

NORTHERN BC REGIONAL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & ICONICS STRATEGY

JUNE 2025



**The Great
Wilderness**
BRITISH COLUMBIA





LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Northern British Columbia Tourism Association respectfully acknowledges the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation on whose territory we operate our main office. We further recognize with gratitude that we carry out our work on the lands of Nations throughout the Northern BC region. We honour our ongoing relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities around Northern BC, and we commit to continuing to work together.

Destination British Columbia acknowledges with gratitude the x^wməθk^wəy əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Sk^wx wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (Tseleil-Waututh Nation) on whose shared territories we operate our main office.

We respectfully recognise that we carry out our work on the territories of Indigenous Peoples throughout BC. We honour our ongoing and developing relationships with First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis Peoples. We are on a path of learning and are committed to working together.

As organizations, we are committed to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and the Declaration Act Action Plan. We are working with the Government of BC, Indigenous Tourism BC, and the tourism industry to develop and implement actions of reconciliation. This includes the development of an action plan for Destination BC and collaboration with Indigenous communities interested in the benefits of tourism.

THANK YOU

Destination British Columbia, Northern BC Tourism Association, Indigenous Tourism BC, and the project facilitation team extend their gratitude to the participants who contributed to the co-creation of the Northern BC Regional Destination Development & Iconics Strategy. This collaborative effort was made possible through community workshops, virtual sessions, and ongoing discussions, ensuring a broad and inclusive range of insights.

The Strategy was shaped by input from approximately 150 tourism partners across the Northern region, representing the diversity of communities, organizations, businesses, and interests within the planning area.

Additionally, we recognize the invaluable support of ITBC's Indigenous Tourism Specialists, whose dedication to relationship-building helped ensure the Indigenous perspective is meaningfully incorporated into the Strategy. As well we thank the Northwestern and Northeastern Destination Development Advisory Committees who play a crucial role, providing insights, guidance, and on-the-ground support to advance this shared vision.

PROJECT TEAM

Destination BC Lead: Ana Alfieri – Senior Program Advisor,
Destination Development

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport Lead:
Jody Young – Senior Policy Analyst, Tourism Sector Strategy
Division

Indigenous Tourism BC Lead:
Jordie Johnson – Manager of Communications, Engagement
and Special Projects
Angela Keech – Indigenous Tourism Specialist, Northern BC

Northern BC Tourism Association:
April Moi – Destination Development Manager
Martina Bancroft – Tourism Development Coordinator

Contributing consultants:
Jennifer Nichol – Jennifer Nichol Consulting
Louise Browne – Louise Browne Associates



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Why A Strategy?
- 1.2 How It Was Developed
- 1.3 Importance Of Indigenous Perspectives And Values
- 1.4 Who The Strategy Is For
- 1.5 What It Does

2. NORTHERN BC: OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Distinctive Attributes
- 2.2 Navigating Northern Bc
- 2.3 Communities
- 2.4 Key Opportunities
- 2.5 Key Challenges

3. OUR VALUES AND VISION

- 3.1 Our Values
- 3.2 Our Vision

4. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- 4.1 A: Experience Development
- 4.2 B: Environmental Integrity And Sustainability
- 4.3 C: Infrastructure, Access And Amenities
- 4.4 D: Collaboration
- 4.5 E: Government Coordination And Support
- 4.6 F: Tourism Workforce
- 4.7 G: Indigenous Collaboration And Representation

5. EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 How Visitors Experience Northern Bc
- 5.2 Where Visitors Are Coming From
- 5.3 Visitor Experience And The Ideal Traveller
- 5.2 Iconics Destination Development: Areas Of Focus
- 5.3 Sharing Stories - Connecting Visitors To Place

6. DESTINATION WIDE EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Market And Export - Ready Experiences
- 6.3 Elevating Touring Experiences
- 6.4 Elevating Outdoor Recreation Experiences
- 6.5 Elevating Indigenous Stories, Experiences, And Touchpoints
- 6.6 Connecting Visitors To Routes And Places Through Story
- 6.7 Sharing Stories And Enhancing Experiences

7. THEMATIC REGION DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Thematic Regions, Corridors, And Experience Development
- 7.3 Northern Rockies
- 7.4 Peace
- 7.5 Prince George - Centre
- 7.6 Skeena - Bulkley - Nechako
- 7.7 Rainforest Coast
- 7.8 Northwest BC

8. NORTHERN BC: PRIORITY PROJECTS

- 8.1 Thematic Regions: Priority Projects
- 8.2 Destination-Wide Priority Projects

9. GEARING UP FOR DELIVERY

- 9.1 Collaboration
- 9.2 Investment
- 9.3 Measurement And Reporting
- 9.4 Next Steps

10. APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Acronyms
- Appendix B: List Of Engagement Participants

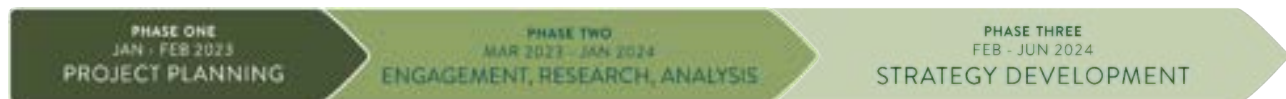
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Destination Development (the “Regional Strategy” or the “Strategy”) provides a roadmap to enhance the competitiveness of Northern BC as a tourism destination. It is a “Living Strategy”, meaning that it will be reviewed and, if needed, updated annually. The Strategy was developed in partnership with Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA), Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC), Destination BC and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS).

