

# AT Banter Podcast Episode 259 - CRIS

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

programs, trip, client, people, volunteers, year, hunting, find, bear, wilderness, called, offer, adventures, activity, cris, organization, adaptive, community, okanagan, ryan

## SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Laura McEwen, Ryan Fleury

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**R** Rob Mineault 00:56  
Hey, and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter,

**S** Steve Barclay 01:02  
Banter banter.

**R** Ryan Fleury 01:04  
Sorry I've got the cowbell but I lost the drumstick.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:07  
Oh man, hit it with your head.

**R** Ryan Fleury 01:09  
Got it. Got it. Okay, do over.

**S** Steve Barclay 01:12  
No.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:14  
There we go. There it is.

**S** Steve Barclay 01:17  
Its time these people learn how this podcast before the editing

**R** Ryan Fleury 01:23  
They don't want to know how the sausage is made.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:29  
Hey my name is Rob Mineault. Oh, and joining me today is "drumstick" Fleury, Mr. Ryan Fleury And Mr. Steve Barclay is here too.

**S** Steve Barclay 01:53  
That's probably me. Yeah.

**R** Rob Mineault 01:56  
Hey, how are you guys today?

**R** Ryan Fleury 02:00  
I'm good how are you?

**R** Rob Mineault 02:02  
Oh are you can't be good. Didn't you hear, Facebook is down! Instagram's down!

**R** Ryan Fleury 02:13  
Instagram WhatsApp and Facebook have been down for hours.

**S** Steve Barclay 02:16  
Really? The Apocalypse?

**R** Rob Mineault 02:19  
Like oh, Steve didn't even know Yeah, Yeah, well maybe who knows maybe maybe it'll stay down.



Ryan Fleury 02:26

Someone on Twitter who said it was some sort of attack that they think it may not come back.



Rob Mineault 02:34

It was that drop that bad? Really?



Ryan Fleury 02:37

Yeah. I didn't dig into it.



Rob Mineault 02:40

But what a dream that would be oh my gosh, give somebody the Nobel Peace. if someone like honestly like I would be. I feel like they would be a hero. We would actually give them the Nobel Peace Prize because it be like you put things back into Pandora's box. Way to go.



Steve Barclay 03:00

Three networks down with one attack?



Rob Mineault 03:03

Yeah. Yeah. Totally. Yeah. So so no word as of yet as to what the what the deal is.



Ryan Fleury 03:11

Nobody's heard I haven't seen I haven't seen anything on Twitter yet.



Steve Barclay 03:14

Yeah. Interesting. I'm sure it'll be on the news.



Rob Mineault 03:17

I mean, we shouldn't be so flippant because I know a lot of people maybe use Facebook for a lot of cool things. Like you know, some of the some of the disability community stuff. So I mean, that's that's not cool. But and you know, especially if you're using one of these social media networks as your main source of like community. Yeah, I imagine it's actually not cool, but and that is true. We can build a new one, we'll build a different one that's not evil. Maybe

we'll go back to MySpace. So all those other sites are probably still around somewhere. No, probably. Everyone just needs your login information and itemized. It's bigger. It's probably around here somewhere. Steve, did you have MySpace?

S

Steve Barclay 04:04

What's MySpace?

R

Rob Mineault 04:05

You didn't have a MySpace?

S

Steve Barclay 04:10

Me. No, Never had MySpace.

R

Rob Mineault 04:14

Oh, wow. Well, how did you miss MySpace?

S

Steve Barclay 04:17

I don't know. I don't know.

R

Rob Mineault 04:19

What were you doing in -- Like, the whatever. What would that have been like? 2000. Early 2000?

R

Ryan Fleury 04:26

Yeah

S

Steve Barclay 04:26

I managed to avoid it entirely.

R

Rob Mineault 04:29

Well, probably a good thing. Yeah, geez, having that. Having that having an office at Aroga obviously, you're you weren't. You weren't in the trenches with the rest of us. What else is going on with you guys?

S

Steve Barclay 04:49

Oh, I don't know. I just run around and it's, we're in a busy time. You know, it's schools back and things are happening.

R

Ryan Fleury 04:57

And it's pumpkin spice season.

R

Rob Mineault 05:00

Oh, don't even get me started. I bought three bath three boxes of Pumpkin Spice Cheerios yesterday.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:06

Did you buy three? I haven't tried them yet

S

Steve Barclay 05:08

Pumpkin spice Cheerios. Really? Yeah, yep.

R

Rob Mineault 05:11

Yeah, they're they're pretty good. They're not as good though as the year that they had pumpkin spice mini wheats. They haven't had it since.

S

Steve Barclay 05:19

Really?

R

Rob Mineault 05:20

Yeah. And while we're talking about breakfast cereal, is a very hard hitting topic of breakfast cereal. I did see in the store too. This is exciting. I saw a cereal called Monster Mash. And what they have done is they took Count chocula, frankenberry and boobery I believe and mix them all together. And they've called it monster mash.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:47

Special for Halloween.

