

BX RANGLANDS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Community Engagement Report

Institute for Sustainable Food Systems and Land to Table Network

June 2022

Prepared for:

Regional District of North Okanagan



Institute for Sustainable Food Systems



1. Introduction

A key objective of the BX Ranchlands development plan was to assess the community and key stakeholder needs/ vision for the BX Ranchlands site so that programming meets the interests of local First Nations, community members, the RDNO, and other relevant stakeholders. As such, initial meetings with the RDNO and L2T representatives developed a plan for community and stakeholder engagement, coordinated by steering committee members including the RDNO Directors for Electoral Areas 'B' and 'C', L2T, and KPU staff.

2. Methods of Engagement

2.1 Project Working Group

The steering committee identified the need for a Working Group composed of local stakeholders to help guide the site development plan for the BX Ranchlands. It was decided that the working group would function as a proxy for public input in the initial plan development phases of the project, and that a draft plan would be brought to the general public later in the spring of 2022, as Covid-19 also made in-person engagement through the winter difficult. The steering committee initiated collaboration with the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) at the beginning of this project; more detailed information can be found in the 'Okanagan Indian Band Engagement' section of this report.

The steering committee determined the working group composition, size, and hours required. Meetings were held online, were no longer than two hours, and members received an honorarium for their time. Four online meetings were held November 2021 through April 2022, totalling 5.5 hours. Meetings were hosted by the steering committee and feedback provided during these meetings had a significant impact on the final plan.

Meeting agendas were distributed one week prior to each meeting, and meetings began with a formal land acknowledgement by KPU's ISFS Indigenous Foodways Community Outreach Facilitator, Charlene Seward. Further engagement materials were distributed after each meeting. Dates, times, and objectives of each meeting are summarised below:



Meeting #1

November 18th, 2021, 1-2:30pm

- Introduce members to the project, including site history and context
- Communicate project goals and intentions
- Brainstorm principles and values to guide plan development

Meeting #2

December 8th, 2021, 10-11am

- Review and provide feedback on updated project principles and values summary including: ecological stewardship, local harvesting and agriculture, and community building and education, underlain by equity, reconciliation, and decolonization.
- Provide an update on the Okanagan Indian Band involvement in the project.
- Review site map and physical attributes, including: land access, infrastructure, past uses and current conditions, and location of habitat areas
- Brainstorm potential programs and activities within the context of core values and site assessment

Meeting #3

February 7th, 2022, 1-2:30pm

- Review draft site plan including activities, locations, and infrastructure
- Present initial site development phasing
- Conduct online brainstorm exercise regarding draft plan

Meeting #4

April 19th, 2022, 10-11:30am

- Present 5 year phasing plan
- Provide budget overview
- Present proposed governance structure, including recommendations for potential partners
- Discuss next steps for community consultation

2.2 Broader Community Engagement

Ensuring that the BX Ranchlands Development plan meets the needs of the community required open dialogue and engagement. This was achieved through two forms:

1. online engagement (webpage, plan presentation YouTube video, online survey),
2. an in-person open house the BX Ranchlands.

Both events were promoted via a press release, postcard mailout to approximately 700 constituents living near the site, and promotion on the RDNO, L2T, and KPU social media channels.

The primary aim of this consultation was to share information with members of the public (especially neighbours), stakeholders, and potential project partners. Each component of the process was reviewed by the steering committee, and vetted by the RDNO’s Communications Officer and Regional Planner.

Postcard

Outreach with the public, especially the Electoral C residents living in close proximity to the property (direct property neighbours and other neighbourhood residents), was a priority. To ensure residents had notification about both the online and in-person engagement opportunities, a postcard invitation to the open house, as well as access to the online survey and L2T website page, was provided. The postcards were mailed out two weeks prior to the open house event.

Press Release- May 3rd, 2022

The press release introduced the project and invited the public to learn more through the webpage or open house, and share feedback through the digital survey. It was timed to coincide with the postcard mailout, May 3rd, 2022. A few local media outlets published the information.

Webpage - May 3rd, 2022

The website (hosted by L2T) contained the detailed project summary, introductory video, online survey link, and open house details. The website was promoted in the press release, on the postcard and in all social posts. After the website went live, L2T received 5x their regular website traffic.



The Regional District of North Okanagan invites you to drop by the BX Ranchlands parcel at 4122 East Vernon Rd, anytime between **3-7pm, on May 12th**, to learn about the activities proposed for the site and to share your feedback.

This event is hosted by Land to Table and the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems. You can learn more at:

<https://landtotablenetwork.com/bx-open-house/>

Survey - May 3rd-16th, 2022

The objective of the online survey was to collect feedback on the proposed plan. It was open to the general public, but particularly those with a connection to or interest in the BX Ranchlands. The survey was hosted on KPU's survey monkey account, and accessed via a link provided on the project webpage. Respondents were prompted to view the plan summary video prior to taking the survey.

The survey included four questions:

1. Why is the BX ranchlands important to you?
2. What about the draft plan excites you?
3. How could the plan be strengthened?
4. How can you imagine being engaged in the future of the site?

Social Media Posts

L2T created short posts to be shared on Instagram and Facebook (on May 3rd and 11th) promoting the open house event and online engagement. Promotion for the open house and survey was also done through the L2T network newsletter, KPU social media, as well as via the project working group.

Limitations to the online engagement include the fact that identifying information was not collected, creating potential for duplicate responses and overlap with the open house, and that online engagement could exclude various community members based on age, access to technology, and economic status.

On-Site Open House

May 12th, 2022 3-7pm

The open house communicated the progress of the planning process with the public, with a particular focus on sharing information and collecting feedback from those living in close proximity to the BX Ranchlands, frequent users, and Electoral Area C residents. The majority of participants who attended were direct neighbours and residents of Electoral Area C, most of whom had received postcards from the RDNO.

The project steering committee organised and facilitated the event. The steering committee welcomed, listened, answered questions, and provided tours. Information was provided on four presentation boards (See appendix

1. Site history and project background
2. Draft development plan map
3. Description of the 7 activity areas
4. Engagement, principles and implementation

Lastly, a poster with the 4 online survey questions was available so participants could add feedback.



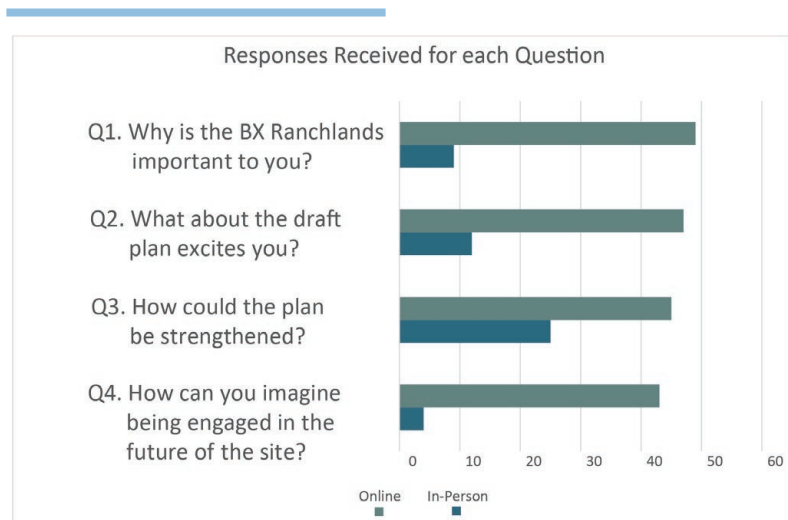
3. Analysis Methodology

Responses received from both the online survey and the open house event were collected in a spreadsheet. Next, codes were assigned according to the content of each comment. In most cases, multiple codes were assigned to each comment. Once all data was coded, the codes were aggregated under general themes such as ecological stewardship, recreation, infrastructure etc. Next, code/theme areas were summed to find the areas with most representation among the comments. This data is presented in the graphs in the results section. Representative comments were included to illustrate the kinds of comments received for each theme. All raw, unaltered comments can be found in Appendix A.

