. The District of Tumbler Ridge has provided an annual contribution of \$200,000 for the last few years. Public concerns have also been expressed that the protection of fossils will have a negative impact on industry and employment in the community. In response, volunteers and staff broadly communicate their ability to leverage any local funding to attract broader sources of industry and government funding. These discussions have helped volunteers to raise the profile of their ongoing work and demonstrate how their initiative can further diversify the economy and enhance the quality-of-life in Tumbler Ridge. They have also worked to clearly communicate how they are working to strengthen relationships with industry and recognize the importance of the mining sector.

Since it formed, the museum has been subject to several studies by consultants for the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation, the District of Tumbler Ridge, and the Peace River Regional District. Despite positive recommendations from various studies, the foundation continues to operate on an annual grant-in-aid. This has impeded long-term planning and has impacted by museum's ability to attract and hire permanent staff. It has also impeded advertising initiatives of educational and tour programs in advance since the organization cannot predict if they will obtain funding from year to year. There are concerns that this not only negatively impacts visitation rates, but also the long-term sustainability of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation's initiatives. In response, the foundation is trying to secure a long-term commitment from the District of Tumbler Ridge in order to allow them to leverage matching funds from the Peace River Regional District. Once municipal and regional funding is secured, it would allow the museum, the District of Tumbler Ridge, and the Peace River Regional District to lobby the provincial and federal governments for matching financial resources in order to, preferably, build an endowment capable of supporting an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million.

In terms of human resources, the foundation has sometimes had limited access to volunteers and staff to support activities, such as coordinating year-round educational programs,

preparing specimens, fabricating, and attending to collections. With a broad range of initiatives unfolding in Tumbler Ridge, people spoke about the high demand for volunteers in the community. In response, staff have taken on extra tasks, such as creating molds. At the same time, despite the passion of volunteers, they can also lack the skills to support the work that needs to be done.

There have also been challenges to safely secure and preserve the paleontological assets of the area. A footprint, for example, was stolen from one of the trackway sites. During the early stages of development, they also did not have office or storage space to store the equipment. A truck obtained through the University of Alberta was used to store the equipment. Soon after, the museum foundation signed a lease for space in the light industrial area that provided office space, a preparation area, and space to store equipment and collections.

Lessons

Through their experience, the volunteers of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and the staff of the PRPRC have learned a number of lessons that have shaped their ongoing activities. Staff at the PRPRC have been able to draw upon their experiences working with paleontology teams at other facilities in order to develop appropriate management practices for a community driven initiative. This included attention to avoiding top-heavy administration and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to a range of staffing needs.

They have also adopted new approaches to field work and tours. For example, lantern light has been used at night to reveal track ways in low relief landscapes. Furthermore, they are working to ensure that they have an endowment in place that can support their operations before they approach the provincial government for a contribution for the construction of the museum facility.

Through all of their work, they have remained patient and have focused on working with positive people. This has been important when engaging with various levels of government and industry, as well as with residents in order to communicate the importance of the project to the community. They have also learned how to work with different councils in order to maximize their access to resources. Finally, participants felt it was important to remain connected throughout the community and to listen for new opportunities. This helped the foundation to obtain space in the light industrial park, and subsequently at the former Claude Galbois Elementary School, in order to support their ongoing operations.

Place Integration

The Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation has approximately 50 to 60 members, as well as a board of directors with 10 to 12 members. The board meets on a monthly basis. It not only draws upon residents from Tumbler Ridge, but also has representation from Taylor and Dawson Creek, as well as connections with Tourism BC. The Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre has three permanent staff, including a director and curator, as well as a number of summer employees. However, the number of staff can vary. Last year, in addition to two curators, the PRPRC had 6 full-time staff, including a couple of archivists, a few staff members to assist with preparing dinosaur bones, and a records archivist. Extra staff, such as

gallery staff, tour guides, and education coordinators, are hired during peak summer periods. They have also had a field assistant and part-time bookkeeper on staff. Given the breadth of work, however, there is interest to work towards increasing the staff to 20 to 25 people. Once the museum foundation decided to pursue the opportunity to develop a geopark, a steering committee was formed that includes the mayor, an industry representative, a member of the Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society, a member from the museum foundation, a few scientific advisors (i.e. archeology, paleontology), tourism representatives, and school representatives.

The Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation has drawn upon a range of partnerships in order to accomplish its goals, including:

- The Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society (maintaining hiking trails, improving access to waterfalls, etc.);
- The Northern Lights College (to develop and deliver dino camps);
- The Tumbler Ridge Public Library (space for Itchy Feet series, hosting fossil roadshows);
- The Tumbler Ridge Community Centre (space for non-paleontology exhibits);
- Canfor (\$10,000 in helicopter support);
- The Peace River Regional District (\$250,000 to support the geopark concept and symposium);
- The North Peace Economic Development Commission (access to the commission's fundraiser);
- The BC Royal Museum's Living Landscapes (\$5,000 in funding to develop exhibits and brochures);
- The Northern Development Initiatives Trust;
- the federal Canada Cultural Spaces Fund;
- the federal Softwood Industry Community Economic Development Initiative; and
- The District of Tumbler Ridge (annual grant of \$200,000 and \$1 lease for the Claude GalboisElementary School).

