

CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST  
DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY



DESTINATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA™

APE LAKE  
Photo: Kari Medig



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FRONT COVER PHOTO: GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST, Stephen Harrington

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A. DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION FOR THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST

The Chilcotin Central Coast is one of British Columbia's natural and cultural gems. It is also one of the least visited areas of the province. This planning area, which encompasses the area west of the Fraser River stretching across the Chilcotin Plateau to the central coast, north to include Hartley Bay, Entiako, Finger-Tatuk and Fraser River Provincial Parks, and south to include Bute Inlet, the Homathko Icefield and Big Creek Provincial Parks, is a region of incredible geographic and ecological diversity.

Comprised of 11 First Nations, 28 unincorporated community entities, and two regional districts, this planning area uniquely has no incorporated communities (Appendix 1). The diversity of the people and cultures are linguistically, culturally and historically rich presenting unique, targeted, and sustainable tourism development

opportunities. Historically the Chilcotin Central Coast's communities were reliant on agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining. With these industries in decline, tourism, Indigenous arts, wilderness resorts and a growing community of entrepreneurial artisans are now contributing increasingly to economic activity.

The Chilcotin Central Coast's largest visitor base are residents of BC and Alberta, followed by Washington, California, and Germany. American travellers represent the highest yield market. Described as the road less travelled, this area is more rustic in its appeal. It attracts Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers. Travellers who enjoy getting off the beaten track, connecting with locals, First Nations and enjoying the cultural diversity while experiencing breath-taking landscapes, backcountry pursuits and outdoor adventures.

The area boasts many distinctive features. It is the gateway to the 6.4 million-hectare Great Bear Rainforest and the Chilcotin Ark, 565 km of some of the world's most ecologically diverse, pristine wilderness. It is home to Mt. Waddington (BC's highest peak), Hunlen Falls (BC's 3rd highest mountain and Canada's highest free falling waterfall), the Charlotte Alplands (BC's highest concentration of alpine lakes), Tweedsmuir Provincial Park (BC's largest), and the scientific marine Hakai Institute. World-class bear viewing opportunities include accessible, market and export-ready experiences to see the Kermode/Spirit bears, grizzly bears and black bears. This planning area also encompasses the T̓silhqot̓'in Indigenous title lands granted in a landmark Supreme Court of Canada ruling in June 2014. The return of direct Port Hardy to Bella Coola ferry service in 2019 will invigorate the Discovery Coast Circle route\*.

Despite the area's uniqueness and popularity as a heli-ski destination, visitation is highly seasonal in summer. There is a need for more purchasable products, guided experiences and self-discovery activities to entice visitors to stay longer and spend more. Accommodation shortages in peak times limit opportunities to fully benefit from the area's tourism potential.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION INCLUDE LEVERAGING THE GROWING AWARENESS OF THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST, ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE ON THE DISCOVERY COAST CIRCLE ROUTE\*, DEVELOPING MARKET-READY INDIGENOUS, CULTURAL AND OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES AND CREATING A MODEL FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES.

\*Name currently under review

## B. DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION FOR THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST

There is a strong pride and love of place shared by stakeholders — it is one of the last remaining unspoiled, sparsely populated wilderness areas in the world. Appreciation for the land, cultures and its people is alive and strong. The vision for tourism development in the next 10 years reflects this:

THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST IS A VIBRANT, LESS-TRAVELLED DESTINATION THAT REFLECTS AND RESPECTS THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF ITS LAND, PEOPLE AND CULTURES, AND REALIZES ITS TOURISM POTENTIAL BY OFFERING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES TO TRAVELLERS WHO SHARE THESE VALUES AND WANT TO CONNECT WITH RAW, UNSPOILED NATURE.

**Four destination development goals were identified to support the vision for this planning area:**

1. Lead the province in local strategic, systematic growth, collaboration and communication to achieve mutually beneficial tourism development outcomes for residents and businesses.
2. Incrementally increase the benefits from tourism while respecting the limited carrying capacity of the land and its people, and develop memorable visitor experiences without sacrificing authenticity and the lifestyle of its residents.
3. Amplify awareness by developing experiences that allow the sharing of traditional cultures while teaching and preserving the way of life.
4. Maintain a keen awareness and understanding of the customer and adapt to the changing needs of the market to attract travellers who value and appreciate what the planning area has to offer.

Thirty-two development objectives, aligned within six themes, are described within this strategy, along with the organizations involved with the success networks needed to realize implementation.

The first five themes relate to the 10-year opportunities identified. The sixth theme acknowledges and responds to the wildfire and flood realities that emerged during the research process and will have a long-term impact on the region, yet there is an opportunity to engage in various short-term initiatives.

**THEME 1** Improve transportation to, from and within the Chilcotin Central Coast

**THEME 2** Lead strategic growth through continued collaboration

**THEME 3** Diversify and expand the visitor experience

**THEME 4** Enable tourism business viability and success

**THEME 5** Protect the environment while managing tourism growth

**THEME 6** Support natural disaster recovery

The composite nature of tourism necessitates collaboration to succeed. Stakeholders in the Chilcotin Central Coast have demonstrated their ability to collaborate and influence decisions on major initiatives impacting tourism to the area. The unique agreements and assets within the Chilcotin Central Coast create a stage for demonstrating leadership and forging new models for collaboration around tourism development.

DONE WELL, THE  
APPEAL OF THIS AREA  
WILL STRENGTHEN AND  
ATTRACT NEW TRAVELLERS  
WHILE DEMONSTRATING  
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES  
THAT COULD BE MODELLED  
ELSEWHERE.

## II. ACRONYMS

**BCFROA** BC Fishing Resorts and Outfitters Association

**BCLCA** BC Lodging & Camping Association

**BCTA** Bella Coola Trail Alliance

**BCVT** Bella Coola Valley Tourism

**CCC** Chilcotin Central Coast (this planning area)

**CCATEC** Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training and Employment Centre

**CCCTA** Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (the regional DMO)

**CF** Community Futures

**CFN** Coastal First Nations within this planning area Heiltsuk, Gitga'at Nuxalk, Kitasoo Xai'Xais, and Wuikinuxv

**CCRD** Central Coast Regional District

**CMC** Cariboo Management Committee

**CRD** Cariboo Regional District

**DBC** Destination BC

**DDP** Destination Development Program

**DFO** Department of Fisheries and Oceans

**DMO** Destination Management Organization/ Destination Marketing Organization

**EDO** Economic Development Offices

**EMBC** Emergency Management BC

**FN** First Nations

**GO2HR** The British Columbia human resource organization for tourism

**GBRF** Great Bear Rainforest

**ITBC** Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia

**MRDT** Municipal and Regional District Tax (commonly referred to as the "Hotel Tax")

**NDIT** Northern Development Initiative Trust

**OCP** Official Community Plan

**RDMO** Regional Destination Management Organization

**TIABC** Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia

**TIAC** Tourism Industry Association of Canada

**TNG** T̓silhqot̓'in National Government (?Esdilagh, Tsi Del Del, Yunesit'in, Tl'etinqox, Xeni Gwet'in, and Tl'esqox)

**TNRD** Thompson Nicola Regional District

**TOTA** Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

**UNWTO** UN World Tourism Organization

**WCTA** West Chilcotin Tourism Association

### PROVINCIAL MINISTRIES

**AEST** Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

**AGRI** Ministry of Agriculture



**MCS** Ministry of Citizen Services

**EDUC** Ministry of Education

**EMPR** Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

**ENV** Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

**FIN** Ministry of Finance

**FLNR** Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

**JTT** Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

**LBR** Ministry of Labour

**MAH** Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

**MAPP** Marine Plan Partnership

**MIRR** Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

**MPSSG** Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General

**TAC** Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

**TRAN** Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

#### FEDERAL MINISTRIES/ENTITIES

**DC** Destination Canada

**INAC** Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

**ITAC** Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

**MIC** Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship

**TIAC** Tourism Industry Association of Canada

**THRC** Tourism HR Canada

**WED** Western Economic Diversification

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# FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## FOREWORD

Initial in-community consultation in the Chilcotin Central Coast planning area was conducted in 2016 and 2017. The project was put on pause from July 2017 to April 2018 for wildfire recovery. In-community meetings were then held in late Spring of 2018 to gather final feedback from partners. Dates in this document have been updated to reflect this.

This Destination Development Strategy is the final report resulting from a 20-month, iterative process of gathering, synthesizing and validating information with stakeholders about the current status of tourism in the Chilcotin Central Coast.

This report synthesizes primary and secondary research gathered from multiple stakeholder conversations, documents, plans, studies and input from the working group.

As one of 20 planning area strategies to be produced between 2017 and 2019, the Chilcotin Central Coast strategy will contribute to the tapestry of long-term regional and provincial planning that will support the development of British Columbia as a world-class tourism destination offering remarkable, authentic experiences that exceed expectations and align with the provincial brand.

Destination BC, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (CCCTA) and the Tourism Café facilitation team wish to thank the stakeholders who contributed throughout the process by attending the community meetings, participating in surveys, stakeholder interviews, follow-up conversations, and forwarding relevant documents that provided the background information for the situation analysis.

The participation of our partners throughout the process was invaluable. It is important to note that no endorsement of this strategy or any action listed within was obtained.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the First Nations on whose traditional territories we gathered for our community meetings including: Bella Coola — home of the Nuxalk, Anahim Lake — home of the Ulkatcho, Alexis Creek — home of the Tl'etinqox and the T'silhqot'in National Government, Nimpo Lake — home of the Ulkatcho and Williams Lake — home of the Secwepemc. We acknowledge that many significant agreements have been realized in this planning area resulting from successful cooperation between the First Nations and non-Indigenous people, the private sector, government, non-for-profit organizations and passionate volunteers.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA'S WORST EVER WILDFIRE SEASON

The wildfires of 2018 were the most significant in British Columbia's history. It was a period of devastation for many who lost homes, businesses and tourism revenues. It was also a time of coming together as communities and citizens reached out to help each other in time of need. The direct, indirect, and induced impacts of the 2017 and 2018 wildfires will be felt significantly for years to come. Gratitude is extended to everyone who contributed to emergency services, firefighting, communication, evacuation and supporting those in need in a multitude of ways. Events such as these demonstrate the tourism industry's fragility and resilience and the strength of the human spirit to endure adversity.

## DEDICATION

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the loss of a tremendous friend of the industry, Ernest Hall on March 21, 2017. A member of the Bella Coola Valley Tourism Association, the BC Ferry Mid-Coast Working Group, the Ferry Advisory Committee, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, the Bella Coola Arts Council and an active participant in the destination development strategy planning process, Ernest's commitment and dedication to helping others flourish will be missed.

### Special thanks are offered to members of the working group:

- Deborah Nelson, Wuikinuxv Kitasoo Nuxalk Tribal Council
- Jeff Leahy, BC Parks
- Julie Dinsdale, Big Canyon Rafting
- Ken Vanderburgh, FLNR
- Nancy Opperman, Project Manager, Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government
- Petrus Rykes, West Chilcotin Tourism Association/Eagle's Nest Resort
- Talia Baptiste, Alexis Creek First Nations
- Tim Milne, Film Documentary

### Special thanks are offered to the facilitators of the Chilcotin Central Coast destination development process:

Nancy Arsenault (lead facilitator) and Lesley Anderson of the Tourism Cafe and Richard Innes of Brain Trust Marketing and Communications



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# INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY

GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST  
Photo: Pete Ryan

## A. PROGRAM VISION AND GOALS

The strategy was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program. The Program is a critical part of Destination BC's corporate strategy and facilitates the collaboration of local, regional and provincial agencies, Indigenous bands, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism operators and other community interests to guide the long-term growth of tourism in the Chilcotin Central Coast.

### The provincial vision for the Destination Development Program is as follows:

- BC is a world-class tourism destination that offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, exceed expectations, and align with BC's brand.

### The provincial vision is supported by three goals:

- Make BC the most highly recommended destination in North America.
- Create strategic 10-year plans for tourism destination development and improve return-on-investment for government and private sector investments in tourism assets.
- Elevate BC's ability to compete as a premium destination while making the province more attractive for investment.

### Destination development brings together planning, policy and capacity building efforts to:

- Ensure that a destination is well positioned to make future strategic decisions.



- Address impediments to growth and capitalize on opportunities.
- Outline key assets of a destination including the main product themes/ experiences available.
- Outline key priorities for new product, infrastructure and amenity development.
- Identify impediments to development and tourism growth (e.g., potential policy or capacity issues, available funding, access to funding etc.).

## B. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy not only supports provincial goals of the Destination Development Program but also:

- Provides strategic direction for the region and guidance for local and regional planning.
- Enhances the Chilcotin Central Coast's ability to leverage their resources and programs.
- Fosters joint action and intercommunity dialogue.

The Chilcotin Central Coast Destination Development Strategy is intended to serve as a guide for tourism partners as they proceed with implementation. This strategy should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities and market conditions. Additionally, results should be tracked regularly to ensure future implementation of activities are more effective in increasing economic, social and cultural benefits to the Chilcotin Central Coast.

FIGURE 1:  
Tourism Revenue  
Drivers



## C. A FOCUS ON THE SUPPLY AND EXPERIENCE

Destination development is the mechanism whereby the natural life cycle of tourism (e.g., development, stagnation, decline and rejuvenation) is managed, evolves and remains desirable for the ever-changing consumer and hence, competitive in its target markets.

Destination development happens when industry and government plan and work together to enhance the quality of the visitor’s experience by ensuring tourism products, services, amenities and practices meet and exceed visitor expectations over the long term.

Tourism has two primary revenue drivers – supply and demand (Figure 1). Creative marketing efforts strive to generate short-term demand for a destination and create immediate urgency for people to want to visit.

Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by creating a compelling visitor experience to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation.

Sharing, via social networks, like Facebook, Twitter and TripAdvisor, which allows travellers to review their experiences and the quality of the destination making social media an essential element of the marketing toolbox.

**There are multiple dimensions to supply that are considered in destination development planning to enhance the visitor experience:**

- The setting in which our experiences take place and how to access them.
- Policies that establish and maintain opportunities and growth barriers.
- The investment enhancement framework.
- Products and experiences matched to consumer interests, including infrastructure and amenities (which are all often public in nature and used by residents as well as visitors).
- Visitor servicing programs that meet and exceed guest expectations.
- Capability, skills and training our industry needs so that we all can excel at what we do. These dimensions are in Figure 2.

## D. METHODOLOGY

This document was developed based on an extensive, collaborative effort during a 20-month process that culminated in the creation of a Situation Analysis report and this Destination Development Strategy.

The destination development planning approach was highly iterative, allowing for multiple opportunities for stakeholder input and validation. The anticipated time frame for project completion was delayed due to the 2017 wildfires and subsequent priority recovery activities (Figure 3).

The process followed a semi-structured strategic approach, created by Destination BC, that allowed for flexibility to ensure the unique considerations of each planning area are assessed and respected. A volunteer Working Committee contributed their expertise to review and discuss the key findings from the Situation Analysis and help develop the goals and supporting objectives and actions contained in this strategy.

FIGURE 2:  
Five Dimensions  
of Supply – the  
Visitor Experience



FIGURE 3:  
Key Project  
Timelines

ACTIVITY	DATES
Pre-project staging, preliminary data collection and document review	August–September 2016
1st in-community consultation	Sept 21, 2016 Bella Coola, Sept 22 Anahim Lake, Sept 23 Alexis Creek, Oct online
Stakeholder interviews, asset inventory research, First Nations survey	October–November 2016
2nd in-community consultation	Nov 7 Bella Coola, Nov 8 Nimpo Lake, Nov 9 Williams Lake, Nov 18 Online
Draft situation analysis document, finalize interviews, stakeholder validation survey, First Nations community visits by the RDMO CEO, complete the asset inventory	November 2016–February 2017
Working group meeting in Williams Lake to review the draft strategy, key findings and set priorities	February 15 & 16, 2017
Finalize the Situation Analysis	March 2017
Draft and review the Destination Development Strategy	April–June 2017
<i>Project pause due to the 2017 wildfire crises in British Columbia</i>	<i>July 2017–October (Fires)</i>
Draft Destination Development Strategy (minus the wildfire impacts)	October 2017
<i>Project pause for wildfire recovery activities with government and stakeholders plus conducting research on the wildfire impacts to the region<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>October–April 2018 (Recovery activities)</i>
Review and update the draft strategy and gather stakeholder input, including in community consultation: 22 May 2018, Alexis Creek and Nimpo Lake, 23 May Bella Coola and an online session for the outer coast 2018	April–May 2018
Finalize and submit strategy	June 2018
Next Steps: Action Planning/Implementation	Winter/Spring 2019

<sup>1</sup>Larose Research and Strategy (2018, March). Impacts of the 2017 Wildfires on the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism. A research report prepared for the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association



## E. KEY OUTPUTS

The three key outputs from this project include:

- (1) An asset inventory of accommodations, tourism businesses and attractions, tourism organizations, food and beverage establishments, parks and recreation sites, sports and arts facilities, meeting facilities, transportation and visitor services.
- (2) A Situation Analysis that provides detailed insights of the industry and CCCTA context, the planning area assessment and considerations, plus information on the 11 First Nations and significant land agreements and treaties, including the federal T̓silhqot̓'in Land decision, provincial Nenqay Deni Accord, the Nemiah Declaration and the Great Bear Rainforest designation.
- (3) The Chilcotin Central Coast Destination Development Strategy.

