

FRASER RIVER DISCOVERY CENTRE

2023

Annual Report

A living, working Fraser – with thriving peoples,
ecosystems and livelihoods – from headwaters to
the Salish Sea!

Table of Contents

Message from the Chair 3

2023 Highlights 4

About Us 5

 1. Who We Are 6

 2. Guiding Principles 7

 3. Convenor Role 8

Education Programs 9

Exhibits 13

Public Programs 19

Financials 28

Supporters 31

Governance 32

A message from the chair

As Chair of the Fraser River Discovery Centre Society (FRDCS) Board, I am pleased to introduce the 2023 Fraser River Discovery Centre (FRDC) Annual Report.

On behalf of the board of directors, I'd like to recognize the dedication of the FRDC staff and volunteers, whose passion for the river has enabled us to do great things. The FRDC team's commitment to being nimble and responsive has allowed the organization to reach even more visitors and learners of all ages.

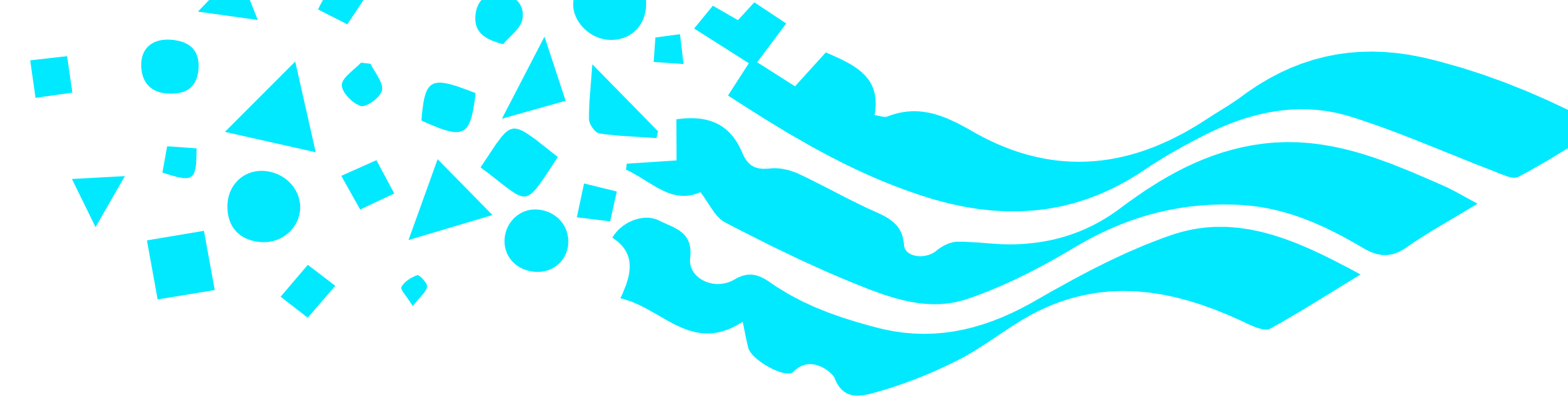
2023 was a year of growth for the FRDC. We saw a 30% growth in visitation from 2022 and a significant growth in earned revenue (nearly double from 2019), which includes admissions, program fees, and gift shop sales. Even so, we have been able to maintain accessibility by offering discounted and low-cost programs to under-served communities. We expanded our reach throughout the river basin through outreach programs, including *River Champions*, a program which is on track to reaching 10,000 students by October 2024.

The FRDC team continues to work with our partners the Musqueam Indian Band (MIB) to develop xʷtatəl'ləm ʔə kʷ šxʷəlməxʷaʔ syəθ ʔiʔ snəwəyət ʔi ʔə tə ʔi ńa stal'əw (*Place of Learning about the Indigenous heritage and teachings of the river*). With the aim to develop more programs that are relevant to Musqueam youth, we worked with educators and students at Southlands Elementary, the catchment school or most Musqueam children, to develop a new outdoor learning program. In the spirit of reconciliation, the FRDC offers free admission to individuals who self-identify as Indigenous.

I would like to thank our supporters, including members, donors, funders, and sponsors, who have all contributed to a successful year. On the horizon for the FRDCS is developing a strategic plan for 2025-2028 which will guide our work as we continue our mission and vision.



Mark Rizzo
Chair



2023 Highlights

17,894 general visitors
and participants
(not including students)

447 school programs delivered

9,958 students

10,008 km travelled

7 weeks of summer day camp

44 active volunteers

124 members

1 temporary exhibit

1 permanent exhibit installed

Who we are

Our Vision

A living, working Fraser – with thriving peoples, ecosystems and livelihoods – from headwaters to the Salish Sea.

Our Mission

To bring together the many voices of the Fraser, to discover, celebrate, and inspire passionate stewards of the River.

A photograph of two young boys standing in a room decorated with colorful flags and streamers. They are holding up their own colorful paper crafts, which appear to be representations of nature or the river. The boy on the left is wearing a grey t-shirt and the boy on the right is wearing a blue t-shirt and a blue cap. The background is filled with various colorful decorations, including flags and streamers, creating a festive and creative atmosphere.

*THE VOICE OF THE
FRASER RIVER*



Who we are

The Fraser River Discovery Centre Society (FRDCS) is a not-for-profit organization established in 1989 with the vision to connect communities in the discovery and celebration of the living, working Fraser River. The Fraser River Discovery Centre (FRDC) is prominently situated on New Westminster's riverfront boardwalk between the River Market and the City of New Westminster's Pier Park.

