

Blueberry River Restoration Society

Annual Report

2023-2024

*Healing Land,
Empowering People*



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Blueberry River Restoration Society

Healing Land, Empowering People

The Blueberry River Restoration Society exists to foster the healing of the land base to a state which will sustain healthy, functioning ecosystems needed for the restoration of Blueberry River First Nations' Treaty Rights.

The Society is one part of the historic 2023 Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement. Governed by a Board of Directors of seven members, three are appointed by the Provincial Government of British Columbia and four are appointed by Blueberry River First Nations. Our board considers itself in service to Blueberry River First Nations and places the highest value on our relationship with them, while also being accountable to the Government of British Columbia and the public.



Message from the Chair

On behalf of our board of directors, I'm honoured to share our inaugural report on the start-up of Blueberry River Restoration Society.

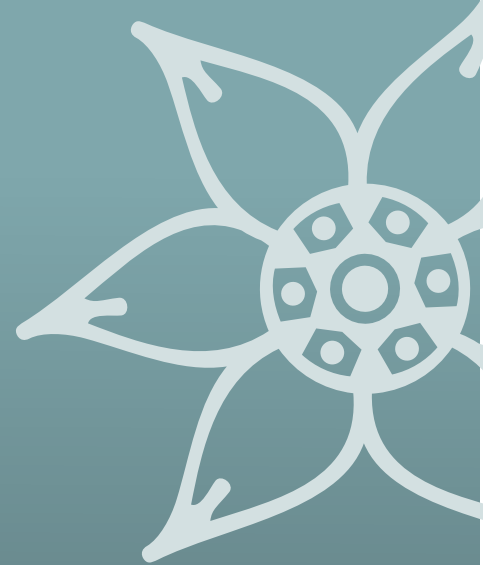
The mandate established by Blueberry River First Nations and the Government of British Columbia is unique and rightfully ambitious based on their historic agreement to establish our organization with an initial commitment of \$200 million.

As the founding directors of this vital organization, we are committed to responsibly stewarding the resources entrusted to the Society with accountability for current and future generations of Blueberry River First Nations. We recognize that the well-being of the land and people are tightly woven, with kinship and guardianship being central to our success. In our first year, we have progressively moved through the start-up of this organization with these values at the forefront, while also being mindful that the Society acts at the right pace to balance the tension between speed and sustainability in ensuring Treaty Rights are restored.

Our first year has focused on building a strong foundation to leverage success from, as we work diligently towards Article 10 – Healing the Land and People as established in the Implementation Agreement. In 2023-24, we have focused on and achieved the following:

Developed a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan. This includes establishing the vision to guide every aspect of the Society's work ahead:

Blueberry River First Nations, a proud and unified people, are thriving in a land where the ecological conditions allow for the restoration of their Treaty rights which in turn empowers them to thrive and practice their culture across their beautiful, healthy territories as long as the sun shines, grass grows, and rivers flow.



In tandem with the Society's vision, we identified four foundational goals, each with specific objectives and indicators of success:



*Trusted
Relationship*



*Accelerate the
Healing of the Land*



*Accountable
Administration*



*Build Our Team
and Develop Talent*

I invite you to read our three-year Strategic Plan that lays out the intentional framework that we employ to govern the Society towards achieving specific objectives in alignment with its vision, mission, and mandate.

Key deliverables that the Society has achieved in our inaugural year include:

Forming trust-based, reciprocal relationships

We have worked with clear intention to develop healthy, transparent, and accountable relationships with Blueberry River First Nations and the Government of British Columbia. Our significant investment of time and attention to listening, learning, and collaborating is paying dividends as we prepare to undertake significant multi-year landscape-level restoration projects across the territory.

Hiring the right leadership for the Society.

The board is confident that we have garnered strong leadership through our hiring of Angela D'Amato van den Hout, who began as our Chief Executive Officer in June 2024. The board recruited Angela through a thorough executive search process. Angela has quickly established strong systems and relationships while also actively building our team and organizational capacity to deliver results. Angela's unique leadership skills, knowledge and experience are having a positive impact as we operationalize the Society.

Establishing strong governance, financial, and operational policies.

