

RDKB Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Technical Memo 1 Summary

This document provides a summary of the full Technical Memo 1. For the full version, click [here](#).

Introduction

The RDKB is updating the region's **Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP)** to guide waste avoidance, reduction, and management for the next 10 years. The current SWMP was approved in 2005 and needs to be updated to set the legal framework for how waste, recycling and waste reduction/diversion is managed, to evaluate how our current systems are working, and to recommend areas for improvement, including how we can move towards zero waste.

The *Environmental Management Act* mandates regional districts to develop plans for the management of municipal solid waste and recyclable materials.

Principles and Targets

Guiding Principles

Eight provincial guiding principles help to scope the development of solid waste management plans.

1. Promote zero waste* approaches and support a circular economy*

Zero waste approaches aim to minimize waste generation and enable the sustainable use and reuse of products and materials.

2. Promote the first 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)

3. Maximize beneficial use of waste materials and manage residuals appropriately

Technology, best practices and infrastructure investments should continue to develop to recover any remaining materials and energy from the waste stream, and to manage residuals for disposal.

4. Support polluter and user-pay approaches and manage incentives to maximize behaviour outcomes

Producer and user responsibility for the management of products can be supported through the provision of market-based incentives, disposal restrictions on industry-stewarded products, zoning to support collection facilities, and support for reuse and remanufacturing businesses.

5. Prevent organics and recyclables from going into the garbage wherever practical

6. Collaborate with other regional districts wherever practical

Collaboration on many aspects of solid waste management (e.g., to access facilities and markets, share campaigns and programs) will support the most efficient and effective overall municipal solid waste system.

7. Develop collaborative partnerships with interested parties to achieve regional targets set in plans

All waste and recycling sector service providers, associations, and environmental organizations, product stewardship producers and agencies, and waste generators are key interested parties in achieving these targets. Encourage a marketplace that will complement stewardship programs and drive private sector innovation and investment towards the achievement of targets.

8. Level the playing field within regions for private and public solid waste management facilities

Solid waste management facilities within a given region should be subject to similar requirements.

*For more about these terms/concepts, continue reading.

Zero Waste/5 R Pollution Prevention Hierarchy

Zero waste is “the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health,” according to the Zero Waste International Alliance.

The 5 R pollution prevention hierarchy is a useful planning tool for moving towards zero waste. Once all achievable opportunities at a higher level have been taken, only then should the next level be looked at. For example, opportunities for recycling should be explored only after all opportunities for reduction and reuse of materials have been exhausted.



Circular Economy

Environment Canada defines a circular economy this way: Nothing is wasted. A circular economy retains and recovers as much value as possible from resources by reusing, repairing, refurbishing, re-manufacturing, repurposing, or recycling products and materials. It’s about using valuable resources wisely, thinking about waste as a resource instead of a cost, and finding innovative ways to better the environment and the economy. Visit [Environment Canada’s circular economy page\(External link\)](#) for more information and a few videos.

Provincial Targets

The BC Ministry of Environment and Parks has set a provincial waste disposal target to lower the municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal rate to 350 kg per capita (i.e., per person) per year.