The FRDC is a 17,000 square feet interpretive centre that presents the stories of the living, working Fraser River and the contributions to the life, history, and future of British Columbia through exhibits, education programs, and special events. We connect people to the Fraser River environment with consideration for the river's socio-cultural and economic importance.

Guiding Principles

The Three Pillars

The FRDC uses three pillars of sustainability—the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of the Fraser River—to guide all planning and operations. Sustainability is often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their needs. This provides the strategic context for the interpretive centre to showcase one of the largest economic drivers in the province, a globally important, biodiverse Fraser.

We define these pillars as they relate to the river:

Environmental – A globally important combination of unique ecosystems!

Socio-cultural – A place to live, work, and thrive!

Economic – A vital economic engine driving the province!

Convenor Role

Identified as a priority from the Society's inception in 1989, the convenor role is critical to fulfill the FRDC's mission to bring together the many voices of the Fraser to discover, celebrate, and inspire passionate stewards of the River, from the headwaters to the Salish Sea.

The Fraser River Basin is inhabited by nearly 70% of the province's population. Partnerships, collaboration, and consultation with those throughout the Fraser Basin is embedded in

the FRDC's work. From the resulting enhanced planning to the development and delivery of programs, events, exhibits, and funding opportunities, these relationships are invaluable to the fulfillment of the Fraser River Discovery Centre's vision.



Learning at the FRDC

The FRDC's focus on environmental education is evident in our school programs, offered in person, at schools, and online as well as in our recreational programs.



“

I would like to thank the community donors for their financial support in funding the FRDC to come and provide such an outstanding outreach program to children. It was one of the best workshops I have experienced with the class. The students and I were both very engaged with content that was so relevant and applicable to our community. Thank you for such an amazing workshop!



Education Programs



447 programs delivered, **9,958** participants from **104** schools in **20** school districts.

School programs are regularly updated and a new program, *Nature Walk*, was developed in collaboration with teachers from Southlands Elementary. *River Champions*, a grant-funded program that travels to schools throughout the river basin is on track to meeting the goal of reaching **10,000** students by October 2024. *River Champions* focuses on climate resilience by encouraging learners to consider the impacts of climate change on the river and what we can do in our communities.

Birthday Parties

Interest in fun, educational birthday parties continues to grow. The FRDC offered **50** parties to **588** participants.



Summer Camps

From July to August, four summer staff funded by Canada Summer Jobs delivered **7** separate camps over **7** weeks with **79** participants aged 6 to 11.

Camp themes were:

- Science on the Fraser,
- Spectacular Salmon,
- Voyageur Adventures, and
- Wonders of the Watershed.



“

When one of my kids attended [summer camps], she always looked forward to them and always had wonderful stories and knowledge to share after camp was done ... I would highly recommend the summer camps. Your child will learn a lot about the Fraser River through a number of different activities.

—Joseph B.



Exhibitions

An interpretive plan was co-created in 2022/23 by the staff team, with input from external community organizations. It is intended to serve in the interim as the FRDC works towards x^wtatə'ləm and is a living document which should seek and respond to community feedback. It expands on the three pillars approach with the overall site theme of:

The Fraser River shapes and is shaped by the communities, both human and non-human, it supports. It is meaningful

to the communities it is a part of, home to unique ecosystems, and continues to be a hub for economic activity. The site theme is supported by two overarching lenses: Interconnectedness & Systems Thinking (ecological, human social systems), and Community, Relationships, & Culture (truth & justice, joy & dreaming).