R

Rob Mineault 05:48

Yeah, I don't know what happened to count chacula and frankenberry and blueberry, but those are really big as when I was a kid. And I do have to say that I've been I've missing them. So I mean, obviously the factories are still around like obviously, they can still make count chacula I don't know why they've discontinued it. They should just bring them back.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:10

Yeah, some of us missed out on those sugary sweet cereals children.

R

Rob Mineault 06:14

Well, the more than the more reason to enjoy them now.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:16

Absolutely.

R

Rob Mineault 06:17

You're in your golden years.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:23

Okay, Grandpa

R

Rob Mineault 06:25

They happen earlier these days. What's I mean, what's the point of having golden years when you're too old to enjoy them?

S

Steve Barclay 06:36

Yeah, might as well.

R

Rob Mineault 06:38

Just to go do the lawn bowl. What are we doing today, Ryan?

R

Ryan Fleury 06:56

Today we are speaking with Laura McEwen from an organization in Kelowna BC called Access Wilderness or Adoptive Adventures.

R

Rob Mineault 07:07

Yeah. How did we not know about these guys? This is amazing.

R

Ryan Fleury 07:10

No idea. Not a clue.

R

Rob Mineault 07:14

This is this is part of the problem with I don't know, I don't know if it's like the internet. There's just too much crap on the internet, it's just it's so hard to find, like really incredible, important organizations like theirs. That's doing a lot of really, really, really good work. And, you know, here we are, you know, your podcast doing doing a podcast, and we haven't we haven't run into them in six years. So and they've been around for 20 years, but no, this is great. You know, they, they basically just to be or take anybody out into the bush and they do hunting, and they do fishing, and they do kayaking and whitewater rafting and doing all sorts of stuff. Like, I'll be interested to hear exactly what but yeah, they just take people out into the woods that that normally would never get a chance to do it. And yeah, it's got to be a pretty amazing experience.

R

Ryan Fleury 08:13

Yeah, absolutely. When I came across the website, I was kind of blown away as to why we had never heard of them before. Why? It was just astounded at the amount of stuff they do. And just thinking about everything that's involved with planning one of their trips. You know, if you have someone in a wheelchair, you've got your wheelchair lifts, you've got the accessible band, you got all these adoptions. You got to make depending on the trip, right? So yeah, it was incredible.

R

Rob Mineault 08:44

Yeah, 100% a couple years ago, I took like a two day camping trip. And that took me like a week and a half to plan. So I can only imagine the amount of planning and, you know, and hard work that goes into one of these adventures.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:01

Yeah, they do some cool stuff. So it'll be interesting to listen to what she has to say.

R

Rob Mineault 09:05

Although we're gonna we're going to contact her through Facebook Live, so I guess I don't know. Maybe that's not happening. I'm just kidding. Man, I'm so curious. Now. You think it's the Russians?

R

R

Ryan Fleury 09:22

Well, I did I did see a headline today that it sounds like it sounds like the Trump running for 2024 is the lead candidate or the republicans so maybe the Russians are involved somehow maybe Trump's involved? I don't know.

R

Rob Mineault 09:35

Well actually now because the Russians wouldn't take down Facebook, honestly they like Facebook. They would like yeah, cuz that's how they spread all their misinformation.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:45

I see.

R

Rob Mineault 09:46

I'm sorry, we're going down to political .. you know what I noticed I noticed in the last two shows I keep using the word rabbit hole a lot.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:56

Yeah, they are on the mind?

R

Rob Mineault 09:58

I guess so.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:59

I don't know. Maybe you need a pet rabbit

R

Rob Mineault 10:02

Maybe ... no actually no I don't think I do because as you can see there's things that rabbits like look cute but I feel like they're they're kind of all dicks.

R

Ryan Fleury 10:13

Send all emails to [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com)

S

Steve Barclay 10:19

.....



And if you want to eventually determine whether Rob's right or not, read Watership Down.

R

Rob Mineault 10:31

I don't think we're going to get any hate mail on this.

S

Steve Barclay 10:38

How dare you malign my bunny?

R

Rob Mineault 10:41

They chew on cords, they crap I don't think you litter train them, I think they just find those pellets everywhere...

R

Ryan Fleury 10:51

They're good eating.

R

Rob Mineault 10:54

Okay send all hate mail to Ryan. See I haven't eaten rabbit.

R

Ryan Fleury 11:10

Too funny.

R

Rob Mineault 11:11

I don't know maybe that's a maybe that's an expedition or adventure that they go maybe they go rabbit hunting lab as he said that that would be actually challenging. I could see like trying to try to take down a rabbit, they're pretty fast. And see that'd be pretty big challenge I guess. And then we got the size we got the size advantage and the guns.

S

Steve Barclay 11:31


That's right. Good 22 will pop a hole right in one of those little buggers.


R


Rob Mineault 11:35


Yeah, you have to hit it hit him though. They run really fast. Although I guess you get them when they're sleeping or something.


 Ryan Fleury 11:44  
We're gonna send you to a hunter education course

 Steve Barclay 12:01  
If it's not charging, it's not fun.