4. Results

From May 3rd to May 16th there were **49 responses collected via the online survey. Over 70 people attended the in-person open house** on May 12, 2022. The chart at right shows the number of responses received for each question, via the online survey and open house.

Below are the aggregated responses to the 4 key questions posed to participants.

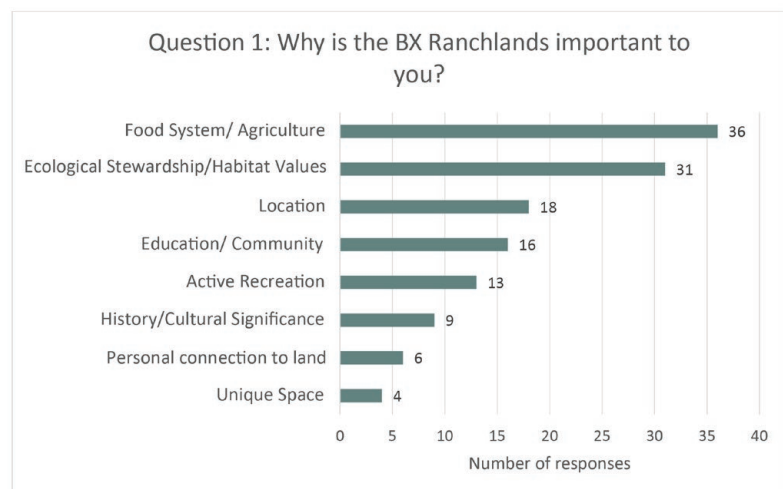


Q1) Why is the BX Ranchlands important to you?

58 responses were received for this question, 49 online and 9 at the open house. Of these responses, the most frequent answers had to do with the **agricultural/food system potential** of the lands, including themes like contributions to food security, farmland protection, the local food economy, and regenerative agriculture.

Respondents stated that:

“local sustainable food production is imperative for the future,” and



“We are losing big swaths of land to single family housing. And we’re losing arable land and natural, accessible land at an alarming rate. It’s so important to keep this land in the community.”

The **ecological stewardship** value of the land was also frequently cited, including the importance of green space and natural areas, wildlife and habitat values of the land.

“This habitat is iconic to the North Okanagan and is disappearing fast.”

“Having more wild and natural spaces within our community is very important to me - the BX ranchlands presents an opportunity to involve our community and offer educational experiences while maintaining habitats and safe spaces for animals and insects.”

“It is a relatively natural area within reasonable distance of Vernon. I believe in the future when more of the area in and around Vernon is built up we will be glad we preserved some land in its natural form.”

The **location** of the BX Ranchlands was also identified as an important draw, with many providing feedback living near the site, and others espousing the value of having these lands so close to Vernon.

In addition, the **education and community building** potential of the lands was valued:

“Glad to see the land preserved as a public asset. Diverse uses will make it a vibrant place to celebrate our community.” “ We need to secure accessible land for our community to use and learn from.”

The **recreational opportunities** afforded by the current and future trail connections were also of importance, as well as the history and cultural significance of the lands- from both settler and Indigenous perspectives. Lastly, some respondents cited personal/family connections to the land and identified the unique opportunity afforded by the lands:

“It’s the only area where a project like this can be executed.”

Q2) What about the draft plan excites you?

47 responses were received online for this question, and 12 responses received at the open house event.

There were 12 general comments expressing support for the entire plan. There were also a few mentions of the **diversity of uses** contained in the plan as exciting both in terms of programming and accessibility for a range of different people, but also in terms of potential revenue streams.

In terms of specific responses, the theme with the most responses was **education and community building**. People highlighted the BX Ranchlands as a community asset:

“I’m excited about the re-imagining this property with broader community



visions and timelines leading the way. In this way, we can restore hog gulch from a drainage ditch into a healthy wetland, we can preserve grasslands, we can share the magic of gardening with the next generation, and we can empower new farmers with experience and support. Instead of being limited by whether things are profitable or not, decisions can be driven by broader goals and visions. This way we can create a community asset that has a positive impact on the BX and beyond.”

Others mentioned that they were excited to attend workshops that might be offered at the site.

The **agriculture and farming aspects** of the site were the next most frequently cited category. Here, respondents were excited that the lands were to remain for farming and food production and protected from development, while also supporting farmers. A caution was noted that site management needed to occur to respect neighbouring farms and prevent the spread of noxious weeds. A couple responses specifically cited the native plant nursery as an exciting component of the plan.

Habitat protection, ecological stewardship and greenspace elements of the plan were also highly cited by respondents as exciting features. In addition to the preservation of habitat areas, restoration/enhancement of these areas was mentioned. Wildlife habitat was mentioned too, however most responses cited the preservation of greenspace and natural areas, and the protection of such lands from development in the future.

Several people were excited by the proposed **community garden**, stating that

“The community garden is fantastic for those of us who can’t afford housing in places we can have our own garden.”

One respondent did flag the importance of management of the community garden to prevent rodent problems.

The **food forest and pollinator plantings** also excited people.

“I’m very excited about the idea of a food forest, pollinator meadows, native plant nursery and opportunities for foraging and really integrating the OKIB and their knowledge/practices.”

Similar levels of excitement were expressed for the **recreation** aspects of the plan, most notably the trail connection.

Several responses were also received relating to the **site management and governance**, particularly the integration with the OKIB, as noted in the previous comment.

“The plan to promote/include regenerative agriculture; the centering of indigenous involvement and decolonization; and in general the fact that the RDNO decided to support various community uses of the land instead of selling it off for redevelopment. This is great!”

The **research and teaching farm** also generated interest in terms of a space for research to occur, but also the potential for a farm school-like program.

“A farm school would be awesome - I am thinking more Linnea Farm school style under the mentorship of someone living here and also working the land.”

Lastly, a couple people were excited about the **community farm**. There may have been some confusion about this element in that it could have been perceived to have been the same model as a community garden, but those responses aside, others cited the role of the community farm in providing food for vulnerable residents:

“The community farm helping to provide for the hungry vulnerable people is wonderful.”

Q3) How could the plan be strengthened?

45 responses were received online with suggestions for improvement, and 25 recorded at the open house.

The category with the most responses was specific suggestions regarding **site development/infrastructure** additions. These included increased parking, signage, covered outdoor seating/meeting place, outdoor entertainment stage, farm stand structure, farm to table eatery/brewery, and farm worker housing. On the latter point, there were also comments made about having a site manager in residence.

There were a few suggestions regarding the **irrigation reservoir** and the potential to combine it with a restored wetland area.

Site management and governance was the next most common category. Respondents here suggested that site management was key, with some concerns raised about who will manage the multitude of user groups. The importance of site management was also stated to ensure guiding principles (like ecological stewardship and water conservation) were adhered to, and to fairly assign leases and users. The importance of including OKIB and other Indigenous groups meaningfully in the governance and management of the site was also noted by several people:

“Include indigenous input and/or input on previous/traditional use of the land and what would typically be found/grown there.”

