



Interviewing, Onboarding and Retention

Presented by:

Molly Thurston, P.Ag *in cooperation with the BBA*
Program Business Advisors

Columbia
Basin **trust**

**BASIN
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Agenda

- **Interviewing Candidates**
- **Onboarding Employees**
- **Training & Mentoring New Employees**
- **Onboarding & Retention Best Practices**
- **Next Steps**

Interviewing Candidates: Preparing and Planning for an Interview



Interview

- **Screen candidates**
 - Read all applications
 - Match candidates' skills to job description key words
 - Eliminate candidates who do not meet minimum skills or experience
 - Select an appropriate number of candidates to interview
- **Choose interview questions in advance**
- **Select an interview format and timetable**
- **Be prepared for common Q&As**
 - What a candidate will need to know about the farm and the job *before* accepting the position

Screening candidates

1. Initial screening of Resumes

- Acknowledge receipt of resume and interest in position
- * Be aware of ‘phishing’ that occurs on open job boards/social media
- Decline by email/online job board
- May have reporting requirements for Federal Work Programs

Who does the interviewing?

- Depends on farm structure & nature of the position being hired
- Farm Owner/Operator
- Involve key personnel in two-part interviews



Screening candidates

2. Phone Screening interview

- Select a team member to call potential candidates
- List of phone screening questions
- Think of your challenges and turn these into questions for the interview
- Note responses
- YES or Maybe

Screening candidates

3. Second Round Interview

- Contact potential candidates to invite to an online or in-person interview
- Different person interviewing candidate
- Repeat of phone interview questions

Screening candidates

4. Upon Completion of the Interview

- Check references
- Make your candidate selections
- Provide the candidate with the job offer
- Notify unsuccessful applicants

