



GABRIOLA RECREATION SOCIETY: Annual Report for 2024

Submitted to Hannah King, RDN Supervisor of Recreation Services on Feb 15, 2025

Administration

- Where possible, we revised and expanded our programs based on available instructors and community feedback.
- Attended meetings of the Gabriola Health and Wellbeing Collaborative, composed of the island's key organizations, and participated in the February Health and Wellness Fair hosted by PHC. This year, the Collaborative successfully established and filled a new Community Wellbeing Coordinator position for Gabriola.
- Researched and evaluated new registration software options and consulted with other recreation organizations. While not implemented in 2024, we anticipate needing a new system in the future.
- Recipient of the 2024 CCCU Employee Passion Project award for \$3000. We used those funds to reduce program fees, subsidize new programs, and invest in program equipment.
- GRS Board of Directors: We welcomed a new vice-president and director, and a current director transitioned to Treasurer.
- Two representatives from the GRS Board attended Master Plan Advisory Meetings to guide and discuss the development of the Recreation and Parks Master Plan for Gabriola. The project completion date was delayed to allow time for the consultants and the RDN to consult with the Snuneymuxw First Nation.
- GabRec Access, our in house financial assistance program, assisted 15 families with program fees, disbursing \$1326 of the \$2000 budgeted.
- Grants in Aid: In 2024 GRS awarded a total of \$4345 in community grants to: MaraGold Theatre's Showcase fundraiser for the Community Hall, Poetry Gabriola Society for improvements to the Yurt structure at the Commons, The HOPE Centre for programming equipment, Gabriola Land and Trails Trust for a chainsaw safety course, and The Commons for a trail signage project.

Programs

- Our established and popular kids' and adults' programs, including Gym Jam, Yoga for All, and adult drop-in sports, maintained strong attendance throughout 2024. High

registration in summer camps, most programs, and increased participation number in drop-in sports.

- We offered 37 unique programs (23 children's, 14 adult), with a selection of programs running multiple sessions to meet demand. 7 children's and 3 adult programs were new. Additionally, GRS collaborated with the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron to bring 5 boating workshops to the community. Free programs were offered including Intro to Self Defence, a trial of drop-in fitness class using YouTube videos, and a month of free adult drop-in sports (Free February).
- BC Sailing collaborated with GRS to bring their MOSS Sailing Camp to Gabriola for 2 weeks this summer. GVFD collaborated with us to create a one-week Youth Firefighting camp.
- Ran 2 separate sessions of kids swim lessons at Camp Miriam, a week in June and a week at the end of August.
- Cancelled Programs include: Youth Guitar (Spring session only, low registration), Acrylic Painting and Mixed Media (instructor availability changed), Creative Dance (low registration), Adult Bike Skills (low registration), Adult Basketball Skill (low registration) and Adult Reroot Farm Camp (no registration). A small number of programs ran with low registration as expenses were offset with more successful programs.

Parks & Facilities

- Rollo McClay Community Park:
 - Both fields were closed in early 2024 due to prevent further damage but reopened in March.
 - Field user meetings were held to discuss allocation and usage guidelines.
 - Birthday party rentals were accommodated for small groups at the picnic shelter.
 - The portable was finally demolished and removed in April, leaving space available for the construction of a gravel pitch during the month of December.
 - GRS contracted Josh O'Sullivan to provide custodial services at Rollo for the April - September season.
- Huxley Park:
 - A new pickleball schedule was implemented in April for the sport court.
 - New improved signage was installed.
 - Plans are in progress for an upgraded shed at the Tennis Courts.
 - Graffiti vandalism became an issue over the summer and persists to date.

Summer Programs & Staff

- Indira Graham and Dylan Fleming were hired as part-time summer program leaders.
- A variety of summer camps were offered throughout July and August, including Art Factory, Up and Atom, Nature Camp, and physically active programs.

Challenges

- School closures: Unexpected closures of the GES gym and Classroom 113 create ongoing challenges for GRS programming. These closures, often due to maintenance, snow days, or short-term power outages, disrupt community programs, particularly adult drop-in sports, but registered programs as well. The lack of alternative facilities on Gabriola and difficulty notifying participants, especially those relying on print advertising and without class lists, compound the problem. GRS is challenged by these closures and their limited ability to ensure continued access when the school spaces are otherwise serviceable.
- Ongoing field maintenance concern has improved by communicating effectively with RDN and user groups. 2024 saw improved field conditions at Rollo. Coordinated with RDN Planner to bring stakeholders together to multiple meetings resulting in the creation of the new gravel pitch at the end of the year.
- Finding suitable instructors for a wide variety of programming, especially for summer programming. We would have liked to offer more this past summer but response to our summer job postings was limited.
- Space: Same challenges, no changes in access to suitable programming space (particularly indoors for high impact sports and outdoor soccer). We currently have very limited external storage for GRS program equipment; and sharing the admin office with space for low impact programs has its challenges as well. Time is spent setting up/taking down and staff are displaced during prime working hours while programming is occurring in the office.

Budget Notes and Differences

The comparative financial report, including GRS' proposed and actual 2024 budgets, accompany this report. The significant differences between our proposed and actual 2024 budgets were:

Revenue

- Program Revenue was higher than expected as we ran many programs and had strong registration.
- Drop in Sports: Attendance was steady throughout 2024. Volleyball and Basketball kept their extended time of 2 hours. Participants greatly value this regular opportunity for recreation in their routine, make-up nights are typically offered if there was an interruption to the playing schedule. Free February went ahead as planned to offset the revenue that was generated in late 2023.
- 2024 Drop in Sports gym rental: Our intention is to break even on drop-in programming.
- Initially, we budgeted to receive \$7200 from Canada Summer Jobs for two positions. Our application was approved but we decided to withdraw from the funding program as we were unable to secure two full-time summer program leaders.
- As previously mentioned, we unexpectedly received a CCCU Employee Passion Project award for \$3000.

Expenses

- Program expenses: primarily consist of contracted instructor wages. Programs without listed expenses are staffed by GRS employees, whose time is accounted for in the staff wages budget.
- Summer Staff Wages: were paid from our operational budget/program revenue as we did not choose to receive the CSJ funding. We hired 2 part-time employees to deliver summer programming together.
- Advertising and Marketing: Spending up from last year as we opted to print one seasonal brochure and insert it in the local newspaper. This was well received by the community, it increased registration and local awareness of our organization in general.
- Grants in Aid: Did not award our full budgeted amount due to eligibility of applications received in both periods. Of note: GRS received an application for pickleball equipment from a local group, but since they were not a non-profit with a bank account, GRS decided to purchase some of the equipment they were requesting and share it with them. This was mutually beneficial as GRS can now run pickleball programs, and the equipment also gets regular use by a large rec club in the community. This purchase was therefore as a program equipment purchase rather than a Grant-in-Aid award.
- Budget line 'utilities': GRS is still paying \$120/year for the hydro connection from the old portable. GRS tried to terminate the service but the connection can only be cancelled by the landowner.

GRS has had a positive and productive year, marked by strong program attendance, community engagement, financial stability, successful park improvements, and diverse recreation programs. We look forward to providing recreational opportunities for the residents of Gabriola Island/Area B in 2025.

[Program statistics](#) for 2024 are attached separately.