

State of the Basin

# Snapshot Report

A check-up on life in the  
Columbia Basin-Boundary Region

# 2022



# Welcome

The State of the Basin initiative monitors and reports on indicators of environmental, economic, cultural, and social well-being in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. Selkirk Innovates compiles the Snapshot report to provide a summary of current State of the Basin research. More information on the indicators of well-being and related reports and resources are available on the State of the Basin website: <https://stateofthebasin.ca/>.

## THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION

Selkirk Innovates acknowledges that the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region encompasses the traditional territories of the Sinixt, the Ktunaxa, the Syilx, the Secwépemc, and the Lheidli T'enneh peoples. The region encompasses more than 8.6 million hectares of land in southeastern British Columbia, Canada. It includes the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary, Central Kootenay, and East Kootenay, which are collectively the Kootenay Development Region, as well as a portion of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. Two other development regions intersect the borders of the region: Thompson-Okanagan and Cariboo. The Columbia Basin-Boundary Region is home to approximately 178,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

## USING RESEARCH TO IMPROVE REGIONAL WELL-BEING

Every day, Columbia Basin-Boundary residents and organizations make decisions that influence the future of our region. The primary goal of the State of the Basin initiative is to provide access to data to support evidence-based decision-making, leading to improved well-being in the region. Four objectives support this goal:

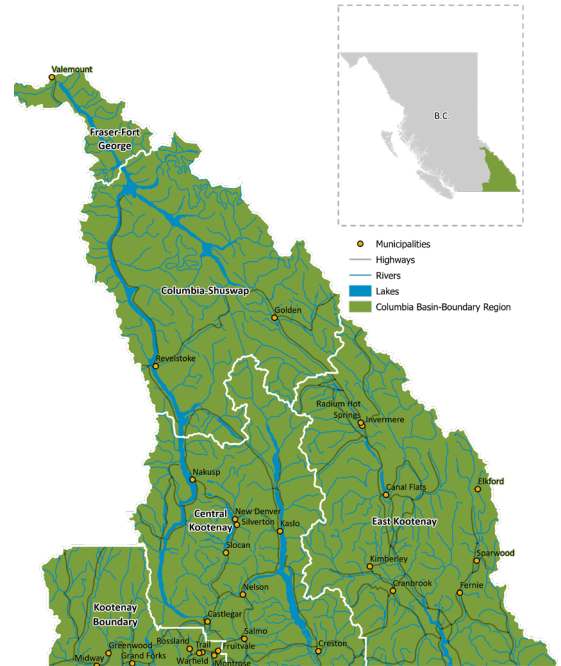
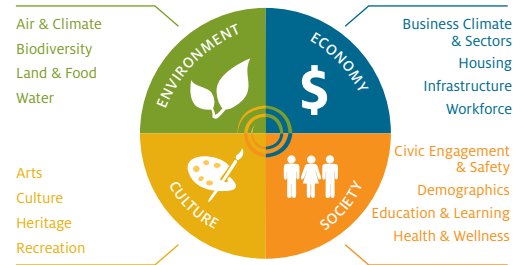
- **Inform** citizens and organizations about the people, natural environment, communities, and economy of the region by providing access to accurate, credible, and timely information;
- **Encourage** understanding of complex issues and trends over time, including future projections when possible;
- **Signal** whether conditions are similar or different within the region, and in comparison to other areas to highlight and celebrate areas of achievement, and to identify significant issues, ideally before they become critical; and
- **Motivate** discussion, information sharing, strategic evidence-based decisions, and collective action.

## INDICATORS & DATA SOURCES

State of the Basin research draws on available data from a variety of sources including federal, provincial, and local governments, crown corporations, and non-profit initiatives. These data are collected from open access sources and through custom requests. The 2021 Census of Population is used for many indicators.<sup>2</sup> While quantitative State of the Basin indicators help establish foundational knowledge of regional well-being, they only tell part of the story. Qualitative information, including Selkirk Innovates' subjective well-being research, can further contribute to understanding the well-being of our communities and region.<sup>3</sup> In September 2021, a random sample of 400 Columbia Basin-Boundary residents participated in subjective well-being research. Participants responded to over 100 closed-ended questions, and some of their responses are included in this Snapshot.