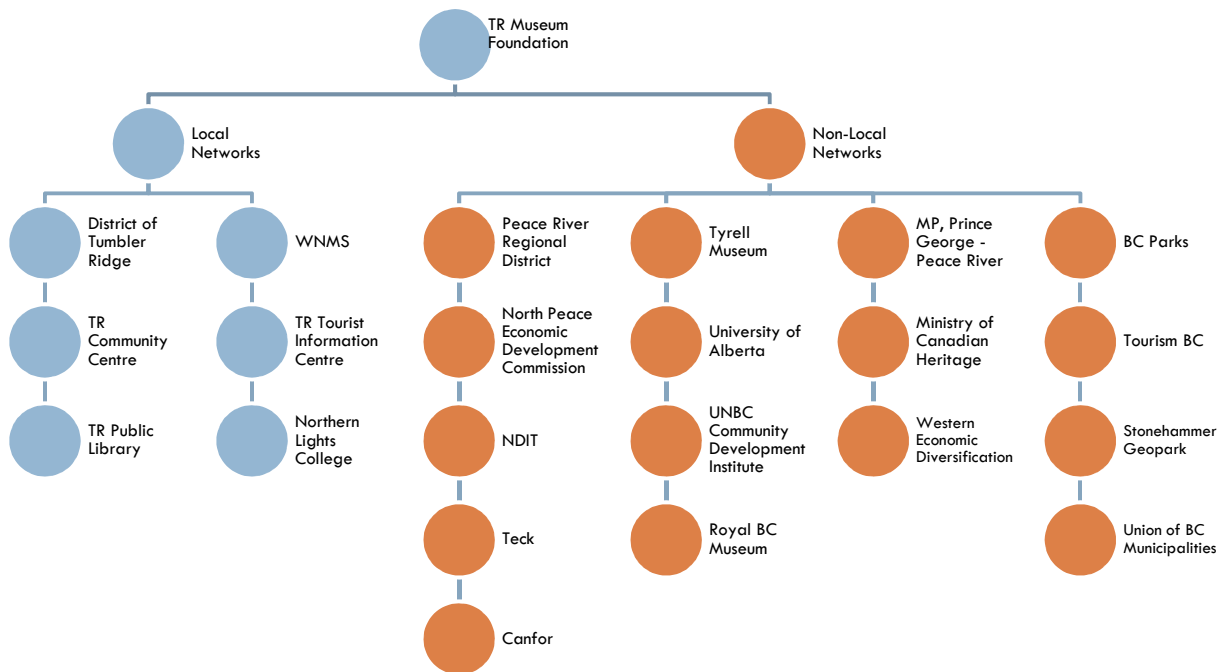
In addition to these partnerships, participants talked about how their relationships with community groups supported their ongoing efforts with the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation. First, a range of residents and stakeholders, such as former dino camp participants, WNMS members, and mine workers have become engaged to explore the area and report paleontology findings to the PRPRC. The foundation also has an important relationship with the community centre where the museum has had access to display cases, as well as the support of the community centre staff who refer tourists to view those displays. They have also received positive support from the public library to host the travelling fossil roadshow that allows people to bring their fossils to the library and have them reviewed and assessed by experts.

The work of the museum foundation and the PRPRC has been strengthened by the development of positive working relationships with industry. Wind power companies have sent maps to the research centre to share information about where they will be working. This has helped the museum foundation and the PRPRC to secure paleontology assets in the region.

The helicopter time that was provided by Canfor was also noted to be helpful as there was no other way to transport the fossil findings, at 1-2 tonnes, out of the canyon landscapes.

The PRPRC has worked with industry to develop an efficient protocol to assess the importance of any paleontology findings on industry sites in order to minimize disruptions to industry operations. They have also been working with the mines to understand which areas are going to be located next to new blast zones and resource activity. This has provided the museum foundation with the opportunity to explore the area and to work with the WNMS to close any trails that may pose a danger to residents and tourists due to blasting in the area. As the foundation has moved forward to develop a geopark, they have recruited Ray Proulx from Teck to be an industry representative on the geopark steering committee. Furthermore, industry supported the geopark symposium by covering the travel and meeting room costs.

Figure 7: Networks for the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation



The foundation has also used its networks to raise the profile of the geopark concept beyond the region. For example, participants spoke about the work of Jerrilyn Schrembi, a regional district representative and former local councilor, to raise the profile of the Tumbler Ridge Aspiring Geopark at the Union of BC Municipalities. Their positive working relationship with local government has also helped them to access more funding resources and infrastructure to support their daily and long-term operations. Overall, participants talked about how the paleontology discoveries and geopark concept has brought diverse residents and stakeholders together. There is a general sense that such a diverse group of stakeholders would not have provided ongoing support for the initiative if it did not have merit. This enables the foundation,

and their local government partners, to justify the funding that has been provided to support ongoing activities.

When we asked participants how their relationships with groups in other communities helped or hindered the museum foundation's work, several positive contributions were also highlighted. First, participants noted that there has been strong support from the regional district who provided \$250,000 to support the geopark concept and symposium. This symposium was well attended by several organizations that the museum foundation has engaged with over the years, such as various aspiring geoparks, the StonehammerGeopark, the UNBC Community Development Institute, industry stakeholders, and others. Participants also talked about the support obtained from local Members of Parliament (Jay Hill and then Bob Zimmer) who have attended events and provided letters of support for grant applications. With no provincial government financial contributions and limited communication with key decision-makers, participants did not necessarily feel that the provincial government has hindered their work; although, some feel that the provincial government has not been supportive either. Over the years, however, the museum foundation has developed many positive networks with BC Parks and BC Tourism.

The museum foundation has also received advice from several organizations outside of Tumbler Ridge. For example, staff at the StonehammerGeopark in New Brunswick provided assistance to introduce them to their UNESCO contacts, as well as to provide advice about how to put a successful application together. The Tyrrell Museum provided advice for creating souvenir molds. The museum foundation has also benefitted from additional human resources acquired from other organizations outside of the community. For example, the North Peace Economic Development Commission provided access to their fundraising staff in order to support the museum foundation's fundraising initiatives. This contribution was credited with expanding the foundation's financial resources while reducing another burden on paleontology staff. Filling out various funding applications can be very time consuming. With the support of the NPEDC fundraising staff, however, the museum staff simply develop a project concept, general budget and rationale and the NPEDC fundraising staff complete the various applications. With this staff support, more peer-reviewed papers are being published and more museum projects are being pursued (i.e. Geopark, renovations, staff and program expansions, etc.).

Over the years, participants' involvement with the museum foundation has affected them in several ways. First, people received satisfaction from being involved in an initiative that has already experienced several successes and has improved the quality-of-life in the community. It has also provided an opportunity for residents to expand their networks. Volunteers have also enjoyed the ongoing opportunities for learning about dinosaurs and the history of their community. For others, they have simply enjoyed the opportunity to remain active and provide a positive contribution in the community. Finally, when we asked participants if there were any changes in leadership that impacted the direction of the initiative, people said "no". In fact, with a core group of 4 to 5 individuals, stable leadership was cited as a key strength of the organization. The leadership was also described as being committed, consistent, and focused.