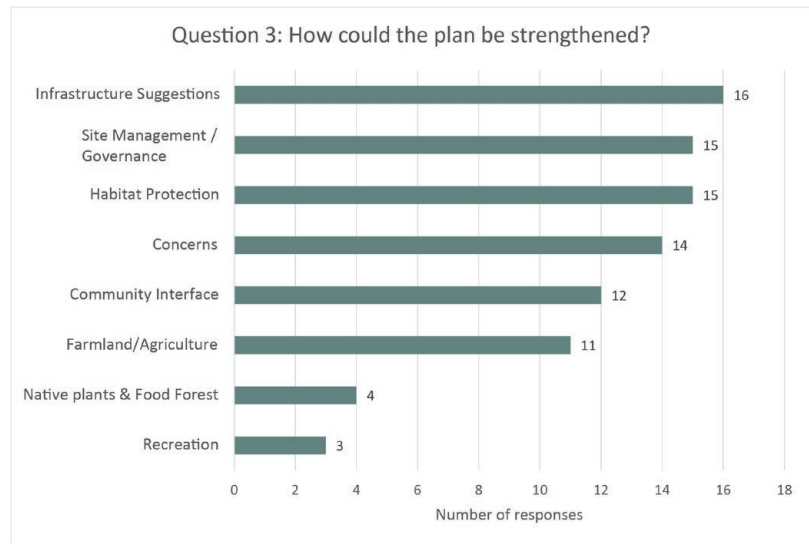
There were also a couple mentions of Land Back (movement to return traditional lands to Indigenous peoples). Also,

“Giving the Secwepemc and Syilx the opportunity to have a say in what happens with this land. The opportunity for reconciliation and sharing their knowledge.”

As in all questions, **habitat protection/enhancement** also received many comments.

Several people reinforced the need for wildlife corridors to connect protected habitat areas:

“Better connectedness between the natural areas instead of isolated pockets. This will provide for a more sustainable and robust natural system and wildlife cooridor - this could be especially important with potentially increased traffic/use from community gardens, nursery and Agricultural use.”



Additionally, there were a few suggestions to restore natural waterways (eg. Hog's Gulch) and use the functioning wetlands in place of the proposed reservoir. Minimally, increasing the buffer distance between these wetland areas and agricultural activities was recommended, with another respondent suggesting much larger areas of land set aside as habitat protection areas. One respondent suggested more trees be planted to reduce the exposure, which is aligned with hedgerow/wildlife corridor considerations.

Other comments encouraged organic/chemical-free practices on the site in consideration of pollinator health.

A significant number of responses were received about the **interface between the site and the community**. A number of these comments suggested including a farmers market / farmgate sales to market products grown on the site.

There were suggestions for the kind of community education programming that could be offered on the site:

“I hope for good interpretive materials onsite and ideally public education programs... for example it would be awesome to have some “master gardening” type programming on native grasslands and supporting native plants.”

Food literacy programming (eg. dehydration, canning workshops) was also mentioned. There were also a couple suggestions regarding the role that programming on the site could play for vulnerable people or people with mental health supports, vis a vis horticultural therapy or similar. Job creation in these (and other sectors) was also encouraged by respondents. A couple respondents offered to help immediately as required and wanted to see the plan be realized quickly. One other community tie-in not captured elsewhere, was the potential for the site to host an outdoor childcare program.

Suggestions around the **farming, agriculture and food production** components encouraged the land to remain in agriculture, and to encourage organic / chemical free production. A suggestion to use the land for livestock grazing as a “holding” use was also made.

There were a few specific suggestions regarding the **food forest and native plantings** on the site. These included the desire to see a full permaculture guild food forest, and interpretive signage to educate site users about the native flora and fauna on the site. Indigenous knowledge should also be incorporated into these plantings and signage.

Suggestions for improving the O60 trail included the completion of the loop, and improvements to the trail surface.

There were a few suggestions which stood alone among responses. These included seeing fewer agricultural uses on the site, the addition of more land for recreation, linkages to surrounding parks, sale of the land for development, access concerns re: walking and traffic nearby, mycofiltration and phytoremediation of water, biochar, agroforestry and milkweed, winter recreation like skiing, and equine therapy.

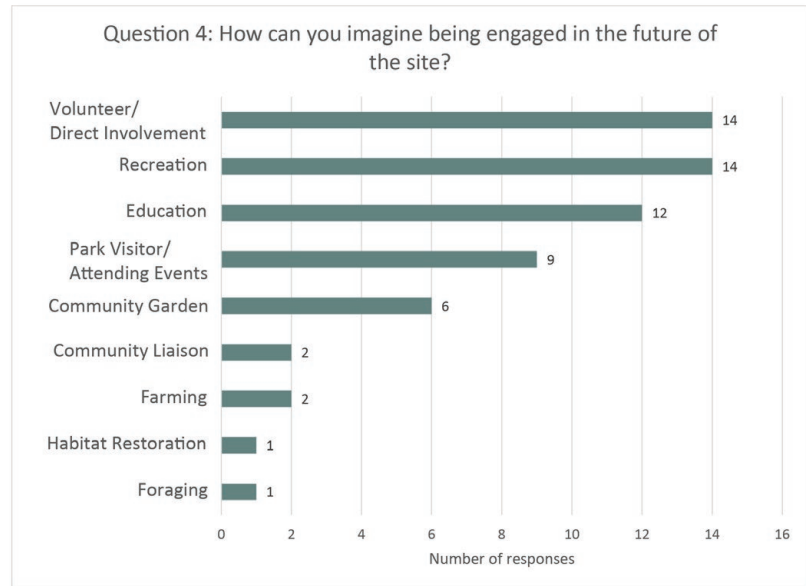
Concerns were raised by a few respondents, including some relating to the reservoir. These included noise, leakage, geotechnical stability, and mosquitoes. Other concerns raised included weed management (potential for spread of invasives if not properly managed) and potential impacts to surrounding properties. As previously stated, site management was a concern, as was ecological integrity and impacts to habitat/wildlife as a result of site development. Pollinators/bee allergies were also cited as concerns. It was also noted that funding and implementation were key to success.

Q4) How do you see engaging with the site moving forward?

For this question, **43 responses were received online and 4 responses at the open house event.**

Most commonly, respondents stated they would continue to walk the perimeter trail and enjoy the natural beauty and amenity of the site (**recreation**). A similar number responded that they would like to **volunteer** to help out with programs and site events/development:

“Opportunities to volunteer, participating in educational opportunities, continuing use of the recreational spots, supporting community initiatives.”



Still others cited simply **visiting the**

site. Several mentioned wanting to participate in educational opportunities that may be offered on the site, and some even offered to host such activities:

*“As a librarian, I would love to participate in educational events. I can see myself reading to small children about gardening, farms or wildlife. We could have a pop up mini library (10 *10 tent) of books about plants.”*

Several people indicated interest in participating in the **community garden**. Others mentioned they would be happy to buy produce grown on the site if offered for sale at farmgate sales or a farmer’s market. Others indicated they were interested in leasing farmland, acting as community liaison, participating in habitat restoration, running an outdoor preschool on site, helping further develop the site plan and serving on an advisory committee.

It is worth noting that most respondents saw themselves engaging with the site in multiple ways:

“Attending workshops, purchasing produce, helping to remove invasive plants, encouraging folks of all ages to be engaged in the future of this site.”

