

The Middle Road Community

Who are we?

We are 11 families of 20 adults and 21 children (between the ages of 1 and 24 – 8 of whom live away from home at least part-time) and numerous pets, from dogs and cats to chickens and horses. We began planning this cohousing style community in 1994 and by 1996 the dream of The Middle Road Community was achieved. We are diverse in many ways. We follow different spiritual beliefs, educational systems, and lifestyle choices. Our daily work includes a wide variety of pursuits, including: homemaker, parent, elder, home schooler, student, counsellor, life coach, group facilitator, Touch for Health practitioner, midwife, musician, writer, theatre artist, visual artist, dancer, media/creative consultant, administrator, building contractor, fine woodworker, inventor, fire-fighter, and ski patrol. Some are retired.

Where are we?

We live on 52 acres of land about 11 kilometres (7 miles) from the city of Nelson (population 10,000) in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia. The land, which includes a mixture of forest, wetland and fields, is situated on an open bench along the north shore of the west arm of Kootenay Lake. The natural habitat is home to a variety of birds and wildlife. Half of the land consists of privately owned home sites and the other half is held in common. Title for the common land is tied legally to the 11 private lots.

The common land includes forested areas, streams, a two-and-a-half acre fenced area containing organic gardens and a small orchard, horse pasture, a playing field, a horseshoe pitch, a chicken coop, and a large community fire pit. The Common House, a converted hay barn, is at the heart of the community – consisting of a large kitchen and dining area, places for people to talk, play, and share interests together, a ping-pong room, an exercise/weight room, a guest room and bathrooms. The wood floors, fireplaces and magnificent views make it a cozy and welcoming place. In warm weather, the large deck extending into the garden is popular. There are hikes up into the surrounding mountains, and a public beach is just a short drive (or reasonable walk) away.

What do we do?

We lead active lives both within and beyond the community. Within, we find ways to enjoy a higher quality of life together – through sharing of a weekly community meal (cooking rotates) and a weekly potluck, work parties, fun activities for children and adults, parties, seasonal celebrations and informal get-togethers. Participation ebbs and flows with people's lives and personal energies but is generally strong. On some occasions, local neighbours are welcomed to join us. Some members raise chickens and provide eggs to the community. Some devote time and passion to the garden and orchard. A singing/chanting group gets together regularly. A Committee of Care is available to us in times of need.

Regular meetings are held once a month, with a summer break. We follow a consensus decision-making format in directing the issues of the community. Broader planning and community building workshops are held occasionally.

Why do we choose to live as a community?

Our reasons are as diverse as we are, but we share a passion for being here. For some, the beauty of the land and the experience of rural living draw us. For others, this is an opportunity for our children and us to live in a safe and conscious neighbourhood. For many, this is an opportunity to work with the process of consensus decision-making.

We endeavour to create a balance between our personal interests and community spirit. Both are important to us. We have a willingness to learn, be aware, and give of ourselves. We find that the time, effort, energy and commitment put in to maintaining an active community life produces enormous rewards.

Interested?

The community is currently at capacity and no vacancies are anticipated. We have no formal guest or internship program.

Whenever a home comes up for sale or rent, we post details on the Canadian Cohousing Network website. At those times we welcome serious enquiries regarding membership and create opportunities to visit as part of the outreach and orientation process. Otherwise, the community is not currently considering or responding to requests for visits.

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