TUMBLER RIDGE SENIORS' TASK FORCE

Origins

Tumbler Ridge was originally planned as a mining town to recruit and retain young workers and their families. Following the Quintette and Bullmoose mine closures in the early 2000s, the community experienced an out-migration of many of these workers and families. At the same time, a housing sale prompted the influx of many seniors to the community. However, the infrastructure, services, and programs were not designed or prepared to support the needs of the aging population. For example, many seniors did not have personal transportation and adequate financial resources to travel to regional centres to access more specialized medical services. Some key service leaders in the community, including Barb Schuerkamp, Dr. Charles Helm, and Dave Price, came together to talk about some of the emerging seniors' issues. A number of recommendations were presented to council. One year later, the Lion's Club also approached council to further express the need to make the town senior-friendly. At this point, council asked community service leaders to return to further discuss seniors' needs. One of the community stakeholders, Dave Price, suggested that the mayor appoint a task force to work through seniors' issues. As a result, the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Task Force was created by former Mayor Mike Caisley in 2008 to examine seniors' needs in the community, and has remained in place to support the work of subsequent mayors and councils.

Early Stages of Development

The goal of the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Task Force was to identify and address seniors' needs in the community. There were a number of people involved in the early stages of developing the task force, including Mike Caisley, Charles Helm, Frank and Grace Walsh, Dave Price, Doug Foerster (Hospice / Palliative Care), Donna Mendaville, George Hartford, and George Rowe (Ministerial Association). During the early stages of development, there were a number of key tasks that needed to be completed, including:

- The recruitment of task force members that have experience with, or interest in, seniors issues,
- Seeking funding to support the work of the task force,
- Hiring a seniors' needs coordinator,
- Hiring the UNBC Community Development Institute to complete a seniors' needs assessment,
- Inviting the Director of Measuring Up the North to provide recommendations for enhancing the accessibility of the community,
- Networking with contacts in other places to obtain advice about accessing various resources and to adopt best practices,
- Reviewing the City of Quesnel's strategic plan for addressing seniors' issues, and
- Completing a strategic plan to identify a priority list of seniors' needs in the community.

Key priority issues identified in the strategic plan included changing curb cuts, enhancing wheelchair accessibility throughout the community, improving the number and quality of

handicapped parking spaces, encouraging businesses to have automatic doors and handicapped washrooms, looking at air quality issues that can impact seniors' respiratory systems, building level entrance ways, building ramps at town hall, and encouraging local businesses to hire seniors for part-time positions. The seniors' needs coordinator and the task force also expanded their work to look at medical support service needs for older residents. During the early stages of development, task force members would meet at the town hall. The seniors' needs coordinator also conducted several planning and coordination tasks from a home office.

Implementation

Once the strategic plan was completed, a number of residents played a key role to mobilize the plan into action, such as Charles Helm, Dave Price, Mike Caisley, Larry White, George Rowe, Tim Snyder, Doug Foerster, Donna Mendaville, George Hartford, and Frank and Grace Walsh. Over the years, the task force has completed a number of tasks to address the needs of seniors in the community, including:

- Providing assistance for seniors to fill out their income tax forms;
- Delivering workshops on seniors' issues (i.e. planning for retirement, wills and estate planning);
- Listening to seniors to monitor and identifying emerging needs;
- Attending the Council of Senior Citizens' of BC (COSCO) conference in Richmond;
- Assigning appropriate leaders, volunteers, groups, and service providers to address seniors' issues (i.e. Northern Health, Lion's Club, etc.);
- Developing new supports to assist seniors to live independently longer (i.e. snow removal, delivering firewood, food delivery, lawn maintenance, etc.);
- Requesting that the TR Cares shuttle van provide rest stops during trips to other regional centres if needed;
- Pursuing and receiving government grants (i.e. from New Horizons, the District of Tumbler Ridge);
- Pursuing industry donations;
- Working with local volunteers to find space and support the development of the Seniors' Corner in the community centre;
- Working with businesses and Public Works to develop curb cuts, wheelchair ramps, signage, elevators, automatic doors, wider entrances, wider isles, handicapped washrooms, and handicapped parking around the community;
- Installing outdoor exercise equipment;
- Working with the commercial safety group to ensure big tanker trucks coming through the community were not venting noxious fumes;
- Working with MLA Blair Lekstrom to complete the Hartford Court seniors' housing project; and
- Making adjustments to the bylaws and Official Community Plan.

The goal of making changes to local bylaws and the Official Community Plan was to make it easier for seniors to do renovations to their homes so the housing stock would become more senior-friendly. A blanket variance was created so seniors no longer had to go to the board of

variance to address accessibility issues in their homes. The initiatives and ongoing activities of the task force were promoted through the “Reflections” column in the newspaper, advertisements around town, word of mouth, brochures, displays, dinners, and presentations at church and other community events. A report card was also created in order to monitor their progress for addressing priority issues. While the seniors’ task force continued to meet at the town hall or the community centre, the seniors’ needs coordinator worked out of a home office.

The direction of the task force has changed over time in order to respond to new and emerging seniors’ issues. As such, the direction of the task force will always be driven by what seniors are asking for at a specific time. While the task force initially started to look at the needs of residents 65 years of age and older, the focus of the task force has broadened to explore the needs of residents who are 55 years of age and older, as well as to assist anyone in the community with medical needs. This focus was changed to reflect the new demographics and needs of the community. There are some concerns, however, about the future of the task force. The seniors’ needs coordinator is retiring and moving out of the community. As the task force has completed a number of projects to improve the accessibility of the community and to put a number of supports in place, some question whether there is a need to continue operating the task force as it has achieved all of its goals.