Several responses referenced ways that the community would prefer to be engaged around site development moving forward. These responses cited mailouts, emails, text messages, social media, and community potlucks as methods to solicit continued engagement. It was noted that there was an error in the mailout for this event, in that names did not match up to addresses.

Full survey responses (including thematic coding) can be found in the Appendix A spreadsheet.

Okanagan Indian Band Engagement

Indigenous food sovereignty, decolonization and reconciliation are key priorities identified both by the working group, and by the KPU/L2T team. Per recommendations from the RDNO, the Okanagan Indian Band was invited to participate in the process through a formal letter, sent via email October 21st, 2021. Email and phone follow ups were made subsequent to this letter, and personal connections with Mike Fotheringham utilised as well.

On Nov. 25, 2021, OKIB advised that Colleen Marchand and Ruby Alexis from the Territorial Stewardship Division were assigned to the project. They joined the third working group meeting. An additional meeting was held solely with them to discuss the project in greater detail. In addition, L2T had a pre-existing relationship with Nikki Lorentz, OKIB's food security coordinator, and an additional meeting was set with her to discuss potential synergies and ideas.

To bring an Indigenous lens to the working group prior to OKIB's involvement, ISFS's Indigenous Foodways Engagement Facilitator, Charlene Seward, was invited to participate and provide a traditional welcome and land acknowledgement at each meeting.

Through the course of the working group meetings, Reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenous food sovereignty was identified as a key priority. The working group did brainstorm possible activities for the site to meet these goals, however acknowledged that these were conceived without input from OKIB. Nonetheless, these activities included:

- Foregrounding Indigenous histories and supporting Indigenous relations to land
- Make space for Indigenous knowledge and allow the stewards of such knowledge to guide decision making
- Inviting OKIB members to lease farmland
- Collaboration on native plantings
- Traditional/medicinal plant gardens
- Visual representations of OKIB presence on site- eg. story poles etc.

In meetings with OKIB's Territorial Services Division and the Food Security Coordinator, **wild harvest potential** on the lands was of interest, and the need to survey the land for existing plants and potential for reintroduction was suggested, as a partnership opportunity building upon existing work done by OKIB. This interest was driven by the desire to document the traditional plant food and medicines that currently grow or could be encouraged to grow on site, and to create more opportunities and spaces for OKIB members to practise traditional harvest. The potential for **teaching and learning opportunities** through the proposed food forest and other on-site



activities was of interest. The historical involvement of OKIB members in the region's agriculture and gardening was also discussed, as was the inherent tension therein with agriculture existing as a colonial construct. It was suggested that **cultural safety for OKIB members** using the site could be fostered by ensuring that signs were in nsyilxcən and english, and that these signs recognize Indigenous histories, knowledge and relationships. There was a need stated from OKIB's perspective for **food processing and storage facilities** in the region, as well as housing. OKIB is also currently in the process of developing their **5 year food security plan**, and there could be several opportunities for the BX lands to support this process and initiative and vice-versa, highlighting the need for ongoing dialogue and communication as the process progresses.

As the timeline of this project was only conducive to initial discussions with OKIB, the project team strongly recommends the continuation of these conversations and integration of the resulting suggestions and initiatives into the plan and development process. Relationship building will take time and should be nurtured on an ongoing, consistent basis. OKIB should be invited to participate in whatever governance organisation is formed to move the BX Ranchlands project forward, and to any/all public/community events. Financial compensation should always be offered for those participating, according to OKIB's suggested remuneration rate.

Conclusion

In general, the project team was satisfied with the participation and feedback received via the online survey, and in-person open house event. Overwhelmingly, the feedback was generally supportive of the concept, with excellent suggestions to consider around details and when moving into implementation of the project. A few neighbours expressed concerns that have been captured in this report.

The project team will carefully consider the feedback received while preparing the final report for the RDNO. The full text of survey and open house feedback will be provided to the RDNO and any future parties working on plan implementation.

The project team wishes to sincerely thank the project Working Group for their ongoing input and support, and for representing the views of their community so well throughout the plan development process, which made this community engagement successful. Thank you as well to all who took the time to learn about the plan and provide their thoughts. Such feedback is invaluable to the success of the final plan.

Appendix A: Survey and Open House Feedback Data

Q1) Why is the BX Ranchlands important to you?

Online Survey Responses:

- I live next to it and look out upon it every day. I regularly walk my dog along the trails. In the winter I cross country ski around the fields. It is an important part of my life in the BX.
- Is a great space in the middle of our community. It is a place where we can be active and check out nature.
- My property borders the proposed trail extension and is located just east of the proposed 1-3acre man made reservoir
- The BX Ranchland has been my backyard for 29 years. I've spent time there as a kid visiting the cows, watching the coyotes and pheasants and walking through the field to meet with my childhood friend who lived on the other side.
- The ranchland is a unique and precious place and I am glad it is in the hands of a responsible group who seem to care a lot for it
- I live right next to it.
- I live very close and use the recreational trails and dog parks often. It's so amazing to have this amenity in our backyard.
- Because I live in Vernon and it's important to me that areas are planned with environmental conservation and diversity in mind, as well as appealing to many different interests of those who wish to use the land.
- Some of the only undeveloped flat lands that are basically within the city. So glad they did not sell in privately!
- Agricultural land and family history
- Because it is part of bx heritage
- Live nearby and use the trail often.
- I believe there is value in local food sources.
- accessible green space close (in) vernon.
- It is in my neighbourhood, and I adore green spaces that can be enjoyed by generations to come. The better used they are the more chance they will be protected from the short term gratification of selling for \$\$\$. Green space and nature will matter to this community in 50 years, not \$10million that was made in the 2020s.
- We are losing big swaths of land to single family housing. And we're losing arable land and natural, accessible land at an alarming rate. Its so important to keep this land in the community.
- Preserve agricultural lands, green space, wildlife habitat and public use
- agriculture land preservation
- The open space near town, childhood memory of caring for horses in that area, flora & fauna (natural).
- It is in my community
- Having more wild and natural spaces within our community is very important to me- the BX ranchlands presents an opportunity to involve our community and offer educational experiences while maintaining habitats and safe spaces for animals and insects.

- This habitat is iconic to the North Okanagan and is disappearing fast.
- I grew up in a house that bordered the land. It's important to keep green spaces.
- Super valuable, accessible, historically significant, agricultural land that helps connect recreation and environmentally important areas
- Ecological, agricultural and cultural values
- The BX Ranchlands is important to me because it is a relatively natural area within reasonable distance of Vernon. I believe in the future when more of the area in and around Vernon is built up we will be glad we preserved some land in its natural form.
- Close and newly accessible public land
- It is a beautiful piece of land near the heart of Vernon that everyone can enjoy. I visit it regularly to walk the trails.
- It is currently a place of peace and tranquility. It borders the entire west perimeter of our property located at [redacted]
- I grew up in Vernon and love that area
- Food systems are important to everyone especially as it's been highlighted as such a currently flawed system over the past 3 years.
- To Maintain an open community space for all the reasons outlined in the plan
- It's one of the few semi-natural areas left in the BX
- The intact ecological history is important as well as bold moves toward innovation with ecological concerns in check to further local food security and relations to the land, people, place.
- This a habitat for animals
- A beautiful place to enjoy nature from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.
- Because my Grandparents owned the property in the 1930's and 1940's and my uncle had a ranch in the area as well. I think it is important to keep the land for agriculture use and preserve the history.
- Important to protect local food security, teach about regenerative agriculture, provide and protect native pollinator habitat and food supply.
- Retaining farmlands in a sustainable manner, consultation with FN, education, giving to the community, et .
- A few of the remaining farmable lands in the area that's relatively flat.
- The BX Ranchlands provide an easily accessible place to walk in a natural surrounding. I enjoy walking my dog there- on leash. I am constantly discouraged and saddened by dog owners who treat it like an off leash dog park. I have a few times politely asked owners of off leash dogs that are in the wetland creek if they are aware that originally dogs were going to be banned out of concern that they would not be kept on leash and damage the wetland areas.
- Our home backs onto the property and we utilize the trails frequently
- We need to secure accessible land for our community to use and learn from. This is a unique opportunity to shape the culture of our community as well as to encourage food security
- It's a place where local kids had their first jobs, learned to hay, move irrigation, drive tractors, etc. Would prefer to see this land preserved for agricultural activities instead of carved off into small GentlePerson's Estates where no farming ever takes place.
- I live nearby
- it's the only area where a project like this can be executed
- Nearby access to trails and wildlife