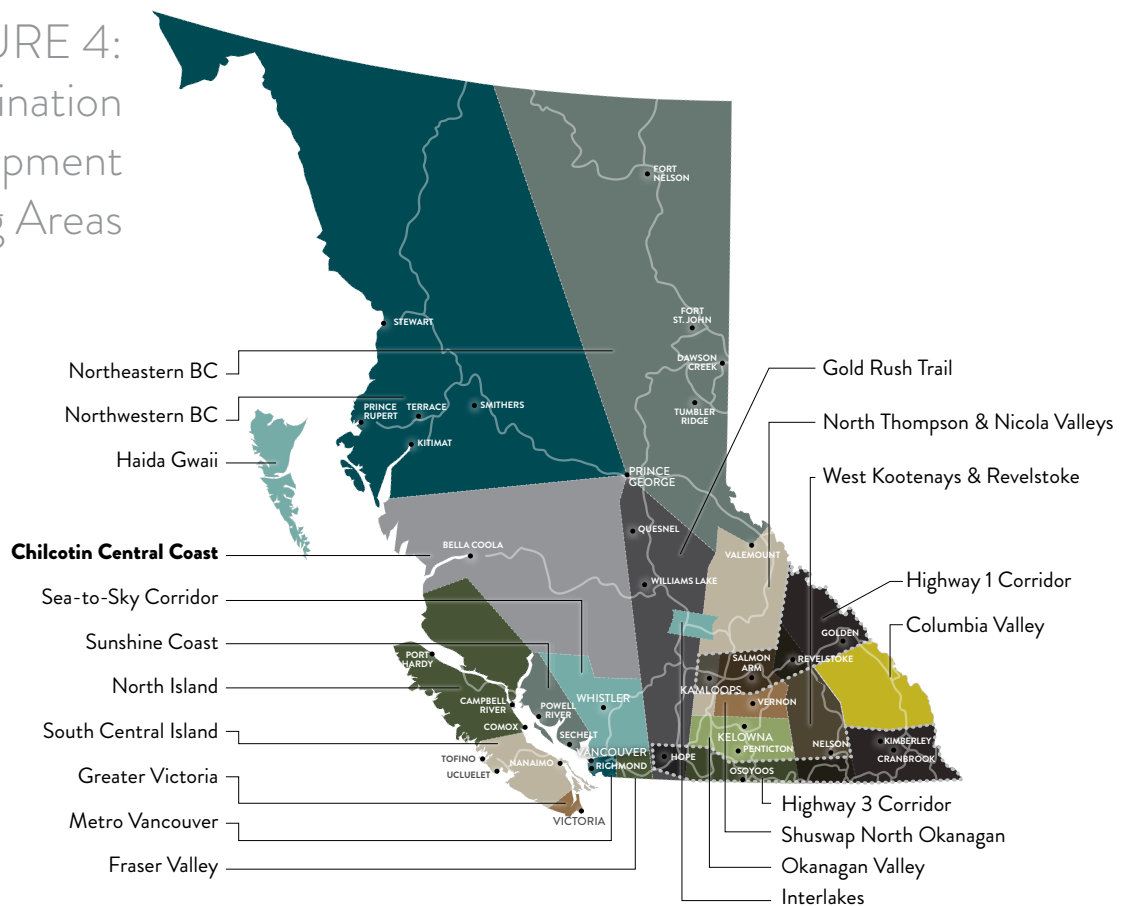
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# ALIGNMENT

WILDERNESS LAKE  
Photo: Kari Medig

The Destination Development Strategy for the Chilcotin Central Coast is one of three strategies that will be prepared for the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Region and one of 20 within the province (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4:  
Twenty Destination  
Development  
Planning Areas



Over the course of Destination BC’s Destination Development Program, each of the province’s six tourism regions will integrate their planning area strategies into one Regional Destination Development Strategy which, in turn, will be used to inform a Provincial Destination Development Strategy, together with all 20 planning area strategies (Figure 5).

In addition to government planning processes related to tourism, other layers of planning that are relevant to the destination development strategy process include:

**1. ASSOCIATIONS AND AGENCIES REPRESENTING DIFFERENT TOURISM SUB-SECTORS** (e.g., culinary, sport fishing, kayaking, boating) and services (e.g., advocacy, human resources, marketing): These organizations play an important role in many aspects of the demand-side of tourism sector development, specifically in relation to the involvement and interests of the private sector.

**2. DESTINATION MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (DMOS):** The marketing and promotional (and, in some cases, destination development) efforts of community DMOs are relevant to the destination development strategy process as these efforts are typically focused on the supply-side of a community’s tourism sector (e.g. marketing the community’s tourism assets).

**FIGURE 5:**  
Levels of Destination Development Planning





**3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES:** These strategies can have direct or indirect implications for tourism destination development and the marketing of these assets (e.g. trail development, zoning for commercial short-term accommodation, protection of visual/scenic assets, commercial property tax frameworks, regulation of the sharing economy, etc.).

**4. INDIGENOUS BANDS, TRIBAL COUNCILS AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS:** The planning area, regional and provincial destination development strategies will impact First Nations communities to varying degrees, as well as the provincial and national associations working to advance their interests (e.g. T̓silhqot̓'in National Government, Coastal First Nations, individual bands, Indigenous Tourism BC, etc.).



# 4

# SUCCESS NETWORKS

LOOKOUT AT HUNLEN FALLS  
Photo: Kari Medig

SUCCESSFUL  
DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION  
RECOGNIZES  
THAT “WE ALL  
HAVE A ROLE  
TO PLAY”.

The Chilcotin Central Coast Destination Development Strategy is not intended to work in isolation or disregard existing policy and planning frameworks.

Rather, the planning process has brought tourism to the table in a coordinated fashion that will work with wider policies and planning efforts.

Success networks represent the clusters of businesses and organizations who are encouraged to collaborate and work in harmony to bring the opportunity to fruition and implement the strategy. As such, these strategies have been built utilizing federal, provincial, regional and local organizations and available resources for implementation. It is recognized that only by working collaboratively in the continued planning and implementation of destination development can the true potential of the planning area be realized.

Tourism partners throughout the development of this strategy have articulated their desire to work cooperatively on key aspects of

implementation. Organizations identified within each tactical success network will be in a position to review, locally, regionally, and provincially, the potential for growing tourism, by leading, or supporting implementation, and action. It does not imply the organizations have committed or endorsed the tactic. This strategy is intended to inform conversations that may lead to future investments and actions, or that will contribute to growing this planning area’s and British Columbia’s visitor economy.

Joint strategy ownership among all planning area tourism partners is a critical component of this program’s success. The planning process identifies a suggested success network of tourism partners to champion and move actions within each objective forward. However, during implementation, leads and involved parties would need to be verified. In many instances, executing on an initiative may

## FIGURE 6: Key Partners in Destination Development

The following partners have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward:

FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	REGIONAL	FIRST NATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination Canada</li> <li>• Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada</li> <li>• Canadian Heritage</li> <li>• Environment &amp; Climate Change</li> <li>• Indigenous and Northern Affairs</li> <li>• Indigenous Tourism Association Canada</li> <li>• Western Economic Diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BC Ferries</li> <li>• BC Parks</li> <li>• Destination BC</li> <li>• Indigenous Tourism BC</li> <li>• Northern Development Initiative Trust</li> <li>• Ministries:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation</li> <li>- Tourism, Arts and Culture</li> <li>- Agriculture</li> <li>- Community, Sport &amp; Cultural Development</li> <li>- Environment and Climate Change Strategy</li> <li>- Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development</li> <li>- Jobs, Trade and Technology</li> <li>- Small Business &amp; Red Tape Reduction</li> <li>- Transportation and Infrastructure</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bella Coola Valley Tourism Association</li> <li>• Cariboo Regional District</li> <li>• Central Coast Regional District</li> <li>• Community Futures</li> <li>• Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association</li> <li>• Northern Development Initiative Fund</li> <li>• West Chilcotin Tourism Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tsilhqot'in National Government</li> <li>• Coastal First Nations</li> <li>• Gitga'at</li> <li>• Heiltsuk</li> <li>• Kitsoo Xai'Xais</li> <li>• Nuxalk</li> <li>• Tl'etinqox</li> <li>• Toosey Indian Band</li> <li>• Tsi Del Del</li> <li>• Ulkatcho</li> <li>• Wuikinuxv</li> <li>• Xeni Gwet'in</li> <li>• Yunesit'in</li> </ul>

require sharing responsibilities and entities listed will be responsible to lead their own areas. The complexity of the tourism industry is understood in the Chilcotin Central Coast. The rich history with First Nations, ferry requirements, Indigenous tourism development and limited access, all combine to make this area both appealing yet also challenging for destination development.

This strategy will inform actions for the future, which, over time, may be embedded in the local, regional and provincial decision making. As this planning process is not intended to duplicate ongoing efforts or create new organizational or administrative structures, the implementation of this strategy should first be executed through existing organizations, where possible. It is hoped that this leads to an integrated system of planning area priorities that will drive investment to grow the visitor economy in ways that contribute to memorable guest experiences while respecting the land and its people.



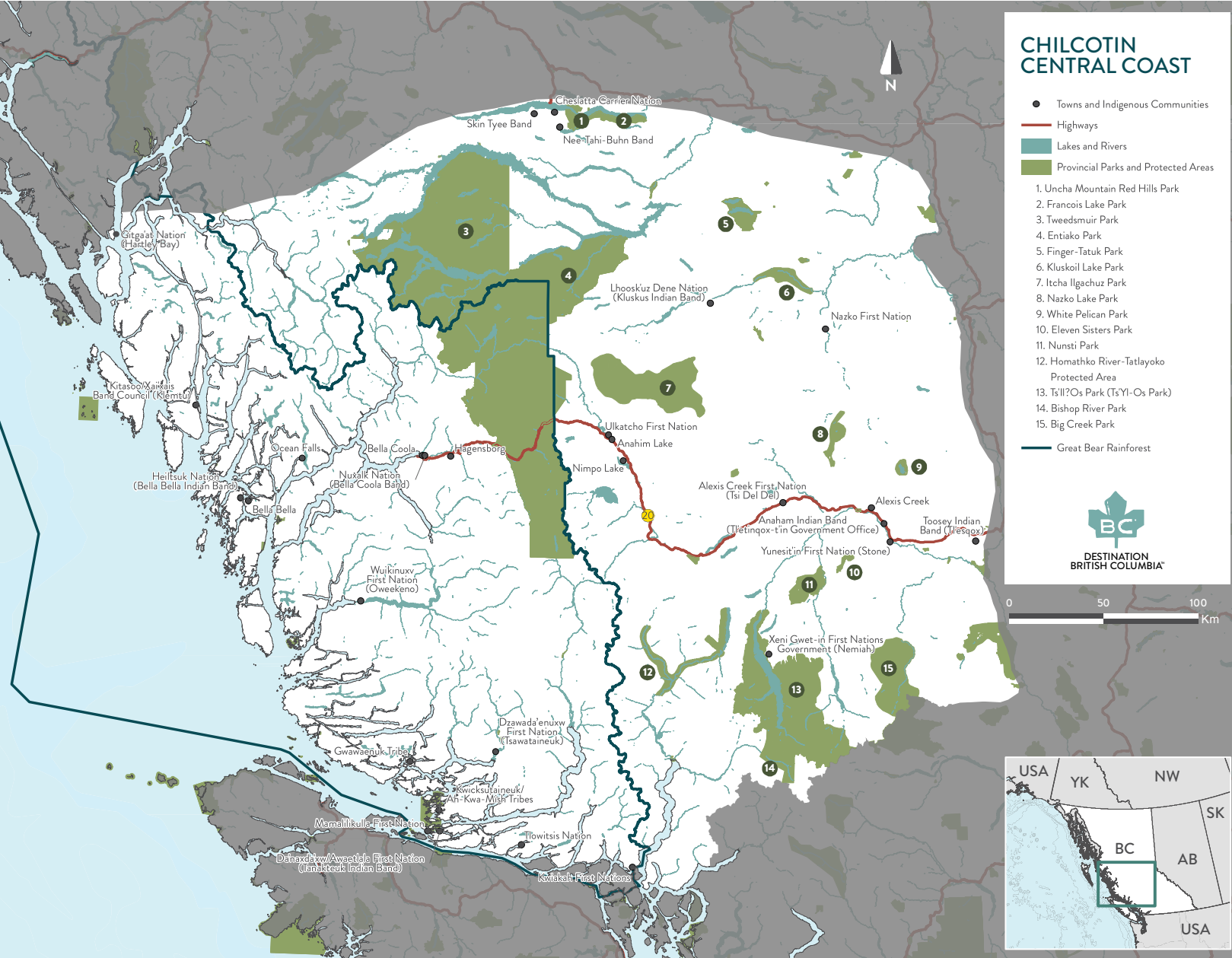
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# A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

NIUT RANGE  
Photo: Kari Medig

## A. GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Chilcotin Central Coast (Highway 20) planning area encompasses the area west of the Fraser River, stretching across the Chilcotin Plateau to the central coast. The northern geographic boundary includes Hartley Bay, Entiako, Finger-Tatuk and Fraser River Provincial Parks. The western portion of the planning area is bounded by the Pacific Ocean and includes the central portion of the newly designated Great Bear Rainforest. The Fraser River demarcates the region to the east and the southern boundaries include Bute Inlet, the Homathko Icefield and Big Creek Provincial Park.



## B. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION BASE, COMMUNITIES INCLUDED AND FIRST NATIONS

Differentiating this planning area from others is its unique composition of 11 First Nations bands connecting along the entire Highway 20 corridor, from Williams Lake to Bella Coola.

This includes the: Gitga'at, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'Xais, Nuxalk, Tl'etinqx, Toosey Indian Band, Tsi Del Del, Ulkatcho, Wuikinuxv, Xen'i Gwet'in and Yunesit'in. This makes it a linguistically, culturally and historically rich region for Canada's first people and presents unique, targeted, tourism development opportunities.

The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) and Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) form the remainder of the government structure within this region. This region has no incorporated towns, cities or municipalities, which adds a politically unique element to this planning area and creates a void in accessing





and leveraging municipal funding programs. The Chilcotin Central Coast planning area is primarily comprised of the entire CCRD, Electoral Areas J (West Chilcotin) and K (East Chilcotin) within the CRD and includes some of Electoral Area C of the Kitimat Stikine Regional District. Within the CCRD there are 28 unincorporated community entities including the Bella Coola Valley, Bella Bella, Denny Island, Klemtu, Ocean Falls and Oweekeno.

## C. DESCRIPTION OF ECONOMY BASE – HISTORICAL AND CURRENT

Historically the Chilcotin Central Coast communities were reliant on natural resources with an emphasis coastally on agriculture, forestry and fishing<sup>2</sup>, and inland on forestry, hunting and mining<sup>3</sup>.

With most of these industries in decline over the past decades both regional districts and the communities within are seeking to reinvigorate and diversify their economies. Tourism, education, health services and public administration are currently the major employers. Tourism opportunities, particularly in the areas of bear viewing, other wildlife viewing, outdoor recreation, sport fishing and heli-skiing have been growing. Aquaculture, commercial fishery activities (including shellfish, fish processing, salmon enhancement), tree farm licensing, marine transportation and repairs, Indigenous arts and a growing community of entrepreneurial artisans also contribute to economic activity in the planning area.

<sup>2</sup>Central Coast Regional District: [www.ccrd-bc.ca/communities/](http://www.ccrd-bc.ca/communities/)

<sup>3</sup>Cariboo Regional District: [www.cariboord.bc.ca/](http://www.cariboord.bc.ca/)

## D. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM PERFORMANCE

There is little data available to measure performance of the tourism industry in this planning area due to the small visitor numbers and lack of research resources.

As a result, the CCCTA data is used and confirms that visitation to the entire Cariboo Chilcotin Coast regions represents 3.5% of provincial visitation and the planning area garners part of this visitor traffic<sup>4</sup>. During the time-frame for the project research, there was no Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) collected in the region to provide accommodation occupancy and rate statistics<sup>5</sup>. Passenger volume for the planning area airports is not reported. And, with the cancellation of the direct Port Hardy to Bella Coola ferry in 2014 there is no recent comparable ferry data available to report on passenger and vehicle traffic into Bella Coola, the gateway community to Highway 20. Finally, as there are no incorporated communities in the planning area, traditional tourism statistics are not available.

### A PLANNING AREA POISED FOR GROWTH

The Tourism Development and Ferry Services research report<sup>6</sup> provides some of the only planning area visitor information available and confirms that

demand is strong and growing for authentic, cultural, First Nations and nature-based tourism experiences. In the areas that are home to the four Coastal First Nations, demand is believed to already exceed the current supply of services, particularly for mid-to-upper-scale guided ecotourism experiences — the most popular of which are whale watching and bear viewing — and Indigenous cultural experiences.

The Great Bear Rainforest itself is drawing increased attention to the region. Fifty-six percent of visitors said that the designation of this area was an important motivator in their decision to visit. With focused efforts on product development to increase the availability of purchasable visitor experiences, expanded marketing and enhanced access, visitation to the region is expected to grow in the future. With these actions, the potential for 11,000–18,000 additional visitor trips is anticipated, and with the return of the direct ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola in 2019 tourism volume is expected to grow substantially.

