

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society (RBAS)

Strategic Plan 2026-2029



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Introduction from the Executive Director

For nearly 30 years, the Revelstoke Bear Aware Society has worked alongside residents, businesses, visitors, community organizations, and government partners to support harmonious human–bear coexistence in our community. Through education, outreach, monitoring, and collaboration, we have helped make Revelstoke a leader in wildlife coexistence while fostering a culture that values both public safety and the well-being of bears.

The success of this work is reflected in our community's growing commitment to bear-smart practices and in the significant reduction in bear mortalities over the past several decades. While these achievements are worth celebrating, we recognize that coexistence requires ongoing effort. As our community continues to grow and change, so too do the challenges and opportunities associated with living alongside wildlife. Climate change, habitat pressures, increasing visitation, evolving municipal programs, and changing community needs all influence how we approach our work.

At the same time, we continue to see strong community support for coexistence, a growing awareness of bear-smart behaviours, and a shared desire to protect what makes Revelstoke unique. We are fortunate to work alongside dedicated volunteers, engaged residents, supportive partners, and passionate advocates who understand that keeping bears wild and communities safe is a shared responsibility.

This strategic plan serves as our roadmap through 2029, outlining the priorities, objectives, and actions that will guide our work over the coming years. Developed through thoughtful discussion and input from board members, staff, and stakeholders, it focuses on four key areas: community collaboration, financial stewardship, internal processes and organizational learning, and organizational capacity. By investing in these priorities, we will strengthen our ability to deliver meaningful programs, respond to emerging challenges, and advance our vision of harmonious human–bear coexistence in Revelstoke.

We know that meaningful coexistence is only possible when a community works together. Whether you are securing attractants, participating in the gleaning program, attending an educational event, supporting our fundraising efforts, reporting bear activity, or helping to share accurate information, you play an important role in this work.

On behalf of the Revelstoke Bear Aware Society, thank you to everyone who has contributed to our success thus far and to those who will help shape our future. We look forward to continuing this work together as we build a safer community for people, reduce human–bear conflict, and help keep bears wild for generations to come.

Kaitlyn Nicol

Executive Director

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society

Vision

Our vision provides the ideal state should we be successful in our purpose. We strive to attain this state and it provides us with a clear direction for our activities and our goals.

Harmonious human–bear coexistence in Revelstoke.

Mission

Our mission outlines the key activities that we will undertake as a Society that leads us to attain our vision.

To support community-driven human–bear coexistence through proactive education, collaboration, and celebration.

Core Values

As a Society, we use our core values to guide our decision-making activities. They provide a way for the Board, Staff, and Volunteers to determine the right course of action, how we interact with each other & those around us. Our core values provide us with an understanding of how we will be a leader in our community.

Evidence-based education

Purposeful collaboration

Supportive and respectful relationships

An empowered community

Passion for coexistence

Summary of our Internal Analysis

During our strategic planning session, many key strengths were identified. These range from RBAS's programs (educational, monitoring, and gleaning) to our organizational strengths, such as collaboration and proactivity.

Our current internal challenges include a new Board and staff, our inability to share our voice at all levels of government (from city to provincial), and our challenges in securing long-term, sustainable funding sources.

Summary of our External Analysis

The assembled group for our strategic planning session identified many external forces that have impacted and will continue to impact RBAS over the next 3-5 years. These range from local changes, such as a municipal residential compost pick-up program and changes to several municipal bylaws, to habitat loss at the regional level.

We also recognized that bear safety has broad social awareness and that respect for wildlife remains important to residents and visitors alike.

Please see our completed SWOT analysis and summary of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the appendix. Also in the appendix are details of our strengths & weaknesses and our PESTLE.

Summary of Priorities

In the next three years, we aim to work on four strategic priorities:

- 1. Community collaboration.**
- 2. Financial stewardship.**
- 3. Internal processes & organizational learning.**
- 4. Organizational capacity.**

We believe that efforts in these four areas will strengthen RBAS and allow us to successfully deliver on our mission.

Priority Specifics

Community Collaboration		
RBAS will engage with the community, partner organizations, and the municipality to advance critical human-bear coexistence programs.		
Strategic Objectives	Measures	Actions
- Expand the Gleaning Program to reduce attractants and increase community participation. - Enhance the quality and number of community celebration opportunities that promote coexistence. - Strengthen advocacy and collaboration with key community partners. - Expand educational programming that promotes bear-smart behaviours among residents, visitors, and businesses. - Expand social media and online engagement to broaden community reach.	# of educational programs and events delivered annually # of participants attending education programs and community events Participant feedback from programs and events # of active community partners # of gleaning program volunteers and participants Total amount of fruit gleaned and where it is redistributed Community indicators of bear-smart behaviour (e.g., garbage tagging results, attractant reduction) Bear-related call statistics (COS and RBAS) # of bear mortalities and causes Geographic trends in bear-related incidents by neighbourhood Online engagement metrics (social media reach, website traffic)	

Financial Stewardship

RBAS will strengthen long-term financial sustainability through diversified revenue streams.

