



Rural Matters

RECONSTRUCTING RURAL'S ROLE IN CURRENT DAY SOCIETY

Canada's Beginnings...



Rural Matters

Why are rural communities important?

Social



Culture



Environment



Economy



Economically

- Natural resources extraction
- GDP contribution
- Rural-urban dependence
- Cost of living advantage
 - Housing
 - Small business development
 - Entrepreneurship



"I love living rural. I feel safe and wave to people on the road. I love being known as a person who has "the work ethic of a farm kid" and who isn't afraid to get their hands dirty." (Quote from Bence's study 2014)

Social

- Social capital
- Sense of community
- Civic involvement
- Sense of place



Cultural

“Living rural can be a lot of work, when it comes to farming especially. Having said that, the benefits I experienced growing up on the farm were incredible. Open spaces, farm work, outdoor hobbies, were all parts of what growing up rural meant to me, I wouldn't change it for anything.” (Quote from Bence 's Study (2014)

- Community identity
- Heritage
- Art
- Culture
- Community appearance
- Community festivals & events
- Community culture
 - Ambience
 - Values



Environmental

"I love rural living you don't have your view blocked by skyscrapers or smog you have more room for a yard not so close to the neighbours." (Quote from Bence's Study (2014))

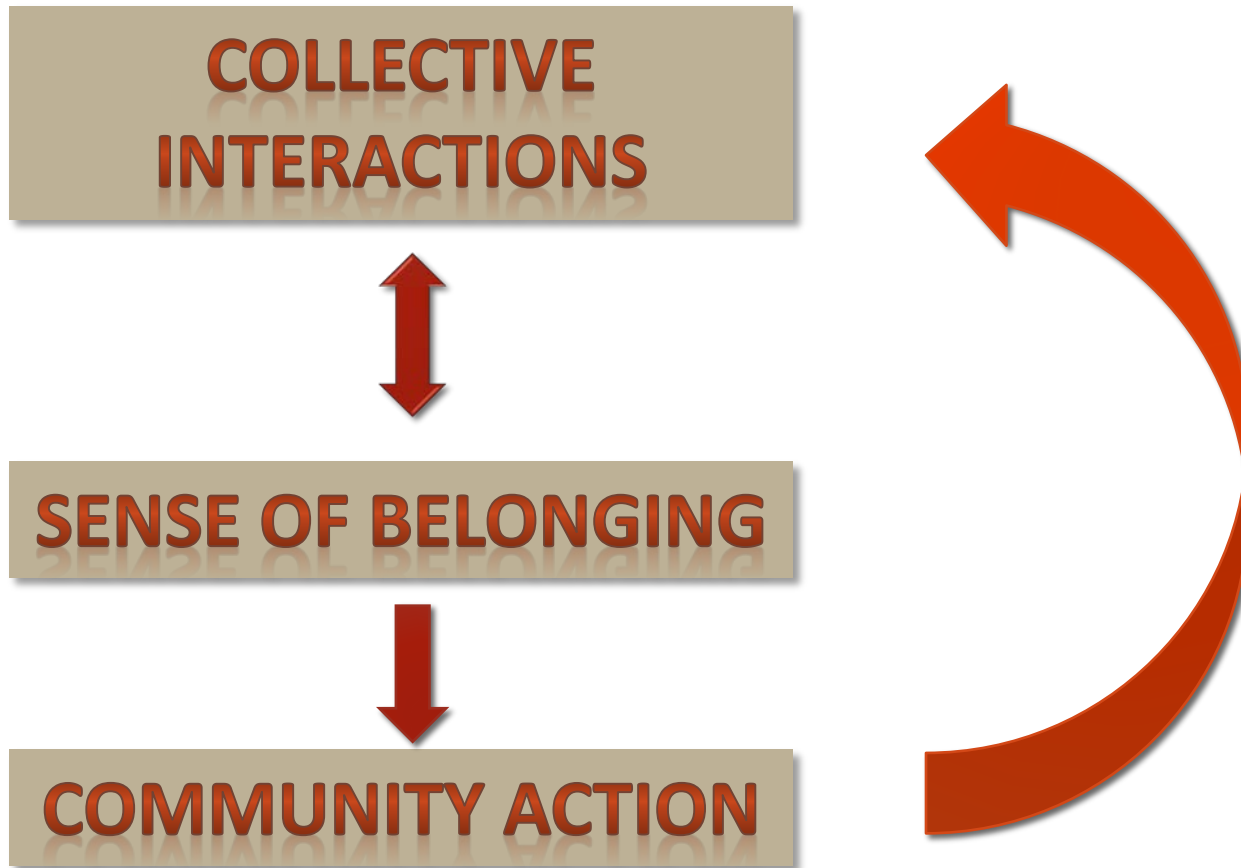
- Parks & green spaces
- Nature & Wildlife
- Quality of water
- Easy access to nature