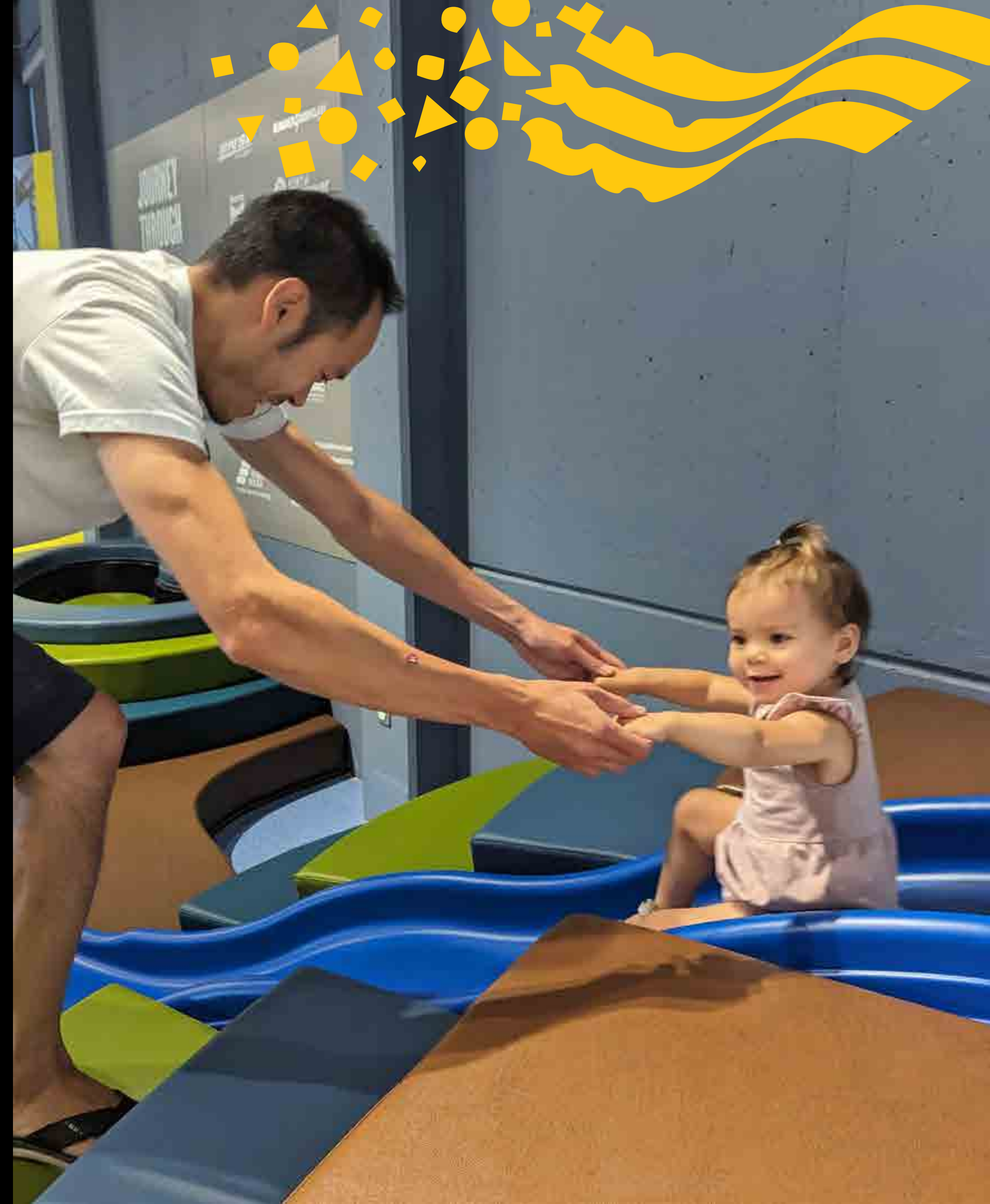
Uninterrupted VR

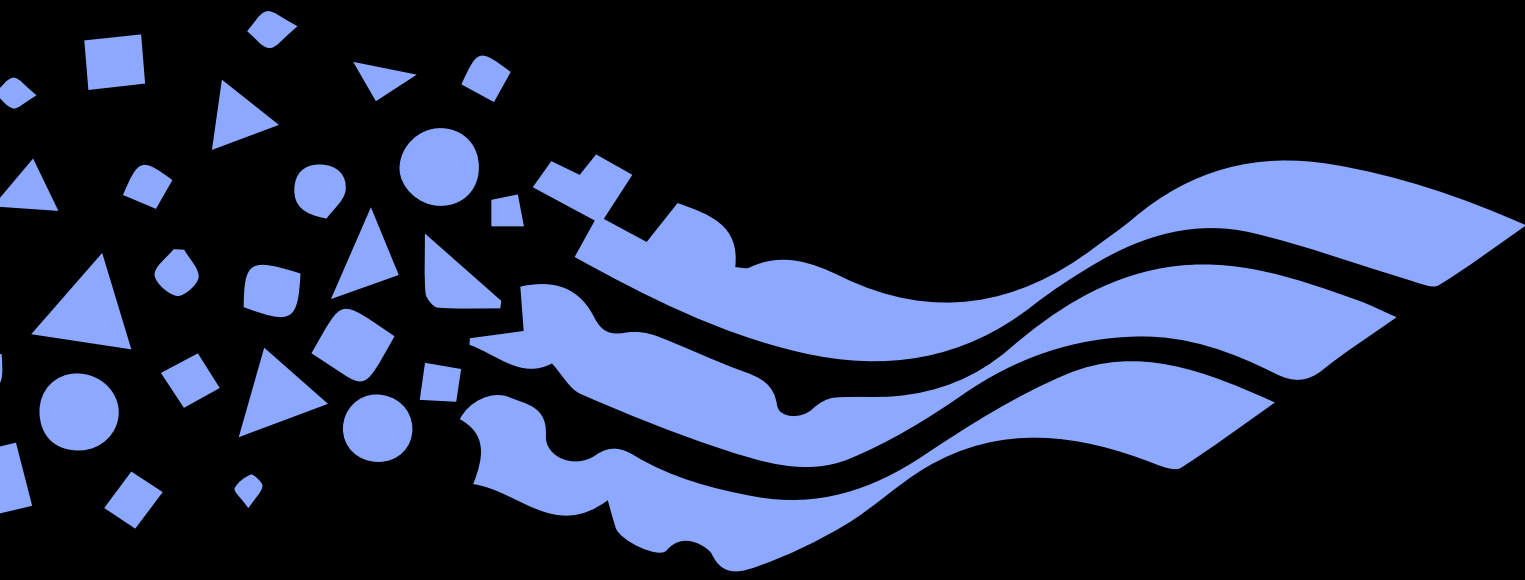
From July 1st to September 30th, the FRDC hosted the *UninterruptedVR* temporary exhibition. Following the journey of salmon migrating upstream through urban waters, it allowed viewers to witness the unbroken cycle of salmon nourishing the land, which happens right beside and within our communities. It introduced 201, primarily new, visitors to the centre and offered a fresh experience to those returning.

Toddler Delta

With a growing audience of groups with young children, the shipping container in *The Working River* gallery was replaced with a cushioned climbing area themed around the estuary. Known as the Toddler Delta, the cushions in the new exhibit represents the different layers of the river and features a slide, a seating area with books, and a recessed area with rubber crumb and native plant stuffies to be “planted”.

It is one of the most utilized exhibits in *The Working River*. More elements will be added to the exhibit area in 2024.