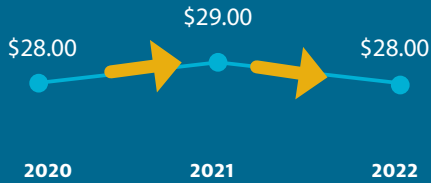
## STATE OF THE BASIN AND WORLD EVENTS

World events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or increased inflation, have impacted many aspects of life in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. As we continue to recover from the pandemic, and navigate new challenges such as the affordability crisis, our understanding of these impacts will deepen as new data become available.



# Workforce

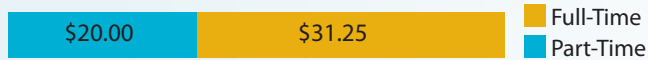
## Median Hourly Wage for All Employees in the Kootenay Development Region Aged 15+. <sup>4</sup>



## Average Before-Tax Income of Columbia Basin-Boundary Taxfilers (2021). <sup>5</sup>



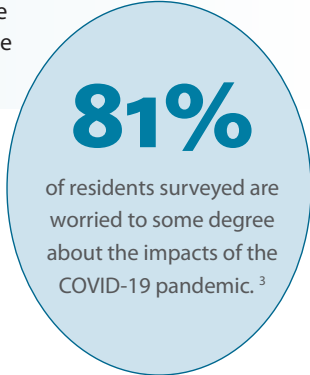
## Median Hourly Wage for Part Time Versus Full-Time Employees in the Kootenay Development Region (2022). <sup>4</sup>



| COMMUNITY       | LIVING WAGE (2022) <sup>6</sup> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Castlegar       | \$20.54                         |
| Columbia Valley | \$21.85                         |
| Cranbrook       | \$21.90                         |
| Fernie          | \$23.58                         |
| Golden          | \$25.56                         |
| Grand Forks     | \$20.05                         |
| Nelson          | \$20.83                         |
| Revelstoke      | \$23.60                         |
| Trail           | \$21.13                         |

| REGIONAL DISTRICT  | PERSONS WITH LOW INCOME (2021) <sup>7</sup> |
|--------------------|---|
| Central Kootenay   | 16.2%                                       |
| Columbia-Shuswap   | 13.2%                                       |
| East Kootenay      | 10.4%                                       |
| Fraser-Fort George | 12.8%                                       |
| Kootenay Boundary  | 13.2%                                       |



## Labour Force Replacement Rate in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022). <sup>8</sup>

# 0.63

A rate of less than 1.0 means an area is unable to maintain the current labour force with local replacement workers.

As of 2022, **66%** of the labour force in the Kootenay Development Region has a post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree, or higher. <sup>9</sup>

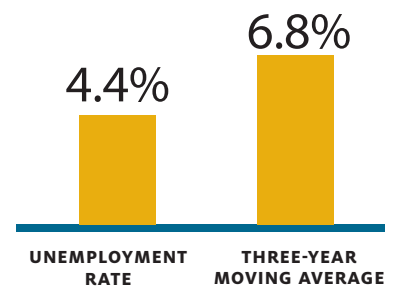


# 3,040

employment insurance beneficiaries in the Kootenay Development Region in May 2022, down from 7,600 in May 2021. <sup>10</sup>

This is a one-year decrease of 60%.