<sup>4</sup>Destination BC. (2017, April). Provincial tourism indicators: 2016 year in review. Retrieved from [www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Industry-Performance/Tourism-Indicators/Tourism-Indicators-%E2%80%93-2016-Year-In-Review/Provincial-Tourism-Indicators-Year-In-Review-2016-\(7\).pdf.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Industry-Performance/Tourism-Indicators/Tourism-Indicators-%E2%80%93-2016-Year-In-Review/Provincial-Tourism-Indicators-Year-In-Review-2016-(7).pdf.aspx)

<sup>5</sup>Note: The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association received approval to collect the MRDT beginning 1 May 2018.

<sup>6</sup>Indigenous Tourism BC. (2016, February). Tourism development and ferry services: A vision for First Nations and rural communities on BC's Central Coast and North Island. Retrieved from [www.tiabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/recent-current-advocacy-issues/AtBC-Central-Coast-Ferries-Report-FINAL.pdf](http://www.tiabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/recent-current-advocacy-issues/AtBC-Central-Coast-Ferries-Report-FINAL.pdf)

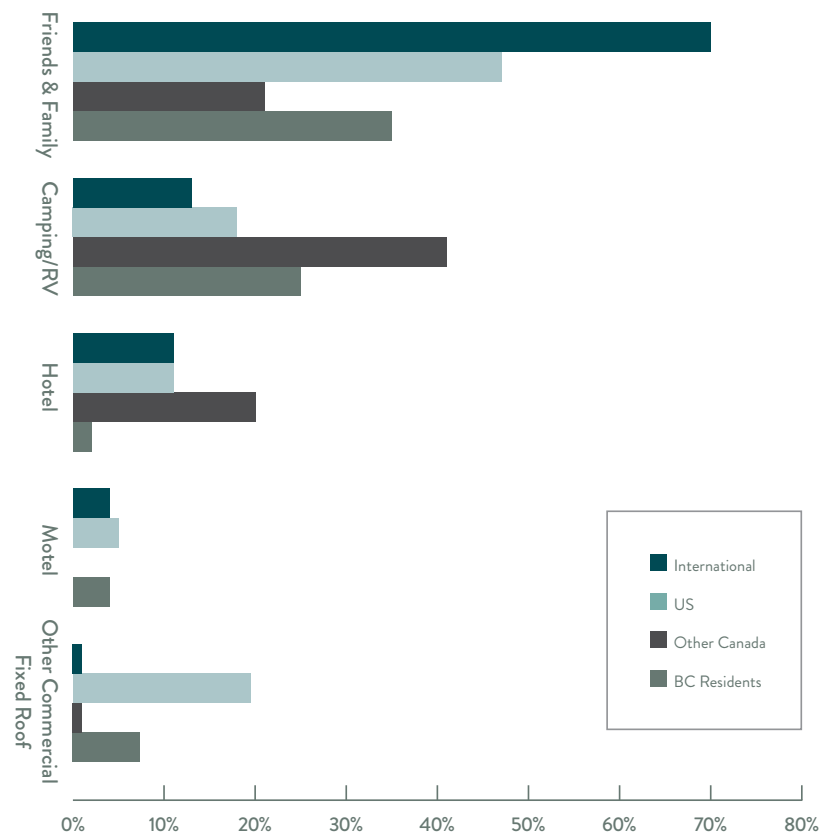
## ACCOMMODATIONS

There were no MRDT statistics for the planning area at the time of the study. Information on the types of accommodation used by visitors must be estimated using regional data for the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (Figure 7).

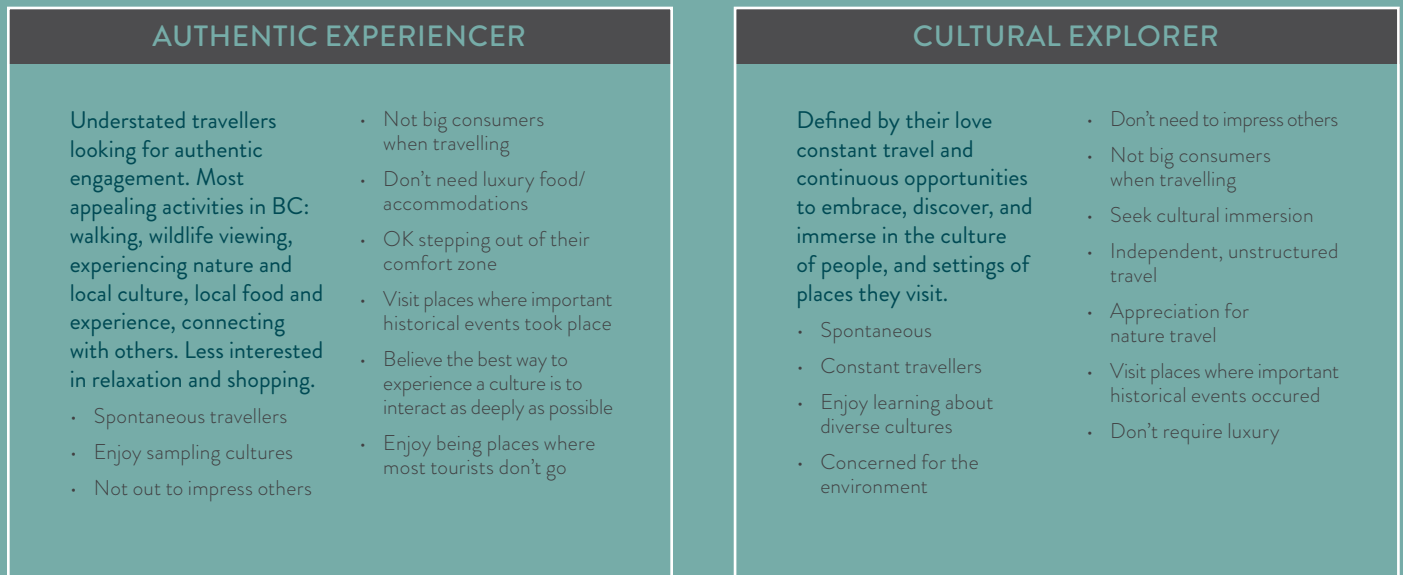
There are many European nationals who reside in the planning area — some who live there seasonally and some who reside year-round — potentially

contributing to the high percentage of international visitors who come and stay with their friends and family. Camping/RV is a prevalent type of accommodation, not surprising given this area's popularity as a touring destination, its numerous parks, natural areas, campgrounds and recreation sites (the CCCTA region has 12% of BC's campsite inventory). As well, Cultural Explorers, one of the region's target traveller types, enjoy this style of accommodation along with B&Bs.

FIGURE 7:  
Accommodation Type  
by Visitor Market



## FIGURE 8: Chilcotin Central Coast Preferred Traveller Types



## E. KEY VISITOR MARKETS

Success in the Chilcotin Central Coast is, and will be into the future, based on attracting niche markets – visitors with a certain profile. In 2014, Destination BC entered into a partnership agreement with Destination Canada to access the Explorer Quotient™ (EQ) research. “This award-winning, proprietary tool is changing the way travel experiences are developed, marketed and sold in Canada.”<sup>7</sup> EQ helps to understand travellers beyond the traditional field of demographics

(e.g. age, education, gender) and provides insight and understanding into people’s social beliefs, values and buying behaviors.

There are nine primary EQ types for Canada, three of which Destination BC is targeting: Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers and Free Spirits. Through a series of stakeholder engagement sessions, it was determined that the Authentic Experiencer (AE) and the Cultural Explorer (CE) were best aligned with the types of visitors

currently visiting and that businesses would welcome more of (Figure 8).

These segments represent 29% of short-haul travellers to BC (BC, Alberta and Washington) and 33% of long-haul travellers from the Greater Toronto Area, other parts of Ontario and the USA. Their preferred activities are aligned with what this area offers: sightseeing, scenery, touring/driving trips. Full EQ profiles of these traveller types can be accessed, free of charge, from Destination Canada.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Destination Canada. <http://en.destinationcanada.com/resources-industry/explorer-quotient>

<sup>8</sup>Destination Canada. (2012). EQ profiles. Retrieved from: [http://en.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Resources/EQ/eq\\_profiles\\_ver2\\_2015\\_eng\\_lowres.pdf](http://en.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/pdf/Resources/EQ/eq_profiles_ver2_2015_eng_lowres.pdf)

FIGURE 9:  
Season of Travel

## SEASONALITY IMPACTS

Visitation to the region is highly seasonal with most of the visitation, from all markets, occurring between June to September during prime bear viewing season (Figure 9). The spring

period (April to June) is highly sought after by international and American guests. Canadians represent the largest number of winter travellers which in part can be attributed to the world class heli-skiing in the Bella Coola area.

MARKET ORIGIN	BC RESIDENTS	OTHER CANADIANS	US RESIDENTS	OTHER INTERNATIONAL
JANUARY-MARCH	15%	27%	0%	1%
APRIL-JUNE	22%	14%	14%	36%
JULY-SEPTEMBER	54%	53%	51%	57%
OCTOBER-DECEMBER	9%	5%	4%	5%

Source: Destination BC 2017 Regional Profile – Cariboo Chilcotin Coast

## F. SUMMARY OF KEY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

From a tourism destination perspective, the Chilcotin Central Coast benefits from a range of unique strengths. However, it also faces numerous destination development challenges, some of which have the potential to impact the future growth and sustainability of the tourism sector.

Figure 10 summarizes, in no specific order, the key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the Chilcotin Central Coast. A more detailed list is located in the Situation Analysis.

FIGURE 10: High Level Summary of Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

KEY STRENGTHS	KEY CHALLENGES	KEY OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive pristine wilderness</li> <li>• World-class protected natural areas</li> <li>• Great Bear Rainforest</li> <li>• Cultural and heritage richness</li> <li>• Abundant wildlife, high concentration of bears including Kermode bears</li> <li>• Diversity of 11 First Nations</li> <li>• Stunning, protected coastal waters</li> <li>• Geographic and climatic diversity</li> <li>• Off-the-beaten-path, uncrowded</li> <li>• Committed, passionate stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty around the impact of land negotiations and agreements</li> <li>• Remoteness from major urban areas</li> <li>• Cost and difficulty of air and sea access</li> <li>• Uncertainty for long-term, direct ferry service</li> <li>• Quantity and diversity of food &amp; beverage options</li> <li>• Availability of purchasable, guided experiences</li> <li>• Limited carrying capacity of wilderness areas to support tourism growth</li> <li>• Insufficient accommodation capacity in high season</li> <li>• Limited cell and Wi-Fi service</li> <li>• Highly seasonal, limits investment appeal</li> <li>• Attracting &amp; retaining staff</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Bear Rainforest</li> <li>• 2019 new ferry service</li> <li>• Rebrand and invest in the circle touring route</li> <li>• Investment in touring infrastructure</li> <li>• Extend shoulder seasons with BC Ferries and BC Parks</li> <li>• New product development — particularly Indigenous experiences</li> <li>• Invest in non-traditional types of accommodation, food and beverage</li> <li>• Develop coastal paddling opportunities</li> <li>• Designation of the Chilcotin Ark</li> <li>• Increased stakeholder collaboration</li> </ul>

## G. EXPERIENCE POTENTIAL

### UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITIONS

The unique selling propositions (USPs) that define the Chilcotin Central Coast include:

1. **World-class protected natural areas affording visitors an opportunity to experience pristine wilderness like nowhere else in the world, including:**
  - a. The 2009 designation of the Great Bear Rainforest.
  - b. The ecologically diverse Chilcotin Ark which encompasses 10 of BC's 14 bio-geoclimatic zones.
  - c. Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, BC's largest provincial park, plus 22 other provincial parks, seven ecological reserves and three protected areas.
2. **Backcountry and outdoor adventure in expansive wilderness environments:**
  - a. This area epitomizes Super, Natural British Columbia™ offering some of BC's highest mountains, largest glaciers, highest concentrations of alpine lakes, and stunning protected coastal landscapes for all types of outdoor pursuits.
  - b. A variety of tourism operators who offer backcountry experiences in the region's pristine wilderness that extend from horseback riding to skiing, paddling, mountain biking and hiking.

- c. The largest contiguous heli-ski tenure in the world offering immense terrain for all abilities and significant annual snowfall for powder hounds.

### 3. Abundant opportunities for wildlife and bird viewing:

- a. Offers some of the best bear viewing in the world, including opportunities to see the unique Kermode/Spirit bear only found in this part of the world.
- b. Extensive wilderness that affords the chance to see moose, caribou, deer, wolf, wolverine, bear, fox, bald eagles, whales and more.

### 4. Unspoiled, protected coastal areas surrounded by stunning landscapes for water-based pursuits:

- a. The area boasts 8,000 lakes, 17,000 km of rivers, countless streams, and fjords. Ocean inlets and passages offer anglers unparalleled fishing options including crabbing and prawning.
- b. Exceptional natural coastal areas that are largely underutilized, including high-amenity regions such as the Bentinck Arm, which contains spectacular natural hot springs, resident humpback whale populations and fantastic fishing and seafood foraging.
- c. Abundant marine assets to support the development of new visitor experiences.

### 5. A rich cultural heritage with diverse stories to share:

- a. Home to eleven diverse First Nations, some of whom already offer market-ready and export-ready experiences, along with others that wish to develop additional tourism opportunities to share their stories.
- b. A variety of unique, cultural and heritage attractions including the Bella Coola Nuxalk petroglyphs, the Klemtu Big House, First Nations pow wows and the historic Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail.
- c. Opportunities to connect with cowboy culture through ranch and horseback riding vacations.
- d. Numerous European residents and business owners who offer opportunities to connect with their settlement stories and cultural backgrounds.

## SPECIFIC PRODUCT EXPERIENCES

The specific experiences identified that have potential as iconic products for growth.

1. The Great Bear Rainforest
2. The circle touring route
3. Indigenous experiences
4. Wildlife viewing, photography and short hikes





6

# A DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION

POTATO RANGE  
Photo: Albert Normandin

## THE DIRECTION FOR THE STRATEGY

### A. VISION

The Chilcotin Central Coast is described by many tourism partners as one of the last remaining unspoiled, sparsely populated wilderness areas in the world where appreciation for the land, cultures and its people is alive and strong.

The result of eight community meetings, working group discussions, a First Nations survey and a general tourism survey (for government, operators and not-for-profits), the vision for this area was defined as:

THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST IS A VIBRANT, LESS-TRAVELLED DESTINATION THAT REFLECTS AND RESPECTS THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF ITS LAND, PEOPLE AND CULTURES, AND REALIZES ITS TOURISM POTENTIAL BY OFFERING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES TO TRAVELLERS WHO SHARE THESE VALUES AND WANT TO CONNECT WITH RAW, UNSPOILED NATURE.



## B. GOALS

Four destination development goals were identified to support the vision for this planning area:

1. Lead the province in local, strategic, systematic growth, collaboration and communication to achieve mutually beneficial tourism development outcomes for residents and businesses.
2. Incrementally increase the benefits from tourism while respecting the limited carrying capacity of the land and its people and develop memorable visitor experiences without sacrificing authenticity and the lifestyle of its people.
3. Amplify awareness by developing experiences that allow the sharing of traditional cultures while teaching and preserving the way of life.
4. Maintain a keen awareness and understanding of the customer and adapt to the changing needs of the market to attract travellers who value and appreciate what the planning area has to offer.

## C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

SIX KEY PRINCIPLES, DEVELOPED WITH STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN THE DESTINATION PLANNING SESSIONS, SERVED AS FILTERS FOR ESTABLISHING THE PRIORITIES FOR THIS REGION.

1. Strengthen collaboration and coalesce stakeholders around a common language for discussing tourism, sharing information and marketing to visitors along the corridor.
2. Recognize and respect the way of life, cultures, heritage and environment.
3. Generate sustainable economic opportunity for future generations.
4. Contribute to a welcoming invitation with which to market our values and unique brand to the world.
5. Transparency of information/ communication amongst all partners.
6. Holistic planning in a way that demonstrates respect for all industries/ sectors.

## D. MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

Existing motivating experiences, and those that have the opportunity to be developed, provide a focal point for development over the next 10 years on experiences that will inspire travel, differentiate the region and offer guests compelling, sustainable visitor experiences.

THIS WILL BE ESSENTIAL IF MORE PEOPLE ARE TO BE ENTICED TO VISIT THE REGION AND SPEND MORE TIME AND MONEY ALONG THE HIGHWAY 20 CORRIDOR, IN BELLA BELLA AND THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST.

**The primary motivating experiences identified for this area include:**

1. The Great Bear Rainforest and Kermode Bears
2. Touring and the Discovery Coast Route\*
3. Indigenous experiences
4. Guest lodge/resort-based experiences
5. Wildlife viewing and photography
6. Heli-skiing
7. Tweedsmuir Provincial Park
8. Backcountry hiking on unpopulated trails
9. Fresh water and ocean angling
10. Recreational boating

\*Name currently under review

This table provides high-level context for each of the motivating experiences.