Water Quality exhibit



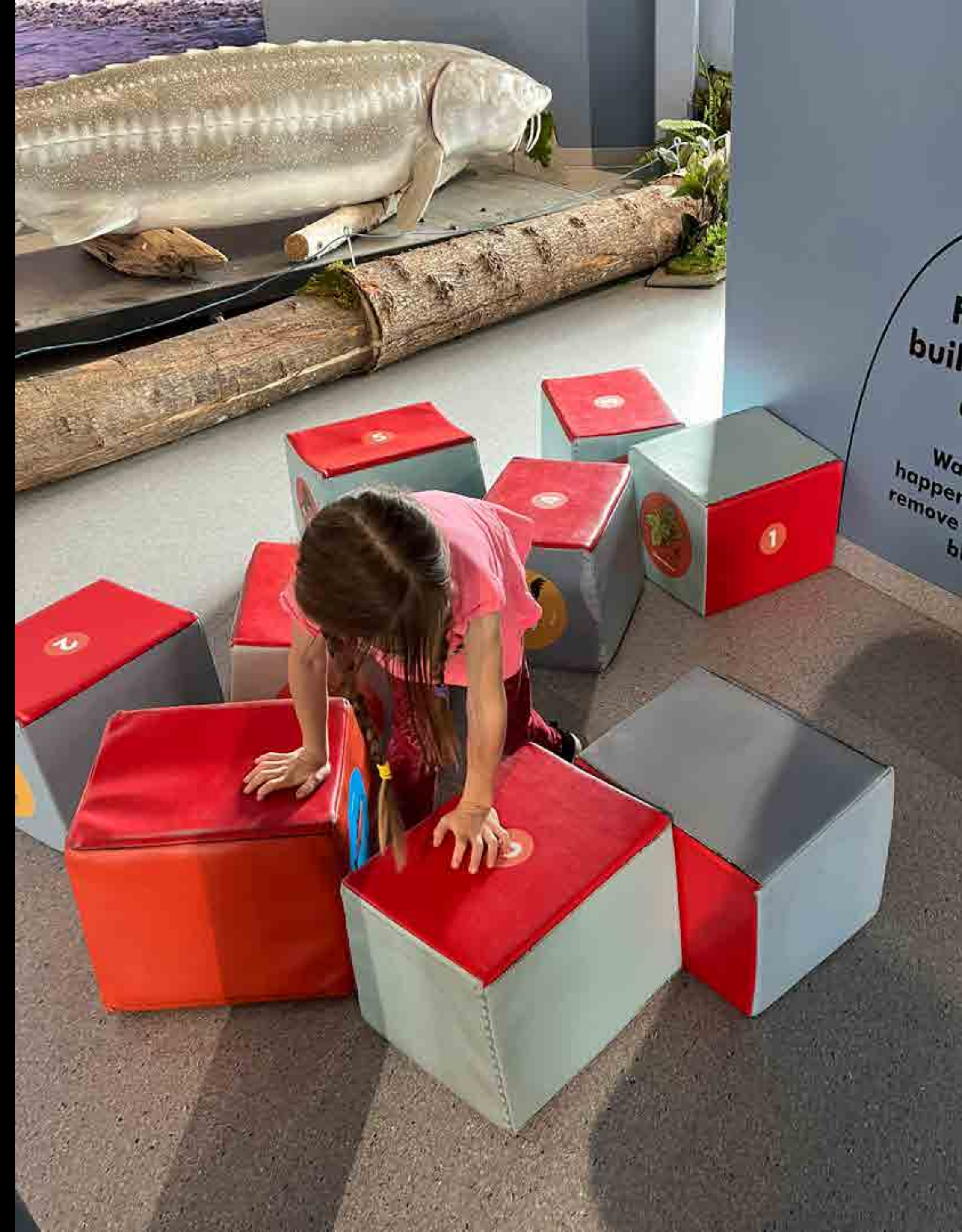
A revision to the water quality exhibit in the second-floor gallery was initiated to align the content with the interpretive plan and update the original data from 2013. With input from x^wməθk^wə́yəm (Musqueam) Environmental Stewardship, Rick Bailey of q̓ícə́y (Katzie First Nation), and Jenna Duncan of the First Nation Fisheries Legacy Fund along with her two students Kate Musset and Kasey Stirling, background

research was initiated, and draft designs completed by graduate student Sam Kohlmann (UBC Sustainability Scholars Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative).

More work is needed in 2024 before the next draft can go to all partners involved for feedback.

Discovery Boxes

New Discovery Boxes were started at the end of 2023 to provide fresh content for visitors to explore. They will be completed in 2024 and have a stratified learning approach to provide specific engagement opportunities for a wider range of ages, as well as the introduction of new themes.



Click:

Photos of the Fraser Summary

Partnering with The New Westminster Photography Club again, the *Click* 2023 theme of *Dynamics of Magnitude* sought to capture the changes that occur along the river, from seasonal to climatic, at all spectrums of scale. It opened in the foyer of the FRDC in December.

photo: Rick Blacklaws



Public Programs

The FRDC offers programs at the Centre and at different locations in the river basin for family and adult audiences.

Faces of the Fraser

18 participants

Originally established to increase programming for adults, and targeted at seniors, the Faces series covers topics from FRDC's three pillars of our guiding principles. A talk early in the year featured Carmen Rosen, Artistic Director of the Still Moon Arts Society. A second event featured Christiane Smoroden, Wild & Immersive Coordinator with the UBC Malcolm Knapp Research Forest.