Drafting Effective and Appropriate Interview Questions



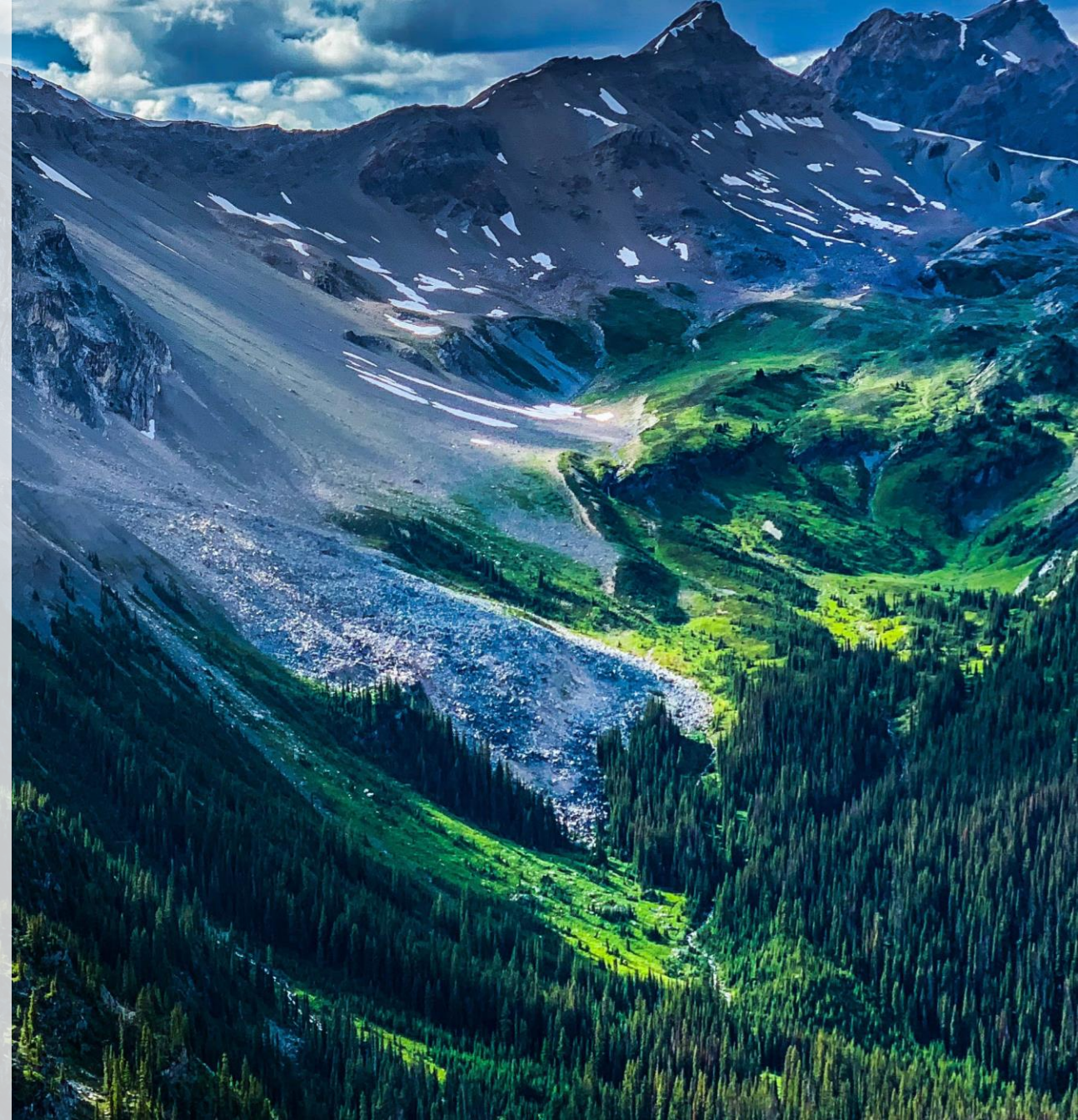
Types of Interview Questions

- **Situational questions** often start with “what would you do if...”
- **Knowledge questions** are direct requests for the information/skills
- **Worker requirement** questions explore a workers willingness to meet job demands



Examples of Interview Questions

- What abilities do you feel are most crucial for the success in this job?
- At this point in your life (career), what goals are you aiming for?
- What have you been particularly praised for or recognized for in other jobs?
- And in what areas do you need improvement?
- To sum up, why do you believe you should be hired for this job?



Human Rights Code Protected Characteristics

- Indigenous Identity
- Race
- Colour
- Ancestry
- Place of Origin
- Sex
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical Disability *
- Mental Disability
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Age
- Political Beliefs
- Religion
- Summary or Criminal Conviction **

Interview Style Tips

- Review the candidate's information before the interview

Establish rapport with the candidate!

- Outline the objectives and structure of the interview
- Be professional
- Practice active listening

A man with brown hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and blue jeans, stands in a greenhouse. He is holding several small black pots containing green seedlings. The greenhouse has a curved metal frame and translucent plastic covering. In the background, there is a blue plastic tub and some soil on the ground.

Interview Structure Tips

- Preparation!**

- Consistency!**

Use consistent interview format and content for all applicants

- Transparency!**

Be transparent about the workplace and working conditions

Only make promises you can fulfill



Location of the Interview

- Online
- Casual or Formal Structure
- Off-site interview
- On-site interview
 - Farm tour
 - Coffee on the Farm



Interview Timetable

Length of interview will depend on the position being hired

- One hour is often enough time to schedule for the interview
- The goal is to gather some initial impressions of the candidate and to ask numerous questions
- Leave time to answer candidate's questions during or at the end of the interview