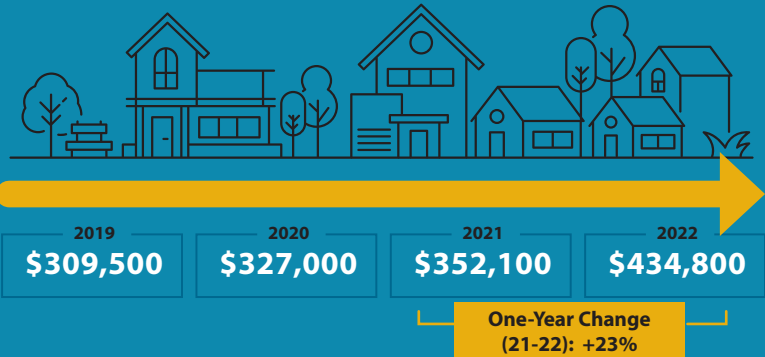
## Unemployment Rate in the Kootenay Development Region (2022). <sup>11</sup>



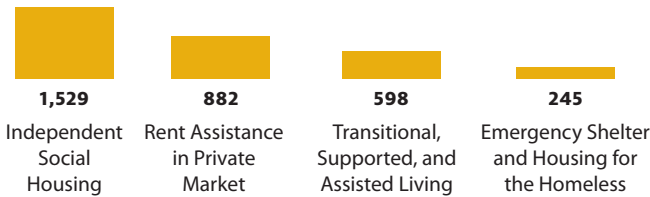
# Housing



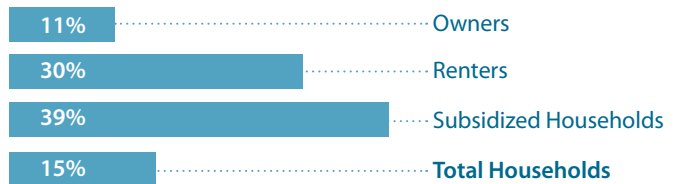
Median Value of All Single-Family Residences in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region.<sup>12</sup>



Subsidized Housing in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022).<sup>13</sup>



Columbia Basin-Boundary Households Spending More Than 30% of Their Income on Shelter (2021).<sup>14</sup>



VACANCY RATES AND RENTS (2022).<sup>15</sup>

| MUNICIPALITY | AVERAGE RENT | VACANCY RATE |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Cranbrook    | \$1,024      | 1.1%         |
| Nelson       | \$1,019      | 0.6%         |

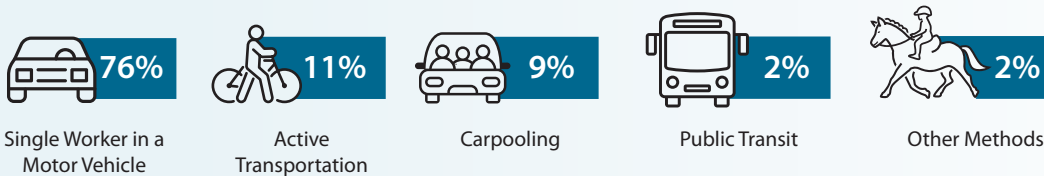
A balanced vacancy rate is 3%.

Five-Year Change in Housing Stock in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2016-2021).<sup>16</sup>



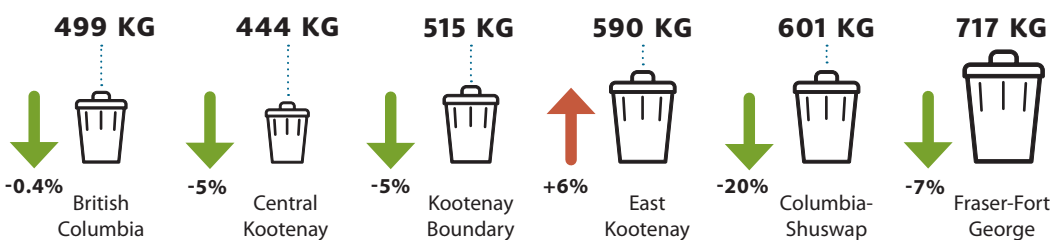
# Infrastructure

Modes of Worker Commuting within the Columbia Basin-Boundary (2021).<sup>17</sup>



**21%**  
of residents surveyed regularly carpool, walk, bike, etc. to work.<sup>3</sup>

Per Capita Waste Disposal Rate (kg/person) (2020) and One-Year Change (2019-2020).<sup>18</sup>



**62%**  
of residents surveyed think their access to telecommunication services is good.<sup>3</sup>

# Business Climate



Average Building Permit Value for Columbia Basin-Boundary Municipalities (2021).<sup>19</sup>

## \$16.7 million

This is a 43% increase from \$11.7 million in 2020.