- local sustainable food production is imperative for the future
- It's not. IMO O'Keefe Ranch already does or easily could fulfill the agricultural theme aspects of this land.

Open House Responses:

- I'm a neighbour
- Can encourage and enhance local food production/foodsoverignty initiatives and learning!
- I live next to it and consider it an extension of my place. I look forward to seeing the ecosystem restored and a new generation of farmers take the reigns
- Glad to see the land preserved as a public asset. Diverse uses will make it a vibrant place to celebrate our community
- We need to preserve farmland. In the past too much farmland has been lost to development
- Outdoor learning space for silver star elementary
- Support young farmers. Support food grown in community at small scales
- Completing the trail
- That the trail will expand into a loop walk.

Q2) What about the draft plan excites you?

Online Survey Responses:

- I'm excited about the re-imagining this property with broader community visions and timelines leading the way. In this way, we can restore hog gulch from a drainage ditch into a healthy wetland, we can preserve grasslands, we can share the magic of gardening with the next generation, and we can empower new farmers with experience and support. Instead of being limited by whether things are profitable or not, decisions can be driven by broader goals and visions. This way we can create a community asset that has a positive impact on the BX and beyond.
- Variety of activities and opportunities for different people
- That the BX Ranchlands will remain green space.
- I'm very excited about the idea of a food forest, pollinator meadows, native plant nursery and opportunities for foraging and really integrating the OKIB and their knowledge/practices. And of course all the farming, gardening and learning opportunities. So I guess I'm excited for it all.
- I'm very glad the ranch land will be saved from development. The food forest especially is intriguing to me.
- Bee farm, restoration of wetlands
- All of it! Community, educational opportunities, chemical free farming and food production. It's all very exciting!
- The 7 different land use designations are very well thought out.
- Native plant garden! North Okanagan desperately needs this. Reestablishing the community garden that was lost, food forest, market garden and research fields. All the collaboration.
- Allowing local horses to continue to ride the trails
- The protection, enhancement and development of natural areas and the nursery that will have native plants/seed stock
- The community farm helping to provide for the hungry vulnerable people is wonderful. The community garden is fantastic for those of us who can't afford housing in places we can have our own garden.

- preservation and food production with interpretive opportunities.
- I like that there will be community gardens, and park space. A farm school would be awesome- I am thinking more Linnea Farm school style under the mentorship of someone living here and also working the land. I would love to see picnic space too. I like the fact that it is a multi-phase plan with components that can be split up and managed by different groups so all of the funding eggs aren't in one basket.
- It all excites me. We walk the circumference trail on a regular basis. It would be wonderful to see the entire five year plan enacted.
- Public education, community garden, growing food & planned use
- the education- planting, foraging, preservation
- Natural content for land, protection of species, attempting to engage OKIB
- All of it sounds great but the community garden is probably the most useful part to me
- All of it!
- The commitment to research, pollinator and habitat protection.
- Extension of the walking trail
- All of it... sounds amazing
- All of it!
- The walking trail, the habitat protection, the food forest, the community garden, the commercial garden, the research area, and the fact that it will not be chopped up into small individually owned lots with houses on them.
- Ecological stewardship
- I love that the land is going to be used to food production and education and that there will be wildlife preservation. I am SUPER excited about the trail being expanded so we can walk a loop around the farmland/pasture.
- I commend you on keeping the area for farming organically but the established neighboring farms must also be respected and their livelihoods protected. We look forward to vigilant property site management. The commitment to ongoing mitigation and zero tolerance of noxious/nuisance weeds on the site to protect the surrounding farms as well.
- The plan to promote/include regenerative agriculture; the centering of indigenous involvement and decolonization; and in general the fact that the RDNO decided to support various community uses of the land instead of selling it off for redevelopment. This is great!
- Diversity! I love that there are diverse opportunities for this project.
- The community farm and indigenous planting, plus the educational aspects
- Everything
- The existing themes are exciting if they are meaningful.
- All six recommendations are well thought out.
- I think all of the aspects of the plan are really great I also think that the research/learning aspect is an important component as from what I have been told, my family did try to learn as much as they could and respected the land.
- That the area is being protected from development and for future generations and in consultation with local indigenous people.
- Everything
- The preservation of ranching lands.

- All of it. Well done!
- The conservation of green space and focus on agriculture
- The combination of public park land and farming opportunities plus the educational aspect
- Great to see land leases, community garden, pollinator areas, trail for the public to enjoy, training space. Excited about the potential for workshops here!
- That it is not being sold for development.
- all the elements- terrific combination- if i had to pick one it would be the educational component
- That it will be not used for development
- farmhold lands
- The fact that part of the lands will be leased, thus reducing the financial cost to RDNO taxpayers.

Open House Responses:

- Love the idea of a community farm and farm leases! Would this allow for small/medium livestock?
- Training programs, agi park concept as asset to the community
- food security
- green space
- Good job! Thank you.
- community garden management necessary to prevent rats
- Allowing for some diversification is important
- silver star elementary has created a field guide for the trail. We want to be involved!
- Excited about community farm
- Public access
- Preserves the land
- helping young farmers!

Q3) What about the draft plan excites you?

Online Survey Responses:

- Including wildlife corridors throughout the site such as a strip of land from the northern forest to the southern wetlands. Restore hog gulch to include natural meanders and a pond feature (the pond would be a great winter recreation spot too!). This pond could also replace the northern reservoir concept and during low flows, it could be topped up by the BX creek water license. Work with the natural features of the park to delineate the different uses instead of straight north/south lines. It would make it more natural. In the development of a class room space, the scope could be expanded to include a community hall, commercial kitchen for value added products, and an agricultural tool library.
- Serious consideration regarding the noise pollution created by the proposed reservoir floating pump. We currently enjoy the tranquility of nature and are concerned for our physical and mental well being with the resulting nonstop incessant industrial droning noise/vibration/pressure from the proposed floating pump that will be running nonstop 14+hours everyday June through September. The infrasound exposure can not only be detrimental to humans but the wildlife in the near vicinity as well. Wherever the reservoir and pumphouse end up being located well maintained pumps and properly built sound attenuated enclosures are vital to turn down the volume of the pumps to be good neighbors to those of us that currently live in a setting of peace and quiet just 500ft from the proposed man made reservoir. Please be a considerate neighbour. Having farm machinery cut and turn hay or prepare, seed or harvest

intermittently throughout the growing season is tolerable farming noise as it is not nonstop day in and day out 7 days a week for upwards of 3+ months. An open reservoir will stagnate and cause reservoir for mosquitos if it isn't continuously aerated which will require the pump to be running during the entire mosquito season. Biological control with Bti must also be part of a vigilant integrated pest management program. Control of noxious weeds must also be part of the plan. Hedgerows/plant nursery should consist of native plants that don't disperse wind blown seeds to neighbouring properties. Would prefer that the reservoir be constructed closer to the more intensive farming nearer 4122 East Vernon entrance away from the bank of the BX road. Concern regarding further destabilization of the bank if liner leaked or reservoir overflowed/gave way and water moved laterally over a possible confining layer and/or caused a washout. Visit the possibly better option of an enclosed (concrete) reservoir with greenspace on top at the East end of the BX Ranchland. This is such a good concept but please ensure that there is no negative impact on the bordering neighbours.