The Society was founded through bylaws and direction from the Implementation Agreement. Since its inception, the board has diligently worked to establish strong internal controls and effective governance to steward and scale the organization for impact. This work is already enabling short-term results with a suite of restoration projects initiated in our first year — and positioning our work to scale considerably from here.

I would like to express gratitude and respect for all my fellow directors for their unwavering dedication and enthusiasm as fiduciaries committed to achieving the vision for healing and restoring the land while creating restoration-based economic opportunities in northeast British Columbia. I know I speak for all of the board when I say that we consider ourselves fortunate and honoured to be involved in such a unique and important organization.

With gratitude,

Brodie Guy, Chair



About

The landmark 2021 BC Supreme Court decision on cumulative ecological and cultural impacts to the Blueberry River First Nations, led to the formation of a unique partnership between the Province of BC and the Nations, the Blueberry River First Nations Implementation Agreement.

Part of the Agreement details the intention for the partners to co-govern a Society dedicated to the planning and management of ecological and cultural restoration, ensuring the ability for the Nations to exercise their Treaty 8 Rights is restored.

Established on March 31, 2023, the Society is dedicated to restoring the land, water, and ecosystems that sustain Blueberry River First Nations' way of life.

The Society is developing plans to start healing the land, by fostering the connectivity of restored ecosystems, re-establishing natural biodiversity, and ensuring the long-term health of these vital landscapes. Restoration of ecosystems is expected to initiate the renewal of the Nations' ability to practice their culture; each aspect of restoration strengthening cultural ways of living to create lasting, reciprocal change.

The Society works closely with Blueberry River First Nations and the Province of BC to ensure plans align with both the Nations' and the Province's priorities. We're uniquely partnered to look forward to a future of Indigenous empowerment, while establishing best practices in restoration to share with the both the Province of BC and First Nation communities for further advancement.

Mission

Our mission is to lead impactful, reciprocal restoration projects that heal the land and, in turn, the people. We honour the traditional knowledge of the Blueberry River First Nations and aim to work in harmony with modern science to create a landscape where ecological balance is restored, and Treaty Rights can be fully realized by the Blueberry River First Nations community.

A Vision for the Future

Our vision is a thriving Blueberry River First Nations community, where restored ecosystems support cultural practices, hunting, fishing, and other rights guaranteed by Treaty 8. We believe that by healing the land, we are contributing to the physical, emotional, and cultural healing of the Blueberry River people.

Strategic Priorities



Trusted Relationships

Meaningfully involve and collaborate with Blueberry River First Nations leadership and families in our decisions and work.



Accelerate The Healing Of The Lands

Implement world-class reciprocal restoration projects that focus on healing the lands and waters that mean the most to Blueberry River First Nations with the goal of contributing to the restoration of their Treaty Rights.



Accountable Administration

Develop enterprise-level systems for openly and responsibly managing the funds we are entrusted to steward.



Build Out Team And Develop Talent

Build a team of top talent while utilizing, cultivating and reinforcing local capabilities.



Reciprocal Restoration

That the well-being of the land and people are tightly woven, with kinship and guardianship being central to our success.



Making Every Dollar Matter

That the Society responsibly stewards the resources entrusted to it with accountability for current and future generations of Blueberry River First Nations.



Transparent Collaboration

That the Society's work is always and actively guided by Blueberry River First Nations in an open and accountable relationship that provides transparency to all.



Agility And Sustainability

That the Society acts at the right pace to balance the tension between speed and sustainability in ensuring Treaty Rights are restored.



World-Class Approaches

That the Society's work will draw from the best examples of reciprocal restoration from Blueberry River First Nations, the region and around the world, adapted to, and focused on, meaningful restoration by and for Blueberry River First Nations.