 Rob Mineault 12:15  
Sporting would be using a sharp stick, then that's a sporting Sure. Everything with a gun. Sporting that is. But anyways, not sure how we went down that rabbit hole.


 Steve Barclay 12:33  
Maybe we should just bring on our guests now.

 Ryan Fleury 12:38  
Joining us now is Laura McEwen. Manager of program delivery at community recreational initiatives society. Laura, thank you so much for joining us today.

 Laura McEwen 12:49  
No, yeah, no problem. I'm happy to be here. I'm glad we can make it work.

 Ryan Fleury 12:52  
So I'm Ryan and joining me in the room are Steve Barclay.

 Laura McEwen 12:55  
Hello, Steve.

 Ryan Fleury 13:01  
And Rob Mineault.

 Rob Mineault 13:02  
Hello there

hello there.

L

Laura McEwen 13:03

Hey, Rob.

R

Ryan Fleury 13:04

So Laura, thank you again for joining us. When I found the website access wilderness, I was pretty intrigued about what the society CRIS is doing. And the community you service. So can you tell us a little bit about the society?

L

Laura McEwen 13:21

Yeah, you bet. Um, so yeah, we're we're called Chris stands for community recreational initiatives society. And we've been around and Kalona for 20 years, we just celebrated our 20th year anniversary. And so that means we've been offering adaptive sport and recreation for 20 years now within the Okanagan, and now we're even expanding north and south of us as well. And we were divided into three programs. So we have our adaptive adventures, which is our guided and supported urban day programs. So more of the local one to two hour programs where we take people out kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, we're so lucky here in the Okanagan to have such quick access to to so many different activities. So that's our adaptive adventures program. Our second program is the adaptive rentals program, which is a program where individuals can access adaptive equipment for individual or independent sport and recreation so they can rent say, an adaptable cycle and go out with their friends or family for a day of cycling on their own. And then our third program, which is the one I'm managing is the accessible wilderness expeditions program. And this one's really fun. It's a guided multi day wilderness trips. And it can it can mean so many things we go so many places we we we've done so many different activities and and we've been offering these adaptive travel experiences now for for as long as CRIS has been around.

R

Ryan Fleury 15:05

Yeah, and I think one of the things I saw was that you guys have taking have taken people out on hunting trips and you have, you know, specialized equipment to accommodate people in wheelchairs and that sort of thing.

L

Laura McEwen 15:20

That's right. Yeah, so we just began a couple years ago offering hunting as an activity with the help of a corporate sponsor that came up came along with us and yeah, so now we're able to offer just another activity for those who you know, used to hunt pre injury, or, or those who just want to give it a try for the first time and want to get out in the back country and experience what it's like to hunt or as fishing as well as another one that we've expanded to.

S

Steve Barclay 15:51

Yeah, can I come hunting with you? Because my hunting buddies suck.

L

Laura McEwen 15:58

L Laura McEwen 15:55

We're always looking for more volunteers. So yeah. be fun to have you.

R Ryan Fleury 16:04

So what is the main population group you guys accommodate to or for?

L Laura McEwen 16:10

I can't really say we have a main population, we really serve all ages and people of all different backgrounds and barriers that they experience. So anywhere from youth, you know, with the cognitive physical disability to an older adults with intellectual or sensory challenges. Really, if anyone experiences any type of barrier to accessing the wilderness, we can help them you know, get out there and enjoy the activity.

R Ryan Fleury 16:43

It really sounds like the community has rallied around the organization or the society and really, really supports it with tandem bikes or vans alternate alternative cycles i'm not sure i forget those what those are called. But this community support really sounds incredible.

L Laura McEwen 17:05

Yeah, we're You're very lucky, where we are here in Kelowna to have such a huge base of support, corporate sponsors, you know, just community members who want to come out and volunteer and get to know our program, we find we can find a role for any type of volunteer and if they want to get involved in the office or if they want to come out there on multi day trips with us, we we certainly welcome them and their help. And yeah, and our founder of the organization, his name is Troy Becker, he it's his family member that lives with down syndrome and that family member has inspired him to to offer these accessible trips and experiences for for individuals who are not able to get out there on their own and need that extra support. And so that's where that's where it all began.

R Ryan Fleury 17:56

And there are many other programs like this in the province?

L Laura McEwen 18:01

No, we are we're quite unique and and powerful within the nonprofit charitable organization worlds here in Kelowna. So we do have the largest fleet of adaptive equipment in the Okanagan. So like you mentioned, we have various cycles that are adaptive. We have kayaks with the deputations we can make on them, we have the trail rider, our our old trusty trail rider that we've had, you know, for the whole 20 years that we've been around, it's a it's a really neat piece of equipment. It's an all terrain wheelchair, and that with the help of a guide and a Sherpa we can basically get anyone to the summit of any mountain they want to go to it's it's incredible.

