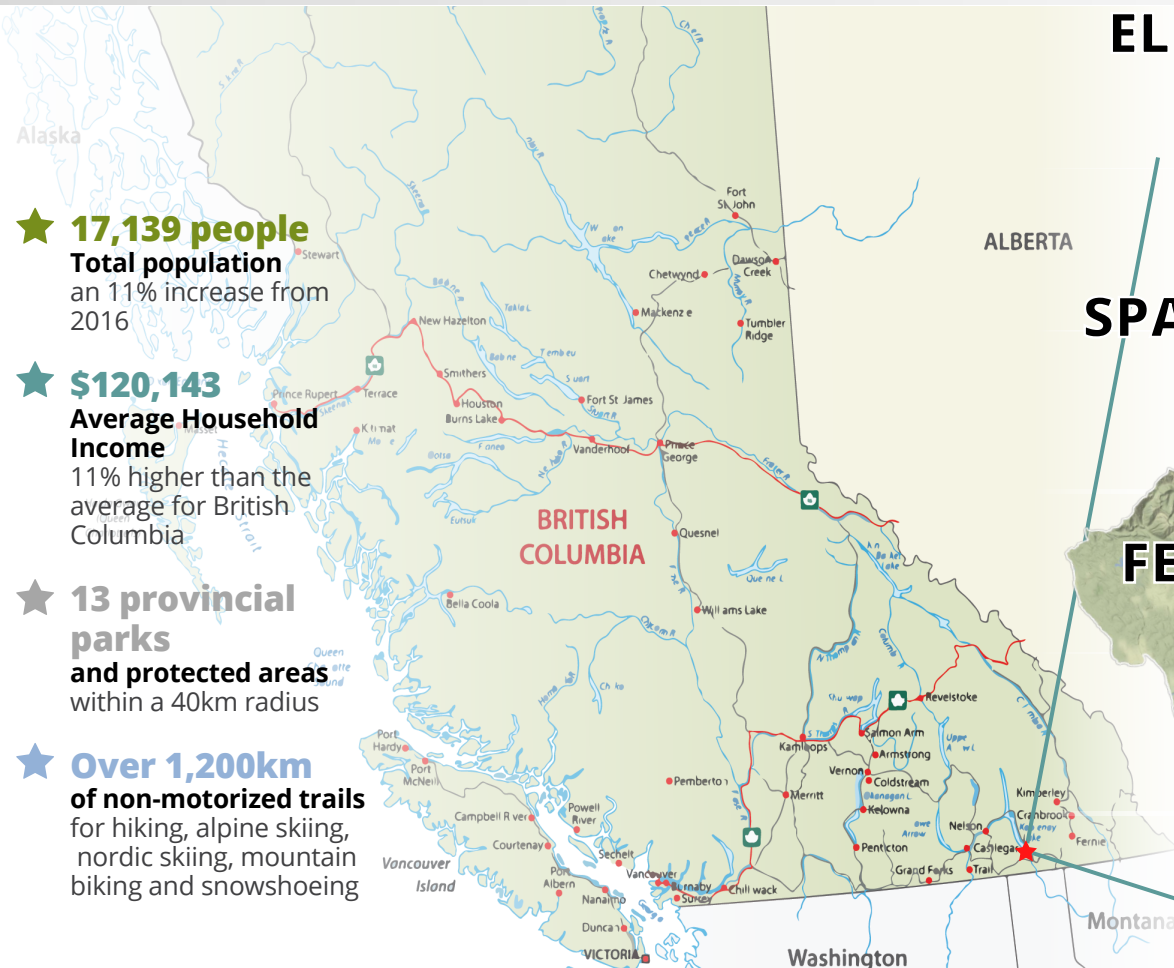




2022 Think Elk Valley

Located in the Southeastern BC, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, is the picturesque Elk Valley. The 220-km long Elk River is the defining part of the Elk Valley, flowing from a glacier on the Continental Divide to Lake Koocanusa and the Kootenay river, just north of the Montana border. This region has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities, picturesque wilderness, cultural amenities, and natural resources. The Elk Valley is a thriving tourist destination and home to one of the largest steel-making coal mining regions in the world, producing one-sixth of the metallurgical coal for the entire international steel industry.



Top Community Strengths: *(as selected by local businesses)*

Outdoor Activities & Recreation
Customer Loyalty
Tourism
Supportive Community

Why live in the Elk Valley?

The Elk Valley is a unique region, combining an endless supply of outdoor recreation & activities and a small-town lifestyle, with a strong economic base, above average wages, and an abundance of community services and facilities.