Guided Tours

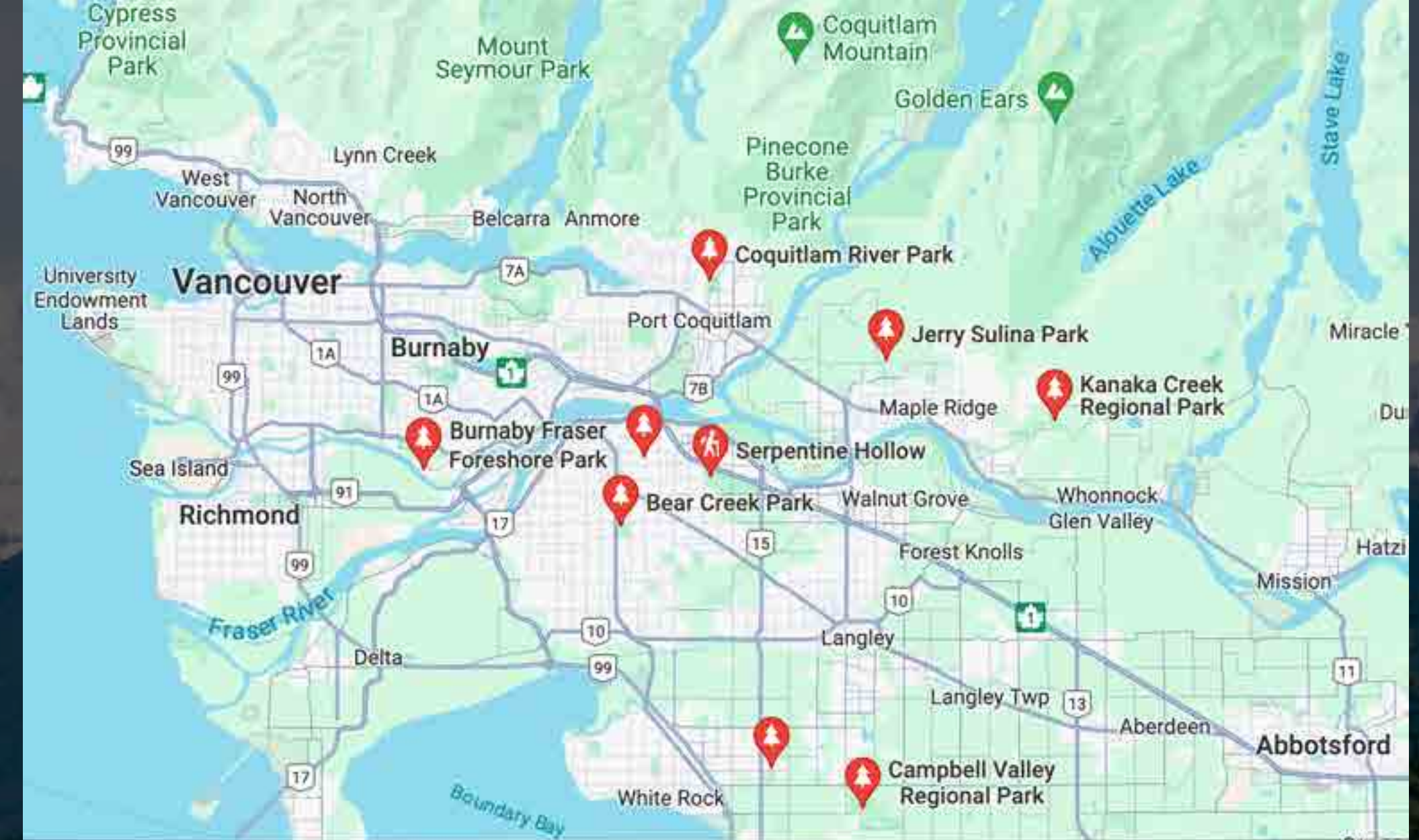
12 tours with 183 participants

Quayside tours along the boardwalk and exhibit tours in the Centre were offered on select dates throughout the year. We also debuted birding walks this year as part of RiverFest.

River Basin Days

11 programs
214 participants

River Basin Days is a monthly program which takes place at different locations in the Fraser River Basin.



- Campbell Valley Regional Park, Langley
- Serpentine Hollow, Surrey
- Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park
- Redwood Park, Surrey
- Jerry Sulina Park, Maple Ridge
- Coquitlam River Park
- Bear Creek Park, Surrey
- Hawthorne Rotary Park, Surrey
- Kanaka Creek Regional Park, Maple Ridge

Super Saturdays, Discovery Days, and Holidays

16 programs with 3,369 participants

A monthly program, Super Saturdays is designed for families with children aged 3–12. Every month, staff and volunteers guide visitors through fun learning activities intended to offer deeper engagement opportunities with seasonal

phenomena on the river. For long weekends and school breaks, the FRDC hosts Discovery Days which offer family programming similar to Super Saturdays.