R Ryan Fleury 18:46

**R** Ryan Fleury 18:48  
There's hope for me yet to climb a mountain Steve.

**S** Steve Barclay 18:52  
Well I keep offering but you're not exactly giving me dates.

**R** Ryan Fleury 18:56  
That's true.

**R** Rob Mineault 18:57  
Please let me go with you so I can push you down the other side of it.

**S** Steve Barclay 19:01  
I would I would take you with me just to watch you Rob. You're the only person I know who's probably more out of shape than Ryan.

**L** Laura McEwen 19:11  
You get into shape pretty quickly coming on one of our trips.

**R** Rob Mineault 19:16  
So talk to me a little bit about about the programs themselves are they did you sort of build them out into like, say age specific programs or are they is it kind of just a first come first serve and you just you have different different programs that anybody can can sort of come and sign up for?

**L** Laura McEwen 19:36  
Yeah, so um, so I'll speak a little bit for Adaptive Adventures Program, the urban supported day programs that we do. And we we do offer specific youth programs. And then we also have like open adventures so anyone can sign up. We have a small registration fee for for clients to to join our organization and then they just say can choose what activity and what works their schedule, and they can come along with us. And then for our accessible wilderness expeditions program, of course, it's a, it's a bit longer of a process, you know, to get to know the client well enough to take them out on a multi day trip where, you know, we're pushing limits, and we're trying new things. And so yeah, we just, we, we either we can kind of do it both ways. We either have a client come to us with, you know, a bucket list, dream of somebody in a mountain or doing a specific kayak trip on the coast or going on a whitewater rafting trip, or, and then they come to us and we can make that happen. We arrange all the adaptations, we find the company to help us guide the trip, we find our volunteers and we, we make it happen that way. Otherwise, we do have some like, annual funded trips that happen as well within our wilderness program. So for example, here in West Kelowna, we,

we have the fire department who funds a trip every year, their charity, their union, charity, they, they fund our our once, once a year trip for two nights three day trip. So we actually just had that last week at Cathedral Provincial Park. And we invited some youth on this trip, and they had a great time fishing and one of them hadn't kept before so we had them in a teepee tent. And it was amazing.

R

Rob Mineault 21:35

And do you do service mainly the Okanagan? Or do you guys try to sort of travel into sort of sort of the more rural communities and try to do stuff all over the province? Or do you guys sort of have to sort of stick mainly to the Okanagan area?

L

Laura McEwen 21:52

Yeah, good question. Our wilderness program, we are open to going, you know, anywhere. And, of course, with some travel restrictions in place right now, we are staying within BC. But you know, in past years, we've done trips in Alberta, we've gone down to the States, you know, we hope to go over to Europe one day and do a big trip over there some time. And so, yeah, really, the sky's the limit. If someone comes to us with an idea, or somewhere they want to go, and we can find the funding for it, then then we'll do it.

R

Rob Mineault 22:25

So talk to me a little bit about that sort of the funding side then. So do you guys sort of fund for specific expeditions or adventures? Or do you sort of just have a sort of a general fundraising strategy? How does sort of that part of it work?

L

Laura McEwen 22:41

Yeah, good question. Again, it's, uh, you know, that's a part of my role is coming up with the funding and finding new corporate sponsors every year. You know, we, some funders will come on as an experienced sponsor, where they're able to fund a partially for, for one client to come on a trip or, you know, big picture, like we would love to have a seasoned sponsor where, you know, we can present to them we've, we've got these six trips happening, this is the cost. And if they're able to help us out that way, that would be amazing. And, yeah, funding is definitely one of our barriers that are challenges that we face every day and but you know, we always make it happen, coming together as a community and there's always there's always people out there that really want to help and get involved.

R

Rob Mineault 23:28

So on average, though, how many per year on average, say of expeditions or adventures would be able to sort of take place like how busy are you guys?

L

Laura McEwen 23:41

Um, so fall is our tends to be our busy season, and just in BC with the forest fires, and it's just a good time to go. You know, the weather's a little bit more predictable in the fall. And so we have, right now we have five trips happening in the next six weeks. And that's also a partly because of our volunteer availability, the summers are really busy time for

bookings, but also to find all the volunteers that are involved in a trip, one trip, you know, depending on the activity and the client's needs and how many clients we're bringing, we may need up to 15 to 20 volunteers coming along in different roles or capacities. So we need, you know, chefs, we need Sherpas, we need just people to help with transportation, and guides, you know, if we're doing a rafting trip, especially. Yeah, a lot of special certifications are required, you know, depending on the activity.

R

Rob Mineault 24:41

And so in terms of just sort of that large volunteer base that you need, how big is the actual team?

L

Laura McEwen 24:49

I would say each, each trip would depend on what activity we're doing, and how many days and where we're going. It's tough to say. You know, typically, we bring about 10 to 15 volunteers each trip.

R

Ryan Fleury 25:06

And how big is the team at CRIS itself?

L

Laura McEwen 25:11

We have five staff on on the team.

R

Rob Mineault 25:14

Wow. That must be a big challenge to manage that many volunteers with with that small of a team.