Building Resilient & Vibrant Rural Communities

- How do we take what is valuable in rural communities and harness it for a vibrant and resilient future?
- **Turning the attention of the community inwards vs outwards will be key to creating vibrant and resilient communities.**
 - **Focus on enhancing local assets and amenities to attract residents/visitors but also to create place attachment to one's community.**

3 Factors to Building Vibrant & Resilient Communities



Creating Resilient & Vibrant Rural Communities

LEISURE

Recreation
Sport
Tourism
Arts and culture
Outdoor environments

- enhances a sense of self, place, and community.
- creates social networks and capital that involves active community agencies.
- source of community pride.
- link all generations of a community.
- cultivates community social wellbeing.
- promotes and cultivates community leadership.



Rural Opportunity

Where is there opportunity for rural communities to focus inwards?

Trends & Rural Communities

- Mobile workforce—people can choose where they work.
- Millennial's—often decide where they want to live first then go after the job.
- Baby boomers—deciding to downsize
- Young adults—attracted to communities that have natural amenities, community character, community festivals/events, and recreation and leisure opportunities.



Trends & Rural Communities

Top five most participated in activities based on Alberta's Recreation Survey (2013)

Physical Activities	Outdoor Activities	Creative/Cultural	Snow Activities	Group Activities	Water Activities
*walking	Gardening	Attending, fairs, festivals, cultural events	Downhill skiing	Bowling	Motor boating
Biking	Day hiking	Doing craft or hobby	Tobogganing	Ice hockey	Canoeing
fitness	*Golf	Visiting museums/art galleries	X-country skiing	Soccer	Kayaking
Swimming—pools	*Overnight camping	Attending live theatre	Snowshoeing	Curling	Water skiing
Swimming—lakes, rivers, ponds	Fishing	Taking part in the arts	Snowboarding	basketball	River rafting

Trends & Rural Communities

▶ Alberta's Recreation Survey (2013)

Favourite location for favourite activities

- Parks and outdoor spaces (58%)

Motivation for participation in activities

- For pleasure (89%)
- To relax (85%)
- For physical health/exercise (83%)
- To enjoy nature (71%)

Albertans more likely to want to start a new activity include

- Women
- Those 18-44yrs vs 45+yrs
- Those with children in their household



Trends & Rural Communities

- Trails & pathways—highly desired amenity
- Nature-based tourism—growing sector of tourism
- Hunting and fishing tourism is a growing niche market for tourism in rural and remote regions.
- Increase desire for access to Northern Canada because of its nature tourism, and wilderness.
- Increase interest and desire to experience Aboriginal culture.



Trends & Rural Communities

- **Rural returning to rural**
 - Start a family
 - Attracted to hometowns because of strong social networks, community attachment, and nostalgic memory
- **Urbanite to rural migration**
 - Seeking radical change in lifestyle



Canada's Small Town Bucket List

○ Nelson, BC

○ **Legal, AB**

○ Forget, SK

○ Flin Flon, MB

○ Port Hope, ON

○ Hudson, QB

○ Victoria By the Sea, PE

○ St Andrews by the Sea, NB

○ Mahone Bay, NS

○ Trinity, NL

○ Dawson City, YT

○ Rankin Inlet, NU

○ Fort Smith, NT

- Natural environment—lakes, mountains
- Escape for artists, writers and musicians
- Heritage buildings and homes
- Local food system
- Outdoor lifestyle—access to natural amenities
- Cultural activities, festivals, art, theatre
- Local cafes, local food
- Natural resources extraction
- Tourism opportunities
- Local recreation opportunities

Rural Matters

- Place attachment and sense of belonging
- Place-based (focus inwards) energies
- Harness local assets and amenities that enhance the potential for place attachment.

A wide-angle photograph of a rural landscape. A gravel road leads from the foreground towards the horizon. On the left, there are several large, leafy green trees. The fields are a mix of green and brown, suggesting a transition between seasons. In the distance, a white silo and a small barn are visible. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds, with some light breaking through on the left side. The overall mood is serene and expansive.

Thank You