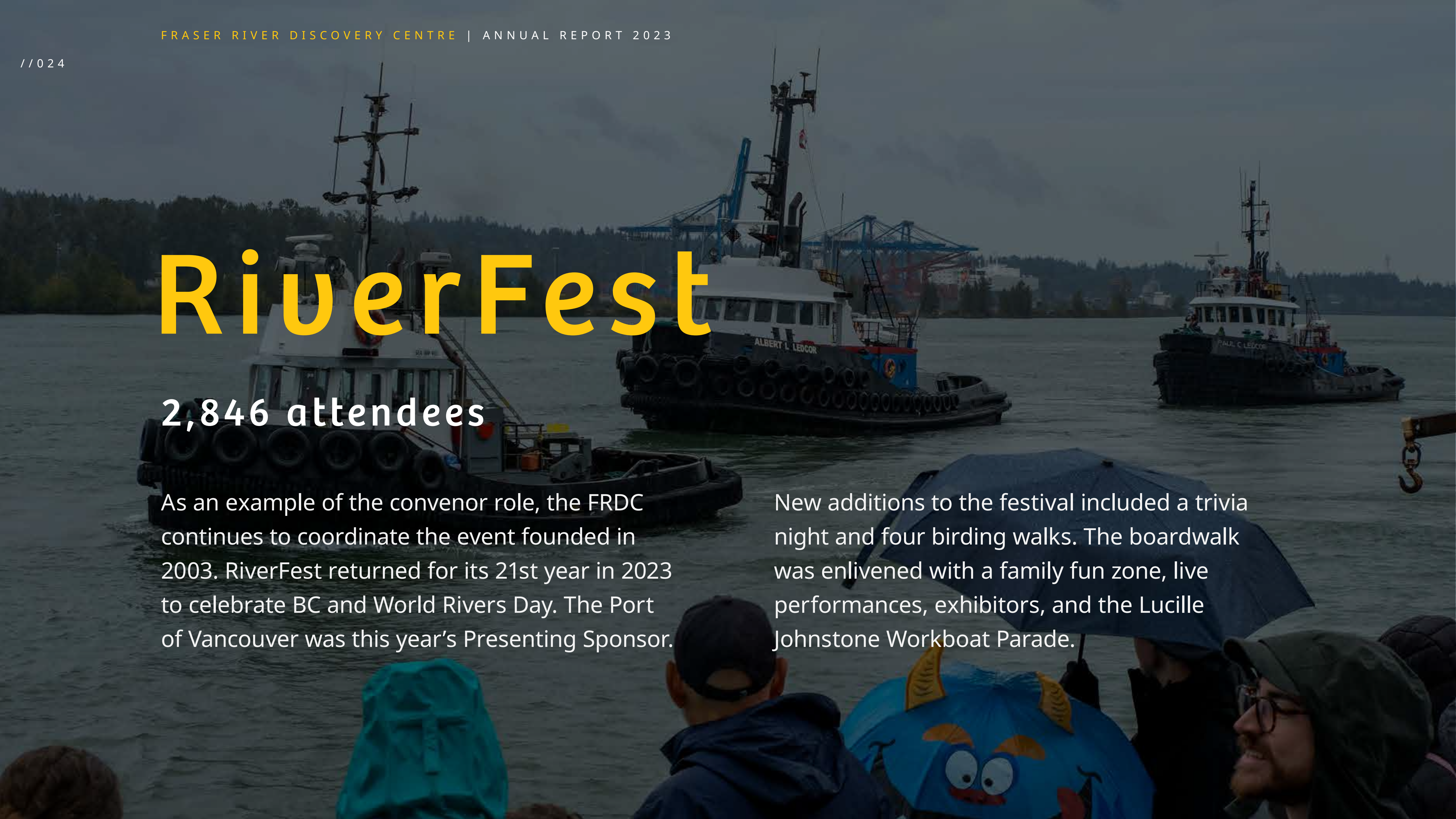


RiverFest

2,846 attendees

As an example of the convenor role, the FRDC continues to coordinate the event founded in 2003. RiverFest returned for its 21st year in 2023 to celebrate BC and World Rivers Day. The Port of Vancouver was this year's Presenting Sponsor.

New additions to the festival included a trivia night and four birding walks. The boardwalk was enlivened with a family fun zone, live performances, exhibitors, and the Lucille Johnstone Workboat Parade.



Fraser River Hall of Fame

75 attendees

Fraser River Hall of Fame to recognize and honour individuals or organizations that have made significant and noteworthy contributions to the health and sustainability of the Fraser River, its culture, people, industry and environment. The honorees for 2023 were Seaspan & Southern Railway.

Public Engagement

Communications focused on raising awareness and involvement through social media and traditional media coverage. With the dedication of two co-op students throughout 2023, the FRDC's social media goals expanded to be a place for people who aren't able to visit the FRDC in person to experience our exhibits and stay up to date on river happenings. We solidified our

selection of regular features, including Weekend Itinerary bringing local businesses together, Water Wednesdays, and Exhibit Spotlight, among many others. We also participated in a variety of local giveaways and media moments such as [#SearchForPhillip](#).

Discovery Shop

The Discovery Shop extends the visitor experience at the Centre by featuring products that encourage curiosity about the river and the natural world, such as books, educational toys, and artwork. The Discovery Shop is an important source of revenue for our small non-profit organization. Shop sales have increased 90% since 2021, when the on-line store was first

introduced. The shop's inventory features local artists, environmentally conscious items, and Indigenous designers and authors.

Financials

Funding for the FRDC continues to be a diverse mix of grants (government, foundations, and corporations), sponsorships (both annual and for specific events and projects), donations (personal and corporate) and earned revenue (admissions, rentals, and program fees).