L

Laura McEwen 25:21

Definitely, yeah, we're very busy, especially in the summer, our Adaptive Adventures programs, because we offer so many the kids are out of school. So we offer a lot of youth programs. And then yeah, we just brought on a maintenance manager, you know, because that's a huge role in itself, just maintaining all of our gear and making sure it's in good shape and doing any repairs that are necessary. And then myself is the wilderness program manager. I just came on in the spring to, to get this program off the ground and you know, to, to be able to offer our our hopes and dreams are to be able to offer up to 10 trips per year. So the way it's going right now it's looking good for next year. But yeah, so it's busy all year round. You know, if I have trips or not, there's there's always tasks on my desk.

R

Ryan Fleury 26:11

What was your background? How did you get involved?

L

Laura McEwen 26:14

My background? I'm a recreation therapist. Yeah, so I've worked in the healthcare system for over 10 years, with various populations. I loved doing it, but I really, you know, I just wanted to share my passion for the outdoors, with my clients. And so I came across CRIS and I had just moved back from the coast. And yeah, the timing worked well, and here I am.

R

Rob Mineault 26:40

Do you find that part of the challenge, really, is to sort of get the word out about Chris? Or do you find that, that many times people who have barriers, they just, they lack that self confidence to really think that they might be able to do something like this? Where do you find is the pain point, in terms of really taking this and really growing and thriving?

L

Laura McEwen 27:07

Yeah, I'd say it's a little bit of both, you know, finding clients long term, you know, that want to keep coming back, you know, they'll try and activity and maybe they tried paddling for the first time, and it wasn't for them, encouraging them to come back to try a different activity the next time because we do offer so many different programs within Chris, just finding what works for them. And our challenge. Yeah, definitely is getting the word out, you know, we think we're well known in the community, but there's always more people that I run into who have never heard of us. And so, you know, using social media these days has been a good tool for us. And, yeah, just updating people on all our trips going on, going on podcasts, you know, getting interviewed on the radio, anything helps, you know, get our get our word across, we're always looking for more clients.

R

Rob Mineault 27:59

I mean, I think that typically, there are so many so great organizations out there that are doing great work. But a lot of times the ones that we talked to, that's really the big challenge is just is just getting people aware of the organization. You know, and it's, it can be especially tough, you know, when you're not in sort of a high density populated area. So how is COVID really impacted you guys over the past year or so?

L

Laura McEwen 28:27

Um, yeah, I mean, we're lucky, most of our activities are outdoors. So with a little bit of adapting how we're doing programs, we are still able to, to run, but certainly, like our clientele are a lot of them are compromised. So you know, there's some hesitation there, and there has been a bit of a client lull in the last year or so, with people's comfort levels, you know, just not being there, in terms of what's going on with COVID. So, so trying to ensure our clients that, you know, our programs are safe, and that we're taking all the measures, you know, related to provincial health orders, and certainly has been a challenge just to get people out or new clients out in the last year.

R

Rob Mineault 29:17

Yeah, well, I'm sure that the the logistics must be a real challenge as well, because I can only imagine, like a, you know, any sort of one of these adventures. The amount of planning that needs to go to it, go into it. In a normal situation is is you know, large enough. I can only imagine when you have to plan for all the adaptations and stuff that must just like triple that.



L

Laura McEwen 29:44

Yeah, there's a lot of work leading up to the activity. Absolutely. You know, sanitization measures. Yeah, afterwards, you know, extra paperwork, it does create more time for sure. Just to make the program happen, you know, even our two hour programs happening out on the lake going kayaking, there's a lot more you know, you have to plan for and think about in the time that we're in right now.

R

Rob Mineault 30:12

Can you can you give us kind of an idea or a little bit of a snapshot of just like what are the different types of adventures and and activities that you guys offer, like sort of, you know, on the spectrum from like the, say, the two hour trip to say the several day trip or week trip, or just give us an idea of some of the activities?

L

Laura McEwen 30:31

Yeah, so our Adaptive Adventures, the urban programs that we offer here, in the Okanagan, in north and south Okanagan, those are the the one to two hour programs where people can come out. In the summer, we offer hiking, kayaking, paddling, and cycling. And that's where they can meet up in the location, which we pick a different location every week. And they can go out, they can try the activity, they can try the bike, and they can come back every week, or they can try different activity. So that's the day programs and then our wilderness programs. So we can do anything from, you know, a one night overnight camping trip to I think the longest trip we've done so far is a seven day kayaking trip out in the broken islands on the coast. And yeah, yeah, that was a few years ago. So it really depends on you know, who the client is, what their comfort level is, and how much they want to push themselves and where they want to go. And, and of course, with adaptations needed, you know, it may take you and I for four days to hike a certain trail, but we have to account for all the extra adaptations, and it might take them up to eight. And and that's okay, and we can do that we'll, we'll make it happen.

R

Ryan Fleury 31:54

So are there costs involved? Are there membership dues? How does that all work?