Interview A

Summer labourer, 35 hours/ week

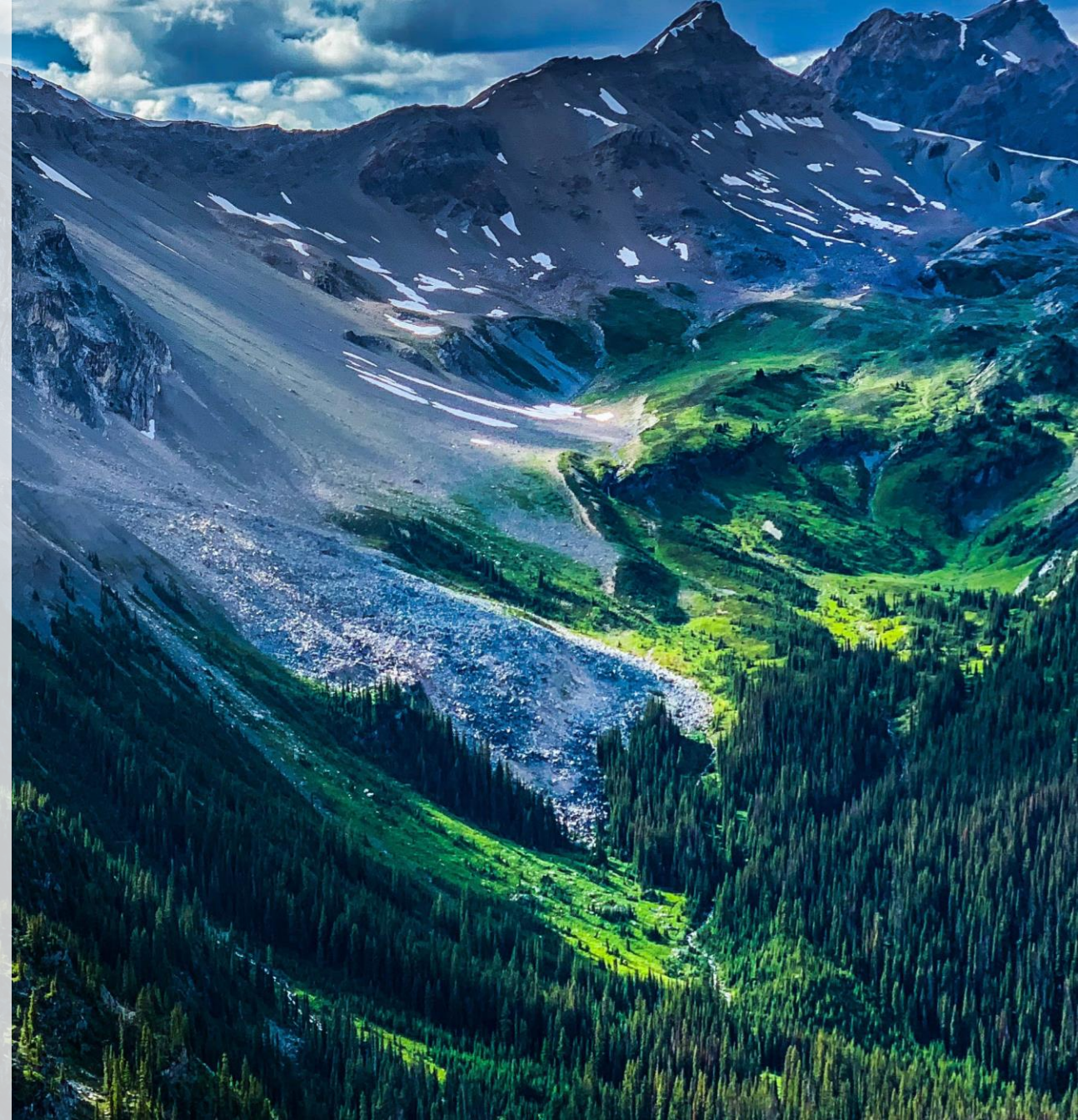
May to September

- Online call OR Casual coffee at the farm – farm tour to gauge interest in role and discuss job requirements.
- Introduction to other key FT staff on-farm
- 1-2 hours duration
- Follow up with written offer
- Request a reply within 1 week of offer