AMENITIES

- 9** Elementary & high schools
- 5** Community centres
- 4** Bike & skate parks
- 3** Libraries
- 3** Aquatic centres
- 3** Hockey rinks
- 2** Health clinics
- 2** Museums
- 1** Hospital
- 1** Arts center

OUTDOOR RECREATION



World class skiing: The Fernie Alpine Resort boasts over 2,500 acres of skiable terrain and 1,082m of vertical drop.



Mountain biking: Over 70 single track trails and 40 lift accessed trails.



52 green spaces, local parks, and sport fields.



Other outdoor activities include: hiking, nordic skiing, snowmobiling, whitewater rafting, golfing, fly fishing, trail running, ski touring, fat biking, tennis, horseback riding, disc golf, paddleboarding, and beach volleyball.

TRANSPORTATION



The Elk Valley is a 3-hour drive away from Calgary, Alberta (international airport), 2 hours from Lethbridge, Alberta, 2.5 hours from Kalispell, Montana (international airport) and 1.5 hour from Cranbrook, BC (international airport).



The Elk Valley is serviced by BC Transit's Elk Valley Transit System which includes a fixed route extending from Elkford to Fernie, and a health connection route on Wednesday's and Friday's through the Elk Valley to Cranbrook.

KTUNAXA PEOPLES

The Elk Valley is part of the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa people. For hundreds of generations the Ktunaxa people used the Elk Valley as a trade and travel route and their territory covers approximately 70,000 km throughout South-Eastern BC, Alberta and the U.S.A.

The Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓i 'it (Tobacco Plains Indian Band), members of the Ktunaxa Nation, are located on the western edge of the Elk Valley. The area continues to be a place of economic trade and prosperity for the Ktunaxa.

Read more at: <https://www.ktunaxa.org/>.

Living in the Elk Valley

\$18-\$20.99/hour

AVERAGE ENTRY LEVEL WAGE

\$63,547

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT INCOME

40 years old

AVERAGE (MEAN) AGE

\$448,972.20

MEDIAN VALUE OF DWELLING (2020)

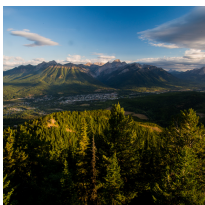
\$964.44

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENTAL COST

\$1,198.27

AVERAGE MONTHLY TOTAL OF ALL SHELTER COSTS - OWNED

The Elk Valley comprises of three major communities, the City of Fernie, the District of Elkford and the District of Sparwood, as well as the Regional District of East Kootenay Electoral Areas A and B. You can find detailed information and specific data for each community by following the below links:



Fernie - [View the community profile](#)

The centre of the Elk Valley's tourism sector. A former coal mining and forestry town, Fernie is the only city in Canada that is fully encircled by the Rocky Mountains. It is noted for its historic downtown core built between 1909 and 1912.



Sparwood - [View the community profile](#)

Located in the heart of the Elk Valley coal fields, the District of Sparwood is the industrial service centre for much of the valley's mining sector. The community offers exceptional outdoor activities including hunting, swimming, hiking, snowmobiling, and fly fishing.



Elkford - [View the community profile](#)

Branded as "wild at heart" the community has a strong connection with its wilderness surroundings, as well as several desirable community amenities for a town of its size. The District of Elkford has strong economic and social connections to the metallurgical coal industry.

Labour Force

The Elk Valley has a well diversified labour force, consisting of a strong core of mining industry workers and an above average representation of skilled labours and university educated workers compared to British Columbia.

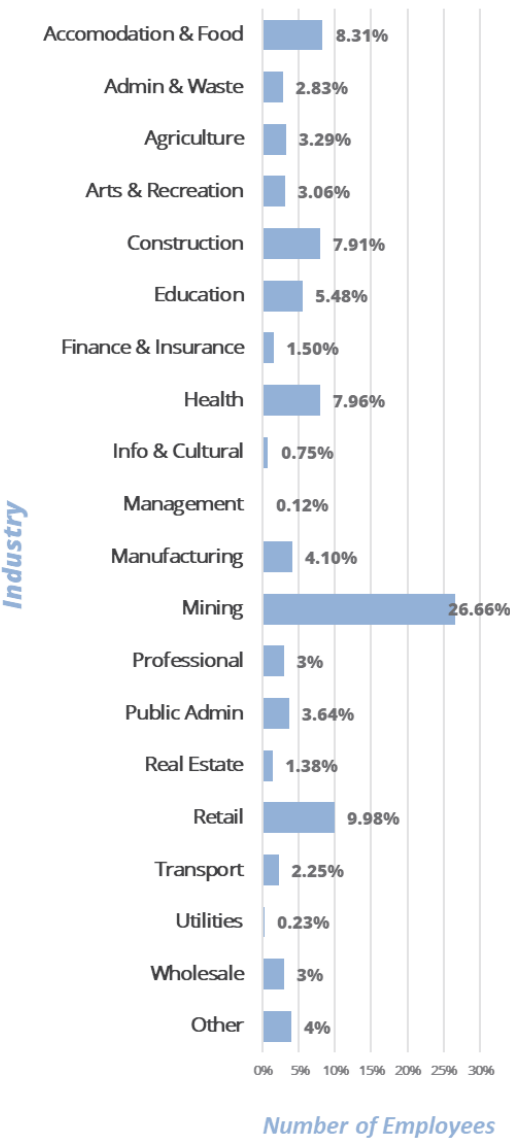
SIZE OF LABOUR FORCE (AGES 15-64)