L

Laura McEwen 31:58

Yeah, so in our urban programs, there is a small registration fee that we require, if you want to join programs, it's an annual fee. And then there's a small programming fee as well. And then for our wilderness programs, like I mentioned, you know, finding funding is a challenge. But certainly there's companies out there that do want to fund either a client or a whole trip in itself to go out. And these, these wilderness trips can cost anywhere, you know, between \$5,000 to \$25,000, depending on what we're doing, how many days.

R

Rob Mineault 32:36

So So do you guys mainly rely on things like grants or corporate sponsorships? Or do you do get a lot of support sort of locally from local businesses?

L

Laura McEwen 32:48

We certainly do rely on on government grants, for sure. You know, community community partnerships as well. Yeah, we have some long term community partnerships that have been going, you know, since we started, that have really helped our program grow. But yeah, certainly, and, you know, like I said, with only five staff, within our society, you know, it's, it's quite a big job in itself ready, and all those grant applications each year to to help our programs running year after year.

R

Rob Mineault 33:22

Oh, 100%. I mean, you could you could just have a full time employee just doing nothing but writing grants. Yeah, you know, I find that like being out in the wilderness, whether whatever it might be hunting, hiking, rafting, kayaking, it really is such a magical experience. And it can be really transformative, especially to people who are used to just being like, isolated or being inside all the time. So that you there must be a lot of like, really amazing stories that you've seen over the year, that, you know, people that are just like completely, like, this is just a life changing experience for them.

L

Laura McEwen 34:08

Absolutely. I mean, these wilderness trips, you know, it's not even just the client that comes home with these amazing stories. It's our volunteers. It's everyone involved in the trip from beginning to end. And I've heard some amazing stories. You know, I just, I read one this morning, we just had a trip come home on Saturday morning, and the client sent a beautiful email to, to all the volunteers thanking them and just, you know, from the bottom of her heart, she was so thankful that, you know, this super generous group of people came together and you know, made her dream come true. She submitted a mountain and she never dreamed that would be ever possible for her. And so, you know, out there, we're not only you know, promoting independence for our clients, you know, reducing isolation, improving you You know, their mental health and well being of the client, it's all about, it's about everyone on the team, right? We all grow together, it's amazing how close knit You know, I've, I've sent trips off or a group of people off on a trip and I've and I've greeted them on the way home and, you know, their energy at the end of the trip is just so contagious. It's, it's amazing, it keeps me doing what I'm doing. There's so much planning that goes into it. And you know, it's all worth it when I get to see them smiling when they get home from that trip, and, you know, just sharing one special moment they had these memories they're going to carry on forever. And, you know, that's what keeps us doing what we're doing.

R

Rob Mineault 35:36

It just makes me go, you know, you're not on the you guys should have double the staff that you have, and there should be one of you in like, every single region, everywhere, because this is such an important set of programs, and it can really, really, really impact things like mental health, and that the link that we see between disability and mental health and, and and for that matter of physical exercise, you know, we know that all of those things can be really indelibly linked. So you know, it kind of, yeah, it amazes me in a way. You know, we we've been doing this podcast for six years now. And and so we've been we're, you know, pretty, we think pretty well steeped in the, you know, disability community in the province yet, you know, we didn't know about you until recently. So and that, you know, honestly, that that's kind of the mandate of this show, too, is that, you know, we want to find different different organizations out there that are doing the amazing work that you guys are and try to spread the word because we just need more of it.

L

Laura McEwen 36:51

Yeah, thank you. We appreciate that. Yeah, we're just, you know, our, our mission is to create that inclusive world for your barriers within the Okanagan, but within our province, and then, you know, anything's possible, as we say at CRIS, so thank you for inviting me.

R

Rob Mineault 37:08

Oh, absolutely. Well, and you know, and listen, any any sort of world domination plans, like I have you guys talked about, like, sort of maybe like expanding, say into, like, the Lower Mainland, for example, because I don't know, like, I feel like, there would be some really incredible opportunity here as well.

L

Laura McEwen 37:26

Yeah. I mean, absolutely. When clients come to us, you know, some do live in the mainland, Lower Mainland, or, you know, in the Yukon or Northern BC, that's not a barrier to us. You know, our clients can come from anywhere they can call us from, you know, we had a client from Minnesota, USA last year who called us. Yeah, so I mean, because we're based out of Kelowna doesn't mean that our clients have to come from within the Okanagan, they can come from anywhere, if they want to do something within our backyard, or they have an idea of somewhere they want to go. The sky's the limit.

R

Rob Mineault 38:05

So for anybody who wants more information, where can they find you guys?

L

Laura McEwen 38:11

So just pop on Google, and, you know, Community Recreation Initiatives Society, or our website is [www.adaptiveadventures.ca](http://www.adaptiveadventures.ca). And then from there, you can link up to any three of our programs. So the Adaptive Rentals, like we talked about Adaptive Adventures, or our Wilderness Program. From there, you'll find links to our social media as well. You'll find our daily calendar of what's going on. Yeah, follow us along and join the adventure. Yeah, so I should have mentioned this spring we rebranded our adaptive travel program so now it is called the Accessible Wilderness Program. So along with our new corporate sponsor that we have, we just rebranded and so we still offer the same types of activities with additions have been hunting and fishing. Now Now we just offer more activities and yeah, yeah, we do have a new website as well. So [www.adaptiveadventures.ca](http://www.adaptiveadventures.ca) is our new website. And that kind of explains the breakdown of our three programs. Perfect. Just out of curiosity. What do you guys go hunting for? Um, Deer, moose, sheep. I'm not a hunter myself.