- Giving the Secwepemc and Syilx the opportunity to have a say in what happens with this land. The opportunity for reconciliation and sharing their knowledge.
- I hope that provisions will be made for the existing local fauna, I live right along the ranchland and love to watch the coyotes stalk across the field, I hope they will not be disturbed by farming activities on the site
- I find there is too many groups involved to manage the area which will create garbage noise and nobody responsible for all of it. I already see it on the trail most people don't have their dogs on the leash, they run wild chase wildlife and also walk in areas that were never designated as a trail. Also horseback Riders and bicycles are on the trail. If not even the trail can be managed how are we expect to manage the whole area with so many groups involved?
- I would like to see more acreage for all of the spaces aside from the farmland leases (#2 from the map).
- Have plans for the length of leases, types of crops and also watering restrictions that encourage innovations for water conservation. Make sure there are opportunities for new people to get a chance to use the site throughout its operation. Establish or work with a land sharing program for those who should move on or can't get in.
- Focus on keeping land agricultural and natural habitat only
- Contacting the locals. And the owners adjoining this land parcel
- Better connectedness between the natural areas instead of isolated pockets. This will provide for a more sustainable and robust natural system and wildlife corridor- this could be especially important with potentially increased traffic/use from community gardens, nursery and Agricultural use.
- Having a farmer's market nearby would be great.
- If fine with it as is.
- My question always comes down to: WTF. Where's the Funding. What's the Followthrough. I love the time, energy, thought and love that has gone into this plan. You all did a great job! But so often in so many not for profit things I see that there is a large gap between Real Life and pie in the sky ideals of an office chair working group/things that look good on paper to out-of-town academics and consultants who get paid to make the plan regardless of the outcome. While this project is quite different from Patchwork farms, how will it avoid the same fate as Patchwork Farms? How can the microprojects within this plan secure funding over multiple years that will allow for the hiring of long term overseers instead of elected officials, or youth between 18-30 who can only work it for a year because that is what the funding dictates? I would like to see local organizations who have a longer term vested interest take on parts of the project at a higher level. Heck, if churches want to take it on for 7 years to start, great! I would LOVE to see continuity with organizations who can get their hands dirty and make it all happen, OR, simply folks that are around for a longer term who can maintain a direction and strategy. I fear that most of the funding will be gobbled up by 'consultants' or 'coordinators' and very little will be left for dependable on-the-ground coordination work. Depending solely upon short term contracts

and ‘transient’ casual employees for the oversight and management of the site isn’t the best. Neither is paying an out-of-city consultant. I recognize that its easy for me to show up after all of these conversations have been had and have armchair/after-the-fact opinions about things, but at the end of the day, I would just like to see this project be different in that it finds a way to become self sustaining in its long term success. It would be great if even a part of this could generate income that could help stabilize and secure the rest of it so it is not completely dependent upon non-guaranteed funding from local governments. I would love to see visions for this land be realized and enjoyed by many in decades to come. On a separate and less long-winded note- I would love to eventually see a bike lane along east vernon rd- the shoulders are sketchy and people drive like mad. This could be a really nice parkway / recreational corridor that connects up with the grey canal trail and it would be awesome to feel safer and have more space when walking/biking along the road.

- Love it the way its presented. Love to see it happen “yesterday”.
- Expedite active public involvement in development and use
- immediate workbee on areas that can be improved at the moment
- There are potentially lots of site users, an overall manager in the long term would be necessary. Don’t lease the big middle lands, let them go, or let people have grazing rights for animals that wont wreck the long term plans.
- Offering an outdoor childcare program
- It looks very strong to me. Perhaps farm gate sales of food produced on-site. Job creation for folks with disabilities and with other obstacles to employment. Proceeds of farm gate sales to benefit either the farm or be donated to people with threats to food security. Other non-profit activities such as therapeutic riding or equine therapy could be offered.
- I hope for good interpretive materials onsite and ideally public education programs... for example it would be awesome to have some “master gardening” type programming on native grasslands and supporting native plants
- For the native plants nursery, please talk to Judy Baumbrough, who together with her sister Buffy ran a native /dry climate adapted plants nursery and landscaping business (Dusty Shovel) for years (they are both retired now). She has a lot of relevant knowledge and skills, and for a long time was the only and best source of native plants from the North Okanagan. Try [phone number and email redacted], or ask Mary Stockdale for other means of contacting her.
- I am happy with it the way it is.
- Include indigenous input and/or input on previous/traditional use of the land and what would typically be found/grown there
- I didn’t see anything about planting more trees. The area is kind of barren and exposed.
- By taking into consideration the peace and tranquility currently enjoyed by the residents of the properties of Carriage court and not construct a vehicular access road and parking lot leading to a high activity commercial plant nursery proposed to abut the western property border of these properties. Establishing a reservoir nearer the wetlands nearer the East Vernon side. If it is established where currently proposed there must be a committment actively treated with bt during mosquito breeding season. Not to mention that establishing this proposed reservoir may destabilize the bank along the BX road. It would seem to make more sense to place the plant nursery closer to the entrance on East Vernon along with all of the other more intense activities and main entrance parking area. What financial support or otherwise will be place for neighboring properties that may suffer negative impact from this proposal? The establishment electric tractors for farming the BX ranchlands. Monarch or Solectrac may be viable options. We ask that if establishing bee hives are being planned that they not be placed next to our property to respect that some people are allergic. What assurances do we have

that when the RDNO hands over the stewardship that it continues to be managed properly.