9,575 People

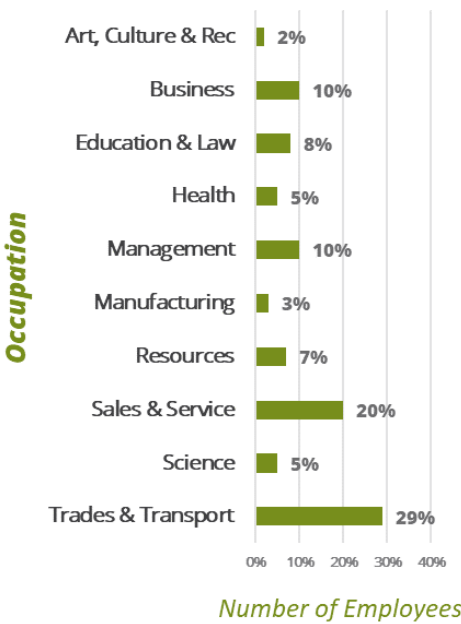
EMPLOYMENT RATE

65%

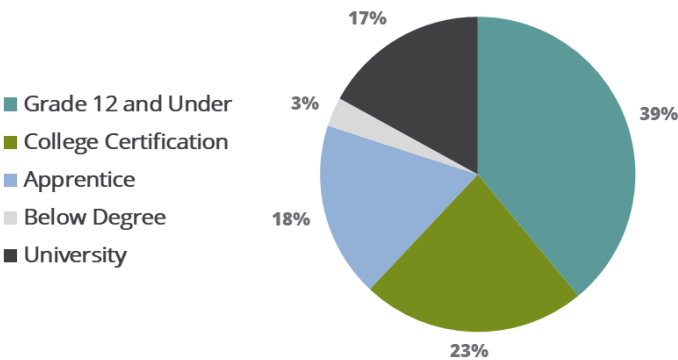
Employees by Industry



Employees by Occupation



Education Level



48%

OF WORKERS COMMUTE UNDER 15 MINUTES TO WORK

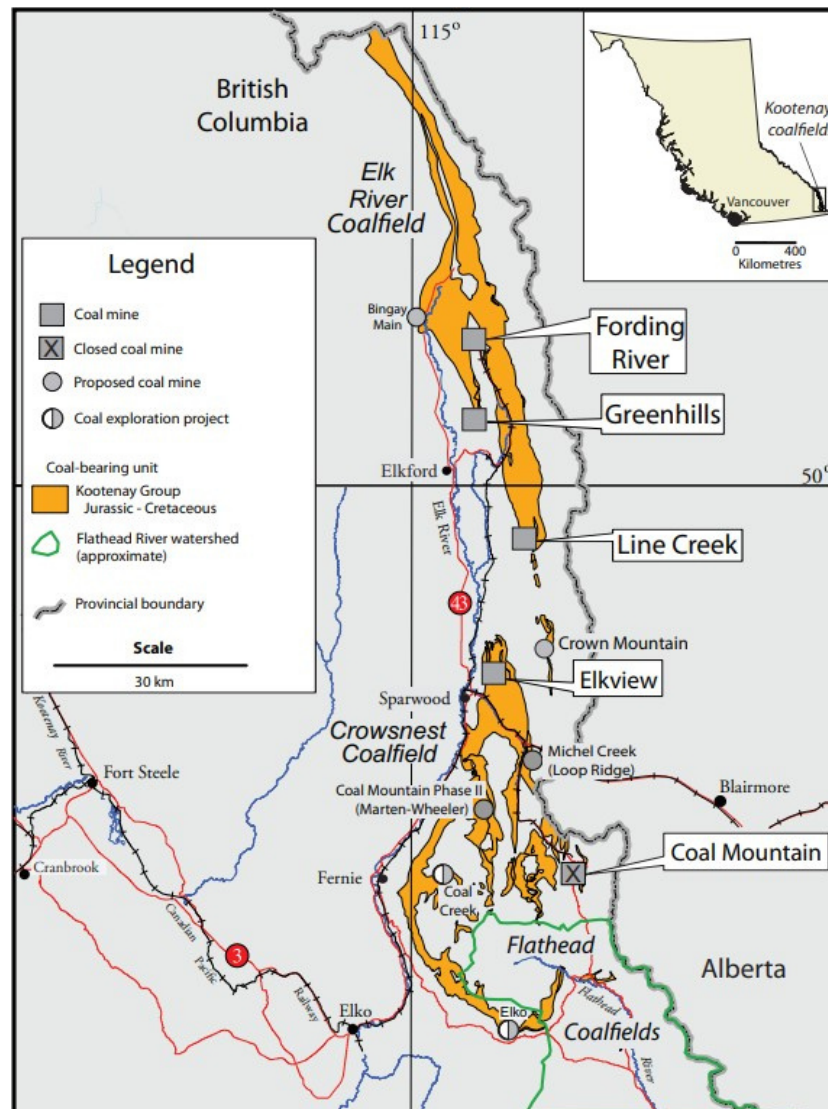
Industry Sector – Mining

The Elk Valley's two leading economic sectors are metallurgical coal extraction and adventure tourism. Primary investment opportunities are **mining service firms**, **amenity-driven entrepreneurs**, and **tourism related businesses**.

The Elk Valley is the heart of Canada's metallurgical coal industry, producing over 80% of Canada's annual metallurgical coal exports. Currently there are 4 four active mining operations and several exploration projects. The mining industry employs over **4,400 people** for Elk Valley coal operations, not including contractors and support businesses.

Teck, the major company in the Elk Valley, calculated that their coal mining operations resulted in an economic contribution of **3,683 million dollars** for 2020. ⁽¹⁾

The East Kootenay Coalfields (2)



(1) <https://www.teck.com/media/Teck-2020-Economic-Contribution-Report.pdf>

(2) <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/mineral-exploration-mining/british-columbia-geological-survey/geology/coalfields/eastkootenay>

Industry Sector – Adventure Tourism

With over 350,000 visitors per year, the Elk Valley has a multitude of work and business opportunities for guides, outfitters, instructors, and other adventure tourism experiences.

Adventure Tourism

FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRY
SECTOR IN THE ELK VALLEY

Year-round opportunity

YEAR-ROUND ADVENTURE TOURISM
OPPORTUNITIES AND JOBS

Supports Businesses

THE SECTOR SUPPORTS, AND IS
CREATING FURTHER DEMAND FOR