<p><b>THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST AND KERMODE BEAR</b></p>	<p>The recently designated Great Bear Rainforest, covering 6.4 million hectares on B.C.'s north and central coast, is the world's largest intact temperate rainforest and home to the Kermode/Spirit Bear. It has garnered worldwide media attention as a result of the October 2016 royal visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, combined with the December 2016 recognition by Queen Elizabeth's Commonwealth Canopy initiative.</p> <p>Managing the growing notoriety and increasing the supply of visitor experiences, while managing the capacity of the land and people is critical if sustainable tourism benefits are to contribute to the region's long-term future.</p>
<p><b>TOURING AND THE DISCOVERY COAST CIRCLE ROUTE *</b></p>	<p>The 2019 commencement of direct ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola re-establishes the former Discovery Coast Circle* touring route, providing an opportunity to appreciate the abundance of unique, interesting natural attractions that are, for the most part, difficult to access, including Mount Waddington BC's highest peak, Anahim volcanic belt, Hunlen Falls and Turner Lakes, Precipice, Farwell and Bull Canyons, Homathko and Monarch icefield and glacier fields, Charlotte Alplands and Chilcotin plateau grasslands. Work needs to continue with BC Ferries, BC Parks and tourism operators to align schedules and hours of operation to optimize visitation during the May to October season to ensure the human resource capacity can be secured to service guests.</p>
<p><b>INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES</b></p>	<p>Creating additional, sustainable revenue generating experiences that celebrate the culture, history and unique features such as the petroglyphs that date back 5000 to 10000+ years.</p>
<p><b>GUEST LODGE/RESORT-BASED EXPERIENCES</b></p>	<p>Unique lodges and resort-based experiences that offer everything from wildlife viewing, fishing, yoga, horseback riding and hiking are tucked in exquisite nature-based settings luring long-haul guests. Owned by European settlers, Canadians and Indigenous businesses, the diversity and quality in a low visitation region is alluring for those who love to be off the beaten track.</p>
<p><b>WILDLIFE VIEWING AND PHOTOGRAPHY</b></p>	<p>The spectacular, untouched nature and stunning landscapes, combined with limited visitation, create an unparalleled lure for wildlife viewers and photographers to immerse in the key seasonal cycles of nature. The potential to create shorter 1 to 3 km front country trails for the less daring traveller could create reasons to slow travel along Highway 20.</p>
<p><b>HELI-SKIING</b></p>	<p>The world-class heli-skiing of the coastal mountains draws powder hounds who appreciate the vast, untouched landscapes and significant snowfall. This segment adds to the year-round profile for the destination.</p>
<p><b>TWEEDSMUIR PROVINCIAL PARK</b></p>	<p>The province's largest park offers resort experiences to quiet, unpopulated back-country hiking and camping in the summer, attracting adventure enthusiasts.</p>
<p><b>BACKCOUNTRY HIKING</b></p>	<p>Backcountry hiking represents a very niche market of visitors who are relatively self-sustaining and seeking the peaceful, unpopulated, quiet immersion of the trails in this region. Continued effort to improve maintenance, access, awareness GPS mapping, trail head amenities and services should continue.</p>
<p><b>FRESH WATER AND OCEAN ANGLING</b></p>	<p>Fresh water and ocean angling for salmon, halibut, steelhead and wild rainbow trout allow for anglers to arrive at different times of the year, revisit the destination and fish in unpopulated, less travelled regions of the province.</p>
<p><b>RECREATIONAL BOATING</b></p>	<p>As the growth in recreational boating continues, there are strategic growth opportunities in Bella Bella and Bella Coola to service this market in ways that optimize the connection between land and sea for visitor activities that generate benefits for locals and connect the boaters to the land-based experiences.</p>

\*Name currently under review

## E. DEVELOPMENT THEMES

Six destination development themes emerged through the planning process under which priority activities are clustered and focused investment can occur.

### 1. IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION TO, FROM, AND WITHIN THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST

Optimizing the regional benefits resulting from the new 2019 BC Ferries direct service to/from Bella Coola has broad stakeholder implications and could have a very positive impact on extending the length of the tourism season in the long-term. Direct ferry service to Bella Coola was identified as a critical link to sustainable tourism development in this area, along with air access and affordability, marine access improvements and increased public transportation.

### 2. LEAD STRATEGIC GROWTH THROUGH CONTINUED COLLABORATION

The regional stakeholders in the Chilcotin Central Coast have demonstrated their ability to collaborate and influence decisions on major initiatives that impact tourism to the area. They have achieved a significant number of key outcomes such as the Great Bear

Rainforest designation, negotiating the BC Ferry direct service to/from Bella Coola in 2019 again and multiple First Nations land agreements. These significant outcomes are a result of focused dialogue, collaboration and commitment that will have long-lasting benefits, and in some cases, represent permanent change in British Columbia. The ability to achieve such results is applauded and lays a foundation for further opportunities to shape the future.

### 3. DIVERSIFY AND EXPAND THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

To generate sustainable benefits for visitors, businesses and First Nations from the visitor economy, it is imperative that a variety of both paid and unpaid visitor experiences<sup>9</sup> be developed. Paid, guided visitor experiences, such as guided tours and interactive, hands-on experiences, drive direct benefits to businesses. This must be combined, at the same time, with the development of paid or unpaid self-guided experiences, which bring indirect benefits to the community. Product development needs to respond to the ideal visitor profiles (Authentic Experiencers and

<sup>9</sup>A purchasable visitor experience is a single or packaged tourism offer that has a retail and/or wholesale value, positioned for sale to the independent or group traveller (e.g., tour, attraction, outdoor adventure activity). The point of sale typically resides with the company with the lead role in delivering the guest experience and overall responsibility for the offer. It differs from a non-purchasable visitor experience such as a trail, fishing or photography that this is self-directed and does not generate a revenue for any tourism business or organization.



Cultural Explorers) identified for this planning area. These are independent traveller types who enjoy getting off the beaten path, spontaneously experiencing a destination and seeking out authentic connections with local people, places and cultures. They tend to be high yield travellers who enjoy learning and exploration as part of their vacation.

#### **4. ENABLE TOURISM BUSINESS VIABILITY AND SUCCESS**

To improve the viability and future long-term success in this planning area, stakeholders identified the need for communication improvements, reduced red tape, decreased cost and shorter time frames for various government processes, regulations and costs. The current regulations, processes and costs impact their operations, seasonal business realities and long-time frames (up to two years reported) for starting businesses with all the regulations in place. Examples include tenure agreements, regulations against the sale of wild foods and policies related to the rights of non-Indigenous land owners within title areas. Additionally, operators reported in the May 2018 meetings a direct loss of business revenue associated with BC Ferries delayed launch, considering that independent travellers and the travel trade have had to cancel their June/ July bookings, and now the lack of confirmations for August and September is impacting the second half of the summer season for some operators.

Other areas to support business viability include: creating a consolidated list of training opportunities, establishing a framework for collaboration between the CCCTA, ITBC and ITAC, developing a long-term labour market strategy and promoting the value of tourism.

#### **5. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE MANAGING TOURISM GROWTH**

There was strong consensus about the importance of protecting the land and the way of life. People choose to live in this area because of their connection to the land and there is a strong sense of place and pride in the area. Key areas of investment needed include research monitoring and legislation to protect the environment. Additionally, tourism needs to be in discussions when wildlife management and marine planning are occurring to ensure the visitor and tourism business impacts are understood.

#### **6. SUPPORT NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY**

The 2017 and 2018 wildfires devastated parts of this planning area. Businesses and livelihoods are at physical and long-term financial risk due to the loss of business and destination reputation. All businesses and communities must engage with all government and their band council's emergency preparedness initiatives to ensure resident and visitor safety, as well as access to, and influence, regarding recovery programs.

# OVER-ARCHING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## The Impacts of Aboriginal Title Land

Specific within the opportunity for leadership through collaboration, the Aboriginal Title Lands will continue to influence decisions regarding the tourism future for much of the region. The Supreme Court of Canada declared Aboriginal title to approximately 1750 square kilometers of land in the central part of the Chilcotin Central Coast planning area in 2014 (Figure 11). The title area lies primarily within the Xenî Gwet'in traditional territory.

The Supreme Court of Canada declaration of Aboriginal title granted the T̓silhqot'in Nation "the right to decide how the land will be used, the right of enjoyment and occupancy of the land, the right to possess the land, the right to the economic benefits of the land, and the right to pro-actively use and manage the land."<sup>10</sup>

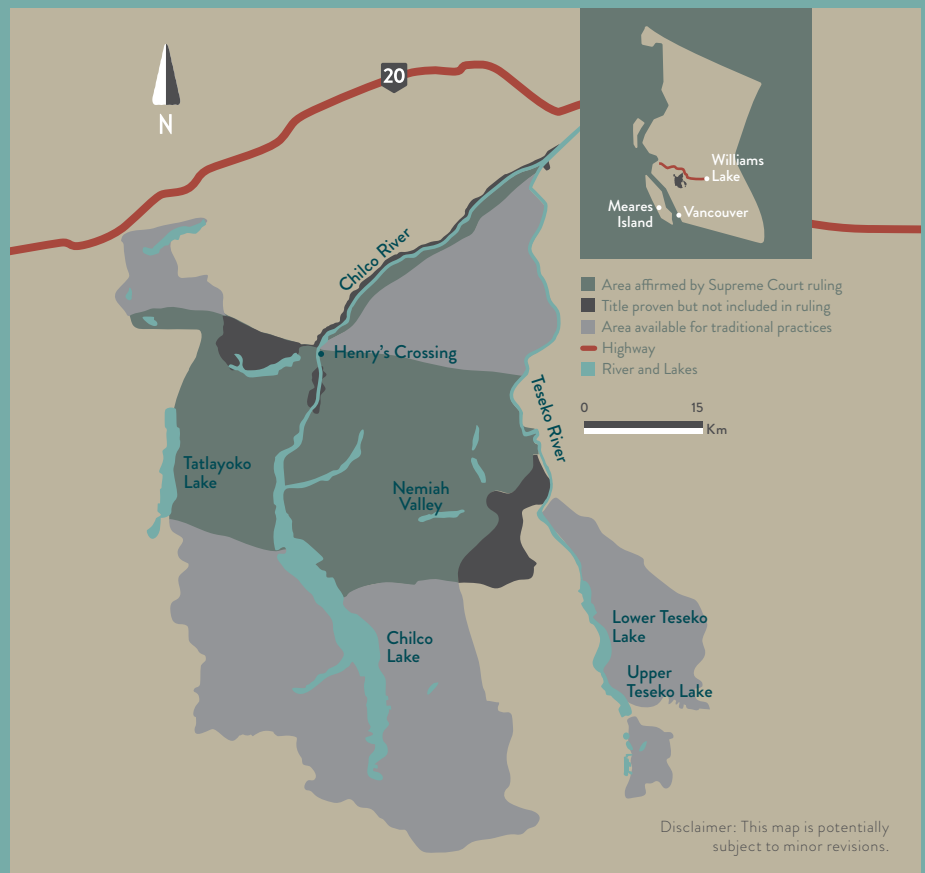
The Nenqay Deni Accord is a five-year agreement between the T̓silhqot'in Nation and the Provincial Government aimed at establishing a shared vision, principles and structures to negotiate one or more agreements related to the management and control of land, including the right to enact laws and decide land

uses, within the claimed T̓silhqot'in traditional territory.<sup>11</sup>

The Nemiah Declaration is a separate agreement from both the Aboriginal title lands ruling and the Nenqay Deni Accord, and creates a framework for agreement amongst the six T̓silhqot'in member bands on land use within the title and rights areas.

The Coastal First Nations Reconciliation Protocol (2008), between a group of six First Nations along British Columbia's Central and North Coast, was designed to increase the economic and legal certainty for resource and land use, establish a process for shared decision making and create opportunities for participation in the green economy.

FIGURE 11: T̓silhqot'in Land Title and Rights



<sup>10</sup>T̓silhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia, 2014 SCC 44, at para. 73.

<sup>11</sup>Source: [www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/agreements/other-docs/nenqay\\_deni\\_accord.pdf#ScheduleA\\_Revised](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/agreements/other-docs/nenqay_deni_accord.pdf#ScheduleA_Revised)

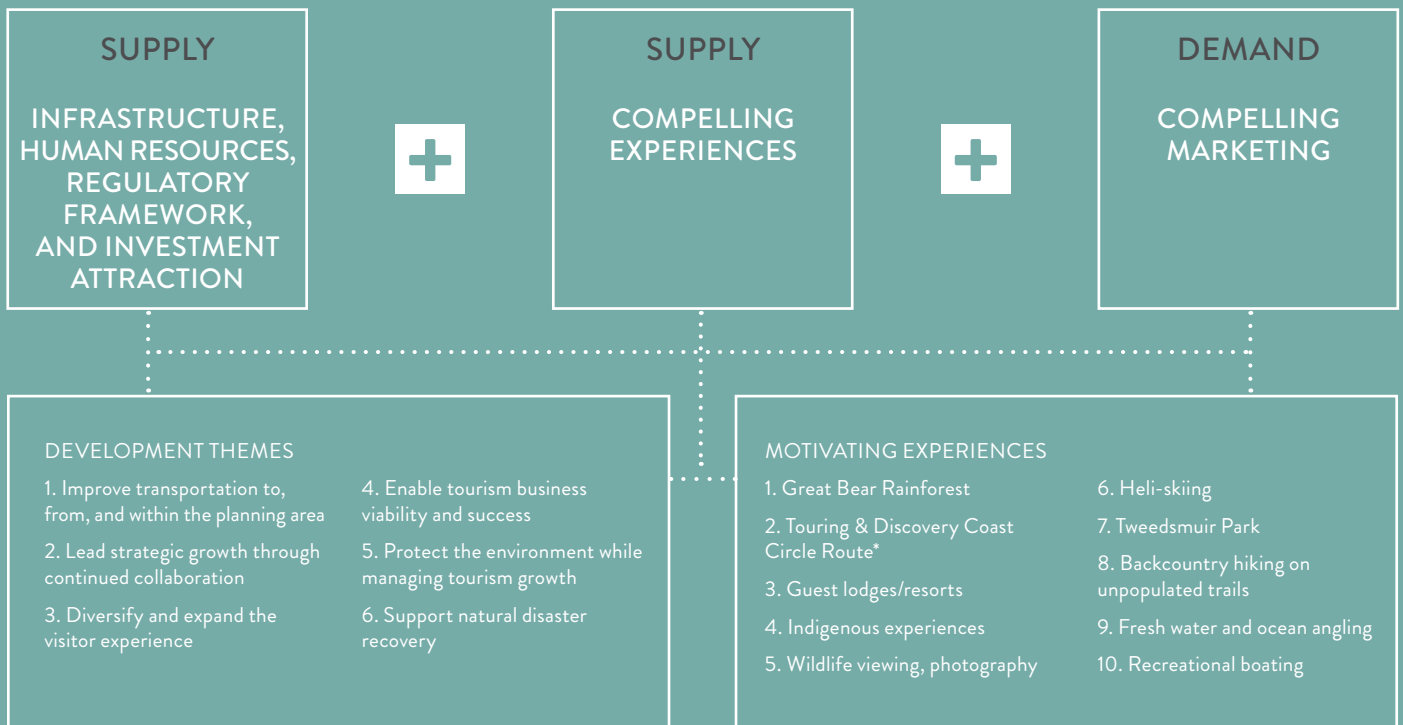
## F. INTERACTION OF DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

In order for any destination development plan to achieve its goals, there must be coordinated interaction with the other components of the tourism development process. As mentioned in section 2C, tourism has two primary revenue drivers — supply and demand. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by providing the setting, access, policy framework, investment attraction, experiences and visitor services to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation. Demand side marketing efforts strive to create urgency for people to want to visit. While this strategy focuses on the supply side, it is important to connect the defined destination themes to the motivating experiences that lead to purchase decisions and result in visitation.

The interaction of supply, demand, development themes and motivating experiences is cyclical. The process of developing supply drivers such as transportation, policy frameworks and investment attraction support the development of compelling experiences — the supply drivers of products and services. These are then able to be marketed to potential visitors to generate demand. The marketing demand drivers lead to purchase decisions which result in visitation. Then, a new cycle of supply-side management and investment is set in motion to encourage competitiveness, sustainability and tourism-driven benefits over the long term.

Each of the six development themes will contribute to each of the ten motivating experiences that have been determined for the Chilcotin Central Coast, although they will do so at different levels, based on the actual objectives recommended.