Interview B

Farm Manager Position - Permanent FT, Live-in position

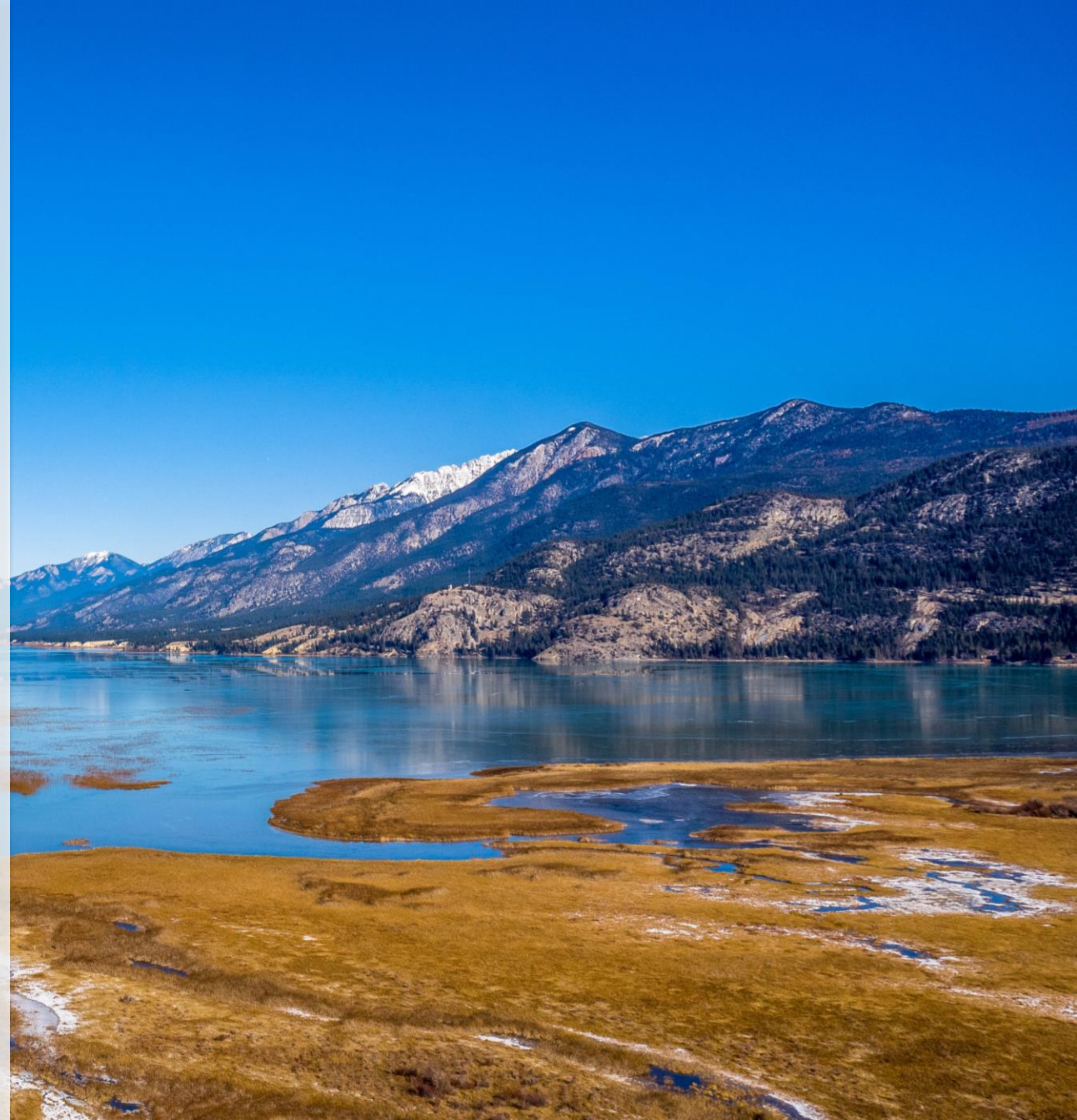
- Initial online interview to further gauge interest in the role and to discuss job requirements
- Follow up communications about impressions of job
- Invitation to visit the farm for one or more days
- Detailed tour of farm, meetings with all key personnel – individual time with other staff, tour of area/region
- Contract negotiations