Impact

The Tumbler Ridge Seniors’ Needs Task Force has had several positive immediate and long-term impacts on the community. The task force provided a focal point to support the coordination across various organizations and groups responding to seniors’ needs (i.e. Northern Health, Service Canada, lawyers, Lion’s Club, local government, churches, etc.), as well as a focal point for seniors to seek assistance. As such, it has also helped to build trust and camaraderie in the community.

As a result of the work done by volunteers on the task force, new opportunities have emerged to address seniors’ needs in Tumbler Ridge. It has created, for example, new programs, such as Meals on Wheels and the Snow Angels program, that continue to provide services to seniors today. It also tackled a number of infrastructure, policy, and service issues that needed to be addressed in the community. With a new blanket variance, there is now a streamlined process in place to make it quicker and easier for seniors to make renovations to their homes. Businesses and public buildings are now more accessible for seniors, mothers with strollers, and other residents with limited mobility. For example, there are more handicapped parking spaces in the downtown core. There are more services in place to support seniors to live independently in their homes longer, such as snow removal, delivering firewood, etc. They also have air quality testing done on a regular basis in order to improve the quality-of-life in the community. Furthermore, there are more opportunities for social interaction through free seniors’ dinners and the Seniors’ Corner drop-in centre.

Several factors have influenced the success of the Tumbler Ridge Seniors’ Needs Task Force. For example, several people we spoke with felt that the success of the task force was influenced by the experience volunteers had delivering services, such as long-term care, to seniors. This equipped them with a good foundation of knowledge to assess infrastructure and service gaps in the community. Some local volunteers and leaders also invested extra efforts

to save costs and ensure that work was completed. For example, the former mayor, Larry White, drove to Prince George to pick up the outdoor recreational equipment with a trailer. In a place credited with having a strong sense of community, there was also a sense that the task force consisted of many influential leaders in the community who had extensive networks that they could draw upon to get things done. More individuals have also decided to live in Tumbler Ridge for the long-term and this has strengthened their engagement in the community. The task force has also modified the frequency of its meetings based on volunteers' time restrictions in order to reduce conflicts with other commitments and volunteer burnout.

Eventually, Tumbler Ridge would become a showcase community for Measuring Up the North – an initiative to improve the accessibility of northern BC communities. As local leaders shared the breadth of their accomplishments at the COSCO conference in the Lower Mainland, they quickly became coveted by other community representatives across Canada.

Challenges

The Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Task Force has experienced a few challenges over the years as it has worked to address a number of seniors' needs in the community. For example, there were regulatory barriers that impeded the ability of seniors to renovate their homes. Not only did seniors need to make sure they had all the required permits for the work, but each time a different senior wanted to conduct renovations, they would have to approach the board of variance at a cost of \$300. In response, the seniors' needs coordinator and the task force worked with the District staff and council to create a blanket variance that would streamline the application process for conducting home renovations. Seniors no longer have to approach the board of variance.

In terms of human resource challenges, there has also been a lack of professionals to respond to the needs of an older population. For example, there has been a lack of home support staff in Tumbler Ridge. Northern Health has experienced challenges recruiting home support workers. At the same time, the provincial government does not consider the transient population that commutes to the community for work when it assesses the funding to be allocated to community services. Tumbler Ridge is viewed only as a community of approximately 2,000 people. As a result, extra pressures are put on the infrastructure, services, staff, and volunteers to respond to needs in the community. Even though the local economy has improved, many services that existed before the mine closures have not been repositioned in the community. Despite the influx of a transient workforce, it has been difficult to encourage the mine managers to become part of the advocacy group when approaching senior levels of government to improve local services. In response, the task force is currently worked with the United Way to explore innovative options to deliver home support in the community.

With a transient population, there can also be considerable turnover in volunteers. As some volunteers have moved away, there has been a loss of expertise and assets in the community. It can also be difficult to retain the interest and involvement of seniors in Tumbler Ridge. Furthermore, as the demographics of the community change, it continuously reshapes the needs in the community. This can affect the planning and investment needs for infrastructure, programs, and services.

The task force has also worked through space and infrastructure issues to support the seniors' drop-in centre. Originally, the Seniors' Corner was sharing space in the community centre with the youth drop-in centre. The seniors would use the space during the day, while the youth would use the space in the evenings. When the restaurant in the top level of the community centre closed, the Seniors' Corner moved upstairs. Some concerns have been expressed, however, that despite the extensive work and contributions by volunteers with the Lion's Club (who work with the task force), they do not have a space of their own to support their work (i.e. a Lion's Den). There is also a limited amount of funding resources in place to support seniors' infrastructure and services. While a number of initiatives have received industry support, some concerns were expressed that the contributions are not as significant as they could be.

Finally, the task force has also overcome some communication challenges. For example, there can be a perception that seniors' needs are not being addressed. The task force continues to use a range of communication tools to promote ongoing initiatives as broadly as possible throughout the community.

Lessons

Over the years, the Seniors' Needs Task Force has learned a number of important lessons that have guided the development of relationships with various stakeholders, as well as their work in the community. First, participants spoke about the importance of remaining positive. Negative outlooks can impact volunteer engagement. A positive approach, however, can become equally infectious and foster a positive working atmosphere. Despite the multiple roles and groups that people are involved with, there was a general sense that volunteers continue to perform above and beyond. It is equally important to base your work on the amenities and assets that exist in the community rather than focusing on what is missing. There is also a realization that many government agencies have a finite, if not declining, amount of resources. In this context, local stakeholders generally feel that they are on their own to develop their own solutions. Furthermore, routine communication is key to nurturing community support for ongoing initiatives.

Place Integration

The Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Task Force consists of 8 volunteers from a variety of sectors in the community (i.e. local government, Lion's Club, hospice, health sector, etc.). The task force has been meeting weekly for three years; although, in the last two years, the meetings have been reduced to twice a month. The work of the task force is supported by the work of a paid seniors' needs coordinator. As a mayor's task force, it is accountable to the local council.