BUSINESSES SUCH AS: HOTELS,
CAMPGROUNDS, BARS & RESTAURANTS,
RETAIL, AND SPORTS MEDICINE

2,500+ projected jobs

IN THE KOOTENAY ROCKIES REGION,
THERE ARE 2,500+ PROJECTED JOB
OPENINGS BY 2028 IN THE TOURISM
INDUSTRY ⁽¹⁾

LOCAL BUSINESS

The highest number of businesses are classified as **“Construction”**, **“Retail”**, and **“Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services”**

22.5% of businesses operate in all three communities in the Elk Valley

“Tourism” and **“Construction”** were identified as top sectors to attract to the Elk Valley

Local businesses have noted a strong demand for **“construction, building, office, and cleaning supplies”**

20% of businesses plan to sell or retire in the next 3 years

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.go2hr.ca/regions/kootenay-rockies>

Business Growth

Building permits growth are an indicator of strong economic performance and business license growth indicates favourable economic conditions.

56%

Business license growth from **2010–2020** (1)

156%

building permits growth from **2015–2020** (2)

Major Projects

Investment in major projects (estimated cost of \$15 million or above) are an **indicator of a robust business climate** and the region's commitment to infrastructure improvements (3)

- Mining: **6**
- Resort/residential: **3**
- Skiing facilities: **1**
- Utilities/gas: **2**

45% of businesses

listed themselves as **growing**

59% of businesses

plan to **expand** in the next 3 years

47% of businesses

expect their **number of employees to increase** in the next 3 years

Elk Valley's 2021 BRE report:

<https://theelkvalley.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Elk-Valley-BRE-Report-2021.pdf>

Business Climate

\$316.20

WATER RATE (ANNUAL AVERAGE – RESIDENTIAL)