Between October–December 2022, there were **32 major projects** in the Kootenay Development Region at an estimated cost of **\$6.6 billion**.<sup>20</sup>

**7** PROPOSED | **22** CONSTRUCTION STARTED | **3** ON HOLD

Total Amount of Building Permits for Columbia Basin-Boundary Municipalities.<sup>19</sup>



2020  
**\$329 million**

2021  
**\$470 million**

Number of Business Starts in the Kootenay Development Region.<sup>21</sup>

872

840

2021

2022

**32**  
fewer  
business  
starts in  
2022.



## 50%

of residents surveyed think their access to retail shops is good.<sup>3</sup>

Employment Rate in the Kootenay Development Region.<sup>11</sup>

2021  
**57.4%**

2022  
**56.8%**



Total Persons Employed in All Industries in the Kootenay Development Region.<sup>11</sup>



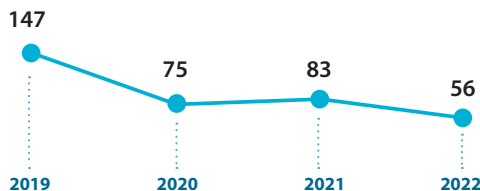
2021  
**79,700**

2022  
**80,000**

### TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES.<sup>22</sup>

| REGIONAL DISTRICT | 2021   | 2022   | ONE-YEAR CHANGE |
|-------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| Central Kootenay  | 14,497 | 14,473 | -0.2% ↓         |
| East Kootenay     | 13,817 | 14,084 | 1.9% ↑          |
| Kootenay Boundary | 5,973  | 6,117  | 2.4% ↑          |

Consumer Bankruptcies in the Kootenay Development Region.<sup>23</sup>



There were **3 business bankruptcies** in the Kootenay Development Region in 2022 – down from seven bankruptcies in 2021 and on par with three bankruptcies in 2020.<sup>23</sup>



ENVIRONMENT

# Air & Climate

In 2022, there were **35 days** in the region with a Smokey Skies Bulletin issued. <sup>24</sup>

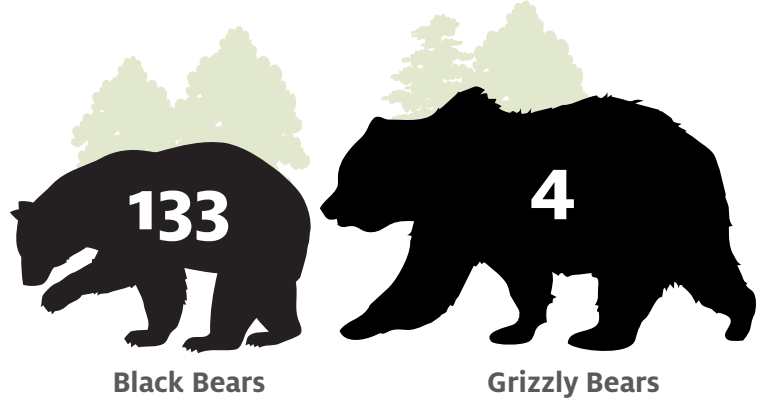
| COMMUNITY                   | ANNUAL AVERAGE PARTICULATE MATTER (PM <sup>2.5</sup> ) µg/m <sup>3</sup> (2022). <sup>25</sup> |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Castlegar                   | 8.2  |
| Cranbrook                   | 8.7  |
| Golden                      | 10   |
| Grand Forks                 | 9.6  |
| <b>Provincial Objective</b> | <b>8</b>   |

# Biodiversity

**RED LISTED SPECIES IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION (2023). <sup>26</sup>**

| SPECIES             | NUMBER |
|---------------------|--------|
| Bryophyte           | 3      |
| Invertebrate Animal | 24     |
| Lichen              | 3      |
| Vascular Plant      | 39     |
| Vertebrate Animal   | 38     |

**Bears Destroyed by Conservation Officers as a Result of Human-Wildlife Conflict in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022). <sup>27</sup>**