Many partnerships have been used to implement many seniors' needs initiatives, including:

- Lion's Club (funding for task force work, and volunteers to support Meals on Wheels, Snow Angels, etc.);
- Northern Health (advice);
- HD Mining (funding for outdoor exercise equipment);

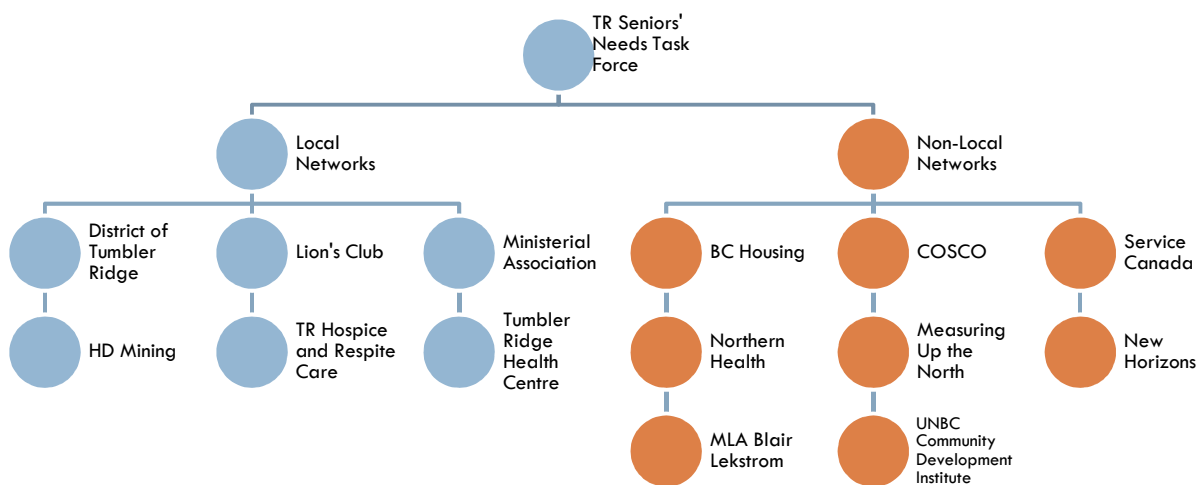
- New Horizons (funding for outdoor exercise equipment);
- District of Tumbler Ridge (land allocated for outdoor exercise equipment); and
- Service Canada (workshop on seniors' issues).

People we spoke with had a mixed sense of how relationships with various community stakeholders have supported ongoing initiatives. The Lion's Club, for example, was admired for the funding and voluntary supports they've provided to support the various task force initiatives throughout the community. Many task force members also have very positive relationships with people throughout the community. They have been able to draw upon these networks in order to get things done. People also spoke positively about the support they received from their spouses that enabled them to remain engaged in seniors' initiatives. Some felt, however, that the mines could provide more funding and exert more influence and work with local stakeholders in order to obtain more services and resources from senior levels of government.

By comparison, participants felt positive about the support and advice provided by groups outside of the community, such as Northern Health and Measuring Up the North. For example, the Director of Measuring Up the North visited Tumbler Ridge and provided recommendations about how to improve the accessibility of the community.

When we asked participants to reflect upon their involvement in the task force and how it affected them personally, people spoke about how it gave them a greater awareness of processes "behind the scenes" that influence how things get done. Others felt a level of satisfaction by helping others. In turn, it provided them with a level of respect and camaraderie with other volunteers and organizations in the community. People also enjoyed being able to see positive changes that would affect the long-term quality-of-life for residents in Tumbler Ridge.

Figure 8: Networks for the Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Task Force



Looking forward, there may be changes in leadership that will impact the future direction of the task force. While the core group of volunteers has remained the same, there has been a turnover with some volunteers appointed to the task force. These changes were due to out-migration and the recruitment of new task force members that were put in place to address specific issues. For example, when there has been a need to liaise with Northern Health, a representative from Northern Health has joined the task force to guide them through various protocols and procedures. The future leadership and support for the task force, however, will change when the seniors' needs coordinator retires and moves away from the community.

WOLVERINE NORDIC MOUNTAIN SOCIETY

Origins

The Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society emerged in the 1990s as a result of the individuals and activities associated with the Cross Country Ski Club. Realizing that Tumbler Ridge was a transient community, residents wanted to improve the quality-of-life, improve the accessibility of the outdoor environment, and make the community an attractive place to live. Some felt that there was also a need to register trails in the area in order to protect those recreational assets from resource development. When the mines closed in the early 2000s, residents also wanted to find new ways to diversify the local economy through tourism. As a result, five residents got together during a biathlon event and decided to start a race that would become known as the Emperor's Challenge. The goal was to improve the awareness of Tumbler Ridge and attract people to the community through events such as the Emperor's Challenge.

Early Stages of Development

During the early stages of development, the key goal for the Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society was to develop a four season club, as well as to improve the accessibility to specific recreational locations. Many also hoped to improve opportunities to get more people hiking in the area. Today, the WNMS is the only club offering organized hiking trips in the area. The key tasks that were addressed during the early stages of development included:

- Forming a society, and
- Registering trails in the area in order to protect them from expanded resource development.

Early planning activities were conducted at the homes of various volunteers.

Implementation

Over the years, many residents have been involved with the WNMS, such as Charles and Linda Helm, Fred Walkly, Al Tattersall, Birgit and Kevin Sharman, Sarah Gamble, Chris Watson, Dave Morgan, and Tim Bennet. Several key initiatives, events, and projects have been undertaken by the WNMS. These include:

- Trail maintenance,
- Organizing hikes,
- Constructing a boardwalk to improve the accessibility of Bullmoose Marshes for seniors and other residents with limited mobility,
- Organizing biathlons,
- Organizing the Flatbed run, and
- Organizing the Emperor's Challenge.