FIGURE 12:  
Interaction of Development Themes and Motivating Experiences



\*Name currently under review



# 7

# STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

TWEEDSMUIR PROVINCIAL PARK  
Photo: Taylor Burk

## THE CHILCOTIN CENTRAL COAST: A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

VISION	<p>The Chilcotin Central Coast is a vibrant, less-travelled destination that respects and reflects the unique heritage of its land, people and cultures and realizes its tourism potential by offering unique experiences to travellers who share these values and want to connect with raw, unspoiled nature.</p>			
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead BC in local, strategic, systematic growth, collaboration and communication to achieve mutually beneficial tourism development outcomes for residents and businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incrementally increase the benefits from tourism while respecting its limited carrying capacity and develop memorable visitor experiences without sacrificing the authenticity of the lifestyle and people in the planning area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplify awareness by developing experiences that allow the sharing of traditional cultures while teaching and preserving the way of life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a keen awareness and understanding of the customer and adapt to the changing needs of the market to attract travellers who value and appreciate what the planning area has to offer.</li> </ul>
USP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World-class protected natural areas and pristine wilderness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backcountry and outdoor adventure</li> <li>• Wildlife and bird viewing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unspoiled, protected coastal areas surrounded by stunning landscapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich cultural heritage</li> </ul>
MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Bear Rainforest and Kermode Bear</li> <li>• Circle route touring</li> <li>• Indigenous experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest lodge/resort-based experiences</li> <li>• Wildlife viewing, photography and short hikes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heli-skiing</li> <li>• Tweedsmuir Provincial Park</li> <li>• Backcountry hiking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh water and ocean angling</li> <li>• Recreational boating</li> </ul>
DEVELOPMENT THEMES	<p>THEME 1: Improve transportation to, from and within the planning area</p> <p>THEME 2: Lead strategic growth through continued collaboration</p>	<p>THEME 3: Diversify and expand the visitor experience</p> <p>THEME 4: Enable tourism business viability and success</p>	<p>THEME 5: Protect the environment while managing tourism growth</p> <p>THEME 6: Support natural disaster recovery</p>	



8

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PTARMIGAN LAKE  
Photo: Grant Harder

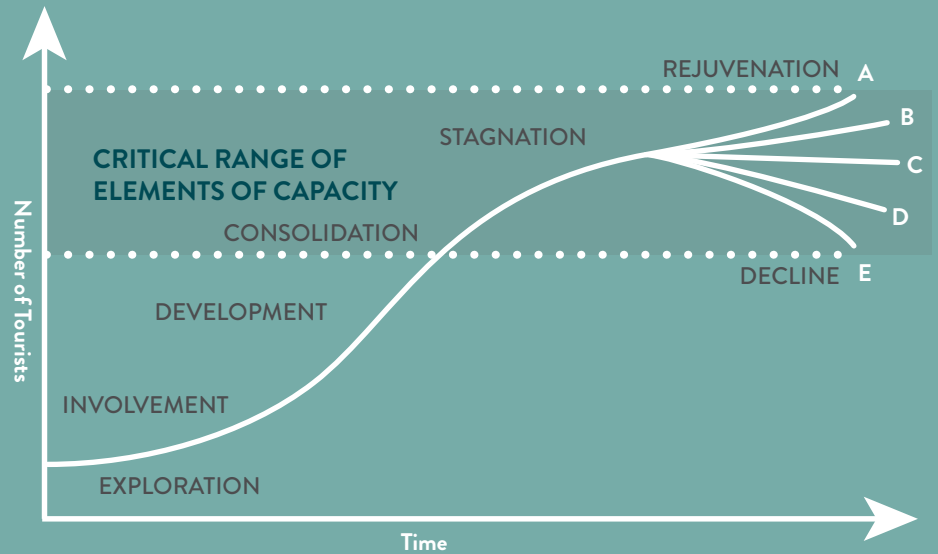
The Chilcotin Central Coast is a destination where niche travellers enjoy stunning landscapes, the peacefulness of the area, connecting with nature and discovering the depth of history of Canada's first people, European settlers and British Columbians who have chosen to make this unique area their home.

Rich in history, geography and culture, this is a quiet, less travelled place of beauty and diversity that offers guests "off the grid" travel and very special opportunities to connect with the land, the people and their histories. Despite 60+ years of tourism history with successful and award-winning tourism operators, this planning area can be considered an emerging destination when compared to the rest of British Columbia.

Recent developments, such as the Great Bear Rainforest's special protection designation under the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy initiative<sup>12</sup> are bringing increased notoriety to the area and new opportunities for businesses and First Nations to welcome visitors. As these opportunities evolve, reaching a balance between delivering a memorable visitor journey, while respecting the heritage, cultures, and natural environment is essential (Figure 13).

<sup>12</sup>British Columbia News. (2016, November 13). Great Bear Rainforest legacy to be recognized on international stage. Retrieved from [news.gov.bc.ca/12792](https://news.gov.bc.ca/12792)

FIGURE 13:  
The Planning  
Area Lifecycle



Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area  
(Adapted from Miller and Gallucci, 2004).

## THE FRAMEWORK

Destination BC provided a priority setting framework for all 20-planning areas to organize and align their objectives and actions in ways that allow for regional and provincial plans to be developed with consistency (Figure 15). Presenting the destination development strategies with a consistent framework will allow the province and the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association to examine the various priorities across all planning areas to identify those which belong within a regional or provincial strategy.

The working group and facilitation team used this framework (Figure 14) to discuss the priorities of each strategy and the relative timing for implementation:

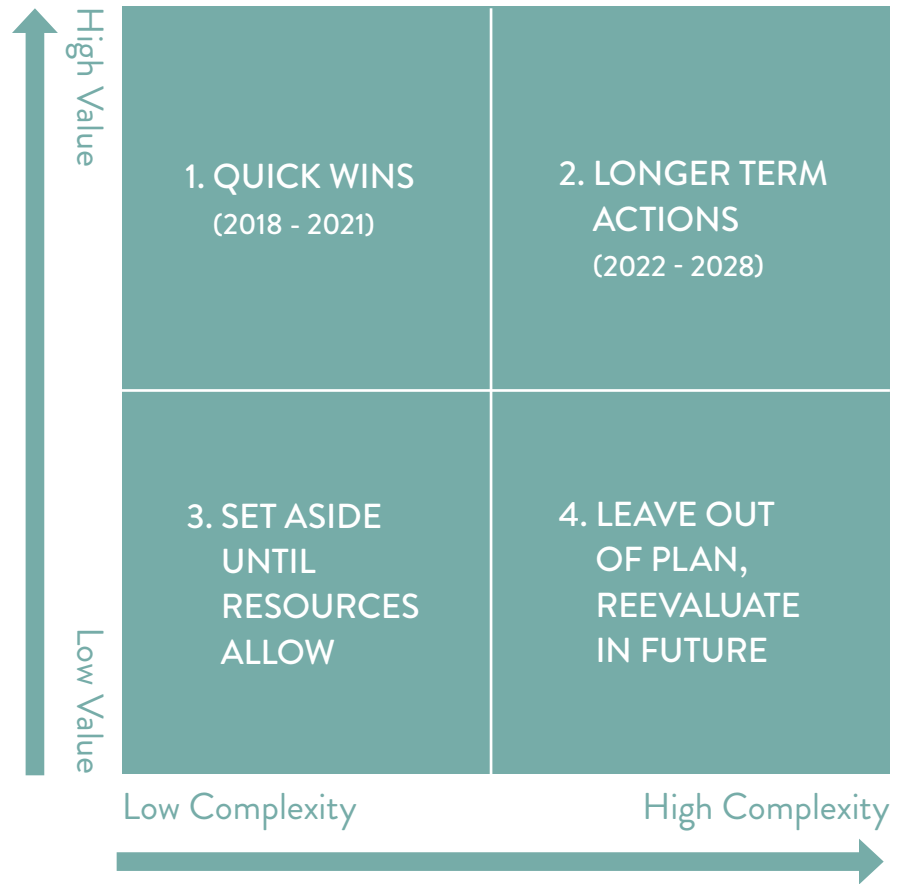
1. **QUICK WINS** high value tactics with low complexity and can be achieved within 3 years (2018–2021).
2. **LONGER TERM ACTIONS** high value, high complexity that require 4 to 10 years to achieve the result (2022–2028) albeit activities can begin immediately to achieve the outcome.
3. **SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** low complexity and low value, address when time/resources exist.
4. **LEAVE OUT OF STRATEGY, RE-EVALUATE IN FUTURE** high complexity and low value, not realistically achieved in the 10-year time frame of this strategy.



The success network is identified<sup>13</sup>, and where the proposed objective has provincial or regional scope beyond this planning area, it is noted. The objectives listed within the themes do not represent

all the opportunities that emerged during the planning process, but those that emerged as a higher priority for tourism destination development.

FIGURE 14: Priority Setting Framework



<sup>13</sup>Organizations and partners listed under the success networks have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward. In no way is this meant to suggest any form of commitment or endorsement of the objective or action.

# THEME 1: Improve Transportation To, From, and Within the Chilcotin Central Coast

Transportation was determined to be the single most important element to growing the tourism potential for all stakeholders, as well as enhancing the quality of life for citizens and visitors alike.

THEME 1: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>1. Ferry Access: Continue to work with BC Ferries to secure an agreement for a ferry schedule that stimulates tourism growth, anticipates future demand and provides a long-term commitment that demonstrates to tour operators BC's commitment to the route, so they have the confidence to include this region in their domestic and international offerings:</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure an agreement in writing to extend the operating season from the May long weekend to Thanksgiving for a period of 5-years to offer travel trade security and independent traveler security in vacation planning 2019–2024.</li> <li>Amend the schedule so guests travel during daylight hours, enhancing their experience and assisting with staff arrival challenges at hotels, restaurants, etc.</li> <li>Work together to explore opportunities of aligning BC Parks and bear watching seasons to the new ferry schedule, increasing the length of time for things to see/do.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> BC Ferry Mid-Coast Working Group, BC Ferries, BC Ferries Vacations, BC Parks, CCCTA, BCVT, WCTA, TRAN, Coastal First Nations, Tourism Vancouver Island, ITBC, ITAC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>2. Air Access: Strategically engage in partnership activities with airline authorities to raise awareness of the opportunities and issues related to air access and affordability.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to influence better aligned flight schedules with ferry schedules for guests arriving into Bella Bella and Bella Coola.</li> <li>Plan for long-term improvements to the Bella Coola Airport as the visitor volumes increase into the Great Bear Rainforest.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Bella Bella, Bella Coola and Anahim Lake Airport Authorities, Kitasoo Xai'Xais, First Nations, Pacific Coastal Airlines, CCRD, CRD, Uikatcho First Nations</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>3. Land Access: Develop an action plan with key stakeholders involved in advancing land-based transportation improvements along Highway 20.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to identify and address Highway 20 road improvements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the existing rest stops with washrooms, visitor information, picnic tables, interpretive messaging etc.</li> <li>Paving to the top of the hill from Anahim Lake.</li> <li>Enhancing wayfinding and interpretive signage along Highway 20.</li> <li>Establish emergency response services.</li> <li>Address the lack of cow-fencing in the Chilcotin.</li> <li>Ongoing road maintenance and cleanliness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Identify key locations for Wi-Fi hotspots and ensure all businesses are aware of these and they are promoted to travellers.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, BCVT, WCTA, TRAN, BC Parks, CRD, Uikatcho, Nuxalk, FLNR</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p>

THEME 1: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>4. Land Access: Work collaboratively with FLNR in the Cariboo Region on a tourism road inventory that will identify the FLNR road infrastructure that supports tourism operators, and lobby for the retention of those roads which are important for tourism access.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCTA secure resources to be the catalyst that can lead the project and manage stakeholder engagement and relations.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> FLNR, CCCTA, First Nations, tourism operators, and other land interest groups/ organizations</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>5. Land Access Improvements: Work with tourism and community stakeholders to provide the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure with clear local guidance on regional signage opportunities.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses the multiple names for Highway 20 so it can be communicated consistently in promotions/maps.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Incorporate First Nations language and English.</li> <li>• Consider a “common look and feel” for the area (similar to the Gold Rush Trail signage).</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, TRAN, CRD, CCRD, BCVT, WCTA, Great Bear project, First Nations, BC Parks, Rec Sites &amp; Trails</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>6. Marine Access: Continue to support the Bella Coola marina enhancement initiatives.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new arrivals area with enhanced public amenities (e.g., washrooms, Wi-Fi, visitor information, retail) and a “sense of arrival” into the Great Bear Rainforest that is different, yet complementary to Bella Bella.</li> <li>• Develop increased mooring space.</li> <li>• Incorporate the need for marina enhancements and parking into the Official Community Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> BC Harbour Authority, Nuxalk First Nations, TRAN, BCVT, Ahoy BC, DFO, BC Ferries, CCRD, Bella Coola Economic Development, CCCTA</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p>
<p><b>7. Public and Shared Transportation: Address the shortage of public and shared transportation options within the planning area.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore stakeholder interest in developing the business case for expansion of public and private transportation services for affordable public and shared transportation options to service fly-in and marine visitors including expanded car rentals, one-way rental/drop off service, taxis, ride-sharing and/or car-sharing services and shuttle services.</li> <li>• Establish a committee to examine airport car rental service in all regional airports that addresses growth as visitation increases.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCRD, CRD, CCCTA, BCVT, WCTA, Operators</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p>

<sup>13</sup>The Situation Analysis revealed Highway 20 is known by 7 names: Highway 20, McKenzie Highway, Freedom Highway, Chilcotin Highway, the Hungry Highway, Bella Coola Highway and the Chilco-Bella Highway

## THEME 2: Lead Strategic Growth Through Continued Collaboration

The Chilcotin Central Coast has proudly negotiated many long-term agreements, plans and practices through collaboration and dialogue. Those with the greatest impact on the strategic development of the destination, and will require high levels of collaboration, are identified in this theme.

THEME 2: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>8. Launch discussions to manage the growing recognition of the Great Bear Rainforest name and the impending retail trademark as it relates to the future use of the term “Great Bear Rainforest” by a broad range of stakeholders including tourism businesses, First Nations, educators, geographers etc.; all of whom have an interest in this unique area within Canada.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the trademark is finalized, engage in a review of how this will impact the ability for marketing organizations and businesses to use the term Great Bear Rainforest.</li> <li>Ensure promotional activities align with strategic development plans, product development timelines and respect the impending trademark.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, Coastal First Nations, DBC, BCVT, WCTA, TAC, CCRD, Great Bear project</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>9. Create a Parks Management Plan that aligns BC Parks planning interests with the Marine Areas Planning Partnerships for the Great Bear Rainforest.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a working committee with Coastal First Nations, BC Parks to detail the types and locations of tourism development permitted within the legislation, addresses carrying capacity management and multi-stakeholder use, bear viewing management practices.</li> <li>Work collaboratively with BC Parks and First Nations to identify any tourism opportunities in BC Parks co-management agreements.</li> <li>Identify a process for monitoring that includes the measures of success and monitoring the impact.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Coastal First Nations (Heiltsuk, Gitga’at, Nuxalk, Kitasoo Xai’Xais, Wuikinuxv), Tourism Operators, CCCTA, PCA, DBC, Hakai Institute, BC Parks, WD, DFO, FLNR, MIRR, MAPP</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>10. Through the Nenqay Deni Accord, and working in partnership with the province and the T̓silhqot’in Nation, to advance tourism management and communications activities between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism stakeholders.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a working group to identify and frame discussions with the provincial government to discuss a compensation policy for non-indigenous, private property that may be impacted by Aboriginal Title.</li> <li>Create new land tenure agreements and application processes for non-Indigenous tourism business owners for permitted user activities on Title Lands, including permit pricing structures and the tenure agreement length.</li> <li>Support and encourage the creation of a set of collaboration protocols by the province, key businesses, community organizations, and First Nations leaders to guide acceptable land use by non-Aboriginal operators and visitors within title lands (motorized vs non-motorized activities, consumptive vs non-consumptive activities).</li> <li>Establish communication and management protocols for Indigenous and non-Indigenous business development.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TNG and TNG communities operators, FLNR, BC Parks, BC Rec Sites &amp; Trails, ITBC, Coastal First Nations, CRD, CCRD, CCCTA, TAC, MIRR, ITAC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 2: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>11. Optimize the benefits from MRDT status for the 3% tax to support tourism growth in the CCCTA.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize and submit the application for a 3% MRDT tax across CCCTA (MRTD approved during the term of the study)</li> <li>Identify the key projects to be supported, relative to destination development from these funds.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, Accommodators, CRD, CCRD, KSRD</p>	<p><b>1. QUICK WINS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>12. Explore the opportunity to safeguard and celebrate the Chilcotin Ark as permanently recognized or designated land area.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a working group to explore the merits, limitations, costs and the long-term sustainability of the various protection/designation options available to this land mass, including alignment with the Central Coast Marine Plan.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>CCCTA to invite BC Parks and First Nations to engage in a dialogue to create a framework for allowable user activities in the existing protected areas.</li> <li>Collaborate to enhance the information online regarding “what is the Ark” to create a single source of current information.</li> <li>Target promotional activities for the Ark to only those accessible locations where capacity exists to welcome guests, and where tourism operators can service their needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, First Nations (TNG, Ulkatcho, Tl’etinqox, Toosey, Tsi Del Del, Yunesit’in, Xení Gwet’in, St’at’imc), tourism operators, WCTA, BC Parks, FLNR, Rec Sites and Trails, Chilcotin Ark-Strategic Campaign, BC Spaces for Nature, Wilburforce Foundation, Chris Harris Photography, BCVT, TNG.</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

<sup>14</sup>Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai’Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations & Province of British Columbia. (2015). Central Coast marine plan. Retrieved from [mapocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MarinePlan\\_CentralCoast\\_10082015.pdf](http://mapocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/MarinePlan_CentralCoast_10082015.pdf)



## THEME 3: Diversify and Expand the Visitor Experience

In broadening the destination appeal, new and enhanced tourism products, services and experiences are needed to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more while travelling. This theme describes the product development initiatives that emerged with the greatest need and priority for the planning area, presented in no specific order or priority.