S

Steve Barclay 39:33

Elk and bear. I have already been on the website.

R

Rob Mineault 39:39

- . . . . .

Really Oh my No, I would not I would not hunt bear.

L

Laura McEwen 39:42

No. I haven't hunted bear before but I know people do. And yeah, I would love to go on a hunting trip myself. I've never ever been exposed to you know, hunting and it would be interesting. It'd be really neat. something new for me to to do. Yeah.

R

Ryan Fleury 40:02

Number one rule is if you kill it, you clean it.

R

Rob Mineault 40:07

I'd go hunting, but it would just be like with nerf arrows. Just bring up peanut butter sandwich to eat.

S

Steve Barclay 40:14

I would not recommend hunting bear with nerf arrows.

R

Rob Mineault 40:22

Well, listen, thank you so much for taking the time out and joining us. And yeah, we'll certainly put everything in the show notes. We're happy to help out wherever we can keep up the amazing work that you guys are doing. And let us know if there's anything in the future that we can do to help if you want to come on and talk about a upcoming program. We'd be happy to have you back.

L

Laura McEwen 40:45

Great. Yeah. Thanks so much for inviting me and I'll definitely be in touch. Yeah, take care you guys and thanks for doing what you do.

R

Ryan Fleury 40:52

Thanks so much, Laura. Thanks for coming by.

R

Rob Mineault 40:56

Oh, you know what, I forgot to ask whether they hunted rabbits.

S

Steve Barclay 41:04

Oh, darn it. Now we'll never know.

R

Rob Mineault 41:06

Now I'm assuming they didn't. I didn't think that they would. I think that I think there'll be outcry behind that rabbit hunting, but I can't like honestly bear like I would I would think that nobody hunts bear.

R

Ryan Fleury 41:19

Oh, sure. They do.

S

Steve Barclay 41:20

Yeah, absolutely. Spring bear. You get a spring bear. You know, when they when they get up and they're getting lean, because they've been not eating through the whole winter. They make absolutely wonderful bacon and sausages.

R

Rob Mineault 41:33

Well, I noticed that I got heat from my last idea earlier in the show about getting them when they're sleeping. So, but it's okay to get there when they're weak, and they're just groggy.

S

Steve Barclay 41:47

Short answer. Yes.

R

Rob Mineault 41:48

Yes. Well might as well just go find them when they're asleep. They're hibernating for six months, they're meant to get probably pretty easy to find when they're sleeping.

S

Steve Barclay 41:55

Actually, that's a common misconception bears don't hibernate. They go into a state called torpor, where they are very, very sleepy and relaxed, but they can awake and respond to external stimuli. So if you go into their cave after them, they're going to eat you.

R

Rob Mineault 42:13

Well, that's fair.

S

Steve Barclay 42:15

I suppose if you're going into their house, yeah, they should be able to eat you.

R

Rob Mineault 42:19

Yeah, I mean, there's what's Florida law, what is it called, stand and deliver? What is that law?

S

Steve Barclay 42:28

Stand your ground

R

Rob Mineault 42:30

The bear version of stand your ground.

S

Steve Barclay 42:32

Responsible for so many wrongful deaths.

R

Rob Mineault 42:37

Well, unless you walk into a bear cave, totally justified. No, that's really cool. So yeah, we need to really help these guys spread the word about these guys, because this is an incredible organization. And it really warms my heart like that they're such a small team because that's really speaks to pasture, the blind beginnings crew to because we're exactly five people to and man, I tell you, like it's it is really, really hard to plan programs. And, you know, we do like a lot of just like small, smaller day stuff, like, you know, once a year, though, they'll do the camps and stuff. And that's, you know, incredible amount of work. So the fact that they do like up to 10 big trips a year with, you know, 15 volunteers, and plus they're trying to stay on top of fundraising and grant writing. You know, that, that I know exactly just how hard these guys must work.

R

Ryan Fleury 43:43

Yeah, one of their trips, I think was a seven day sea kayaking trip off, Euclulet or something up there, up, up there. So can you just imagine what's involved getting everybody? They're getting all the equipment? They're all the adaptive equipment. They're the accommodations, the meals, first aid, all of that stuff, right? For a seven day trip? You're planning that six months ahead, if not further,

R

Rob Mineault 44:07


At least. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's intense.


S


Steve Barclay 44:12


... ..


Well, we don't know what they slept in.


 Ryan Fleury 44:15  
Still.


 Steve Barclay 44:17  
Well, you said it was in-tents. You don't know.


 Ryan Fleury 44:19  
Yeah.

 Rob Mineault 44:21  
I got that joke. Ryan missed it.