Several additional tasks have been done to support these activities, including:

- Using their website, e-mail, and word of mouth to contact members and other individuals in order to share information and promote events;
- Using the website to recruit volunteers;
- Coordinating volunteers to lead hikes;
- Coordinating events;
- Distributing brochures at the Visitor's Information Centre and the community centre about trails in the area;
- Writing books to promote the hiking opportunities in the Tumbler Ridge area;
- Collaborating with various government agencies to register and preserve the area;
- Engaging with industry to discuss the potential impact on trails;
- Pursuing funding to support trails maintenance and events;
- Purchasing a snowmobile to support the maintenance of 10 km of ski trails;
- Maintaining over 100 km and approximately 30 hiking trails;
- Building a bridge at Bergeron Falls;
- Constructing a cabin to store the club's chainsaw, snowmobile, grooming equipment, and other tools;
- Constructing a warming shelter / cabin;
- Partnering with Ducks Unlimited to build a boardwalk at the Bullmoose Marshes;
- Hiring professionals to remove mountain pine beetle kill trees from trails;
- Registering participants for the Emperor's Challenge;
- Coordinating volunteers for the Emperor's Challenge;
- Requesting the services of Search and Rescue and the Tumbler Ridge Rangers to support the Emperor's Challenge;
- Collaborating with the Lion's Club to provide food for the Emperor's Challenge;
- Ensuring a massage therapist is available for runners participating in the Emperor's Challenge;
- Coordinating water stations for the Emperor's Challenge;
- Disposing of garbage following the Emperor's Challenge;
- Maintaining a spreadsheet to keep track of the times for runners; and
- Posting the runners' times on the website.

Many volunteers conduct these activities from their homes and throughout the environment. Their annual general meeting, however, is held at a public meeting space such as the public library or in a meeting room at the community centre.

During the early stages of development, the overall purpose of the club changed as the focus was broadened to accommodate both skiing and hiking activities. The scope of the Emperor's Challenge has grown considerably over the years. Registration fills up very quickly and has reached up to a capped field of 950 participants. Furthermore, while the distance of the event was initially longer, it was shortened to 21 km to encourage more individuals to participate in the event.

Impact

The Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society has had several positive immediate and long-term impacts on the community. First, their efforts have helped to establish many protected trails in the area in order to bring long-term stability to these recreational assets. The expansion and maintenance of trails in the area has improved the accessibility to nurture a good quality-of-life and healthy lifestyle for residents. With an influx of seniors and an aging population, for example, seniors' involvement with the WNMS has promoted a healthy, active lifestyle through hiking and cross-country skiing. The trails were also built and maintained to accommodate mountain biking in order to expand the recreational opportunities in the area.

With the Emperor's Challenge, the WNMS has also now established the biggest off road event in British Columbia that attracts a capped field of 950 participants from all over BC. This has helped to raise the profile and awareness of the community and has produced several economic benefits for the community. The Emperor's Challenge has also prompted more residents to engage in recreational running throughout the year in preparation of the event. Combined, all of these activities and initiatives have helped to expand tourism in Tumbler Ridge and diversify the economy.

People we spoke with noted several factors that have contributed to the success of the WNMS over the years. First, people like the safety and comfort of organized group hikes due to the presence of bears and other wildlife. In fact, the WNMS has often been contacted by many individuals in other communities who wish to attend their organized hikes. The WNMS has become known as the "know-how-to hiking group".

In terms of the Emperor's Challenge, it is the only big off-road race in northern BC and takes place in the unique location of the surrounding mountains. Second, the registration fee of \$45 is very affordable compared to other events (i.e. more than \$200 for the Death Race). Over the years, the Emperor's Challenge has become the largest fundraiser for the WNMS. As a result of the financial success of this event, the WNMS has never needed to approach the District of Tumbler Ridge for funding. Since the WNMS was formed, they have won many awards, including the national True Sport award that is only given to three communities in Canada.

As a result of their capacity and success, the WNMS has been asked to partner with other community groups to support various initiatives. When the Arts Council, for example, had limited financial resources to support the Banff Film Festival in Tumbler Ridge, they contacted the WNMS volunteers who provided revenue from the Emperor's Challenge and pursued corporate sponsorship to support the festival. Each year, the WNMS members also organize the Itchy Feet series, an annual event that is held in the public library to allow people to share their stories about places where they have travelled. Funding to support displaced forestry workers was used to provide employment through trail maintenance in the area. With a good quality, extensive trail network in the Tumbler Ridge area, the WNMS was also contacted by the women's Olympic hockey team to train by using the running trails in the area. The Emperor's Challenge also brought the CBC TV show "Village on a Diet" to the community as residents from Taylor participated in the race. The WNMS also used the \$10,000 award they received from True Sport to purchase a line machine in order to paint a running track at the

high school. Looking forward, the WNMS is exploring a potential partnership with the Peace River Regional District to create a regional park in the Tumbler Ridge area.

Challenges

As the WNMS has worked to strengthen their recreational assets and nurture a positive quality-of-life, there have been a few challenges that volunteers have had to work through in order to be successful. At times, it can be challenging to recruit enough volunteers, both for the Emperor's Challenge and for the Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society's broader and ongoing activities. For example, while the Emperor's Challenge event has grown over the years, the volunteer pool has not increased. There may be a lack of water or medical personnel. It can also be difficult for volunteers to maintain the membership database and process payments on an annual basis. In response, the WNMS now has a one-time membership fee of \$20. These issues, however, can lead to volunteer burnout. Many of these volunteer recruitment challenges were attributed to the transient nature of the community and the out-migration of some core volunteers.

There can be a number of operational challenges associated with the Emperor's Challenge. As the event has become increasingly popular, the registration for the 950 spots has filled up more quickly each year. In order to respect the environmental impacts on the mountainous environment, they have capped the field of participants at 950 people. Due to industry activity, the WNMS has also had to find new mountainous locations to support the event. The need to identify a new route expanded the workload for volunteers as they worked to assess routes that are accessible, that could deliver a good running event, that are able to support water stations, and that are able to support good communication. In addition to finding a location that could support parking for all the participants and volunteers at the base, volunteers would need to cut and maintain trails along the route. All of these operational challenges can be exacerbated by a turnover of volunteers each year.