Reminders

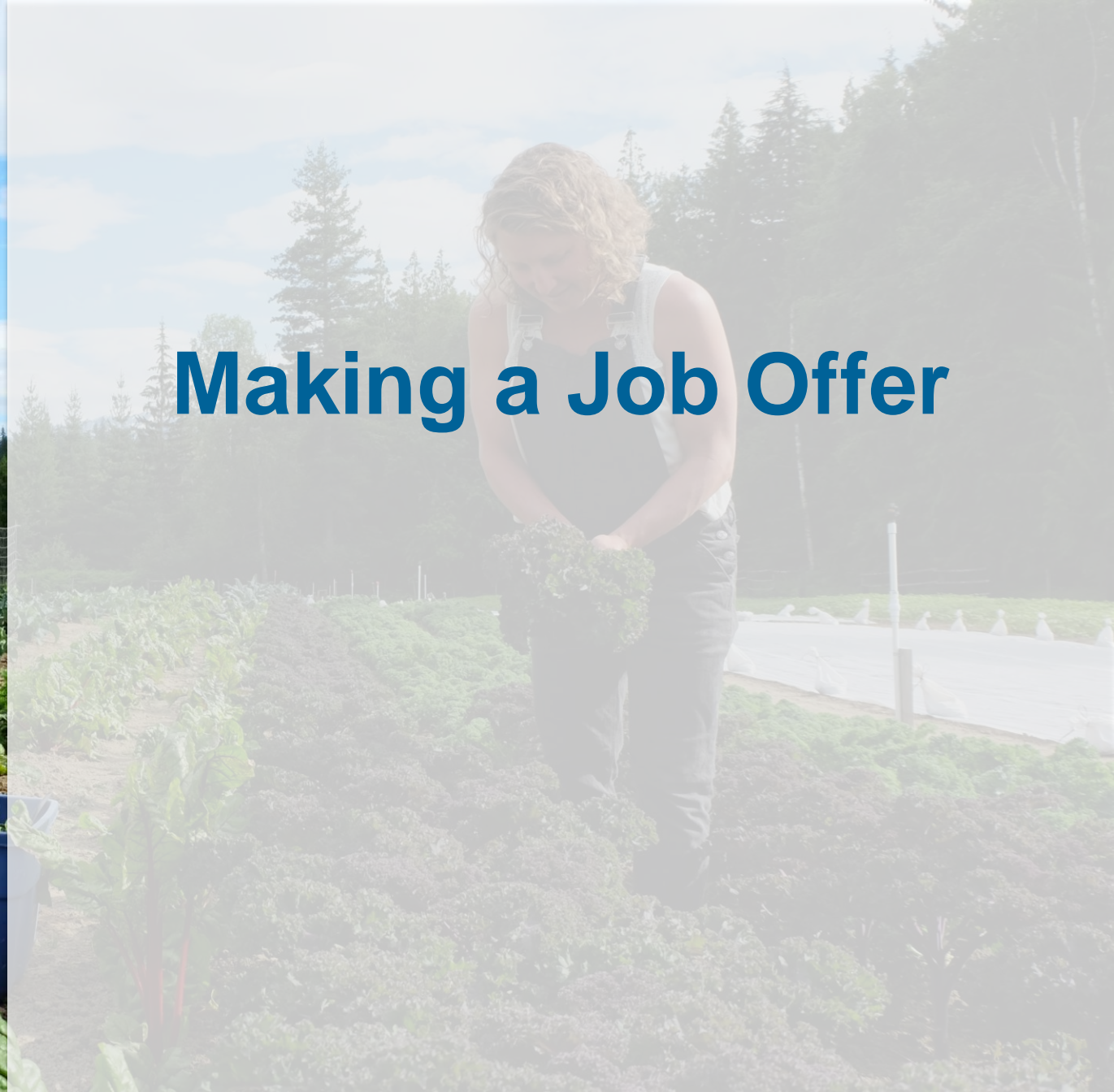


1. Involve the right people in the interviews
2. Invest time in to preparing for the interview
3. Stay consistent, transparent and professional throughout the process



Onboarding New Employees





Making a Job Offer

Job Offer

- Make a verbal offer by phone or in person to allow the person to ask any questions. Keep the communication positive and let the candidate know that you expect they will do a good job and enjoy working for you.
- Follow up with a written offer

What should a written job offer contain?

- Quality and quantity of the work expected
- Work schedule and term
- Evaluation requirements
- Clearly stated wages and benefits



Creating Clear Job Expectations





Employee Handbook

- Why do you need an employee handbook?
- What should you include in your handbook?

Understanding a Policy vs. Procedure

- **Policy** – informs your employees on what is expected, may include guidelines, rules and regulations
- **Procedure** – informs the process of how things are done, and the actions taken to implement policy