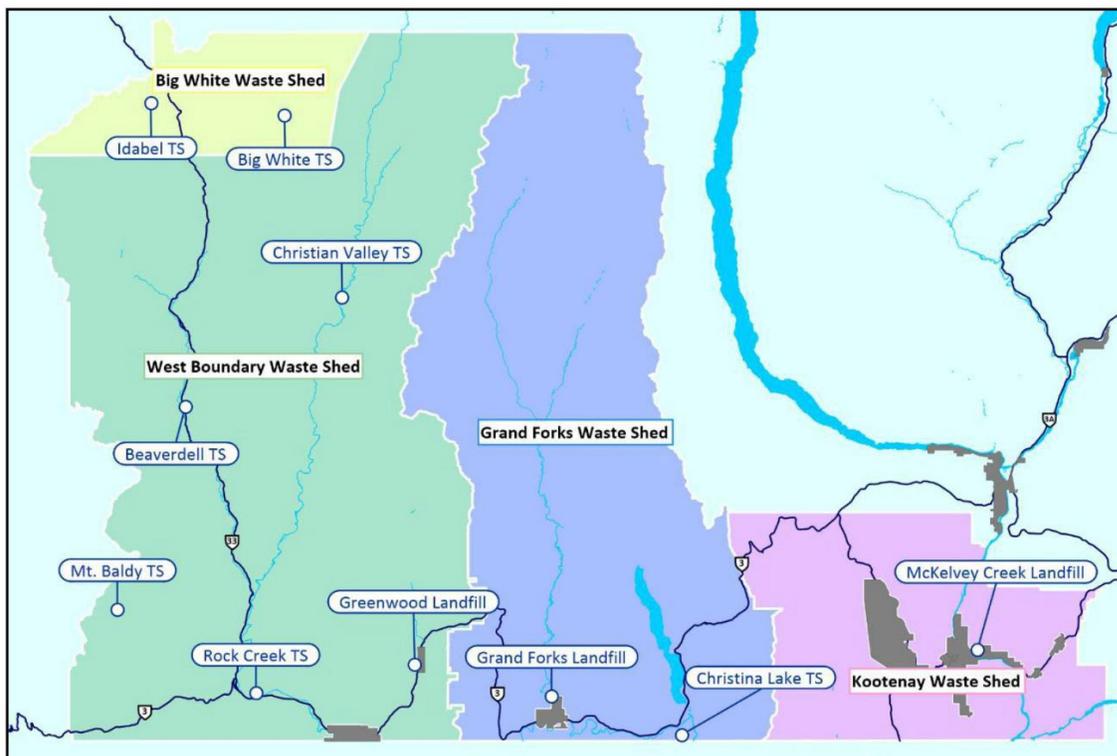
In 2023, British Columbians disposed of an average of 481 kg of municipal solid waste per person per year — down 88 kg per person since 2012, though higher than the low of 473 kg/person in 2016.

Solid Waste Management in the RDKB

Waste Sheds and Facilities

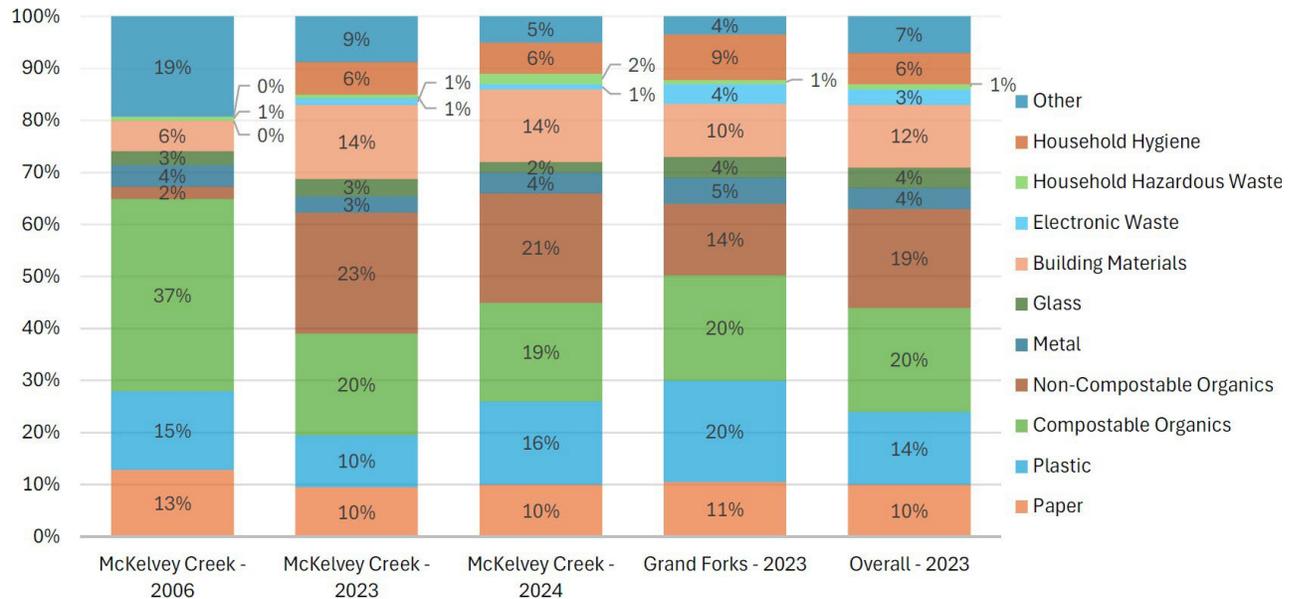
The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary can be separated into four different waste sheds by where waste is deposited. The RDKB operates four staffed transfer stations, three regional landfills, and three unstaffed transfer stations. These facilities are shown on the map below.