 Ryan Fleury 44:27  
Right over my head.

 Rob Mineault 44:29  
Over your head and under your feet. Indeed. All right, well, anything else to say about that fellas?

 Ryan Fleury 44:37  
If you are living in the interior of BC or anywhere, for that matter, you are a candidate for one of their programs. Reach out to them next time you're in the vicinity or if you want to do some Okanogan travel adventures?

 Rob Mineault 44:51  
Yeah. Which you should do totally should do.

 Ryan Fleury 44:55  
Or wine tours. Do some wine tours. Go find a Sleeping Bear.

 Rob Mineault 45:01

They're in torpor. If they're in torpor, like do you think do they sleep less like during the rest of the year? Like do they are they not? Because I don't know when you've when you've been in torpor for six months? I don't know like I would think that you could like pretty much live on like, like little cat naps for the rest of the year.

S

Steve Barclay 45:21

Couldn't couldn't tell you. I don't know.

R

Rob Mineault 45:23

So maybe bears don't really sleep all that much.

S

Steve Barclay 45:28

Okay, well, it's a good question. Maybe they get older napping in at once. Yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 45:33

That That would be great. I would love to just nap.

S

Steve Barclay 45:36

Ryan line us up a bear expert.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:42

Okie dokie

R

Rob Mineault 45:42

Yeah, it was like it was that guy's name in the what was that 70s show, Grizzly Adams?

S

Steve Barclay 45:46

There you go.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:48

Is he alive? No, he's dead.



**S** Steve Barclay 45:51  
Yeah, he got eaten by a bear.

**R** Rob Mineault 45:55  
No he didn't

**R** Ryan Fleury 46:00  
He wasn't sleeping.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:02  
He got really drunk and he's like took a marshmallow he's like "watch this guy's I can feed the bear with my mouth. Here, Bear Bear."

**S** Steve Barclay 46:11  
Okay, Grizzly Adams suffered head and neck trauma during a grizzly attack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California and ... oh that's a different Adams.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:20  
What? There's more than way way more than one Grizzly Adams?

**S** Steve Barclay 46:23  
Yeah, there was a there was an actual Grizzly Adams.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:26  
Oh, you're right. Wasn't that that show based on a true story, wasn't it? I think no? Maybe. Man, let's take me back to my childhood. I used to love that show. Used to watch like the Littlest Hobo and Grizzly Adam and Little House on the Prairie.

**S** Steve Barclay 46:52  
Dan Haggerty was the name of the the actor and he died.

**R** Rob Mineault 47:00

That's a bummer

S

Steve Barclay 47:02

He died at 74 I guess yeah I guess I'm probably guessing not from being eaten by a bear.

R

Rob Mineault 47:09

Probably died in a plate of spaghetti. That's the way to go face down and a plate of pasta.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:19

Yeah

R

Rob Mineault 47:23

Anyways, that got dark What?

S

Steve Barclay 47:27

Sorry he died in Burbank. I don't I don't think there's a lot of Grizzlies in Burbank

R

Ryan Fleury 47:31

Probably not yeah

R

Rob Mineault 47:36

Yeah, well

S

Steve Barclay 47:38

No, cancer. There you go, cancer

R

Rob Mineault 47:42

oh wait no cancer was the name of the bear that ate him.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:58

All right, so Rob, where can people find us?

R Rob Mineault 48:01  
Hey wait a minute okay, well okay let's let's roll with this I they can find us [www.atbanter.com](http://www.atbanter.com).

R Ryan Fleury 48:10  
excellent. They can also

R Rob Mineault 48:19  
Okay, go ahead who were what else Oh yeah.

S Steve Barclay 48:22  
Hey, hey, hey, they can also find us online you know

R Ryan Fleury 48:28  
Not today they can't

S Steve Barclay 48:31  
We're all down Facebook, Twitter instagram they're all done they're done there no more Yeah. obsolete things.

R Rob Mineault 48:40  
I'll create an AT Banter MySpace page to be backup in no time.

R Ryan Fleury 48:46  
are we on LinkedIn?

R Rob Mineault 48:49  
So yeah, shut up, the email address you guys already screwing this up, so you can also drop us an email if you so desire at [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com)

R Ryan Fleury 49:03  
- - - - -

Thank you. Or you can also call us toll free at 1844996428 to leave us your name your message and if you give us your permission, and we may play your message on an upcoming episode.

R

Rob Mineault 49:16

Yeah, especially if you have any bunny stories of them being dicks because I need some support in this gentle audience. Because apparently nobody believes me. But yeah, if you've ever had a bunny, and it's done something dickish give us a call and tell us your story. And I promise you we will mention it on the next show. The phones are gonna light up now.

S

Steve Barclay 49:44

No, probably ringing off the hook. Ring and ring ring ring those phones.

R

Rob Mineault 49:50

Okay, is that it? Are we done?

S

Steve Barclay 49:51

We're done.

R

Rob Mineault 49:52

All right. Well, then I think that will do it for us this week. Thanks everybody for listening in. Big thanks. Have To Laura, for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.