2023 Revenue

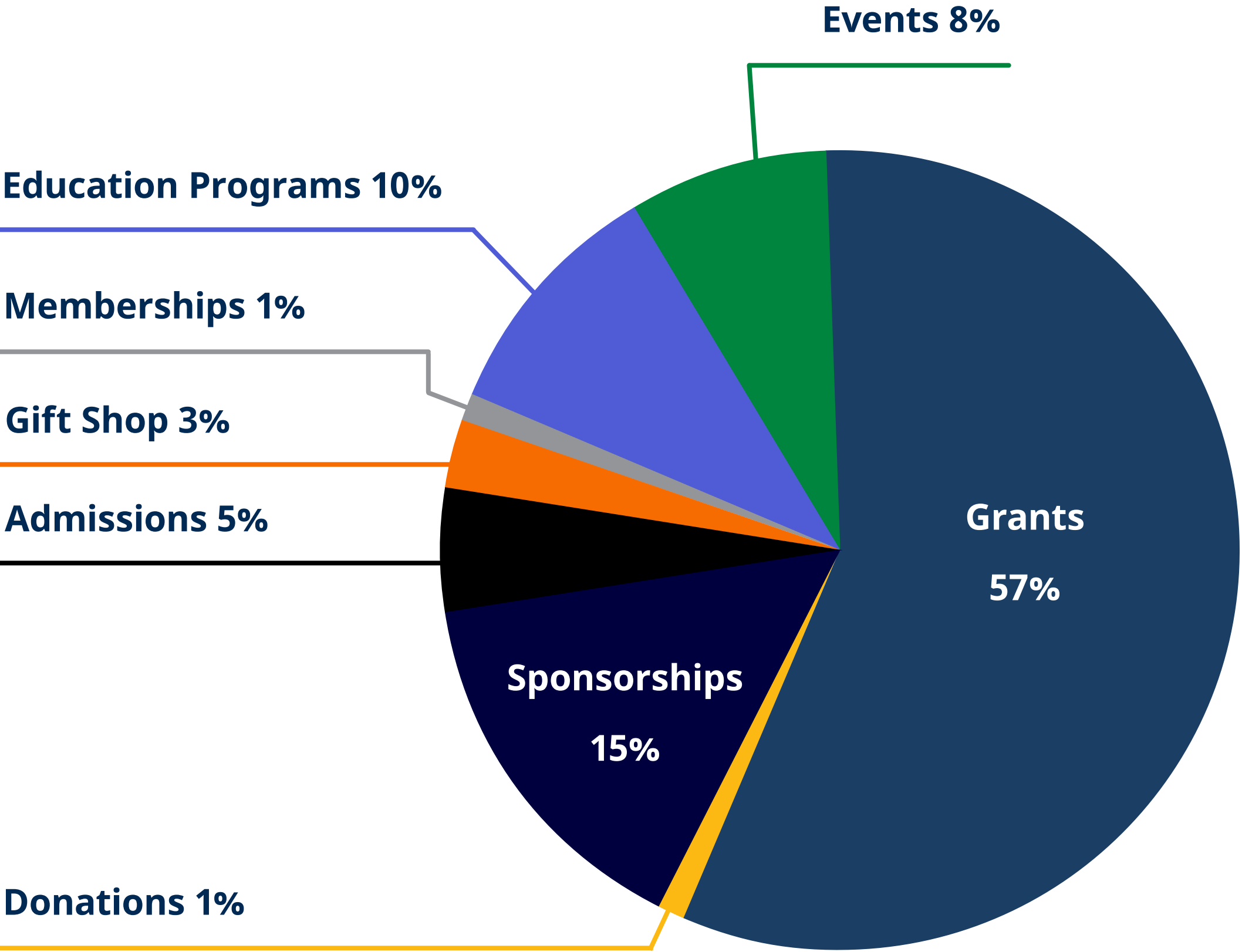


photo: Rick Blacklaws



2023 Expenses

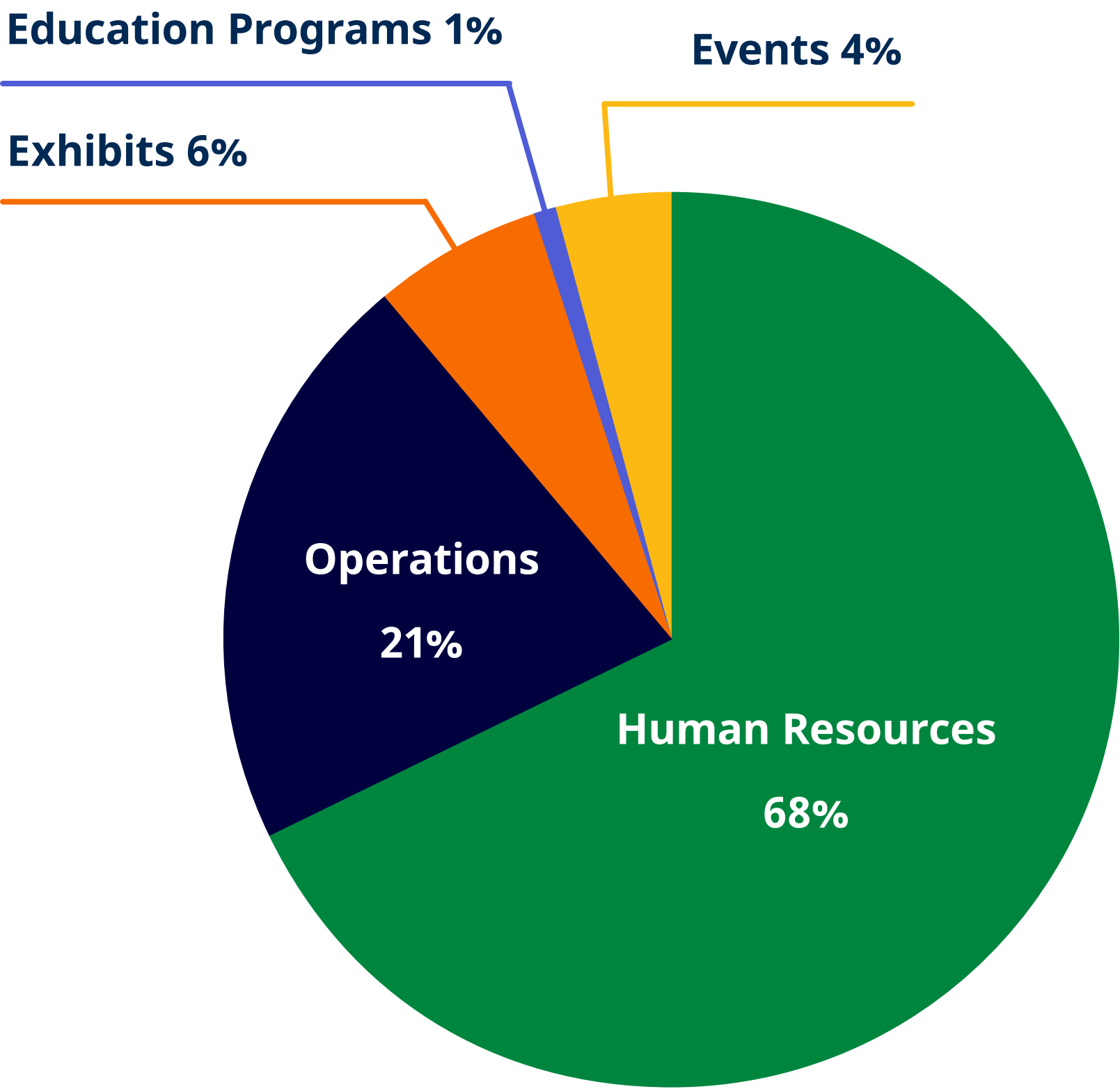


photo: Rick Blacklaws



Supporters

- **Government** - Government of Canada, Province of British Columbia, City of New Westminster, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, BC Hydro.
- **Business** – BOSA Development, BNSF Railroad, FortisBC, Fraser River Pile and Dredge, Ledcor, Loren Nancke Chartered Professional Accountants, Parkland Corporation, Robert Allan Ltd, SAAM Towage, Schnitzer Steel, Seaspam, SRY Railways, TransMountain, Western Canada Marine Response Corporation.
- **Foundations** – Canadian Association of Science Centres, GMR Foundation, McLean Foundation, New Westminster Legion Branch 2, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Rivershed Society of BC, Seedlings Foundation, Tourism New West.
- **Corporate Donations** – Denim & Steel, digitally hip, Forrest Marine Ltd.
- **Personal Donations** – Mike Armstrong, Audrey Barnes, Connie Baxter, Fiona Beales, George Bosnick, Angela Chih, Allen Domaas, Kathleen Higgins, Karen Lee, Walter Low, Todd Martin, Margaret Mason, Mark Rizzo, Lyle Viereck, Jennifer Whiteside, Carmen Wiseman.
- **In-kind Donations** – City Avenue Market, Climb Base5, Earnest Ice Cream, Inn at the Quay, Kelly O'Bryan's New Westminster, Kozak Ukrainian Eatery, MAKE Vancouver, Nada, Organic Ocean Seafood Inc., Pacific Breeze Winery, Paddlewheeler Pub, Pandora's Locks, Rain City Games, Reo Rafting, Rick Bronson's House of Comedy, Sabai Thai Spa, Steel & Oak Brewing Co., Translink, The Old Spaghetti Factory, Vancouver Circus School, Western Mariner Magazine.

Governance

The 2020–2024 Strategic Plan sets the direction for FRDC by identifying goals and supporting initiatives. It is the basis for the operations plan to ensure the FRDC develops and sustains a prominent and valued role in the Fraser River Basin. The FRDC Board conducts a yearly review of the strategic plan and updates strategic directions as necessary, providing staff and contractors direction to develop annual plans that are current and relevant.

People