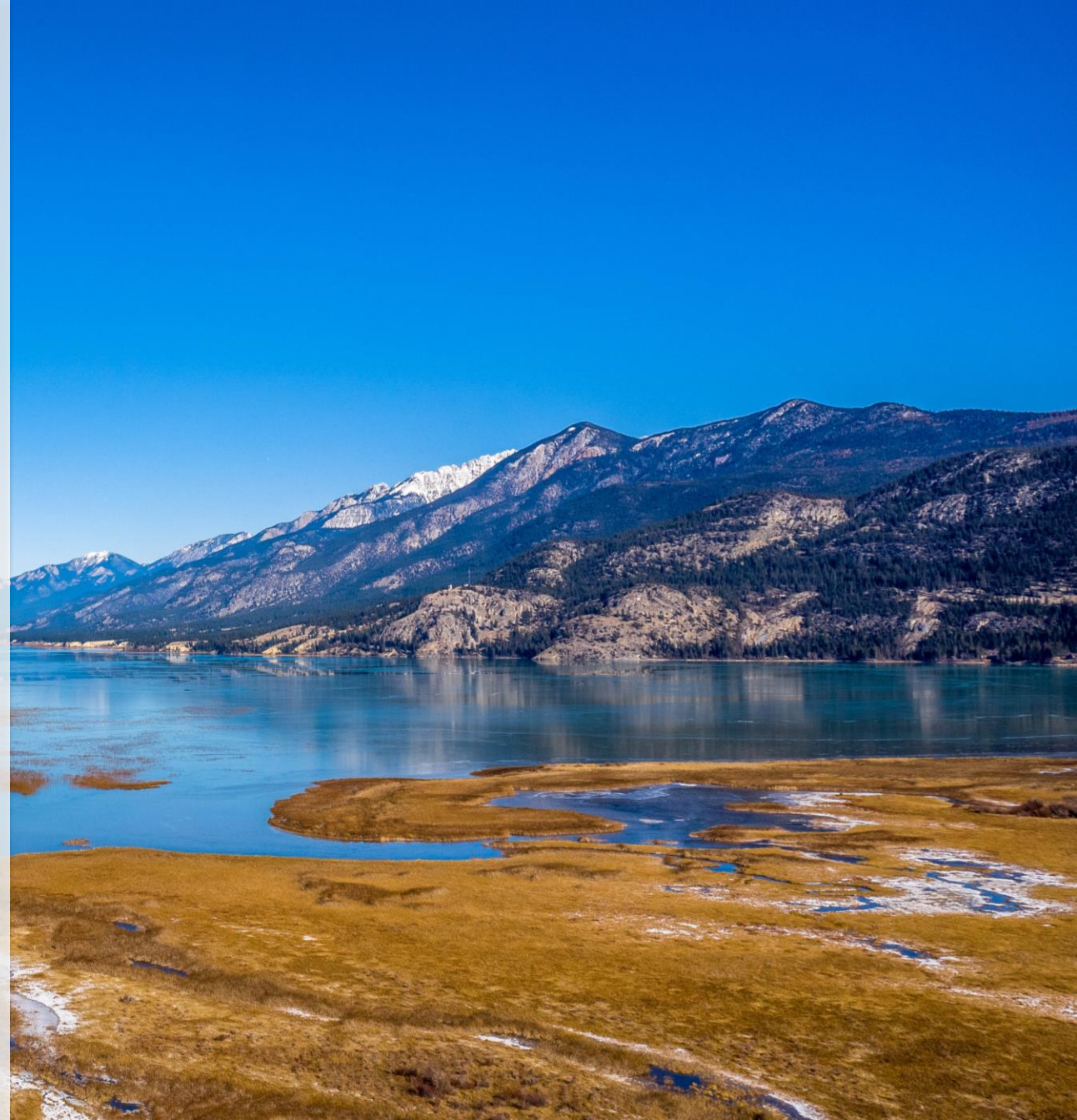
Job Expectations

- Create clear job descriptions!
- Level of experience and skill required for the position.
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Clear description of duties to be performed.
- Calendar/Gantt chart
- Clearly explain your expectations as the employers during onboarding process
- Model the behaviour!

Reminders



1. Begin work on Employee Handbook
2. Create key on-farm policies and procedures, post relevant information in highly visible areas