Strategic Objectives	Measures	Actions
• Expand merchandise offerings to strengthen community engagement and generate revenue. • Increase community-generated revenue through donations, sponsorships, and events. • Maintain strong and diversified grant funding sources.	Annual merchandise revenue Total community-generated revenue (donations, sponsorships, events) Number of grant applications submitted annually Grant success rate Percentage of revenue from non-grant sources	

Internal Processes & Organizational Learning

RBAS will look to increase efficiency of our internal processes so that we may more effectively provide the critical data to our Board, our Staff & Volunteers, and to the Community.

Strategic Objectives	Measures	Actions
• Develop systematic data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to support program evaluation and informed decision-making. • Strengthen program evaluation and impact measurement practices. • Develop a data-collection matrix that identifies key indicators and responsibilities for tracking organizational data. • Ensure the board receives regular program and impact reporting to support strategic decision-making.	Completion of a formal data collection matrix Number of programs tracked through formal data collection Completion of annual program evaluation or impact reporting Frequency of data review and reporting to the board	

Organizational Capacity

RBAS will strengthen our organizational capacity through regular training & development programs.

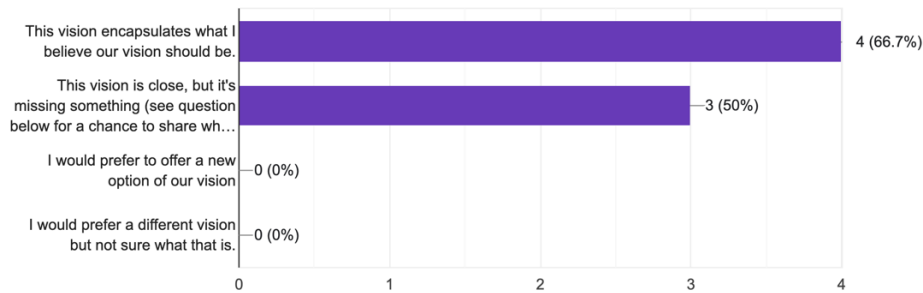
Strategic Objectives	Measures	Actions
• Develop and maintain board and staff succession planning processes, including a board skills matrix. • Expand and strengthen the volunteer program, including strategies for recruitment, engagement, and retention. • Increase board outreach and recruitment to ensure strong governance and community representation. • Provide governance training and development opportunities for board members.	Completion and annual review of board skills matrix and succession planning tools Number of board training or development opportunities completed annually Number of active volunteers Volunteer retention rate year-over-year Number of board recruitment or outreach activities conducted Volunteer experience feedback surveys or interviews are completed annually	

Appendix

Summary of Stakeholder feedback

A vision (or purpose) is a statement of where the organization aims to be in the future. It shouldn't speak of specific actions (because these may change): Keeping bears wild and our community safe.

6 responses



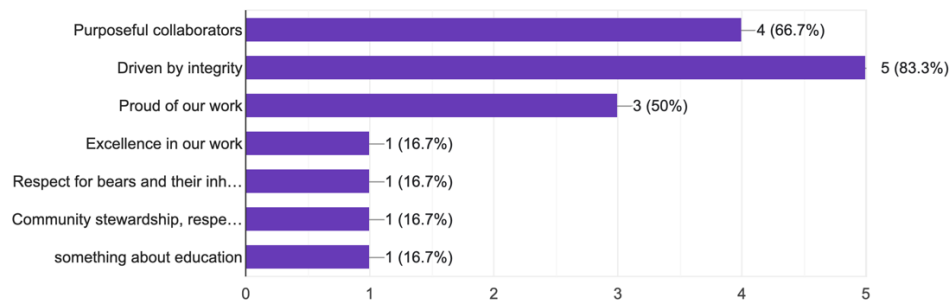
A mission (or ambition) is a statement of what it is that the organization actually does, and the benefit you provide to the wider community. What is...an/bear conflict in the community of Revelstoke.

6 responses



Values are the guiding principles of the organization that help unite all members, help to define the the organization's "brand", and will guide all actions. Any additional values you believe need to be adopted.