Board of Directors

Governance

The Society is governed by an independent Board of Directors, made up of four appointees from the Blueberry River First Nations and three appointees from the Province of British Columbia. To ensure Blueberry's voice is dominant at the table, quorum is established with at least four Directors, the majority of whom must be Blueberry-Appointed Directors. The Board is composed of a group of dedicated volunteers committed to building the Society through collaborative and thoughtful processes to achieve the mandate of the organization. Each brings a unique set of skills and experience to best support the Society's mandate



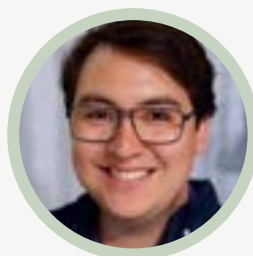
*Brodie Guy,
Chair
(Provincial Appointee)*



*Alicia Woods
Vice-Chair
(BRFN Appointee)*



*Tom Either
Secretary / Treasurer
(Provincial Appointee)*



*Kashtin Apsassin
Director
(BRFN Appointee)*



*Trish Balcaen
Director
(Provincial Appointee)*



*Sherry Dominic
Director
(BRFN Appointee)*

The Society would like to acknowledge past Directors for their contribution to the Society's earliest phase:
Greg McDade – Director | Norma Pyle – Chair | Wayne Sawchuk – Director



Year One Work

From its inception on March 31, 2023, through its first fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, the Society prioritized building a robust and sustainable foundation to guide its future restoration efforts for Blueberry River First Nations' lands.

In this first year, the Society undertook foundational steps with a level of care and precision essential for establishing responsible management of the community's investment trust and building an effective organization. This initial phase was carefully advanced to ensure the Board's deliberate approach to creating an enduring organization equipped to best serve the Nations and Province in their unique partnership to start to heal the land and people of Blueberry River First Nations.

The progress achieved in the Society's first year, from establishing a strong governance framework to building strategic plans and partnerships, exemplifies the importance of a measured, responsible approach in setting up an organization of the Society's scale and purpose. The Board will ensure, based on the strong foundation it continues to build, governance and financial management plans serve to protect the interests of Blueberry River First Nations while ensuring that restoration initiatives are impactful, sustainable, and best support future generations of the community.





Establishment of Committees

The Society's governance was strengthened by the formation of four key Board committees, each integral to its strategy and operations:

Strategy and Governance Committee

This committee developed the Society's governance framework, including the Board Charter, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of Directors and management. Their work ensures clarity in decision-making processes and alignment with the Society's mission, setting standards for and overseeing transparency and accountability.

Communications Committee

With a focus on building relationships, the Communications Committee initiated critical outreach efforts with Blueberry River First Nations' Elders, Council, and department leads. These early relationship-building activities laid the groundwork for the trust and collaboration necessary for long-term success.

Finance, Investment, and Audit Committee

Working closely with George & Bell Consultants, this committee developed a draft Investment Policy centered on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles inclusive of Indigenous Rights. Additionally, the Society's first financial audit was completed, confirming that the Society is in good financial standing. This milestone reinforces the Board's commitment to financial stewardship and long-term fiscal health.

Project Review Committee

This committee initiated the preliminary work program and action plan, aimed at aligning projects with strategic goals and ensuring they address the most pressing restoration needs within the Claim Area identified in the Implementation Agreement. This committee also began development of a custom approach to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), in collaboration with Blueberry River First Nations.

Board members went on a guided tour of the Claim Area in early 2024 to better understand the landscape where restoration is focused. The Society has placed focus on developing the collaboration between the Province and the Nations, engaging in collaborative efforts with various provincial ministries and Blueberry River First Nations, setting the stage for a foundation of genuine trust, collaboration, and transparency. These engagements are crucial for aligning the Society's restoration goals with provincial initiatives and complementing ongoing restoration work within Blueberry River First Nations' territory.



Restoration Approach

The Society is committed to an ecological restoration program grounded in collaboration, cultural renewal, and community-centered approaches.

The Society's planning emphasizes building trusted relationships with Blueberry River First Nations through active involvement of leadership and families, ensuring that restoration efforts resonate with the Nation's values and Treaty Rights. This will be achieved by embedding Indigenous knowledge, fostering transparent communication, and creating clear pathways for ongoing engagement.

The restoration approach includes a phased project rollout, starting with small, impactful projects scaling up over time. Three projects were approved this year and include research into lines of sight and the effect on wildlife, advancing LiDAR applications, and restoration of stream and riparian sites. Projects are designed to enhance biodiversity, reconnect ecosystems, and sustain culturally significant practices. Incorporating world-class restoration examples, the Society aims to establish a long-term ecological and cultural restoration program framework that is scientifically rigorous and culturally resonant. Trust and transparency at the forefront, there will be a comprehensive approach to ongoing information sharing, including a special focus on youth and Elders' leadership.