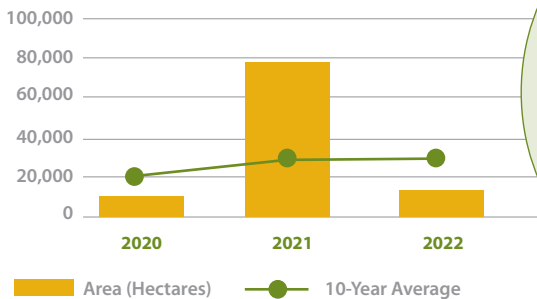


**Number of Threatened Ecosystems in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2023). <sup>26</sup>**



# Land

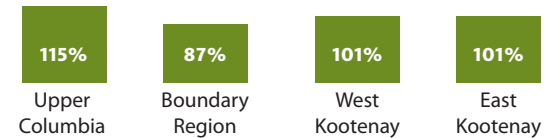
**Area Burned by Wildfires in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022). <sup>28</sup>**



**88%** of residents surveyed think the landscape and aesthetics of their community are attractive or in good condition. <sup>3</sup>

# Water

**Snow Water Indices, April 1, 2022. <sup>29</sup>**



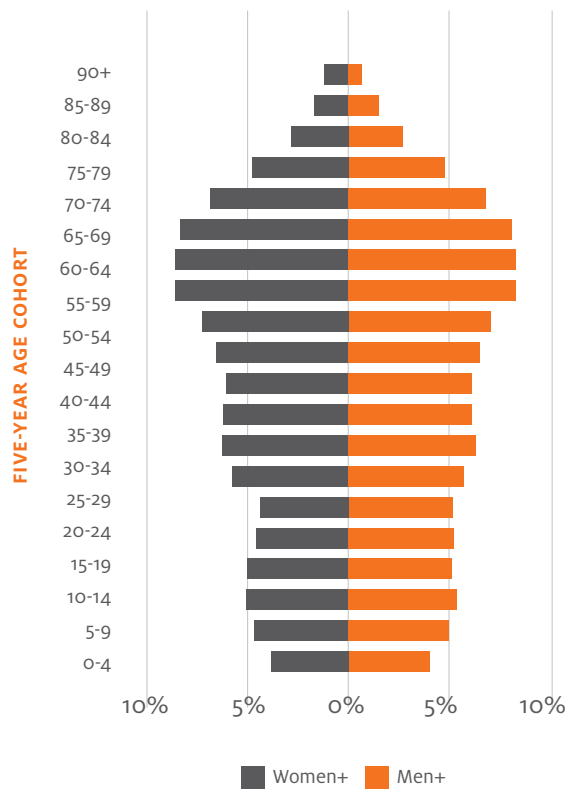
The April 1 snow water index provides an indication of the amount of water that will be available to serve human and environmental needs over the spring and summer seasons. The index reflects the percent of normal expected snowpack. <sup>29</sup>

SOCIETY

# Demographics

ALL DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS ARE FOR THE KOOTENAY DEVELOPMENT REGION

Population Structure by Age and Gender (2022).<sup>8</sup>



The total estimated population in 2022 is

# 166,781

+1% from 164,499 in 2021.<sup>8</sup>

Number of Migrants.<sup>30</sup>

| MIGRANT TYPE        | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Net International   | -181    | 686     |
| Net Interprovincial | 2,056   | 1,214   |
| Net Intraprovincial | 369     | 587     |
| Net Total Migration | 2,244   | 2,487   |

There was an +11% increase in net total migration over the last year (2020/21 to 2021/22).

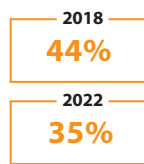
Number of Dependents Per 100 Workers (2022).<sup>8</sup>



## Civic Engagement & Safety



**Voter Turnout for All Municipal Elections in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region.**<sup>31</sup>



There was a 9 percentage point decrease in voter turnout between 2018 and 2022.