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>13. Examine opportunities to develop additional purchasable tourism products and services for group and independent travellers to be in place by 2019 when the new ferry starts greater access to Bella Coola and the Great Bear Rainforest.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify specific Indigenous tourism development opportunities, in consideration of the CCCTA Indigenous Tourism strategy.</li> <li>Work with CRD and CCRD economic development officers to support the product development of non-Indigenous operators.</li> <li>Identify opportunities to align product development support between DBC Remarkable Experiences program, ITBC, ITAC, Economic Development and Community Futures.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Coastal First Nations Operators, Coastal First Nations, Hakai Institute, TAC, BC Parks, CRD, CCRD, CCCTA, FLNR, ITBC, ITAC, CF, DBC</p>	<p><b>1. QUICK WINS</b></p>
<p><b>14. Strike a taskforce with provincial government and First Nations to create a local area trail strategy for the Highway 20 corridor to ensure the strategic investment and integrations for trail expansions.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strike a taskforce of committed individuals with a vested interest in expanding the trails system and supporting amenities as part of a land strategy.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine best places to introduce 1 to 3 kilometres short trails along Highway 20 to encourage guests to stop, walk and enjoy their journey.</li> <li>Address tourism vs non-tourism activities.</li> <li>Address motorized vs non-motorized activities.</li> <li>Investigate the use of a harmonized trail head strategy.</li> <li>Examine the viability of increased investment in the Grease Trail vs visitor volumes and use relative to other trail investments.</li> <li>Address ongoing maintenance issues relative to trails promoted and accessible by travellers.</li> <li>Improve the basic amenities at trails that will be promoted for visitors; this includes parking, washrooms, maps, emergency information, garbage cans, Wi-Fi hotspots.</li> <li>Seek funding to create a single user-friendly place where visitors can to find trail information with consistent maps information regardless if it is owned/managed by different entities including a digital map project (complete with PDFs for off-the-grid reference).</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> FLNR, BC Parks, Rec Sites &amp; Trails, First Nations, CCCTA, WCTA, BCVT, CRD, CCRD, TRAN, CMC Great Bear project, operators, Coastal First Nations</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>15. Define the short-term (2019–2022) to long-term (2022+) enhancements to visitor activities, amenities and services.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage BC Parks to increase the number of public bear watching platforms and align their operating season with the new Sea Wolf ferry schedule.</li> <li>• Identify the key locations for additional visitor look-outs, backcountry hiking trails, and mountain biking trails.</li> <li>• Identify places where guests can rent equipment or purchase guided tours/activities such as by canoe, paddleboard, kayak, mountain bike, hiking, etc., including who could invest in increasing this capacity over time.</li> <li>• Identify new opportunities to develop and sell hands-on, engaging, paid visitor experiences with storytellers, artisans, etc., including who could invest in increasing this capacity over time.</li> <li>• Invest in a guest survey to determine interest based on what operators would be willing to provide in the short and long-term so there is data to guide investment.</li> <li>• As the plans to replace the ranger station in Bella Coola advance, ensure discussions regarding tourism opportunities are factored in. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor the progress to determine when tourism influencers can contribute to the conversation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Operators, WCTA, BCVT, Great Bear project, CCCTA, ITAC, ITBC, Sectors</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>16. Support cultural and experiential tourism development to increase the number of purchasable visitor experiences that generates new or additional revenue for businesses.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Indigenous communities to communicate the business development opportunities for more purchasable tours/products that bring the cultural, traditions and heritage of the First Nations to life.</li> <li>• Create more purchasable travel packages for both independent and group travellers along the Discovery Coast Circle Tour* with Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider experiences along Highway 20 and the marine corridor so visitors are invited “out of their cars” and “off their boats” to engage with the community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support to develop capacity with First Nations artists and create ways for guests to access these individuals, on a fee for engagement basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> ITBC, CCCTA, ITAC, First Nations that wish to generate new tourism revenues, Operators, CCCTA, BCVT, WCTA, ITBC, ITAC, Great Bear project, Community Futures, INAC, MIRR, NDI, go2HR</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>17. Invest in targeted product development research activities to support product and destination development business decision making and reporting.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct feasibility studies to develop multi-purpose visitor/cultural interpretive centres in Bella Coola, Bella Bella and in the Chilcotin areas and alternative accommodation options/opportunities within the TNG region.</li> <li>• Conduct research to determine the visitor profile and interest in various types of alternative camping/glamping accommodation including the cost to invest, price points and occupancy to assist investors in understanding the market potential.</li> <li>• Invest in destination specific research, designed to meet the informational needs of small business, in a tourism area with small volumes and no municipalities.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Coastal First Nations, Nuxalk, Heiltsuk, &amp; Ulkatcho First Nations and TNG, INAC, NDI, Community Futures, CCRD, CRD, ITAC, ITBC, CCCTA, DBC, BC Parks, FLNR, Rec Sites and Trails, BCVT, WCTA, Great Bear project, BCLCA</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

\*Name currently under review

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>18. Assist businesses in becoming market and/or export ready to price and package travel for domestic and international travellers, as well as work to repair relationships with travel trade partners as a result of the cancellation, re-launch and delay of the direct Port Hardy to Bella Coola BC Ferries route, that has led to lost business and reputation.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a joint meeting of tourism operators to discuss the travel trade immediate needs for business growth, as well as identify operators that would benefit from international distribution channel training to increase the pool of visitor experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> ITBC, ITAC, DBC, CCCTA, Operators, BCVT, WCTA, Great Bear project</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p>
<p><b>19. Collaborate to improve the consistency of food and beverage operators regarding operating hours, length of day and length of season restaurants are open along Highway 20 that align with current and future visitor demand.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the diversity of food options, responding to visitors' interests in local, traditional foods as part of their travel experience.</li> <li>• Encourage investment food trucks, "grab and go" fresh lunches food kiosks at gas stations and hotels to add capacity with a lower overhead and ability to increase in summer season.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Operators, CCCTA, CRD, CCRD, AGRI, CFIA, ITAC, Community Futures, Operators, investors, CRD, CCRD, CCCTA</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p>
<p><b>20. There is a need for investments to upgrade existing accommodations that have become tired and/or don't meet modern standards for accessibility and today's visitor expectations.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with CCCTA to include in the accessible BC program.</li> <li>• Renovate/improve existing accommodation for enhanced accessibility for visitors with disabilities and mobility issues.</li> <li>• Encourage operators to new niche accommodation options (yurts, huts, heritage accommodation, hostels, etc.)</li> <li>• Create a no-interest or low interest capital investment fund that tourism operators could access to invest in their property.</li> <li>• Explore non-traditional accommodation opportunities (i.e., Airbnb, etc.,) through adding additional unique accommodation that reflect the character of the region and remote guest experience.</li> <li>• Encourage existing operators to upgrade and/or expand their operations.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> BCVT, WCTA, CCCTA, CRD, CCRD, First Nations, CF, TNG, private/public sector accommodators, BC Parks, FLNR, Rec Sites and Trails, Existing business owners</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

## THEME 4: Enable Tourism Business Success and Viability

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>21. Improve visitor services and public safety that addresses the lack of connectivity.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a visitor information services plan that acknowledges the lack of modern communication connectivity.</li> <li>• Identify financial support for infrastructure upgrades including visitor kiosks, Wi-Fi, electric car plugs, a fenced dog area at visitor rest stops.</li> <li>• Investigate a mobile visitor servicing option, like the Tofino van, to allow support services to move to where visitors congregate at rodeos, festivals and special events in different communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TRAN, CCCTA, First Nations, BCVT, WCTA, CRD, CCRD, BC Parks, Rec Sites and Trails, Alexis Creek VIC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>22. Support efforts by TIABC and tourism operators to improve government processes including the time/process to secure tenure, permits and development approvals to decrease risk and uncertainty.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with TIABC for an update on any policy changes that would positively impact the challenges and reduce the red tape issues with government.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TIABC, TAC, CCCTA, FLNR, Coastal First Nations, TNC, First Nations, CRD, CCRD, First Nations, Operators, DBC, BC Sector Associations such as Guide Outfitters, River Outfitters, Fishing Resorts &amp; Outfitters, Helicat Canada, etc.</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>23. Work with provincial and federal agencies to remove the restrictions on the sale of wild foods (e.g., fish, berries, mushrooms) to diminish the illegal harvest, while allowing access for small business to engage visitors in authentic experiences.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage the sector associations and TIABC to work with the federal and provincial governments to update policies to allow the sale and consumption of wild food and seafood by tourism operators, foragers/guides and restaurants.</li> <li>• Engage the First Nations to work with government to allow product development related to wild food experiences, foraging and dining when it relates to their land.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> AGRI, First Nations, CRD, CCRD, FLNR, Operators, DFO, BC Parks, CFIA, SFI, TIABC</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>24. Create a consolidated list of training programs that are available to Indigenous and non-Indigenous operators (front-line to owner/operator/manager) needed and the organizations that can support delivery.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch a research project to create a central area for tourism industry development programs to make it easier for operators to locate.</li> <li>• Collaboratively identify and invest in training that responds to the First Nations training topic areas identified for learning associated with: First Nations business, product development, entrepreneurship, guiding, market vs. export readiness, World/First Host, small business coaching, business succession planning, and customer service training.</li> <li>• Collaboratively invest in non-Indigenous training topic areas identified: customer service, World/First Host, small business entrepreneurship in tourism, product development, succession planning, First Nations cultural sensitivity training.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> go2HR, ITBC, CCATEC, DBC, ITAC, Community Futures</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>25. Establish a framework for collaborative action between CCCTA, ITBC, and ITAC to leverage the long-term destination development opportunities for the best interest of business opportunities and visitor outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align the relationship building and the destination development goals between ITBC, CCCTA and ITAC to build on past strengths and build new bridges and relationship given players are in key positions.</li> <li>Secure funding for a full-time Indigenous liaison staff person within the CCCTA to build relationships with First Nations communities, train and support tourism development, align and manage development opportunities.</li> <li>Secure funding to update the 2013 Cariboo Chilcotin Coast regional Indigenous tourism strategy to reflect new regional developments and align with ITBC's and ITAC's 5-year strategies.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, ITBC, ITAC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>26. Develop a long-term labour market/business development and human resource training strategy that addresses growth and challenges from increased tourism activities and marketing. Include barriers to growth, access to staff training and business development resources and addressing volunteer burnout.</b></p> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, go2HR, TAC, ITAC, ITBC, First Nations, NDIT, Community Futures, MIRR, operators</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p>
<p><b>27. Improve the understanding with local citizens and businesses of the value of tourism, the importance of each element of the visitor journey and the local area opportunities for guests.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage local First Nations governments, band councils, the CRD, CCRD and unincorporated communities to incorporate tourism development interests and activities in their Official Community Plans and/or strategic planning documents/ band council document. This includes any land use interests, evolutions, environmental/cultural protection and allowed/encouraged visitor activities.</li> <li>Actively, and continually, invite new players into to local, regional and provincial tourism conversations to garner diverse input and create advocates who can speak on behalf of the industry.</li> <li>Promote and continue to educate communities, politicians, and citizens about the value of tourism and the benefits of a robust visitor economy Consider the creation of a Tourism Ambassador program that fits the needs of this travel corridor.</li> <li>Increase visitor referrals from between businesses, First Nations bands, and communities.</li> <li>Create a small working group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders to co-educate on the value of collaboration protocols for long-term business success and cross-community tourism development, product development and marketing and tourism planning.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CRD, CCRD, BCVT, Coastal First Nations, TNG, CCCTA, WCTA, TIABC, DBC, NDIT, Great Bear project</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>28. Investigate the cost of liability insurance for small operators who only need seasonal insurance. Compare to co-op models in other sectors.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify other planning areas with a similar need, host a meeting to discuss needs, focus and challenges, then set forth a course of action.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TIABC, Tourism Operators, Sector Associations</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

## THEME 5: Protect the environment while managing tourism growth

THEME 5: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>29. Safeguard the natural environments while managing strategic growth within the capacity of the land and communities to sustain the investments.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a working group to develop a sustainable tourism charter for wildlife and fisheries management and responsible visitor and business behavior for both consumptive and non-consumptive activities.</li> <li>• Create a working group to develop sustainable operating policies to be considered by the province that align provincial and Coastal First Nations policy, to reduce marine and land-based wildlife human use impacts and expand the economic impact of eco-tourism and wildlife viewing.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with the Ministry of the Environment to provide tourism perspectives to the development of wildlife management plans to ensure tourism activities and development, and future visitor growth, do not negatively affect the environment, displace wildlife or impede the fish stocks.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> CCCTA, First Nations, FLNR, BC Parks, Operators, BCVT, WCTA, Great Bear project, CRD, CCRD, Chambers, Community Futures, TNG, TIABC, operators, and Sector Associations such as BC Wildlife Federation, Commercial Bear Viewing Association, Guide Outfitters Association, Helicat Canada, Wilderness Tourism Association, Sport Fishing Institute</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>30. Manage and monitor the growth of visitor volumes based on carrying capacity as the Great Bear Rainforest grows in prominence, the BC Ferry increases access to the region in 2018, and the DBC destination development strategies are implemented and focused on driving targeted, sustainable growth to the region.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the measures and KPIs that will form the baseline data</li> <li>• Identify and make recommendations on a sustainable funding model that includes identifying who will take the lead in monitoring visitor impacts.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> BC Parks &amp; Coastal First Nations Watchmen, Ahoy BC, Central Coast Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p>

## THEME 6: Support Natural Disaster Recovery

The economic and social impacts of the 2017 and 2018 wildfire season continue to be studied by various governments along with the multi-pronged support that will be needed to assist businesses and communities who were impacted in one of three ways:

1. Direct impacts (initial expenditures (or losses) minus consumption taxes) — 100% of which are incurred by the destination, itself.
2. Indirect impacts (income losses by suppliers of the expenditure-related businesses — e.g., a construction or warehousing businesses supplying hotels and restaurants).

3. Induced impacts (income losses by businesses serving resident employees of tourism businesses — e.g., recirculated salaries of hotel and restaurant employees in local grocery stores).

A whole of government approach is required at times of natural disasters combined with the necessity to draw on local area expertise to ensure impacted business and communities can recover as quickly as possible and receive the supported needed.

THEME 6: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>31. Secure temporary tax relief and operating permit relief (2019–2021) for tourism businesses impacted by the 2017 and 2018 wildfires.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Province to provide a 3-year, temporary property tax, business tax relief and/or deferral for 2019–2021.</li> <li>• Province to provide temporary operating permit relief (e.g. tenures, park use permits) 2019–2021.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> FIN, FLNR, BC Parks municipalities, BC Parks, RDs</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>CATALYST</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>32. In light of the 2017 and 2018 wildfires and potential future risk develop tourism focused natural disaster plans that includes:</b></p> <p>(i) a climate change mitigation and adaption plan for tourism operators, and</p> <p>(ii) a regional tourism emergency preparedness, response and recovery plan.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities and RDMOs to strike a taskforce to identify the key elements that must be addressed by government over the long-term.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> ENV, FLNR, EMBC, TRAN, MPSSG, insurance companies, tourism businesses, BC Parks, municipalities, TAC, RDs, RDMOs, GRTC, First Nations, DBC</p>	<p>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>33. Share consistent messages with all businesses in the impacted wildfire areas that be used in their visitor communications.</b></p> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> ENV, FLNR, EMBC, TRAN, MPSSG, insurance companies, tourism businesses, BC Parks, municipalities, TAC, RDs, RDMOs, First Nations, DBC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>



# 9

# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

BELLA COOLA  
Photo: Eric Berger

## A. CATALYST PROJECTS

The following eleven actions were identified as catalyst projects for immediately moving the Chilcotin Central Coast Destination Development Strategy into implementation:

1. Continue to work with BC Ferries to secure an agreement for a ferry schedule that stimulates tourism growth, anticipates future demand and provides a long-term commitment that demonstrates to tour operators BC's commitment to the route, so they have the confidence to include this region in their domestic and international offerings (Objective 1).
2. Launch discussions to manage the growing recognition of the Great Bear Rainforest name and the impending retail trademark as it relates to the future use of the term "Great Bear Rainforest" by a broad range of stakeholders including tourism businesses, First Nations, educators, geographers etc.; all of whom have an interest in this unique area within Canada (Objective 8).
3. Create a working group to identify and frame discussions to work with the provincial government to discuss a compensation policy for non-Indigenous private property that may be transferred to Aboriginal Title (Objective 10).
4. Encourage BC Parks to increase the number of public bear watching opportunities and align their operating season with the new Sea Wolf ferry schedule (Objective 15).
5. Create more purchasable travel packages for both independent and group travellers along the Discovery Coast Circle Tour\* with Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses (Objective 16).
6. The CCCTA, DBC and ITBC to hold a joint meeting of tourism operators to discuss the travel trade immediate

\*Name currently under review





needs for business growth, as well as identify operators that would benefit from international distribution channel training to increase the pool of visitor experiences (Objective 18).

7. Create a no or low-interest fund that businesses could access capital to upgrade and/or expand their operations (Objective 20).

8. Develop a visitor information services plan that acknowledges the lack of modern communication connectivity (Objective 21).

9. Establish a framework for collaborative action between CCCTA, ITBC, and ITAC to leverage the long-term destination development opportunities for the best interest of business opportunities and visitor outcomes (Objective 25).

10. Create a small working group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders to co-educate on the value of collaboration protocols for long-term business success and Cross-community tourism development, product development and marketing, tourism planning (Objective 27).

11. Secure temporary tax relief and operating permit relief (2019–2021) for tourism businesses impacted by the 2017 and 2018 wildfires (Objective 31).

## B. PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

A key deliverable of the Destination BC Destination Development Program is the creation of regional and provincial strategies. Objectives and actions that are shared commonly across the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region may become regional priorities and will inform the creation of a Regional Destination Development Strategy.

This Chilcotin Central Coast Destination Development Strategy, along with 19 other planning area strategies in British Columbia will inform the creation of a single Provincial Destination Development Strategy. Objectives identified as provincial in most often involve multiple provincial government organizations including Destination BC, TAC, ITBC, go2HR, and TIABC.

It is recommended the following Chilcotin Central Coast, priority 1 and 2 level objectives and actions become provincial initiatives within the Provincial Destination Development Strategy.