The Fraser River Discovery Centre Society is a registered not-for-profit society and charity governed by a Board of Directors. The FRDC Board is authorized by the FRDC constitution and bylaws to manage or supervise the managing of the affairs of the FRDC. The FRDC Board aims to be representative of the geographical, economic, cultural, and social diversity of the Fraser River.

2022–2023 Directors of the Fraser River Discovery Centre Society

Mark Rizzo, Chair; Director, Marine Canada, Parkland Fuel Corporation

Kathleen Higgins, Past Chair; Partner, Young Anderson

Lyle Viereck, Vice Chair; Principal, Viereck Consulting Ltd.

Allen Domaas, Secretary; Nordic Star Services Ltd. & Retired CEO Fraser Port Authority

Brett Pavan, Treasurer; Partner, Loren Nancke Chartered Professional Accountants

Fiona Beales, Director; Territory Manager, Pearson Canada

Nolan Charles, Director; Councillor, Musqueam Band

Tom Corsie, Director; Retired VP Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

Michael Forrest, Director; President, Forrest Marine Ltd.

Nures Kara, Director; Senior Environmental Manager, Schnitzer Steel Canada

Mandev Mann, Director; Commercial Real Estate Lawyer

Todd Martin, Director; Health, Safety, Environment & Quality Manager, Catherwood Towing Ltd.

Staff

The core FRDC staff team is supported by volunteers and co-op students throughout the year and seasonal staff in the summer months.

Karen Lee, Executive Director

Alicia Mills, Education Coordinator

Petra Maior, Education Programs Manager

Alex Johansen, Public Engagement Manager

Arielle Garsson, Program Coordinator (River Champions)

Alexis McGillivray, Interpreter

Carlo Santos, Interpreter

Sarah Steward, Programs Assistant

Temporary and On-call Staff

Kaylen Gill, Cedrick Iyumva, Emma Mozsar, Kathleen Nguyen

Jessie Reyes, Natasha Sing, Kyra Tamagi, Katherine Wagner

Contractors

Stephen Bruyneel, Director, External Relations and Development

Terry Sparrow, x^wtatəlləm Indigenous Relationships and Engagement Coordinator

Susan Jury, Bookkeeper, digitally hip, Information Technology support

Volunteers: 44 active individuals donated 818 hours!

The FRDC volunteer program provides meaningful ways for community members to connect with the river and each other. From the leadership of the board of directors to the diverse and multi-disciplinary skills needed to assist with programs and special events, volunteers continue to be vital to the success of FRDC!