**18%** of Columbia Basin-Boundary taxfilers made a **charitable donation** in 2021. The average donation per taxfiler was **\$1,632** and the total amount donated was just over **\$40 million**.<sup>32</sup>

## Health and Well-being

**5.3%** of the 1,285 live births in the region in 2021/22 were **low birth weight newborns**.<sup>33</sup>

**76%** of residents surveyed are satisfied to some degree with their sense of spirituality.<sup>3</sup>

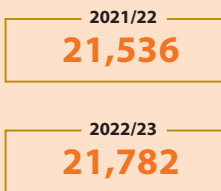
There were **52 deaths** from illicit drug use in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region in 2022.<sup>34</sup>

**38%** of residents surveyed say that they connect with friends and family all the time.<sup>3</sup>

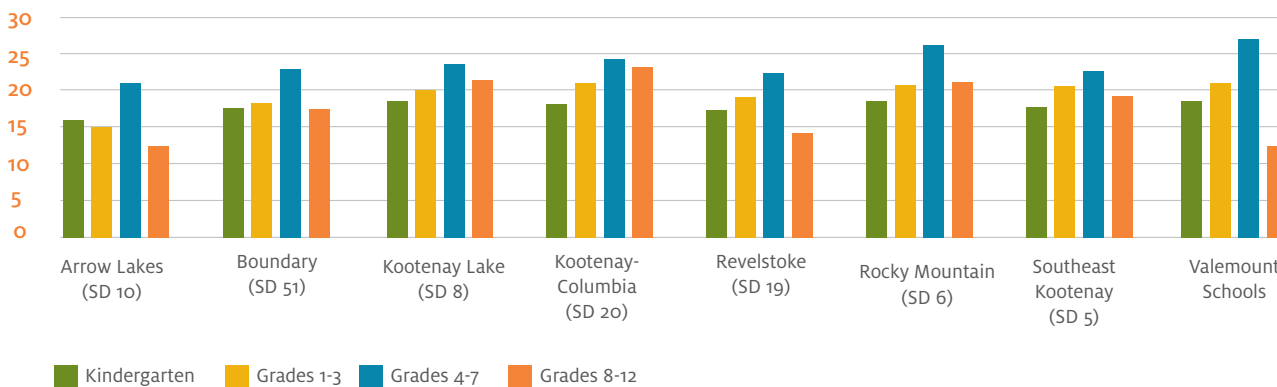
# Education & Learning



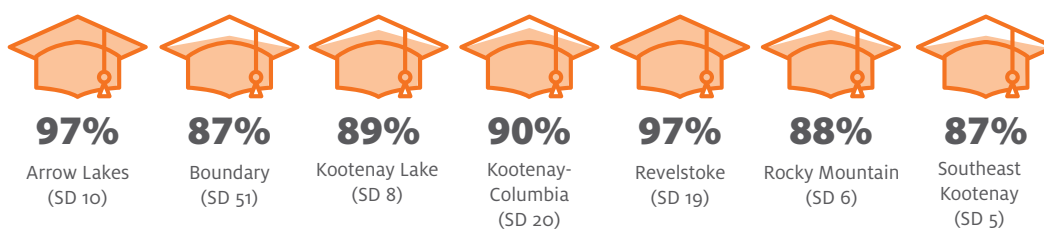
**Number of Students Enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Columbia Basin-Boundary Schools. <sup>35</sup>**



**Average Class Size by Grade Cohort (2022/23). <sup>36</sup>**

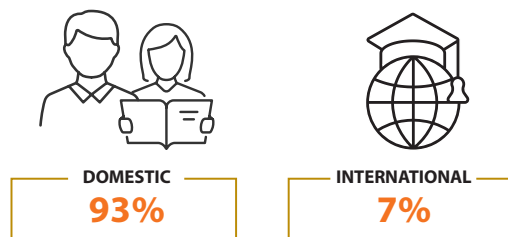


**High School Completion Rate (2021/22). <sup>37</sup>**



| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR RESIDENTS 15+ IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION. <sup>2</sup> | 2021 |
|--|------|
| No certificate, diploma or degree  | 14%  |
| High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate                                   | 30%  |
| Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma  | 12%  |
| College, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma                               | 22%  |
| University certificate or diploma below bachelor level                                       | 3%   |
| Bachelor's degree or higher  | 19%  |