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
<b>THEME 1: Improve Transportation To, From, and Within the Chilcotin Central Coast</b>	
<b>1</b> Ferry Access: Continue to work with BC Ferries to secure an agreement for a ferry schedule that stimulates tourism growth, anticipates future demand and provides a long-term commitment that demonstrates to tour operators BC’s commitment to the route, so they have the confidence to include this region in their domestic and international offerings.	1
<b>2</b> Air Access: Strategically engage in partnership activities with airline authorities to raise awareness of the opportunities and issues related to air access and affordability.	2
<b>4</b> Land Access: Work collaboratively with FLNR in the Cariboo Region on a tourism road inventory that will identify the FLNR road infrastructure that supports tourism operators, and lobby for the retention of those roads which are important for tourism access.	1
<b>THEME 2: Lead Strategic Growth Through Continued Collaboration</b>	
<b>8</b> Launch discussions to manage the growing recognition of the Great Bear Rainforest name and the impending retail trademark as it relates to the future use of the term “Great Bear Rainforest” by a broad range of stakeholders including tourism businesses, First Nations, educators, geographers etc.; all of whom have an interest in this unique area within Canada.	1
<b>9</b> Create a Parks Management Plan that aligns BC Parks planning interests with the Marine Areas Planning Partnerships for the Great Bear Rainforest.	1
<b>10</b> Through the Nenqay Deni Accord, and working in partnership with the province and the T̓silhqot’in Nation, to advance tourism management and communications activities between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism stakeholders.	1
<b>THEME 3: Diversify and Expand the Visitor Experience</b>	
<b>15</b> Define the short-term (2019–2022) to long-term (2022+) enhancements to visitor activities, amenities and services.	1
<b>16</b> Support cultural and experiential tourism development to increase the number of purchasable visitor experiences that generates new or additional revenue for businesses.	1
<b>17</b> Invest in targeted product development research activities to support product and destination development business decision making and reporting.	2
<b>THEME 4: Enable Tourism Business Success and Viability</b>	
<b>21</b> Improve visitor services and public safety that addresses the lack of connectivity.	2
<b>22</b> Support efforts by TIABC and tourism operators to improve government processes including the time/process to secure tenure, permits and development approvals to decrease risk and uncertainty.	1
<b>27</b> Improve the understanding with local citizens and businesses of the value of tourism, the importance of each element of the visitor journey and the local area opportunities for guests.	1

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
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THEME 5: Protect the Environment while Managing Tourism Growth	
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29	Safeguard the natural environments while managing strategic growth within the capacity of the land and communities to sustain the investments.	2
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THEME 6: Support Natural Disaster Recovery	
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30	Manage and monitor the growth of visitor volumes based on carrying capacity as the Great Bear Rainforest grows in prominence, the BC Ferry increases access to the region in 2018, and the DBC destination development strategies are implemented and focused on driving targeted, sustainable growth to the region.	2
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23	Temporary property tax, business tax relief and/or deferral for 2019–2021.	1
26	Temporary operating permit relief (e.g. tenures, park use permits) 2019–2021.	1
28	Share consistent messages with all businesses in the impacted wildfire areas that can be used in their visitor communications.	1

It is recommended the following Chilcotin Central Coast objectives and actions become regional initiatives with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Regional Destination Development Strategy. It is acknowledged that all provincial initiatives identified

will impact and be relevant to the regional strategy. Additional objectives, just to be included in the regional strategy are identified in the table that follows.

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
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THEME 1: Improve Transportation To, From, and Within the Chilcotin Central Coast	
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5	Land Access Improvements: Work with tourism and community stakeholders to provide the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure with clear local guidance on regional signage opportunities.	2
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THEME 2: Lead Strategic Growth Through Continued Collaboration	
--	--

11	Optimize the benefits from MRDT status for the 3% tax to support tourism growth in the CCCTA.	1
12	Explore the opportunity to safeguard and celebrate the Chilcotin Ark as permanently recognized or designated land area.	2

THEME 3: Diversify and Expand the Visitor Experience	
--	--

14	Strike a taskforce with provincial government and First Nations to create a local area trail strategy for the Highway 20 corridor to ensure the strategic integration and harmonized look and feel approach to trail development meets future visitor needs between the various land-owners.	1
20	Expand the diversity of the accommodation base.	1

THEME 4: Enable Tourism Business Success and Viability	
--	--

25	Establish a framework for collaborative action between CCCTA, ITBC, and ITAC to leverage the long-term destination development opportunities for the best interest of business opportunities and visitor outcomes.	1
22	Support efforts by TIABC and tourism operators to improve government processes including the time/process to secure tenure, permits and development approvals to decrease risk and uncertainty.	1
27	Improve the understanding with local citizens and businesses of the value of tourism, the importance of each element of the visitor journey and the local area opportunities for guests.	1



## C. FUNDING PROGRAMS

To assist planning areas such as the Chilcotin Central Coast with their implementation efforts, Destination BC has compiled a list of funding programs as part of the provincial situation analysis.

The different funding options highlighted include: Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), Destination BC Programs, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Programs, Community Gaming Grants, Community Trusts, Municipal Funding and Business Levies.

Contact Destination BC for a copy of this information sheet.

The provincial government also has an online tool on their website to find economic development funding and grants.

### Funding options also include:

- Continuation of the annual \$25 million in funding for the Rural Dividend Program, to 2019/20.
- \$40 million in additional funding for the Connecting British Columbia program, which extends high-speed internet access to rural and remote communities. Applications are reviewed as received.

- Northern Development Initiative Trust offers a range of funding programs suited to a diverse set of economic and development priorities in central and northern BC, with \$20 million available in the Cariboo-Chilcotin-Lillooet region.
- 2017 TAC ministerial mandate letter includes to “Double the province’s investment in the B.C. Arts Council over four years.” Once established, this will have positive impacts for communities across the province with increased opportunities to engage in the arts.
- 2017 TAC ministerial mandate letter includes to “Establish an arts infrastructure fund to help provide space for B.C. artists.” Once established, the new infrastructure fund should improve and increase art spaces across the province.
- Various Indigenous tourism and business development initiatives federally and provincially.
- Wildfire recovery programs.

# 10

# MEASURING AND MONITORING SUCCESS

TWEEDSMUIR PROVINCIAL PARK  
Photo: Taylor Burk

FIGURE 17: Goals and Performance Measures

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	SOURCES
1. Lead the province in local area strategic, systematic growth, collaboration and communication to achieve mutually beneficial tourism development outcomes for all businesses in the planning area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish research measures</li> <li>• # shared use/collaboration agreements</li> <li>• # strategic, collaborative project outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial/area agreements/protocols</li> <li>• Value of tourism studies</li> </ul>
2. Incrementally increase the benefits from tourism while respecting the limited capacity of the land and its people in this planning area and developing memorable visitor experiences without sacrificing authenticity and the lifestyle of the people living in the Chilcotin Central Coast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in visitor spend</li> <li>• Increase in length of stay</li> <li>• Increase in overnight stays</li> <li>• Increase in # authentic Indigenous experiences</li> <li>• Net Promoter Score<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial tourism research</li> <li>• CCCTA research</li> <li>• ITBC research</li> <li>• Regional Profile</li> <li>• MRDT funded research</li> </ul>
3. Amplify awareness through developing cultural experiences that allow the sharing of traditional cultures while teaching and preserving the way of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of education/training opportunities</li> <li>• # participants in professional training</li> <li>• Various marketing measures for consumer marketing<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCCTA research</li> <li>• ITBCC research</li> </ul>
4. Maintain a keen awareness and understanding of the customer and adapt to the changing needs of the market to attract travelers who value and appreciate what the planning area offers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor surveys</li> <li>• Prizm analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EQ research</li> <li>• Provincial, CCCTA and project specific research</li> </ul>

The BC government provides a community economic development measurement tool that may be useful in tracking progress: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development/developing-your-community/track-your-progress](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development/developing-your-community/track-your-progress)

<sup>15</sup>Net Promoter Score calculation: [www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx)

<sup>16</sup>Marketing is not part of BC's Destination Development Planning program, measures of marketing success can be secured from Destination BC's marketing department.

# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITIES AND FIRST NATIONS IN THE PLANNING AREA

### Unincorporated entities within the Chilcotin Central Coast destination development planning area

- |                    |                   |                  |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Alexis Creek    | 11. Firvale       | 21. Nimpo Lake   |
| 2. Anahim Lake     | 12. Hagensborg    | 22. Ocean Falls  |
| 3. Bella Bella     | 13. Hanceville    | 23. Redstone     |
| 4. Bella Coola     | 14. Hartley Bay   | 24. Riske Creek  |
| 5. Big Creek       | 15. Kleena Kleene | 25. Rivers Inlet |
| 6. Butedale        | 16. Klemtu        | 26. Stuiie       |
| 7. Chezacut        | 17. Kimsquit      | 27. Tatla Lake   |
| 8. Chilanko Forks  | 18. Knight Inlet  | 28. Wuikinuxv    |
| 9. Dawsons Landing | 19. Namu          |                  |
| 10. Denny Island   | 20. Nemiah Valley |                  |

### First Nations within the Chilcotin Central Coast destination development planning area

- |                            |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Gitga'at Nation         | 5. Tl'etinqox (Anaham) Nation    | 9. Ulkatcho Nation    |
| 2. Heiltsuk Nation         | 6. Tl'esqox (Toosey) Indian Band | 10. Yunesit'in Nation |
| 3. Kitasoo Xai'Xais Nation | 7. Tsi Del Del (Redstone) Nation | 11. Wuikinuxv Band    |
| 4. Nuxalk Nation           | 8. Xení Gwet'in Nation           |                       |

## APPENDIX 2: DEFINING THE VISION TOGETHER

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

There was strong stakeholder consensus during the September and November 2016 meetings regarding the type of visitors to whom this region appeals. This mirrors the reasons people choose to make this their home — it is one of the last remaining unspoiled, sparsely populated wilderness areas in the world where appreciation for the land, cultures and its people is alive and strong.

Initiatives put forward in this plan must exemplify many of the following:

- Strengthen collaboration and coalesce stakeholders around a common language.
- Recognize and respect the way of life, cultures, heritage and environment.
- Generate sustainable economic opportunity for future generations.
- Contribute to a welcoming invitation with which to market our values and unique brand to the world.
- Transparency of information/communication amongst all partners.
- Holistic planning in a way that demonstrates respect for all industries/sectors.

Through progressive discussions and refinement, a vision for the area was narrowed to two statements that were tested with stakeholders.

### VISION STATEMENT 1

The Chilcotin Central Coast is a welcoming, remote wilderness destination that realizes economic opportunity through collaboration to attract visitors who enjoy getting off the beaten path, immersing in unspoiled nature and connecting to the stories, past and present, of the land and its people.

### VISION STATEMENT 2

The Chilcotin Central Coast is a vibrant, less-travelled destination that reflects and respects the unique heritage of its land, people and cultures, and realizes its tourism potential by offering unique experiences to travellers who share these values and want to connect with raw, unspoiled nature.

The final survey feedback, as of 14 February 2017, revealed 44% in favor of the first statement and 56% preferred statement 2.

WILDERNESS      INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Authentic      cultural experience

RESPECT      Unspoiled      community pride

First Nations      enhanced

thriving      World Class      visitor activities

opportunities

## APPENDIX 3: PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This appendix provides highlights of key planning considerations important to developing tourism in the Chilcotin Central Coast planning area.

### 1. THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST: AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY

The legislation protecting the Great Bear Rainforest offers full-protection to one-third of the 6.4-million-hectare area; the remaining areas allow for low-impact resource development activities, such as forestry, tourism and hydro-electric generation to support the people living in the area.

The significance of this precedent-setting legislation, together with both positive and negative media exposure in 2016, has allowed the brand to grow in notoriety and reputation. The rapid growth in awareness necessitates that the product and destination development get ahead of increasing demand to visit. Key planning considerations that need to be addressed for tourism success include:

- a. Engaging in a process to define which tourism activities should be developed, which should not, and who would benefit from investing in tourism development in the Great Bear Rainforest. Lessons learned from the collaborations in Nunatsiavut, Nunavut and Haida Gwaii could prove beneficial.
- b. Managing growth and capacity for access, multi-stakeholder land use.
- c. Managing the brand regionally and provincially for its impacts multi-sectors of the BC economy.

The brand recognition is ahead of the ability to welcome and service visitors to an international standard and meet visitor expectations. This is not uncommon. Tumbler Ridge with its Global Geopark designation has some growing pains, as do many historic sites that receive an UNESCO designation.

It is imperative that priorities for purchasable visitor experiences be developed in the short term, combined with a yield management strategy to support carrying capacity management of this delicate area and ensure growth happens

at a pace that can be sustained. Targeted products and services for group and independent travellers need to be in place by 2018 when the new ferry opens this corridor and tour operators have had 12 to 18-months to package and sell the region.

The Great Bear Rainforest, because of its natural assets, remote location and difficult, expensive access lends itself to a high yield, low volume growth strategy. This strategy also echoes the desired approach communicated by stakeholders during the consultation process. Product developers will benefit by looking at other remote fly-in locations such as Sonora Resort, Nimmo Bay, Clayoquot Sound and the region's own Spirit Bear Lodge.

### 2. OPTIMIZING THE 2018 BC FERRIES COMMITMENT

Another example of stakeholder collaboration leading to positive results has been the efforts of the BC Ferry Mid-Coast Working Group, on behalf of the region, to secure the commitment for the new ferry in 2018. Considerations for optimizing the new ferry from Port Hardy to Bella Coola include:

- a. Continuing to support the BC Ferry Mid-Coast Working Group in their efforts to:
  - Secure an extended season (May to October) to grow tourism and proactively respond to demand.
  - Offer day-time service so guests can enjoy the coastal excursion to/from the region (as opposed to a sleeping experience), which will also assist in making visitor services available in Bella Coola on ferry arrival/departure days.
  - Securing a long-term commitment to the route so travel trade relations can be rebuilt and both operators and long-haul visitors can be assured if they are planning one to two-years out that the ferry will be available.



- b. Once the BC ferries schedule is confirmed, joint planning regarding the visitor experience options will be needed. This includes everything from arrival, to hours of operation and staffing aligned with the schedule, transportation options for movement of visitors, etc. All businesses – private, public sector and First Nations – who benefit from welcoming visitors must work together to ensure this truly becomes a “once in a lifetime destination experience.”
- c. Enhancing the marina arrivals/departure infrastructure in Bella Coola, leveraging the “Gateway to the Great Bear Rainforest” brand as the welcoming identity. Consideration should be given to harmonizing the visitor experience with a complementary, yet a different story and brand identity, at the Bella/Bella marina, and celebrating the differences of the traditional lands of First Nations people in these communities.
- d. Ensuring the marina and ferry development activities are incorporated into the future Bella Coola official community plan (OCP).

**The industry survey confirmed that:<sup>17</sup>**

- 87% support increased ferry capacity during peak season.
- 83% support extending the ferry season from the May long-weekend to Thanksgiving.
- 82% support aligning the name of the 2018 Port Hardy-Bella Cool ferry with the driving route.
- 66% support Bella Coola Marina enhancements.
- 58% support marina enhancements along the central coast.

### 3. A UNIQUE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The composite nature of tourism necessitates a high level of collaboration across a multitude of levels that includes governments and Crown corporations at the federal, provincial and regional levels, First Nations, associations, non-profit organizations and other bodies such as airport and harbor authorities, private industry and the public. The regional stakeholders in the Chilcotin Central Coast have demonstrated their ability to collaborate and influence decisions on major initiatives that impact tourism to the area. These include the T̓silhqot̓in Land Title agreement, the Great

Bear Rainforest designation, reinstating the Bella Coola-Port Hardy ferry, and the Chilcotin Ark initiative.

None of these accomplishments have come easily, nor without compromise, but these landmark decisions add new dimensions that will transform the business opportunities in the area. The unique agreements and assets within this region create a stage for demonstrating leadership and forging new models for collaboration around tourism development. Done well, the appeal of the Chilcotin Central Coast will strengthen the visitor opportunities and attract new travellers who value what the region offers while demonstrating collaborative leadership practices that could be modelled elsewhere.

### 4. THE CHILCOTIN ARK

Appreciating that the Great Bear Rainforest brand will lead the way in drawing attention to the Chilcotin Central Coast region, there is an opportunity to develop the Chilcotin Ark brand as a complementary, yet completely diverse, wilderness visitor experience. This geographically diverse region has the long-term potential to provide a rich continuum of visitor experiences spread out over its multitude of bioclimatic and geographic zones. It was discussed with stakeholders that care needs to be given to marketing the Chilcotin Ark before key questions are answered regarding the long-term strategic development including:

- a) Is there stakeholder interest in striving for a provincial or national park status? UNESCO part or Geopark? Biosphere reserve status? Each has opportunities, limitations and costs; all take time and money to achieve and maintain to the standards if successful.
- b) Who would be the representative lead organization to strive for special status?
- c) What visitor experiences can/should be developed in the short-term? Where is there access? Who are the benefactors?
- d) Should a foundation be established to fundraise for development/preservation investment?
- e) What can be learned by following the progress and evolution that will be made by the Great Bear Rainforest over the next few years?

<sup>17</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed 14 Feb 17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (5) and very important (4).