It can also be difficult to work through the process of registering trails. Industry and the WNMS must routinely work together and compromise on the trails and areas that are protected. At times, there has also been limited funding to support the society's ongoing work and initiatives in the community. These challenges have been exacerbated by the provincial government's funding cuts to maintain provincial parks - assets that are frequently used by club members. In response, WNMS volunteers have spent their summers maintaining nearby provincial parks in order to keep them safe and open. It is important to note, however, that while limited funding has been made available to support parks and recreation, the WNMS has still found a number of provincial government staff who are willing to provide advice and assistance.

Despite the extensive efforts of volunteers, some trail networks are not walkable for many residents and visitors due to the blow down of mountain pine beetle infested trees. There have been times when the WNMS did not want to advertise their hikes beyond Tumbler Ridge due to the large influx of visitors hiking on narrow trails. At the same time, there are concerns that people in the community are not utilizing the trail networks as much as visitors from other communities.

Lessons

Over the years, the WNMS has learned many lessons that have enhanced the success of their organization's initiatives. It is always important to step back and look at the bigger picture when working with industry to resolve challenges and create compromises. In this respect, it is equally important to avoid reacting angrily when engaging with industry stakeholders in order to build those working relationships. The WNMS also invests time in meeting with their own members in between meetings with industry. Furthermore, it has been really important to ensure that they have adequate insurance in order to support key events, such as the Emperor's Challenge, as well as ongoing activities.

Place Integration

The Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society is a non-profit society that is governed by a board of directors. This board consists of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and four directors. For the Emperor's Challenge, the WNMS recruits approximately 80 volunteers to support various tasks on race day. There are also several key volunteer positions each year to support the planning and coordination of the event, including a race director, a route director, a volunteer coordinator, registration, sponsorship, medical support staff, water station volunteers, and maintaining time statistics of the participants.

The WNMS events and activities have also been supported by a range of partnerships both within and outside the community, including:

- Community Futures (to train people to build trails near the warming shelter),
- BC Recreation and Parks Association,
- BC Parks,
- Ministry of Environment (to register trails),
- Ducks Unlimited (to build another boardwalk to improve trail accessibility),
- District of Tumbler Ridge (to assist the community to maintain local trails),
- Tumbler Ridge Secondary School,
- Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation, and the
- Arts Council (to deliver the Banff Film Festival).

In terms of the Emperor's Challenge, key partnerships have included:

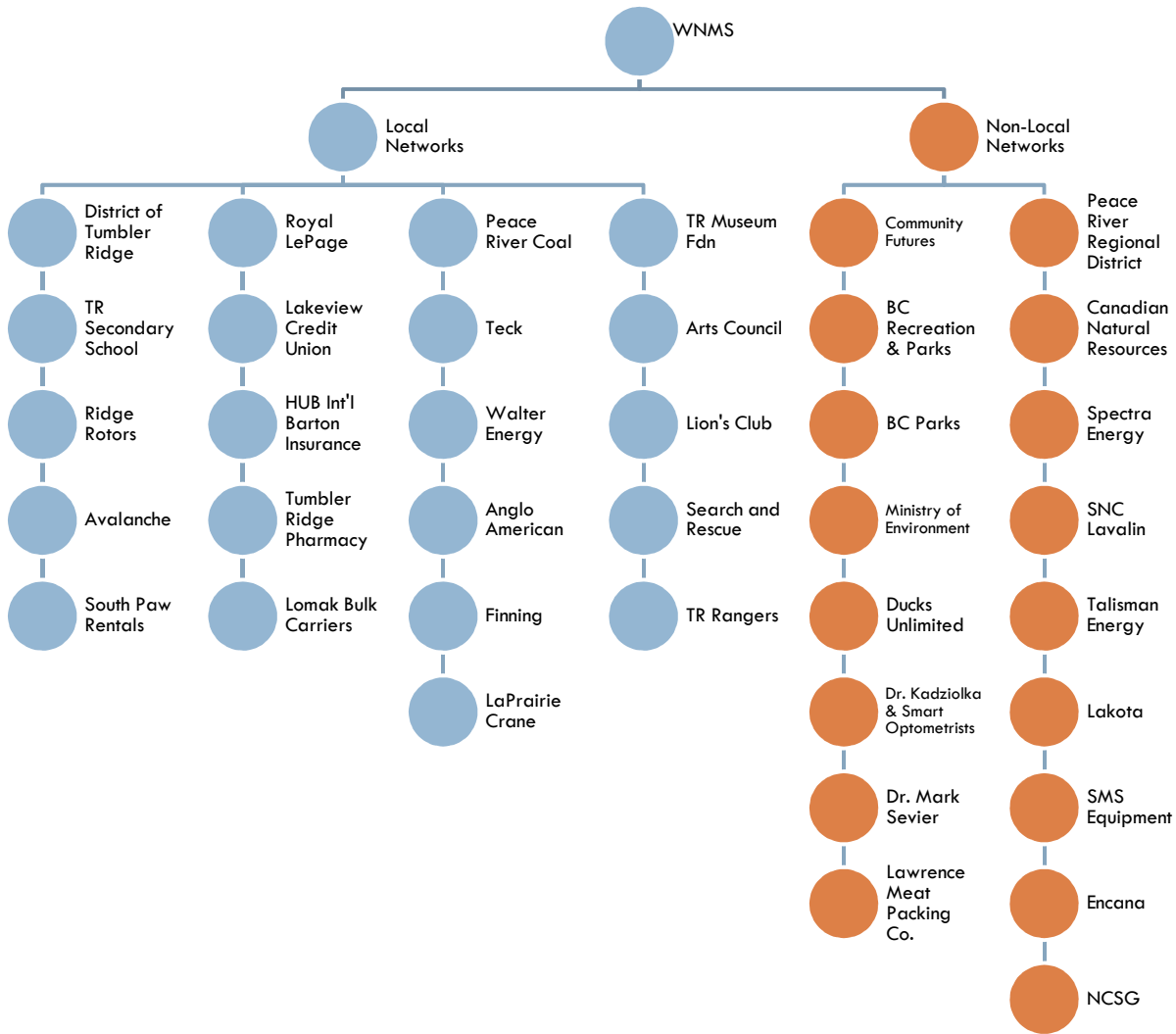
- Peace River Coal,
- Teck,
- Walter Energy,
- Ridge Rotors (donated helicopter time),
- The Lion's Club (volunteers, food),
- Search and Rescue,
- Tumbler Ridge Rangers,
- Lakeview Credit Union,
- Dr. Kadziolka & Smart Optometrists,
- Tumbler Ridge Pharmacy,