The Society has been designated with managing a significant trust to initiate its activity, with the potential opportunity to increase the fund with additional Provincial contributions over time. Therefore, sustainable management of the trust and effective reporting on its successes are a significant component of the Society's work, the Society will ensure financial stewardship through transparent governance, accountable, diversified, socially responsible fund management.

The strategic approach includes rigorous evaluation mechanisms, enabling the Society to monitor project effectiveness and ensure alignment with Blueberry River First Nations' values. Further, prioritization of Treaty 8-owned businesses is aimed at strengthening the local restoration economy and providing opportunities expanding beyond the Claim Area over time.

Through these efforts, the Society envisions a thriving landscape where restored ecological conditions support the cultural and environmental legacy of the Blueberry River First Nations for future generations.





Blueberry River Restoration Society **Financial Statements**

March 31, 2024

Management's Responsibility

To the Board of Blueberry River Restoration Society

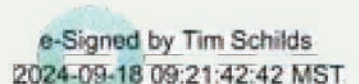
Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the accompanying financial statements, including responsibility for significant accounting judgments and estimates in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. This responsibility includes selecting appropriate accounting principles and methods, and making decisions affecting the measurement of transactions in which objective judgment is required.

In discharging its responsibilities for the integrity and fairness of the financial statements, management designs and maintains the necessary accounting systems and related internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are authorized, assets are safeguarded and financial records are properly maintained to provide reliable information for the preparation of financial statements.

The Board of Directors is composed entirely of Directors who are neither management nor employees of the Society. The Board is responsible for overseeing management in the performance of its financial reporting responsibilities, and for approving the financial information included in the annual report. The Board fulfils these responsibilities by reviewing the financial information prepared by management and discussing relevant matters with management and external auditors. The Board is also responsible for recommending the appointment of the Society's external auditors.

MNP LLP is appointed by the Board to audit the financial statements and report directly to them; their report follows. The external auditors have full and free access to, and meet periodically and separately with, both the Board and management to discuss their audit findings.

September 12, 2024


2024-09-18 09:21:42:42 MST

Chief Financial Officer

To the Board of Blueberry River Restoration Society:

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Blueberry River Restoration Society (the "Society"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Society as at March 31, 2024, and the results of its operations, its changes in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Society's financial reporting process.

MNP LLP

10611-102nd Street, Fort St. John BC, V1J 5L3

T: 250.785.8166 F: 250.785.5660



MNP.ca

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Society's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Society to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Society Act of British Columbia, we report that, in our opinion, the accounting principles in Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a consistent basis.

Fort St. John, British Columbia

September 12, 2024

The logo for MNP LLP, featuring the letters 'MNP' in a large, bold, black font, with 'LLP' in a smaller, black font to the right.

Chartered Professional Accountants

The MNP logo, consisting of the letters 'MNP' in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

Blueberry River Restoration Society
Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2024

2024

Assets

Current

Cash (Note 4)	92,260,178
Accounts receivable (Note 5)	15,610

92,275,788

Liabilities

Current


Accounts payable and accruals (Note 6)	76,986
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Net Assets

Unrestricted net assets, end of year	92,198,802
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92,275,788

Approved on behalf of the Board

 e-Signed by Tom Ethier

2024-09-12 18:40:08:08 MST

Director

 e-Signed by Brodie Guy

2024-09-13 10:18:13:13 MST

Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Blueberry River Restoration Society
Statement of Operations
For the year ended March 31, 2024

	2024
Revenue	
Funding revenue <i>(Note 7)</i>	80,000,000
Disturbance payments	8,292,420
Interest revenue	4,533,621
	92,826,041
Administrative expenses	
Bank charges and interest	1,439
Board travel and meetings	32,674
Contracted services	276,664
Directors' fees	119,613
Insurance	28,000
Office expenses	1,760
Professional fees	50,389
Training	524
Travel	8,442
Strategic planning	23,277
	542,782
Restoration program expenses	
Staff travel	1,476
Contracted services	82,981
	84,457
Total expenses	627,239
Excess of revenue over expenses	92,198,802

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Blueberry River Restoration Society
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
For the year ended March 31, 2024