Onboarding Candidates

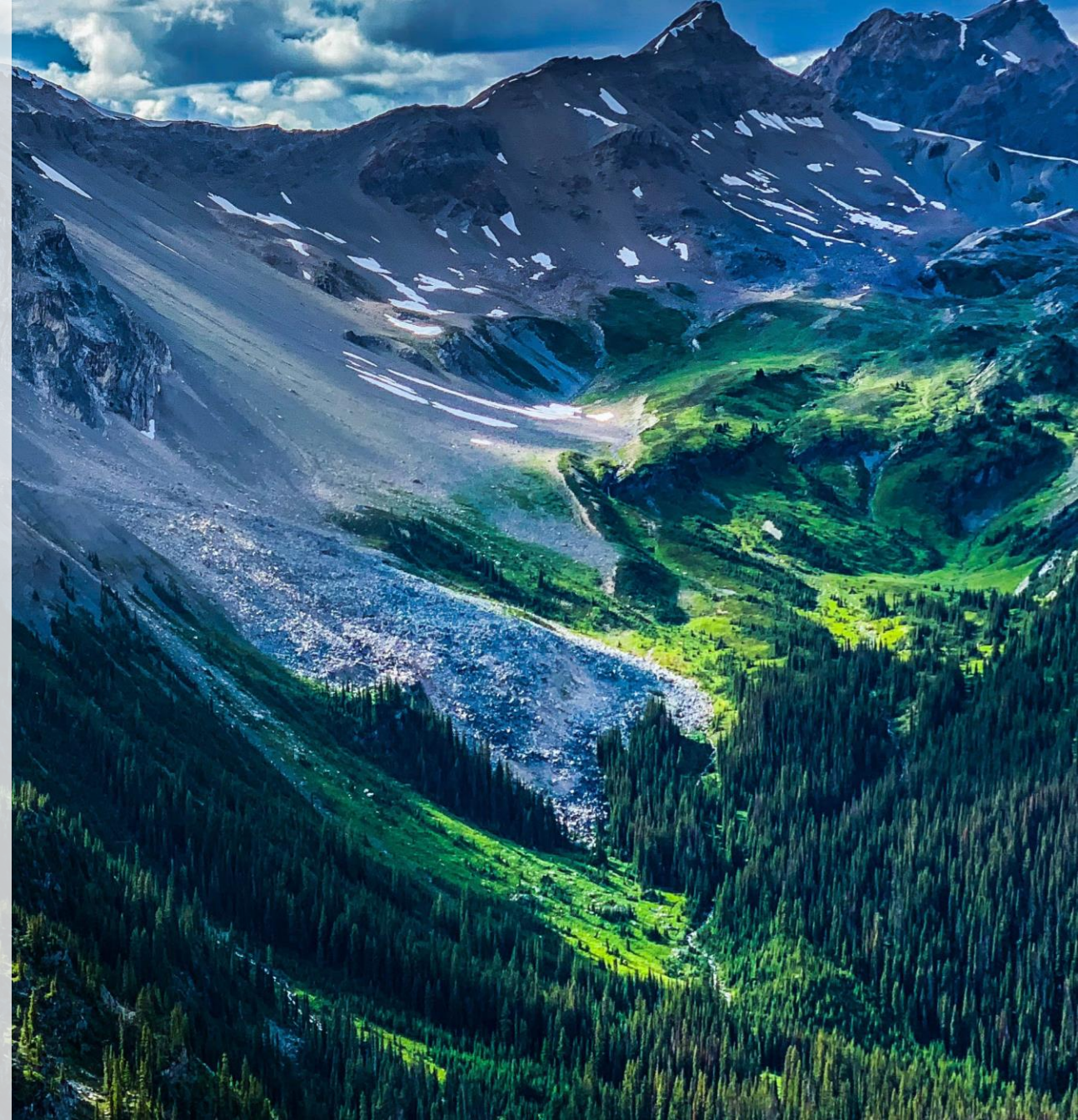


Onboarding New Employees

- **Orientation**
- **Policies and Procedures**
 - Allow time for questions and discussion
 - Use the employee handbook
- **Training**
 - Safety training
 - Customer service training

Create a good "First Day"

- **Time** spent with candidate on first day
- Tour of workplace
- Meet key team members Paperwork – fill out employment package
- Schedule for upcoming shifts
- Social time – get to know each other (Lunch?)
- Calendar/Schedule follow up check in with new employee



First Weeks...

- Demonstrate workplace culture
 - Supervised Job orientation – understanding how to perform duties
 - Watch me, Tell me, Show me
 - Safety Training
 - Check-ins
-
- The 5c's of onboarding stand for compliance, clarification, culture, connections, and check back



Training and Mentoring New Employees





Training and Mentoring New Employees

- Be intentional with the training schedule, building on skill sets.
- Use structured check-ins with formal questions to gauge progress, learning and understand employee needs

Employee Retention



Retention Best Practices

Transparency

Communication

Collaboration

Personal Growth



Non-Wage Benefits

- Free or reduced price for farm products
- Flexible hours and vacation time
- Full-time employment opportunity for management or supervisor positions
- Free or discounted lodging
- Group health benefits or health spending allowance
- Professional Development Opportunities

Wrapping up Seasonal Employment



Wrapping up the season

- Workplace wrap up – tools, equipment, notes
- Final payroll
- Record of Employment
- Collect current contact information
- Exit interviews – collect feedback
- Find out who is interested in returning