**College Enrolment by Student Type for Post-Secondary Institutions with Campuses in the Region (2021/22). <sup>38</sup>**





CULTURE

# Arts & Culture



**Public Libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2021).**<sup>39</sup>

**Local government support**  
**\$37.90**  
 PER CAPITA

**Circulation of all materials**  
**5.7**  
 PER CAPITA

**61%**  
 of residents surveyed perceive their community livability as improving.<sup>3</sup>

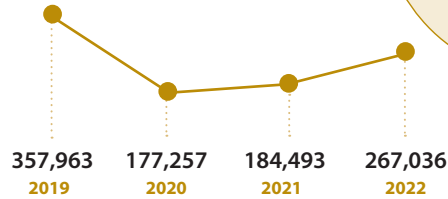


**Percent of Local Government Spending on Parks, Recreation, and Culture in Columbia Basin-Boundary Municipalities.**<sup>40</sup>

**2020**  
**11.8%**

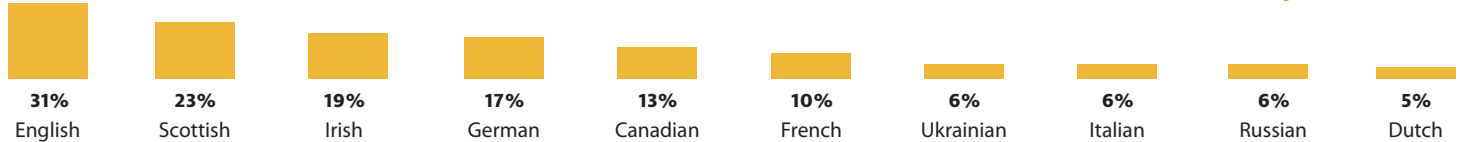
**2021**  
**12.4%**

**Visitors to Kootenay Rockies' Visitor Centres.**<sup>41</sup>



## Heritage

**Top 10 Self-Identified Ethnic Origins in the Columbia Basin-Boundary (2021).**<sup>42</sup>



**188** different ethnic origins self-identified in the Columbia Basin-Boundary (2021).<sup>42</sup>

**83%** of residents surveyed would recommend their community to others as a good place to live.<sup>3</sup>

**82%** of residents indicated a positive sense of community well-being.<sup>3</sup>

**7.3%** of Columbia Basin-Boundary Residents Identify as Indigenous (2021).<sup>43</sup>

## Recreation



**Number of Parks in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022/23).**<sup>44, 45, 46</sup>

**251**  
 Local Greenspaces

**90**  
 Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

**4**  
 National Parks

**Number of Civic Facilities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region (2022).**<sup>48</sup>

**MUSEUM**  
**17**

**ARENA**  
**11**

**RECREATION CENTRE**  
**15**

**COMMUNITY HALL**  
**11**

**CURLING CLUB**  
**9**

**Visitors to National Parks.**<sup>47</sup>

| NATIONAL PARK                             | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | ONE YEAR CHANGE |
|---|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Kootenay National Park                    | 510,200 | 574,126 | +12.5%          |
| Mount Revelstoke & Glacier National Parks | 726,546 | 775,190 | +6.7%           |
| Yoho National Park                        | 537,533 | 663,878 | +23.5%          |

# Learn More

To get more information on indicators of well-being within the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region go to [stateofthebasin.ca](https://stateofthebasin.ca). This website also contains resources including previous [Snapshot Reports](#), [Subjective Well-being Reports](#) (results of a poll of Columbia Basin-Boundary residents focused on perceptions and behaviours), and [Community Profiles](#) (summaries of community-specific State of the Basin data); and [featured trends and analysis](#).

Through the State of the Basin initiative, Selkirk Innovates provides remote data provision support. This is one-on-one support to provide State of the Basin research for use by an organization or initiative. Access this service by contacting [Jayme Jones](#).

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

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