- Canadian Natural Resources,
- Dr. Mark Sevier Inc.,
- Spectra Energy,
- SNC Lavalin,
- Talisman Energy,
- Ridge Rotors,
- Lakota,
- Anglo American,
- SMS Equipment,
- Encana,
- Avalanche,
- South Paw Rentals and Sales Inc.,
- Lomak Bulk Carriers Corp.,
- NCSG Crane and Heavy Haul Services,
- Finning,
- LaPrairie Crane,
- Hub International Barton Insurance,
- Lawrence Meat Packing Company, and
- Royal LePage.

The relationships that the WNMS has with several community stakeholders have helped to support their initiatives in a number of ways. For example, the WNMS has received voluntary support and expertise from Search and Rescue, the Tumbler Ridge Rangers, and the Lion's Club to support the Emperor's Challenge. Ridge Rotors has also donated their helicopter time in order to improve the safety of this event by flying over the race route before it starts in order to scare bears away. Their helicopters are also in place in case of security or medical emergencies. Ridge Rotors has also supported the maintenance of trails and parks. For example, they provided assistance to transport a bridge in for Bergeron Falls. With so many trails being registered provincially, it has enhanced the position of the WNMS to routinely engage and work with industry. To support winter social events, the WNMS has provided an annual donation to the public library to pay for staff who stay late during the Itchy Feet series.

When we spoke with volunteers about their relationships with groups and organizations in other communities, they noted that all of the provincial organizations have provided positive advice and assistance. In some cases, those partnerships have opened the doors to work with other groups on larger initiatives. Corporate sponsorship has also provided the support needed to deliver the popular Emperor's Challenge event.

Figure 9: Networks for the Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society



For many of the WNMS volunteers, their involvement to ensure the success of these events and initiatives has kept them very busy. While some members of the executive have remained in the community since the WNMS was formed, there has also been turnover with the core group of volunteers due to mine closures, mine openings, and an influx and out-migration of retirees.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to highlight the themes, issues, experiences, and constructive lessons that emerged from key informant interviews in Tumbler Ridge in order to explore how the voluntary sector is responding to the needs of older residents and broader community development issues in aging resource communities. Understanding the pressures and opportunities across various community groups can form the basis for a more comprehensive approach to planning programs, policies, and infrastructure investments.

Our work has identified several positive things that have been done in Tumbler Ridge to respond to the pressures facing community groups and residents, such as:

- Delivering workshops and supporting educational opportunities for volunteers;
- Enhancing the visibility of voluntary initiatives through print and radio media, as well as through informal networks;
- Investing in workshops and presentations to broaden community awareness of voluntary initiatives;
- Investing time to build trust with local and non-local partners;
- Investing in research to understand community needs;
- Investing in strategies to support planning and enhance the quality of investments in the community; and
- Leveraging networks to access a broader range of expertise, funding, meeting space, land, and equipment.

The breadth of voluntary initiatives demonstrates the importance of the voluntary sector in both responding to seniors' needs and community development initiatives. Although this work has focused on issues associated with voluntary and community development initiatives in Tumbler Ridge, there are a number of issues that fall outside of the local jurisdiction. As such, some topics may simply become advocacy issues for the local stakeholders to raise with other levels of government, industry, and partners. Others are clearly available for local action. Below, we have highlighted some possible areas that community stakeholders can build upon to respond to the needs of volunteers in order to strengthen the resiliency and capacity of various facets of the community:

Capacity Building

- Develop strategies to target a broader range of volunteers (i.e. youth, Aboriginal, men, and people with specific expertise);
- Provide opportunities for flexible, even short-term, voluntary engagement in order to provide residents with opportunities to test their interests and nurture longer-term commitments;
- Continue to invest and develop supports for a seniors' needs coordinator to support volunteer recruitment and capacity development;
- Devote attention to succession planning and strengthen the capacity / leadership skills of voluntary organizations;

- Invest in financial and project management skills for non-profit groups;
- Invest in developing communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills for volunteers;
- Host seminars to broaden an understanding of the benefits and issues associated with forming and managing societies and charities;
- Invest in building the capacity of voluntary board of directors; and
- Routinely review mandates, policies, and other operational tools to ensure they are current and appropriate to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Research and Information

- Monitor changing service and infrastructure needs;
- Invest in supports to monitor and understand changes to processes, regulations, and opportunities presented by government agencies, trusts, and industry; and
- Invest in databases of useful information and resources.

Relationships

- Continue to invest in infrastructure and opportunities for social interaction in order to nurture and maintain networks at the local, regional, provincial, and national level.

Communication

- Continue to invest in communication strategies to increase the visibility and profile of voluntary initiatives as a basis for volunteer recruitment and broadening community support;
- Invest in communication strategies and mechanisms early and throughout the process to demonstrate need, to build relationships, to manage expectations, and to develop a collective common understanding to inform ongoing activities; and
- Continue to ensure that information about local, regional, provincial, and federal supports is up-to-date and accessible in multiple formats for residents.

Coordination

- Facilitate opportunities for pooling resources for information and development of strategies;
- Facilitate opportunities for sharing operating costs and developing smart infrastructure to support voluntary work;
- Develop clear roles and responsibilities for volunteers, partners, and stakeholders involved in voluntary initiatives; and
- Continue to facilitate collaboration / coordination across voluntary groups, committees, service providers, etc. in order to streamline supports, use resources wisely and efficiently, and reduce duplication.

This report has provided several insights into the role of the voluntary sector in responding to the needs of an aging population and supporting broader community development. With an

aging workforce and an aging population, community needs for services, supports, and care are evolving. Given the challenges associated with many voluntary groups, incentives for volunteering and support for voluntary sector capacity building are crucial to support its continued role in community development.