	2024
Net assets, beginning of year	-
Excess of revenue over expenses	92,198,802
Net assets, end of year	92,198,802

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Blueberry River Restoration Society
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended March 31, 2024

2024

Cash provided by (used for) the following activities

Operating	
Excess of revenue over expenses	92,198,802
Changes in working capital accounts	
Accounts receivable	(15,610)
Accounts payable and accruals	76,986
Increase in cash resources	92,260,178
Cash resources, beginning of year	-
Cash resources, end of year	92,260,178

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

3. Significant accounting policies *(Continued from previous page)*

Financial instruments *(Continued from previous page)*

All financial assets except derivatives are tested annually for impairment. Management considers whether the investee has experienced continued losses for a period of years, recent collection experience for the loan, such as a default or delinquency in interest or principal payments, in determining whether objective evidence of impairment exists. Any impairment, which is not considered temporary, is recorded in the statement of operations. Write-downs of financial assets measured at cost and/or amortized cost to reflect losses in value are not reversed for subsequent increases in value. Reversals of any net remeasurements of financial assets measured at fair value are reported in the statement of remeasurement gains and losses.

4. Cash

There is no externally restricted cash related to funding revenue.

5. Accounts receivable

Included in accounts receivable is \$15,610 of Goods and Services Taxes receivable from the Canada Revenue Agency.

6. Accounts payable and accruals

Included in accounts payable and accruals is \$1,890 of source deductions payable to the Canada Revenue Agency.

7. Funding revenue

2024

Province of British Columbia

80,000,000

8. Payments to employees and contractors

The BC Societies Act requires that disclosure be made for remuneration paid to employees or contractors in excess of \$75,000 in the year.

There are currently no employees of the Society.

Included in contract services for the current year is \$98,000 of payments made to one contractor.

1. Incorporation and nature of the organization

Blueberry River Restoration Society (the "Society") is located in Fort St. John. The Society's purpose is to plan and advance cultural and ecological restoration of Blueberry River First Nations territory, and to restore members' ability to exercise their Treaty Rights within their unceded Lands. The Society is incorporated as a non-profit organization and is not a registered charity and thus is exempt from income taxes under ITA 149(1)(L) of the Income Tax Act ("the Act").

2. First-time adoption of Canadian public sector accounting standards

This is the first year of operations for the Society. In preparing these financial statements, the Society has elected not to apply any of the transitional provisions permitted by Section 2125 First-time Adoption at the date of transition to Canadian public sector accounting standards.

3. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements are the representations of management, prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards using the standards applicable to government not-for-profit organizations, including the following significant accounting policies:

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include balances with banks and short-term investments with maturities of three months or less. Cash subject to restrictions that prevent its use for current purposes is included in restricted cash.

Revenue recognition

The Society follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Restricted investment income is recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted investment income is recognized as revenue when earned.

Measurement uncertainty (use of estimates)

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period.

Accounts receivable are stated after evaluation as to their collectability and an appropriate allowance for doubtful accounts is provided where considered necessary.

By their nature, these judgments are subject to measurement uncertainty, and the effect on the financial statements of changes in such estimates and assumptions in future years could be material. These estimates and assumptions are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary they are reported in excess of revenues over expenses in the years in which they become known.

Financial instruments

The Society recognizes its financial instruments when the Society becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. All financial instruments are initially recorded at their fair value.

At initial recognition, the Society may irrevocably elect to subsequently measure any financial instrument at fair value. The Society has not made such an election during the year.

The Society subsequently measures cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accruals at amortized cost using the effective interest rate method. Interest income is recognized in the statement of operations.

Transaction costs directly attributable to the origination, acquisition, issuance or assumption of financial instruments are added to the carrying amount for those financial instruments subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost.

Blueberry River Restoration Society
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended March 31, 2024

9. Payments to directors

Included in expenses for the current year are \$119,613 for Board of Director fees. The expenses were recorded at the exchange amount, which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

2024

Chair	32,700
Vice-Chair	1,275
Secretary-Treasurer	20,838
Director	15,187
Director	12,862
Director	5,175
Director	5,738
Director	17,188
Director	6,950
Director	1,700
<hr/>	
	119,613