6 responses



Strengths

- Effective staff
- Committed board of directors
- Gleaning program and support of residents through bear attractants
- Serving our vulnerable community and school students.
- Purposeful collaboration
- History – people are aware and familiar
- Good branding, online presence
- Politically neutral and not an advocacy group
- Community engagement occurs in many different ways – youth to broader community.
- Event engagement and attendance have been strong.
- Tenacity
- Online Presence
- Uniqueness
- Proactive approach
- Staff activities
- Education and bear movement monitoring and awareness activities
- Gleaning program
- Community support and volunteer potential
- Ability to collaborate with tourism Revelstoke to support more outwardly facing bear/human interactions within our community
- Bears are a topic many people are drawn to.
- Volunteers
- Evidence-based recommendations and information
- Board that cares
- Fun events
- Positive reputation

Weaknesses

- High board turnover
- Gleaning capacity and lack of easy engagement from the community
- Data presentation is confusing and not well documented
- Funding challenges
- Board experience
- We don't articulate the goal and progression towards being a Bear Smart Community
- Outward facing education to tourism community
- Ensuring board terms are staggered
- Finding stable long-term funding
- Not a huge sway with city decisions
- Lack of a relationship with the city
- Lack of priority at the city
- Lack of voice at all levels of government
- Board experience in the NPO sector could be higher

- Engagement in the community
- Utilizing gleanings resource
- Data Management
- Could be better in tracking bear reports in a more standardized way
- Stable funding
- Youth education can improve
- Board training
- Delay of bins
- Not having Conservation Officer
- City Support
- Bylaw holes – Fast food chains
- Enforcement issues
- Businesses not taking the lead – some
- Bins not being used properly
- Chickens – education – lack of bylaw around fencing and protection
- Highway/Railway deaths
- Long-term locals
- Breaking the myth about reporting bears
- Messaging always coming from Bear Aware and not – employer, chamber (consistent messaging though from bear aware)

PESTLE

Political

- Municipal residential compost pickup
- Provincial funding for conservation officers
- Grants
- Polarization of bear topic – pro-bear and anti-bear
- Federal program supporting wildlife coexistence
- Environmental education funding
- BC promotion of bear-smart communities
- Good relationships with city
- Cuts to wildlife programs
- Shifts in council priorities and budget constraints
- Destination BC – possible funding?
- Change in municipal government
- Development – political issue
- Bear hunt
- Attractant bylaw
- Enforcement of bylaws

Economic

- Lack of consistent funding may mean the need to be more creative in fundraising
- Rising cost of living may mean residents have less capacity to invest in attractant management (pro/con as may help to raise interest in advocacy for municipal or provincial support)
- Habitat loss – forestry/development/tourism

- Resort town – higher income population MRDT
- Endowment fund potential?
- Developers – get them aware of the organization
- Cost of food – gleaned programs
- Volunteers get free food
- School breakfasts -

Social

- Broad awareness of the value of respect for wildlife
- Some areas of conflicting values – chickens as bear attractants
- Keep nature natural – people don't want bears killed around town – myth on reporting
- People are educating others – domino affect – message getting out
- Social media importance
- Print and radio may be important with a different audience
- People love bears
- Iconic
- Networking at larger events

Technological

- Social media – tracking newcomers for special education
- Food security grants for harvesting tools/machines
- GIS tools and affordable GPS enabled cameras can help map travel corridors and attractant hotspots
- Better online reporting platforms
- Growing use of home and wildlife cameras
- Digital education tools to reach wider audiences
- AI – threat – need to get to website
- Can also help
- Lots of research

Environmental

- Poor years for berries drives bears into the city
- Possible pro-action during these years?
- Global warming changing hibernation schedules
- Loss of mountain food sources
- Drier summers and droughts
- Wildfires
- Habitat loss
- Bears getting hit on highway
- Surrounded by National and Provincial parks
- Illecillewaet Greenbelt Society
- Wildsight and CSIS
- Stables
- Turtle

Legal

- Need to change Revelstoke's attractant bylaws since they are not very robust and do not include commercial waste.
- Bear hunt
- Organizational legal requirements – society act
- Wildlife act will be changing in next couple of years
- Conservation officer authority changing
- Enforcement in general

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
Brand Proactive/monitoring Educational resources/programs Gleaning program Collaboration	Not a priority with the city Board skills/knowledge/succession planning Lack voice at all levels of gov't No stable long-term funding Data presentation
Opportunities	Threats
Bin roll out program (incl. bylaws) Strategic education plan Gleaning program expands to value-added income generation Community engagement (trusted messenger) Effective marketing – brand presence	Habitat Loss/development/climate change Financial instability Loss of trust by community/misinformation Poor data management/reporting Poor bin program rollout