1. Big White Waste Shed: Waste from the Idabel and Big White Transfer Stations are brought to the Glenmore Landfill in Kelowna.
2. West Boundary Waste Shed (Greenwood Landfill): Waste from Electoral Area E (West Boundary), the Village of Midway, and the Village of Greenwood.
3. Grand Forks Waste Shed: Waste from Electoral Area C (Christina Lake) and Electoral Area D (Grand Forks Rural).
4. Kootenay Waste Shed (McKelvey Creek Landfill): Waste from the municipalities within the greater Trail area and Electoral Areas A and B.



Waste Composition

The figure below shows the waste composition for the RDKB based on waste composition studies for the McKelvey Creek Landfill and Grand Forks Landfill. The McKelvey Creek Landfill was studied in 2006, 2023, and later in 2024 following the implementation of the RDKB’s green bin program for food waste collection. The Grand Forks Landfill was studied in 2023.



Diversion

There are two types of diversion programs undertaken in the RDKB: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and RDKB implemented ones. EPR programs are provincially regulated and put the responsibility on the producer to manage the environmental impact of the item throughout its lifecycle, from selection of materials and design to the management of the product at the end of its life. These programs are required for certain products and are typically funded by charging the consumer a non-refundable fee for the collection and management of that product.

In addition to these EPR items, the RDKB requires the sorting and separation of specific materials at their disposal facilities where they are stockpiled prior to being marketed off-site and/or used beneficially within the landfill instead of soil, road building aggregate, or for composting. This includes the separation and chipping of clean wood and yard and garden waste, the collection and composting of food waste, and the separation and shipping off-site of scrap metal, including appliances, and propane tanks. Since record keeping of metal and food waste collected started in 2016, the amounts collected have continued to increase, with a clear increasing trend since 2022.

Waste Management Services

Garbage Collection

The RDKB has excellent coverage of the region for curbside collection, with most addresses served by the program. The RDKB has recently taken over the curbside collection service in the McKelvey Creek area (Trail, Rossland, Warfield, Fruitvale) with the implementation of the green bin program. In other parts of the Regional District where there are no curbside collection services (Blackjack, South Belt, Sheep Creek, Christina Lake – boat access, Big White, Idabel Lake, Christian Valley), residents and businesses in the area must self-haul waste to a transfer station.

Recycling

Curbside recycling of packaging and printed paper is offered throughout much of the region (approximately 95% of households) along with the curbside garbage collection programs. Recycling is collected once every two weeks and drop-off is available at ten facilities in the region.

Extended Producer Responsibility Programs

In British Columbia, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs have been put in place as an industry-led approach, which include the responsibility for producers to collect items and facilitate their reuse or recycling. These programs are typically funded by charging the consumer a fee when the product is purchased, referred to as eco fees, container recycling fees, or environmental handling fees. These product categories can be returned at locations in the [RDKB](#): beverage containers, smoke and CO2 alarms, thermostats, medications, oil, antifreeze, oil filters, empty oil, antifreeze containers, paint and household hazardous waste, batteries, electronics, tires, packaging and printed paper, light bulbs/tubes.

Organic Waste Collection Services

The RDKB currently offers green bin collection throughout most of the RDKB alongside the garbage collection program. This was most recently implemented in the eastern side of the District, with the greater Trail area receiving the service in 2023. Yard and garden waste is collected at most RDKB waste management facilities, and some of the municipalities offer seasonal curbside collection.

Composting

All food scraps and yard and garden waste collected in the RDKB are brought to the compost facility at the Grand Forks Landfill, which composts these residential food scraps along with septage sludge and yard and garden waste through a covered aerated static pile system to produce a landfill cover.

