

Elk Valley Community Profile

The Elk Valley, in the southeastern corner of British Columbia, extends from Elk Lake Provincial Park to Lake Koochanusa, following the path of the Elk River. Elkford, Sparwood, and Fernie are all towns in the Elk Valley with numerous other rural communities throughout the valley. Mountainside Church serves the greater Elk Valley Community.

With expansive mountain ranges, lakes, and rivers, the Elk Valley is an outdoor enthusiast's playground. Summer activities include hiking, biking, fishing, camping, and hunting. Winter activities including downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. A large percentage of the residents of the Elk Valley participate in at least some of these activities. Residents enjoy the spectacular mountain scenery, nature trails, fresh air, wildlife sightings, and friendliness of living in a small town.

Each of the communities in the valley has unique nuances that impact the culture and services in each town.

Sparwood:

- Hub location for all 5 of the Teck Coal mines in the area. A large percentage of Sparwood residents work for Teck or one of the many service and product suppliers for Teck, and work on a variety of shift work schedules (mines operate 24/7)
- Real estate to purchase or rent is generally easier to find in this area, and more affordable than other areas in the Elk Valley
- Has above average recreation facilities for a town of its size. And the recently established Sparwood Trails Alliance, is working on developing more outdoor trails in the area.

Fernie:

- Generally known more as a tourist destination, though there are still a considerable number of mine workers that live in the Fernie Area
- Fernie Alpine Resort is well known ski hill, located just minutes outside of town.
- Real estate is generally more expensive than Sparwood and is less available
- Boasts a variety of high-quality restaurants, more shopping options, and a largely known trail network for outdoor recreation.
- In addition to the public school system, The Fernie Academy is a high academic Charter school option from grades 1-12.

Elkford:

- This community 25 minutes north of Sparwood is at the end of the highway, and is the gateway to Elk Lakes Provincial Park
- Almost all residents are mine related employees, and shift work shapes the town culture
- Great community centre that serves the many young families that live in the area
- Residents generally travel out of town for most of their shopping and entertainment.