2.00%

PROVINCIAL SMALL BUSINESS INCOME TAX

\$12.46

AVERAGE LEASE RATE (PER SQUARE FOOT – TRIPLE NET LEASE)

\$0.42

NATURAL GAS (BASIC CHARGE PER DAY) (4)

\$0.209

ELECTRIC (RESIDENTIAL BASIC CHARGE PER DAY) (5)

Telecommunications

TELUS, SHAW, XPLORNET, BELL, ROGERS, COLUMBIA BASIN BROADBAND CORPORATION, TOUGH COUNTRY COMMUNICATIONS

Employment Land Inventory Map

FOR THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF THE EAST KOOTENAYS:
[HTTPS://WWW.ARCGIS.COM/HOME/ITEM.HTML?ID=8019228ED60E4896A3C536674C1DB3D5](https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=8019228ED60E4896A3C536674C1DB3D5)

(1) <https://stateofthebasin.ca/economy/business-climate/building-permits>

(2) <https://stateofthebasin.ca/economy/business-climate/starts-and-closures>

(3) <https://stateofthebasin.ca/economy/business-climate/major-project>

(4) <https://www.fortisbc.com/accounts-billing/billing-rates/natural-gas-rates/residential-rates>

(5) <https://app.bchydro.com/accounts-billing/rates-energy-use/electricity-rates/residential-rates.html>

Contact Information

Elk Valley Economic Initiative

<https://theelkvalley.ca/>
250-423-6868
coordinator@theelkvalley.ca

Fernie Chamber of Commerce

102 Commerce Road, Fernie, BC V0B 1M5
250-423-6868
www.fernierchamber.com

Sparwood Chamber of Commerce

141 Aspen Drive, Sparwood, BC V0B 2G0
250-423-2423
<https://sparwoodchamber.bc.ca/>

Elkford Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 220, Elkford, BC V0B 1H0
250-425-5725
<http://www.elkfordchamber.ca/>

Community Futures East Kootenay

100-131 7th Ave. South, Cranbrook, BC V1C 2J3
250-489-4356
<https://www.cfek.ca/>

Tobacco Plains Band Council

3603 BC-93, Grasmer, BC, V0B 1R0
250-887-3461
www.tobaccoplains.org

WorkBC Centre Fernie

302C 2 Ave, Fernie, BC V0B 1M0
250 423-4204
<https://workbccentre-fernie.ca/>

City of Fernie

501- 3rd Avenue, Fernie, BC, V0B 1M0
250-423-6817
www.fernie.ca

District of Sparwood

136 Spruce Avenue, Sparwood, BC V0B 2G0
250-425-6271
www.sparwood.ca

District of Elkford

744 Fording Drive, Elkford, BC V0B 1H0
250-865-4000
www.elkford.ca

Regional District of East Kootenay

19 24th Avenue South, Cranbrook, BC, V1C 3H8
250-489-2791
www.rdek.ba.ca

Additional Information

Workforce Attraction and Job postings for the Elk Valley:

<https://www.workinfernier.com/>

BC CDC Health Profile for the Fernie Local Health Area:

<http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles/HealthReport/Fernie?archiveYear=2019>

BC Government Community Investment Opportunities:

<https://communityinformationtool.gov.bc.ca/investmentopportunities/home>

Trailforks - Online trail database with detailed maps:

<https://www.trailforks.com/region/east-kootenays/>

Sources

Community Profiles for the Elk Valley:

<https://stateofthebasin.ca/reports-resources/community-profiles>

State of the Basin reporting on indicators of social economic, cultural, and environmental well-being:

<https://stateofthebasin.ca/>

Statistics Canada 2016 Census:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Statistics Canada 2021 Census:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

BC Government Community Information Tool:

<https://communityinformationtool.gov.bc.ca/cit-dashboard/public/search-communities>

Elk Valley Economic Initiative Business Retention and Expansion Reports:

<https://theelkvalley.ca/resources>

Elk Valley 2018 Investment Profile:

<https://theelkvalley.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Elk-Valley-Investment-Profile-2018-Do-It-Different.pdf>

BC Government local government statistics:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments>

Major Projects in BC:

<https://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/bcea/?catalogLayers=5178>

About the EVEI

The purpose of the Initiative is to collaboratively pursue regional economic development projects and initiatives in the Elk Valley, striving to expand opportunities for existing businesses, attract new ones and diversify the types of businesses. In addition, we aim to increase the number of permanent, full-time residents who spend their money locally thereby contributing to the region's sustainability.

The Elk Valley Economic Initiative will champion, support and articulate opportunities for projects and initiatives while creating a network and increasing communications among individuals and organizations involved in economic development.