- Not sure at this moment
- Housing opportunity for farmworkers.
- By increasing the water allocation from GV Water source. The BX creek water license is not sufficient anymore, and to make the 90 acre farm lease more feasible. In time more parking will have to be provided.
- Make sure that there is stipulation that it is never sold for development.
- More than the “inclusion” of the words of restoration and reconciliation. By mentioning Indigenous, this is a commitment to involve and consider landback. The proportions of each section are off. 50% needs to be for ecological restoration, protection, with and alongside Indigenous people. Perhaps even as LandBack. Then, divisions of each of the categories at equal importance. Please, shrink the field, open this for intensive plantings, rotations, tiny and large leases. With a board to do seed propagation planning for planting regimens and collection. Emphasis of organic practises only.
- Any development takes away habitat for animals. Agriculture is bad because the fenced off areas take away corridors, access to water, and food for animals. If you drive out the rodents by developing agricultural land, you also drive out the snakes, hawks, eagles and owls. It is a big chain reaction. Takes away a whole eco system.
- It is important to extend the bx ranch trail right around the site in order for the public to have access to this beautiful landscape. We walk this trail several times a week.
- I did not see where they made any mention of people learning anything about learning to preserve food. Learning how to can, dehydrate etc would be really important today with rising food costs.
- Ban the use of herbicide, fungicide and pesticide throughout the area.
- I’m wondering if it will be a chemical free zone. As inorganic growing. No point in having an area dedicated to bees unless chemicals are banned. Wondering if bee hives will be housed on the property.
- Revisions to the pollinator component would be advisable.
- Would like to see more information on the walking path and the intention for it. I don’t know if this plan is the place for including what users and uses are intended for this path.
- More wildlife corridors- since the trail went in with tall fences (which for some reason have barbed wire on top) we no longer see deer in the valley which were a common presence for years prior
- Buy more land to add to the park including those around the bx ranch dog park
- Not sure how wildlife may be impacted? For example, will the Food Forest, Community Gardens etc require electric fencing? Previous crops grown here- hay- did not attract as many animals, but growing veggies, fruits, berries, etc might make a big difference. I would love a tie-in with mental health supports for folks of all ages- getting your hands dirty in the soil, growing stuff, can really help ground folks and give them hope for the future- perhaps as part of the Good Food Box program?
- I believe additional recreation needs to be incorporated in the plan so more people use it. I also would like to know how this fits in with the larger green belt strip between hwy 6 and silver star. If the the City of Vernon ever develops the old reservoir land, what recreation area would these people access? This needs to be considered. Will the Mutrie dog park move to the ranchland so this could become a park?
- have an area with sitting and cover so seniors can sit and interact with gardeners and visiting students and learn about indigenous farming
- Band shell or small stage for concerts
- perhaps a fruitstand and farm to table eatery or brewery/cidery to draw patrons. utilizing produce/fruit grown on the property

- Sell the land as originally considered!

Open House Responses:

- Create parking lot (reduce night tie activity that is unwated)
- food/medicine. Endemic plant forest garden
- Biochar please
- Mycofilter water
- Increase buffer and use restrictions around riparian areas
- Agriforestry! Back 40 especially; low maintence, low water.
- Milk weed
- consider section for mental health organizations and use so clients can work on the land (with supervision).
- Can we please make it chemical free?
- Phyto remediation to purify water.
- Formal community vote
- Improve trail- uneven
- Land back please.
- Full 9 layer guild-build food forest
- strong focus on organic farming please
- Focus on ecological management; make it better for wildlife; biodiversity action plan for land
- Safe walking path along Francis Rd so school groups from Hillview can safely access trail and farm
- Compost research
- Instead of building a reservoir, restore Hog Gultch to include a large pond with an irrigation system in it. During low flows, BX Water could be used to top it up. Ducks Unlimited funding?
- Consideration to be made for weed control, and controls implemented
- 10m trail is too wide! Looks like a freeway
- Link to Mutrie Dog Park and onto the old reservoir
- Less field over 5 years
- Confining layer and reservoir concern: re water movement
- Farmer-in-residence. Farmstay/intensive accomodations for programs or workshops. Farm caretaker if there are animals.

Q4) How can you imagine being engaged in the future of the site?

Online Survey Responses:

- I imagine myself walking the trails and enjoying the wildlife. I see myself hunting for tasty fruits and vegetables. I see my self talking with neighbours. I see myself learning and growing.
- Participating in community events such as the community gardens and site tours.
- Please add [address redacted]to your mail out list as we did not receive notice of the open house on May 12th.
- I'm not sure. I'd love to take part in community events & workshops. If they ever needed a grower I'd love to work with the native plants! Although I am a white settler and a job like that should prioritize

an indigenous community member. I would definitely be interested in seeing what job opportunities arise with this project. A side note, I think some kind of therapy opportunity would be very neat. I was just looking into horticulture therapy which could be a great opportunity for some members in the community. I guess gardening and farming and opening up a communal space such like this becomes therapeutic for the whole community. I'm rambling- this is exciting for Vernon and surrounding areas!

- Volunteering at the community garden would really interest me
- I'm watching the area from my property and so are my neighbours. We already see things that could be improved. The whole area should be leased to 1 group only with the addition of bees, the restoration of wetland and maybe tree planting. I think a reservoir does not belong on that property at all.
- Opportunities to volunteer, participating in educational opportunities, continuing use of the recreational spots, supporting community initiatives.
- I liked receiving this notice in my inbox from the RDNO.
- Love everything about this. I understand the need for lease land to help offset costs. But the more public area available the better the space. Can't wait for a native nursery and also potential courses and learning for that can be offered on site. Yay for sustainable regenerative food systems!
- Listen to long time area residents
- Letters to bx surrounding home owners How will this affect our taxes and traffic The east vernon road has become a free way and 50 km signs need to be posted It's a by pass for people from Coldstream direction to foothills and ss and it is scary walking riding on that road now
- Additional info sessions. Posting on social media of updated and plans.
- Personally I would like to plant in the community garden and walk the trail. As a librarian, I would love to participate in educational events. I can see myself reading to small children about gardening, farms or wildlife. We could have a pop up mini library (10 *10 tent) of books about plants.
- I will continue to use it for walking.
- I will be a visitor to it, an enjoyer and supporter of it! I will be a neighbour, a cheerleader and depending on what actually happens, maybe a volunteer, employment applicant or helper too.
- I'd happily volunteer if needed.
- Yes.
- Using the community garden
- I have been looking for somewhere locally to run an outdoor preschool for the past 10 years. I currently run an urban outdoor program in my home and yard in Vernon. I would love to either have the option for field trips to the ranchlands, or to have a space that I could rent/lease land to run an outdoor program on the site.
- I would hike the perimeter, perhaps. I may volunteer at the farm, or in one of the areas.
- Using it, a lot!
- Not sure... we definitely love to walk there, would come to relevant public events.
- Purchasing food grown on site, walking the paths, enjoying the birds and insects that still call this area home as a result of still having local habitat.
- Longitudinal timelapse of the site to show seasonal/yearly/decade/generational changes as a record/archive footage
- I plan on continuing to walk the trails as long as my legs allow and would fight any plans for residential development of the area.
- [phone number redacted] Timely email updates or text or mail outs. We would have and would appreciate to be invited to meet with stakeholders. As a property owner that will be negatively impacted

by poor stewardship (weed bearing hedge rows of seed producing contamination of our hay fields (our ability to maintain farm status on our 15 acres) is not considered conscientious stewardship with respect to existing local farmers. In the wild pollinating meadows are wonderful/ideal. But creating wind blown seed that literally snows onto neighboring properties isn't fair. We had a townhouse development built next to our property. They sprayed their hillside with their idealistic wildflower mix that snowed weed seed onto our llama pasture as tears flowed down my face. We would not appreciate hedge rows of this purposely planted anywhere near our hay fields. We are currently in the process of re-establishing weed free pastures having been contaminated by weed seed blown from the BX ranchlands that were not properly maintained in recent years. We look forward to the open house next week. [identifying information redacted]

- I want to lease some of the farm space!
- I can imagine being involved in the education opportunities this project may provide.
- I would like to participate in the development of the food forest, pollinator meadow and the habitat development. Perhaps also the community farm.
- I'll visit and use the park.
- As part of a challenge to grow the healthiest, holistic, most nutritious and abundant lot on the land possible. As a land and water restoration person? As an endemic plant propagator? As a food forester? As a natural builder? Where do natural homes meet this site? Hopefully all of the above. [name redacted]
- Helping in the Community garden or volunteering in any learning component.
- Through my work over the years with coordinating the local Pollinator Pathway project through the Sustainable Environment Network Society. Continuing to post information on our facebook page about the area. Using the area with my family and friends for outings.
- Public education sessions for the development and ongoing about farming, bee health, etc.
- Joining an advisory board.
- Not sure.
- Continuing to utilize the trails and supporting the proposed programs
- I will take my children there often to walk and to learn
- Attending workshops, purchasing produce, helping to remove invasive plants, encouraging folks of all ages to be engaged in the future of this site
- I grew up on a property bordering the BX Ranch. I moved my family back to Vernon in 2003, purchasing property in the BX. I would consider volunteering time to help develop a long term plan beyond the information contained within the presentation.
- as a volunteer to interact with students and tourists. to educate and answer questions, and as a community garden user
- using it for walks and purchasing produce /fruit from a fruitstand onsite
- I will not. In my view, this land has little to no value in public hands.

