



BACKGROUNDER: 2020 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

AREA A – Brent Bidston

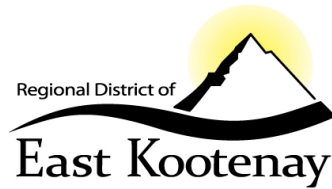
A retired commercial pilot and retired ambulance paramedic, Brent is the founder of the Elk Valley Air Search and Rescue Association and Angel Flight East Kootenay program, which provides free flights to patients who need to go to Kelowna or Cranbrook for medical appointments. He has already flown over 35 Angel Flights taking RDEK patients to Kelowna for cancer treatments. He and his wife organized the fund raising, awareness and administration to make Angel Flight a reality, which was an enormous undertaking. Brent has been flying for Canadian Air Search and Rescue since 2012 and spends 200 to 250 hours each year training navigators, spotters and new volunteer pilots as well as flying when a rescue is called. In addition, Brent has volunteered for 13 years at Fernie Alpine Resort as a Ski Patroller in winter and for five years in summer; has assisted with the South East Rockies Grizzly Bear Census for four years; and has spent 10 years volunteering as a paramedic and bike mechanic to the Highline 100 bike race.

AREA B – Bonnie Crosson

Bonnie moved to the Valley over 40 years ago and has been an involved and passionate volunteer ever since. She is heavily involved in volunteer activities through the Triangle Women's Institute and has served as Treasurer. When her children were young, she was involved in the local 4-H club and is often the first to arrive and last to leave no matter the community event she is helping with. She started the Grasmere Library and has run it for many years. You can still find her there virtually every Thursday night to welcome and assist people in the library. She was an active member of the Grasmere United Church and is credited as being instrumental in keeping the Church going for many years. Beyond "*what*" she does for the community, Bonnie is appreciated deeply for "*how*" she gives to the community: with kindness, optimism, humour and heart.

AREA E – Larry Gould

Larry is known for embracing the spirit of community and is often the first to volunteer when someone is in need. During a fire on Skookumchuck prairie, he provided equipment, water trucks, and workers to assist the BC Wildfire Service and other community members in putting out the fire. When two homes caught fire in Wasa, he arrived with his water truck to help prevent the spread of the fire and support affected residents. He generously donates to the Wasa Lions skating rink and ballpark, and in the winter months can often be found plowing for neighbours and community members who have no equipment or are unable to do the snow clearing themselves. In addition, Larry donates wood to those who need it and gives to the ranchers for cattle bedding. He is known for his sense of community and giving nature, jumping in to help whenever and wherever needed, never expecting anything in return.



AREA F – Lyle Wilson

Lyle has dedicated his life as a volunteer towards supporting his community in becoming more engaged, active, and healthy. He has been a volunteer with the Toby Creek Nordic Ski Club for decades, serving as coach, President and Board during this time; was instrumental in getting the Lake Windermere Whiteway started nearly 15 years ago; and, through his current role as chair of the Columbia Valley Greenways Trail Alliance (CVGTA), is seeing the Westside Legacy Trail to completion. He has been a participant in Canfor's Public Advisory Group for Forest Sustainability since 2006 and is an accomplished athlete and coach. Lyle has given countless hours to benefit the mountain bike and cross country skiing communities and has played a key role in developing the sport of mountain biking including fat biking and accessible trail development in the Nipika/Cross River Recreation Area.

AREA G – Hedi Trescher

Hedi has been an outstanding volunteer in the Upper Columbia Valley for more than 50 years. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Windermere District Farmers' Institute Abattoir at the Invermere crossroads, continues to be an active member of the Brisco and District Community Association and is a passionate advocate for local food production and food security. In addition to her other volunteer pursuits, she has written and published a book, "Brisco & Spillimacheen, a History" which preserves our local history for future generations through a collection of information and photographs. She is known for her dedication, kindness and volunteerism.