Personal Touches

- Celebrations
- Growth Opportunities
- Gratitude & Recognition

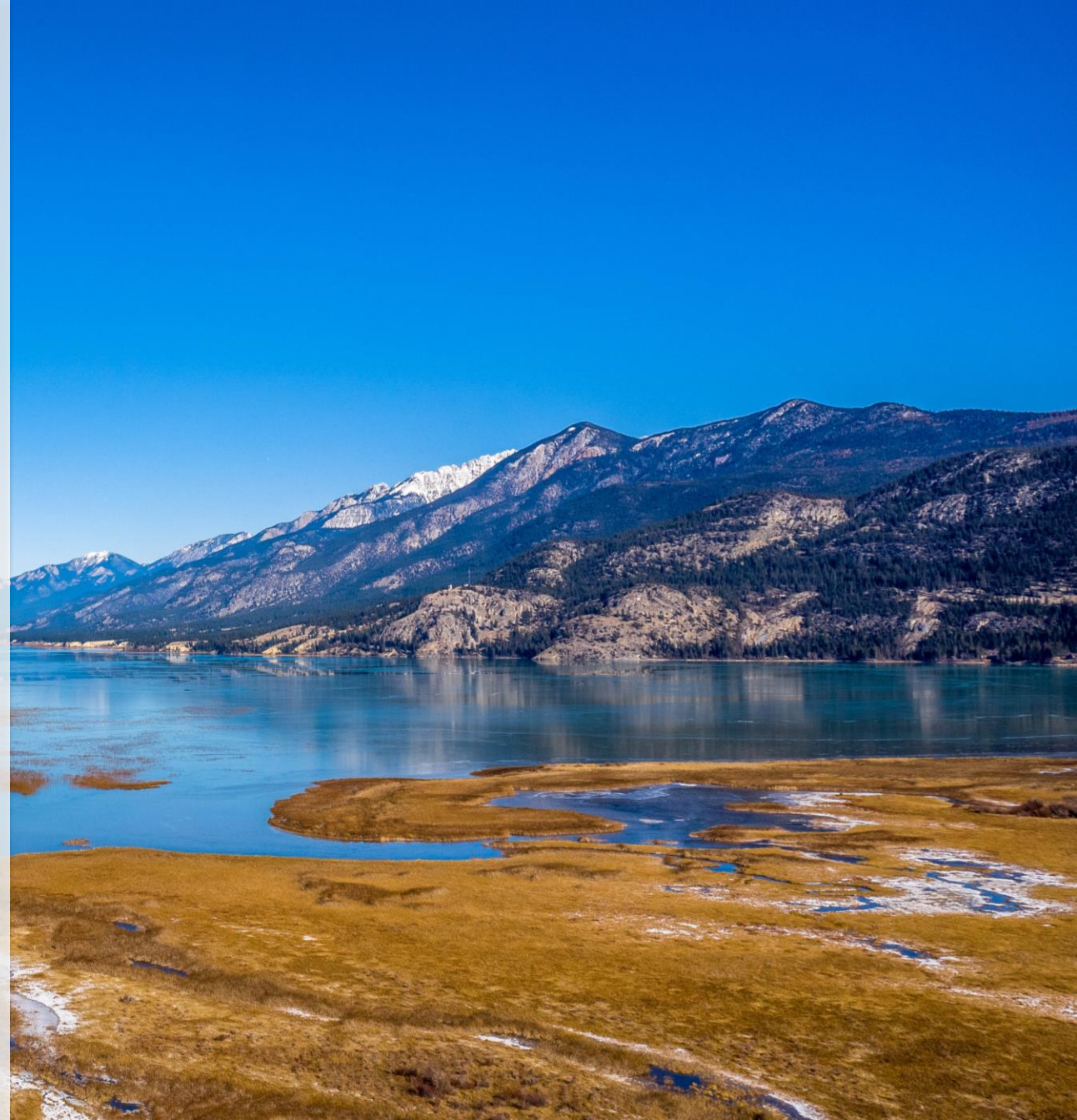
Stay in Touch with Seasonal Employees

- **State your intentions to continue employment the following season**
 - Employ key staff year round
- **Reach out during winter holidays**
- **Check returning interest when you send T4's**
- **Invite returning workers to offer suggested candidates and to share your job posts**

Recap



1. Create clear job expectations and job descriptions
2. Start with employee handbook essentials
– hours of work, pay schedule, time off
3. Plan your employee orientation and onboarding activities
4. Adopt best practices for worker retention
5. Plan for end of seasonal employment





Thank you!