Policy Progress Update

This section presents a summary of the progress made with respect to the policies included in the 2005 Solid Waste Management Plan and organized by the 5 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, residuals).

Refer to the full [Technical Memo 1](#) for the full list of policies/strategies and their progress updates.

Reduce

In Progress, Ongoing, or Completed

- Educational materials for the green bin were developed and education regarding waste diversion programs are provided to Rotary Club and recreation programs. Ongoing education is provided to the public online.
- Upgrades to the Grand Forks organics diversion facility were completed.
- Businesses are supported in setting up organics diversion programs rather than assisted in conducting waste audits. A 'zero waste event guide' was developed and the 2026 BC Winter Games was provided with guidance on waste avoidance.
- RDKB offices were transitioned to digital files and waste diversion programs for containers, paper fibre, and beverage containers were implemented.
- Local reuse and reselling groups are included on the RDKB website.
- Trash to Treasure days are promoted in coordination with the RDCK.

Not Started or Abandoned

- The RDKB no longer has a fund set aside for private groups to promote waste reduction.
- A dedicated organics transfer station in the McKelvey Creek waste shed has not been completed at this time.

Reuse

In Progress, Ongoing, or Completed

- Clean wood waste is chipped and is utilized for compost or for operational material within the landfills.
- Local reuse and reselling groups are included on the RDKB website.
- Trash to Treasure days are promoted in coordination with the RDCK.

Not Started or Abandoned

- Reuse 'share sheds' were discontinued.
- Salvaging is not permitted at RDKB facilities for safety reasons.

Recycle

In Progress, Ongoing, or Completed

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs continue to be delivered at no cost to residents and local governments. In addition to provincial EPR program items, propane tanks are collected for recycling—the only non-EPR item in the collection stream. RecycleBC-funded recycling collection facilities are operated, and space is provided at solid waste management facilities for EPR products not accepted at private sector locations.
- EPR program materials and organic waste, in addition to waste, are collected at all but one of the RDKB solid waste facilities.
- Recycling continues for paper, plastic resins, glass, and metal containers.

- Curbside collection programs and services at transfer stations were expanded. Curbside collection is conducted throughout more rural areas, which is somewhat rare in BC.
- Recycling depots are free to use for EPR-accepted recyclable materials across the RDKB, but not for metals or non-EPR materials.
- Scrap metal is collected at waste facilities for recycling and use of the EPR program is encouraged for small and large appliances.
- Construction/demolition/renovation wood waste is separated. Clean wood is chipped and composted with sewage sludge at the McKelvey Creek and Grand Forks Landfill sites to produce a material for landfill cover. Treated and painted wood is used as landfill cover and operational material. Clean brush is composted.
- Centralized composting began in 2012 at the Grand Forks Landfill through a pilot program, which has since been established and expanded to produce Class A compost. An organics management strategy for the region was developed in 2019.

Not Started or Abandoned

- Backyard composting continues to be encouraged but is no longer supported financially.
- There needs to be an EPR program for mattresses in the region but they are not currently recycled. Beyond mattresses, the need for additional EPR programs has not been demonstrated.

Recover

Not Started

- Waste-to-energy options are unfeasible in the region due to the small quantity of municipal solid waste generated and BC regulations.

Residuals

In Progress, Ongoing, or Completed

- Landfill conformance reviews were conducted in 2025 for the three facilities to determine the requirements to operate all regional landfills in accordance with BC Environment's Landfill Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste.
- All landfill operators are certified and many landfill staff have the Manager of Landfill Operations (MOLO) designation.
- Transfer Station facilities were developed throughout the RDKB to bring waste to one of the three regional landfills. Four of the seven transfer stations are staffed.
- Closure plans are complete. Rock Creek and Christina Lake landfills are closed and are now operated as transfer stations. Rock Creek and Beavercreek are covered by environmental monitoring programs. Christina Lake was closed in 2005, but it is unknown if still monitored.
- Contaminated soil generated outside the RDKB is only accepted upon approval of the General Manager of Environmental Services.
- Acceptance of special and biomedical waste continues to be prohibited, and the ban on disposing of recyclable materials at RDKB facilities continues.
- The Solid Waste Management Bylaw, tipping fee schedule, and design, operations and closure plans for the regional landfills are updated as required.