Open House Responses:

- Consideration to be made for weed control, and controls implemented
- I would walk the trails and enjoy the agricultural atmosphere. I would help harvest food.
- Cutting edge thinking- way to go!
- Community potluck to talk and celebrate further!

Appendix B: May 12 Open House Boards

Background

What are the BX Ranchlands?

The BX Ranchlands is a 167-acre property located on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land near Vernon, BC.

Historically, the area was an important site for Indigenous hunting and gathering, however, these activities were greatly disrupted by the implementation of Settler agricultural practices in the 1870's. Settlers used the land to provide pasture for the horses of the BX Express stagecoach, which moved people, goods, and communications throughout the province. In recent years, it has been primarily used for growing forage and hay crops, and over-wintering horses and cattle.

Approximately 33 acres have been used to form a perimeter trail network. It is also an ecologically diverse site, containing habitat areas that support a mix of vegetation and wildlife.



Project Overview

In 2021, The Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) and the Land to Table Network of the North Okanagan (L2T) were contracted by the Regional District of the North Okanagan (RDNO) to prepare a 5 year development plan for the BX Ranchlands parcel at 4122 East Vernon Rd As. Located on the ancestral lands of traditional territory of the Okanagan Indian Band, and part of Electoral Areas B and C, the site is a valued community resource for agriculture, recreation, and conservation. In order to explore these interests further, ISFS and L2T worked with the RDNO and local stakeholders to draft a plan for the site that will maintain community access while supporting ecological well-being and encouraging agricultural opportunities for local farmers and growers.

The project is managed by a steering committee made up of RDNO Directors for Electoral Areas B and C, Bob Fleming and Amanda Shatzko, and representatives from both L2T and ISFS. The role of L2T and ISFS has been to steward the planning process and conduct community engagement.

Now that the proposed plan has been drafted, the broader community has been invited to provide input. Once ISFS and L2T have collected this input, a revised plan will be provided to RDNO in Summer of 2022, after which RDNO will review and begin its approval process.



Use this QR code to learn more about the plan or to provide feedback. You can also visit <https://landtotablenetwork.com/bx-open-house/>



May 2022

BX Ranchlands Draft Development Plan



May 2022

Site Plan Description

1 habitat protection - 24 ac

Existing habitats include a mature douglas fir forest, cattail wetland, hog’s gulch, and gramminoid wetland riparian areas. Badger dens can also be found. These spaces could support Indigenous harvesting practices and contribute to the health of local ecosystems. As such, they should be protected from development or disturbance and with appropriate partnerships and funding, restoration should also be pursued.

Beginning Year 1

2 farmland leases - 90 ac

Providing farmers with reliable access to land will support local agriculture and strengthen regional food systems. Lessees would have access to irrigation and the opportunity to collaborate with other land-users. A water reservoir will be created on the property to support farmers and provide recreational users with a landscape feature. Land access would be determined by the types of crops being farmed and their irrigation needs, and the willingness of lessees to farm without chemical inputs.

Beginning Year 1

3 community garden - 1 ac

A community garden could be built close to the parking lot and perimeter trail, providing access to 40 raised beds for community members of all ages and abilities. This space would replace recently lost community garden space, and help facilitate education and community building around local harvesting and agriculture.

Beginning Year 1

4 food forest - 0.5 ac

Food forests are rooted in Indigenous methods of cultivation and designed to encourage the growth of plant foods, medicines and materials. Establishing one on site would support ecological stewardship through local harvesting and a space for education and community building.

Beginning Year 2 - 3

5 pollinator meadows - 2 ac

Pollinator meadows attract birds and insects that will support the surrounding ecosystem through pollination. 2-acres could be allocated for the creation of two pollinator-friendly meadows. However, pollinator-friendly plants could be included throughout the site, in semi-natural areas or in hedgerows. Having these plants on site is an act of ecological stewardship and an excellent education opportunity.

Beginning Year 2

6 community farm - 5 ac

A non-profit community farm would sell half of its produce and provide the rest to community organizations like local food banks, school lunch programs, or the Good Food Box. The farm could also host field trips for K-12 students, student internships, and workshops for the wider community.

Beginning Year 4

7 research and teaching farm - 12 ac

This area will be allocated to research and knowledge mobilization around regenerative agricultural practices and will support the agriculture community. The space could also include a farm school, with education opportunities for local farmers like workshops, farm tours and conferences. This could be managed by KPU in collaboration with local organizations and educational institutions.

Beginning Year 5



Engagement, Principles, and Implementation

Working Group

The working group was jointly organized by the RDNO, L2T and ISFS. Composed of community stakeholders and local decision makers, the primary role of the working group was to advocate for community interests and establish planning priorities. The working group has provided feedback at every stage of the planning process.

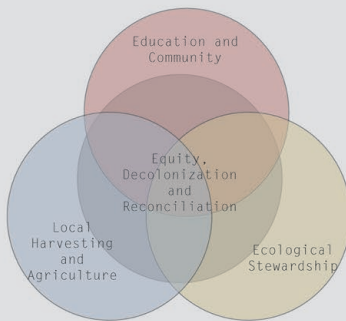
Since ISFS and L2T started the project in October, 2021 the following stakeholders have been represented through working group meetings and one-on-one consultations:

- Farmers
- School District 22
- Property residential neighbor
- Current tenant on the land
- BX Swan Lake Community Association
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Young Agrarians
- Local permaculturalist, compost expert, and community educator
- Interior Health Authority
- Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB)
- Okanagan College
- Local historian
- RDNO Directors, representing Electoral Areas B & C

Plan Objectives and Guiding Principles

The plan sets out to develop the BX Ranchlands in a manner that:

1. Empowers **ecological stewardship**;
2. Creates opportunities for **local harvesting and agricultural practices**; and,
3. Promotes **education & community building**.



These core objectives were developed by RDNO, KPU, L2T and the advisory working group. Each objective is linked by a commitment to social and environmental **equity, reconciliation and decolonization**. This means programs and spaces developed under the plan are designed to be accessed and enjoyed by peoples of diverse ages, mobilities, genders, cultures, and economic backgrounds. It also means that the plan aims to support Indigenous food sovereignty by acknowledging the significance of the space to Indigenous Peoples and by promoting relationship building and collaboration between OKIB and RDNO citizens and governments.



Implementation

RDNO will be responsible for implementation, however, the site would be managed in collaboration with a local non-profit organization (either preexisting or created specifically for this project). Under this model, the RDNO would manage the finances, but the partner organization would coordinate site operations. This means the non-profit organization would work with the RDNO, to implement each of the development plan recommendations. Site operations would also be overseen by a board made up of local stakeholders.



May 2022