## 5. TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Beyond BC Ferries, there were a variety of transportation and communication investments that were identified which would benefit visitors and locals alike. Stakeholder consultations confirmed that there is a desire to take a view towards investments and solutions that will support long-term growth, as opposed to short-term solutions that may need to be revisited in another few years. The items have been clustered by infrastructure type and are presented in order of importance, as identified by stakeholders in the February 2017 survey.<sup>18</sup>

### a. Air Transportation

Beyond the government commitment to partially fund a new air terminal in Bella Bella, the Ministry of Transportation is committed to working with Destination BC to undertake improvements along Highway 20. Several other ground transportation items were identified. In order of importance they were:<sup>19</sup>

- Reducing high airfare costs (58%)
- Improvements to Bella Bella Airport (42%)
- Improvements to Bella Coola airport (42%)
- Scheduling of flights to Bella Bella (38%)
- Scheduling of flights to Bella Coola (37%)
- Scheduling of flights to Anahim Lake (31%)
- Improvements to Anahim Lake Airport (30%)

### b. Ground Transportation

The need for improved road and ground transportation was identified as important. The stakeholder survey identified these items.<sup>20</sup>

- Improving existing Highway 20 road stops (67%)
- More washrooms along Highway 20 (65%)
- One-way car rental drop-off service (59%)
- New rest stops along Highway 20 (59%)
- Improving emergency services (57%)
- Affordable car rentals (47%)
- Public transportation on Highway 20 (47%)
- Paving the top of the hill to Anahim Lake (44%)
- Taxi service between communities (19%)
- Introducing a car-share initiative (10%)

Additional issues raised included the consistency of gas pricing and hospitality along the Highway 20 corridor, the availability of RV Sani-dumps, the multitude of names by which Highway 20 is referred to which can cause confusion, where identified.

### c. Visitor Services, Communication and Signage

The need for improved visitor services, communication and signage was identified as important.

- Better trailhead signage (80%)
- Enhancing interpretive signage (71%)
- Multi-purpose visitor/cultural interpretive centre in Bella Coola (71%)
- Cell service along Highway 20 (57%)
- Multi-purpose visitor/cultural interpretive centre in the Chilcotin region (49%)
- Creating First Nations/English language signage (40%)
- Multi-purpose visitor/cultural interpretive centre in Bella Bella (49%)
- Wi-Fi service hot spots along Highway 20 (55%)

<sup>18</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed <sup>14</sup> Feb '17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (\*) and very important (\*).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

## 6. INCREASE THE DESTINATION APPEAL FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

A common theme emerging from stakeholder conversations was the need to strengthen visitor experiences and offerings aligned with the priority target EQ Authentic Experienter and Cultural Explorer visitor profiles who primarily travel independently, or occasionally in small-groups, and have a strong desire for authentic engagement and learning when they travel. While individual businesses may cultivate the market for larger groups and motor coach business and accept group business opportunistically, as a regional destination development opportunity this was not deemed to be a priority. Essential to success in increasing destination appeal for independent travellers is a mix of costly infrastructure in development of activities/services (essential in providing a variety of things to do) as well as in the creation of people/program-based experiences (critical to connecting visitors to the local people, heritage and culture in deep, meaningful ways). A variety of paid and unpaid experiences is necessary, although the primary gap identified in the stakeholder consultations was in purchasable, guided activities and experiences, particularly Indigenous, cultural and nature-based experiences.

## 7. ACCOMMODATIONS

There is a need in the region for increased accommodations, particularly during peak season when capacity in the Bella Coola Valley area is exceeded. Consideration should be given to evolving visitor interest in unique sleeping experiences beyond a traditional hotel/inn. Emerging non-traditional accommodation options such as yurts, comfort camping/oTENTik-style (furnished canvas tents), and sleeping spheres require much lower capital investment, provide a mid to higher-range unique offering and different price point.

A focus on working with BC Parks to extend the seasonal campground openings, assessing the feasibility of attracting new hotels and motels and working to enhance the diversity of accommodations is warranted. Policy work on the integration of short-term rentals such as Airbnb to add to the accommodation pool could also help ease capacity issues during high visitation, but short time periods such as during

the height of bear viewing season that don't warrant a traditional fixed-roof accommodation property.<sup>22</sup>

- More unique accommodations options to support peaks in demand during high season (77%)
- Longer provincial park campground season (50%)
- More bed and breakfasts (47%)
- New comfort camping options (e.g. Yurts, huts, O'tentiks with some amenities) (46%)
- More hotels/motels (45%)
- More traditional campgrounds/campsites (43%)
- New RV campgrounds (36%)

## 8. FOOD AND BEVERAGE

The need for more, and better, food and beverage services along Highway 20 was identified by 72% of the industry stakeholders surveyed as absolutely critical or very important. Much like what is happening with the evolution of accommodations, food and beverage options are rapidly evolving as well.

Food trucks, brown bag lunches and picnics, and increased variety and availability of higher quality, local pre-made takeaway food and meal options at retail stores along Highway 20 were raised as lower cost solutions to address the food and beverage shortages in the region. Along with requiring lower (to no) capital costs, they have the added advantage of being easily transportable to where there are special festivals, sporting events, pow wows, rodeos and other special occasions. As an additional alternative, select fixed-roof accommodators may wish to open a mini "grab and go" health bar for guests travelling to secure healthy meals through a pre-order system by phone, online app or email. Support to entrepreneurs to write business plans and secure start-up funding would help kick start these types of initiatives.

As demand grows in the region, a longer operating season and longer hours during high season will be required to service visitor traffic. Regional planning should look at where there are nodes with the highest concentration of guests so advanced business planning could occur.

<sup>21</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed 14 Feb 17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (5) and very important (4)

<sup>22</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed 14 Feb 17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (5) and very important (4)

## 9. TRAILS, TRAILHEADS AND FACILITIES

The need for more leisure, shorter trails (1 to 3 kilometres) along Highway 20, easily accessible from the various communities was identified as a way of encouraging more visitors to enjoy the landscape and enhance the overall visitor experience by offering more things to do. Additionally, the need for better signage, parking, consistent maintenance, facilities and mapping was mentioned. Currently the back-country is served by a variety of trails, most of which are long, challenging, unmapped and unsigned — not appealing, nor suited, to the average traveller touring by vehicle. There are several shorter trail options in and around the Bella Coola Valley and into Tweedsmuir Park, but more are needed in the entire region if visitors are to be encouraged to stop and enjoy the drive between Williams Lake and the coast.

## 10. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

Community beautification and/or streetscape enhancements in Bella Coola and along Highway 20 (roadside cleaning and garbage pickup) was raised as an opportunity by stakeholders, particularly those in Bella Coola. It was identified that garbage along Highway 20 can leave a negative impression among visitors travelling in this pristine wilderness area.

Beautification efforts, even decorative waste receptacles can add to the appeal of a community or a driving corridor that has a lasting impact on the visitor. Within communities, plants and flowers, decorating garbage cans, creative signage and interpretive messages can help bring a town to life and direct visitors who have time to explore. Bella Coola, Bella Bella and Anahim Lake, as gateway communities should explore the value of such investments to their tourism infrastructure.

## 11. RECREATIONAL BOATING AND NATURE-BASED

The popularity of recreational boating and water-based activities, such as kayaking, traditional canoeing and stand-up paddle (SUP) boarding, and the rising popularity of cycling, are providing new, alternative ways for visitors to enjoy themselves in nature and be active at the same time. New mountain biking trails are currently being researched and planned for development in the Bella Coola Valley, and, according to stakeholders, private trails already exist in the Chilcotin area that can be enjoyed for mountain biking. The appropriate services are needed to support the growth of

these types of niche activities — enthusiasts who pursue any sport have specific needs for gear purchase and transportation, storage, repairs, rentals, etc., that a destination needs to plan for and develop for these active travel/soft adventure segments to thrive and grow. It is sometimes assumed that these travellers will bring their own gear and equipment, but with the Chilcotin Central Coast being primarily a long-haul destination attracting fly-in visitors, the need for support services is/will be critical for success.

The opportunity to entice recreational boaters to disembark from their boat to enjoy visitor experiences in the community will continue to grow. Offering bike, kayak, SUP rentals, etc. could improve the appeal of the coastal communities. Recreational marinas have the opportunity to move from “serving basic needs” to an invitation into the community to enjoy, connect and spend money.

The Chilcotin region has more purchasable experiences than the Coast now, as the numerous lodges offer outdoor activities, flightseeing, backcountry pursuits, rentals and more.

## 12. PEOPLE AND PROGRAM EXPERIENCES

- To ensure safe, responsible and culturally appropriate access to the land and the people, while simultaneously responding to travellers’ desires for more authentic, meaningful experiences, and the growing demand for Indigenous tourism experiences, an opportunity exists to:
- Increase the availability of guided services for purchasable activities and experiences all along Highway 20, in Bella Coola, in targeted locations in the Great Bear Rainforest and where there is First Nations interest, within the T̓silhqot̓in title area.
- Explore if there is a willingness to invest in small group tour operators, like Copper Sun Journeys in Bella Coola, to develop and offer Indigenous experiences with local storytellers.
- Diversify the availability of cultural experiences by identifying artisans who would be willing to share their craft and teach others through interactive, hands-on experiences.
- Develop culinary experiences where visitors could learn to forage for foods, learn about and cook using traditional methods of the First Nations and European settlers.

- Examine which festivals and special events might be appropriate to offer visitors an opportunity to pay for a VIP experience by meeting with, sharing time with, and/or dining with a special guest such as a rodeo rider, musician or elder.

In addition to these specific suggestions, discussions with current and emerging operators proposed developing tiered visitor offerings for distinct markets — from high end/high value (e.g. private bear viewing with luxury accommodation and other activities) down to lower cost/lower value-added experiences that might involve bear viewing at the BC Parks facility with a private interpretive guide and transportation.

- More purchasable Indigenous tourism experiences (75%)
- More purchasable Great Bear Rainforest tourism experiences (70%)
- New, shorter leisure trails of 1-3km in length (67%)
- More backcountry hiking trails (62%)
- Kayak/canoe/stand up paddleboard rentals (63%)
- More travel packages with room, activities, transportation together (53%)
- More mountain biking trails (53%)
- New Chilcotin Ark tourism experiences (53%)
- Additional bear watching lookouts (53%)
- More purchasable product along the Discovery Coast Circle Tour\* (52%)
- Longer BC Parks bear watching season (50%)

### 13. SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS TOURISM CAPACITY BUILDING

Given the unique composition of this region, the large geographic area over which it spreads, the challenges of getting around the remote coastal communities and the diversity of 11 First Nations, the approach to developing tourism would benefit from a niche/personalized approach over more traditional large group approach using workshops with generic content. To this end, the planning considerations identified to date for supporting First Nations tourism capacity building include:

1. Refreshing the 2013 Cariboo Chilcotin Coast regional Indigenous tourism strategy, to reflect new regional developments, designations, land agreements, and the recently-released five-year strategic plan 2016–2021 of Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.
2. Securing funding to implement the key recommendations relevant to this planning area from the ITBC 2013 Chilcotin Central Coast regional strategy; it was confirmed by ITBC that little progress has been made toward implementing the core recommendations.
3. Increasing the support role that ITBC can contribute to this region.
4. Securing funding for an Indigenous staff member to join the CCCTA to provide a liaison function between the CCCTA and the First Nations bands in the region and provide mentoring and support for tourism business development, product development, and marketing to those bands who wish to advance tourism initiatives.
5. Appreciating that not all the 11 First Nations have tourism as a priority at this time (e.g., the Ulkatcho). For those, however, wishing to develop their visitor economy (e.g., Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Xeni Gwet'in and the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais) invest in training that focuses on the types of visitor experiences that will generate new, sustainable and revenue generating employment opportunities. Integral to this is collaborating with other businesses, respecting past successes that led us to this point in time, and respecting the different band management/governance approaches and priorities.

\*Name currently under review

## 14. COLLABORATE TO COMPETE

Numerous planning considerations for business and destination development need to be prioritized, and working groups struck to:

1. Discuss the uncertainty related to land title and commercial tenure agreements - current and pending. The potential to demonstrate provincial and national leadership in setting the stage for the future with clarity regarding expectations, opportunities and limitations.

2. Collaboratively address the shoulder season's potential for growth. This needs to be a holistic approach with tourism stakeholders working together. Having hotels open without guest activities available to do, or the park campgrounds closed (or without services) during the height of bear viewing season, is at cross purposes and a lose-lose situation for visitors and businesses alike. Ferry and flight schedules drive arrivals.

3. FLNR, BC Parks, and Recreation departments of government and tourism stakeholders need to discuss a harmonious approach to trail development, for visitors don't realize that different government departments are responsible for different trails. Some conversations are already en-route (e.g., Bella Coola with its mountain biking trail development initiative), but if trail development is a planning area priority these discussions need to be broadened to areas within the Chilcotin:

- Who can invest in shorter, leisure trail mountain biking and hiking trail development?
- Which communities/First Nations are interested in co-investing?
- Where should trails be located and the types of single or cross-purpose uses it will be designed for, including seasonality?
- Who will manage the increased asset base once developed?

4. Invest in region-specific research. There is very little economic impact and consumer research specific to this region, which makes it difficult for businesses to know where to grow and invest. Due to the nature of the region, the number of visitors will always be small and regional sample sizes broken out from the provincial research will likely never

be enough for the research to be statistically significant or relevant. Therefore, working with businesses and organizations like the CCCTA, WCTA and the First Nations communities to define their information needs and influence government and investors is important.

5. Monitor the unknown impacts of climate change and human use impacts as tourism grows. Given the importance of the natural environment to tourism and the way of life in this region, changes to the wildlife, salmon stocks, migratory patterns, etc. could change the opportunities and challenges for tourism.

6. Provincial and First Nations Government processes, regulations and costs (i.e. for permits and tenure agreements), where possible, need to be streamlined and optimized to support tourism business success. Stakeholders reported difficulty understanding the costs and regulatory requirements that need to be met. They can be burdensome, policy and regulation are reported to be inconsistent based on differing land uses, finding who to speak to in government is difficult, and knowing the rules of engagement, opportunity and limitation within the T'silhqot'in title lands for non-Indigenous tourism business is in progress.<sup>24</sup>

- Collaboration between Indigenous, non-Indigenous and governments (92%)
- Ability for tour operators to pre-book on BC Ferries (82%)
- Local citizen knowledge about tourism activities (80%)
- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association funding (80%)
- Harmonized land use management between government departments (80%)
- Business certainty related to commercial tenure agreements (79%)
- Cost of liability insurance to operate (78%)
- Harmonized trail development plan between government departments (77%)
- Funding to implement the Regional Indigenous Tourism Strategy (75%)
- Business certainty related to land claim negotiations (73%)

<sup>24</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed 14 Feb 17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (5) and very important (4).

- Impact of rapid visitation increases due to increased awareness of the Great Bear Rainforest (73%)
- Streamline government administrative process to reduce barriers to business (71%)
- Policy on compensation for private property in Indigenous title areas (71%)
- Lack of destination specific research (67%)
- Increase tourism management capacity within Indigenous government/bands (66%)
- Complexity of government permits to operate (64%)
- Current business environment not encouraging for new investment (63%)
- Impacts of climate change (53%)
- Restrictions on sale of wild foods (41%)

7. A range of investments, needed for the future, were identified at community meetings and stakeholder interview. When asked to identify the top five, numerous were identified and will be reviewed by the working group as part of the next step in the destination development planning process. The following list represents the diversity of the first priority shared by industry.

- Increased, reliable ferry service, May to October, better hours to allow for a scenic tour, correct size to accommodate larger vehicles, reliable schedule over the next five years, create a parking/staging area in Bella Coola
- Increase the number of rooms/accommodations available
- Create sustainable operating procedures in sensitive wilderness areas
- Cell service on the Central Coast
- First Nations lending rates equal to low lending rates of other governments
- Increased advertising
- More involvement by First Nations people for local tours, traditional foods, native interpretive center, native art
- Connect the road from Anahim lake to Vanderhoof and the running surface of Highway 20

- Consensus on a vision
- New Indigenous tourism products and experiences
- Improved air service

The need for staff — be they seasonal or year-round — is, and will remain, one of the greatest challenges for the tourism industry. Growing businesses and expanding the visitor offer is only realistic if staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and qualifications.

#### **Creative solutions will need to be explored including:**

- Staff sharing through business partnerships
- Training more guides and encouraging private business start-ups that can be contracted by multiple hotels, tour companies, etc.
- Affordable front-line and customer service training needs to be readily available through go2 programs such as WorldHost and those offered by ITBC

#### **Other related issues raised by stakeholders and survey relative to their importance were:<sup>25</sup>**

- Lack of First Nations tourism business training (84%)
- Need for small business coaching (83%)
- Improve understanding of the Value of Tourism (81%)
- Improving entrepreneurial culture in some communities (81%)
- Lack of tourism market readiness training (product/ experience development) (74%)
- Lack of hospitality/customer service training (73%)
- Seasonal staff labour shortages (73%)
- Volunteer burn-out (70%)
- Gaps in staff skill sets (69%)
- Funding a full-time Indigenous liaison/development person in the CCCTA (69%)
- Succession planning (62%)

<sup>25</sup>Final results from the stakeholder survey that closed 14 Feb 17. The percentages are derived from a 5-point likert scale and represent the items identified as absolutely critical (5) and very important (4).

## APPENDIX 4: BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography provides a list of documents received and reviewed in creating the Situation Analysis Report that provided the foundation, along with industry input, to create this Destination Development Strategy.

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