It was prepared in collaboration with communities, organizations and businesses from across Northern BC. Destination BC funding and program support were essential for the development of the Strategy. This Executive Summary provides highlights and should be read in conjunction with the full Strategy.

PROCESS

Over 250 people/organizations contributed to the Regional Strategy, which was developed in three phases during 2023 – 2024.



The Regional Strategy is primarily focused on destination development and has been informed by the new regional brand for Northern BC – *The Great Wilderness*. It builds upon several foundational strategies developed in recent years, in addition to focused research, analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement (see image below).

DESTINATION OVERVIEW

Northern BC’s geography and cultural landscapes are very diverse with coastal areas, mountains, significant headwaters, glaciers, rivers, lakes, hot springs, valleys and vibrant communities. It is BC’s largest tourism region, covering 569,000 km² – half of the size of the province. It features more than 60 sites of natural heritage significance, including provincial, national, and marine parks, and wildlife refuges. With just under 500,000 people, the population of Northern BC is characterized by a younger demographic than the province as a whole. Its outstanding cultural and natural assets support (or could support) a range of adventure, eco-tourism, cultural, and Indigenous tourism experiences.

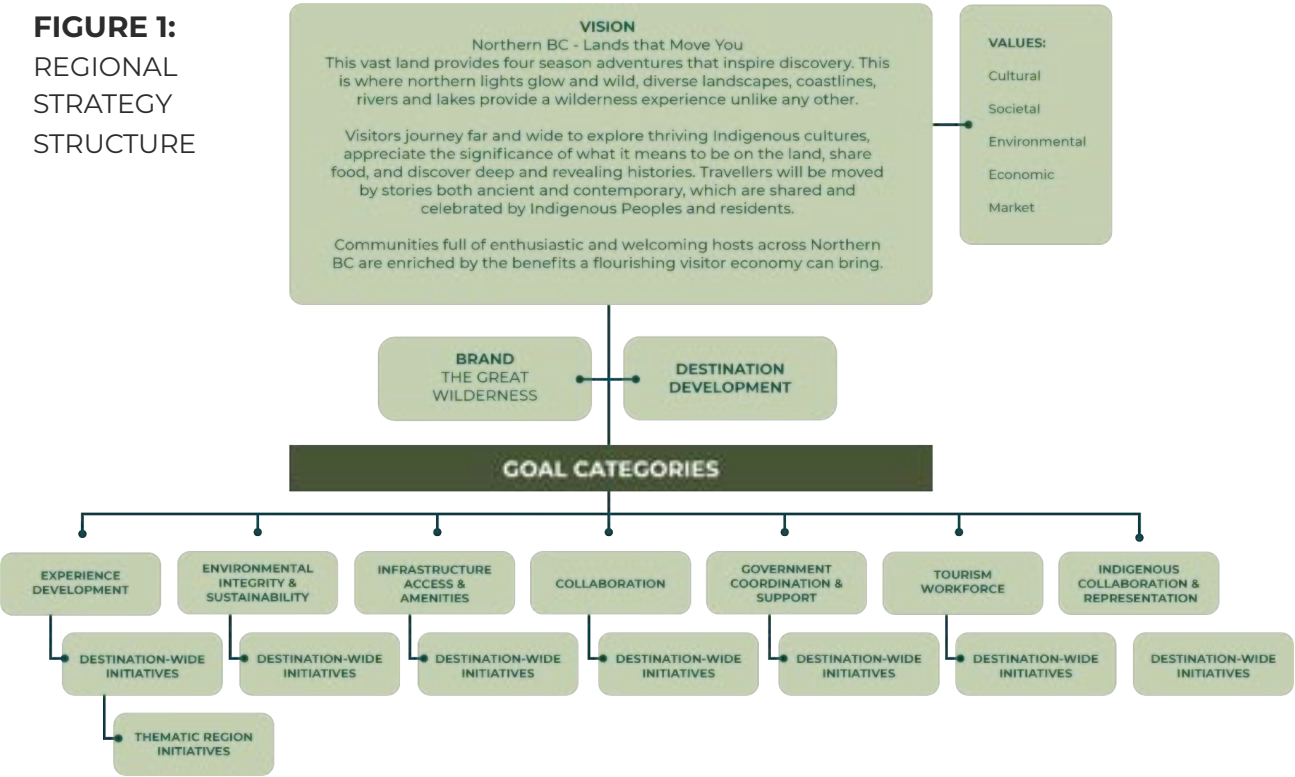
There are five regional districts, one region (the Stikine Region), one regional municipality, and 33 incorporated municipalities in Northern BC. The largest communities are Prince George, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Smithers, each of which serves as a commercial and transportation hub for their surrounding areas. There are over 50 First Nations communities in Northern BC, representing rich and diverse cultural traditions and ways of life.

REGIONAL STRATEGY STRUCTURE

The structure of the Strategy is illustrated in Figure 1. The Destination Vision describes the ideal future state for Northern BC as a destination. The accompanying values will guide implementation over the years. The Destination Development goals, including experience development, complement the new brand for Northern BC: *The Great Wilderness*. The brand will be further supported by marketing initiatives led by Destination BC, Northern BC Tourism, and Indigenous Tourism BC. Through the brand and supporting marketing initiatives, travellers will be inspired to visit and experience more places within Northern BC at more times of the year.

The goals are categorized under seven themes and are designed to help achieve the vision and support the brand promise. Additional details regarding the vision, values, goals and supporting initiatives are provided following the diagram

FIGURE 1:
REGIONAL
STRATEGY
STRUCTURE



REGIONAL STRATEGY VALUES

The following values guided the development of the Regional Strategy and will serve as touchstones during implementation and ongoing destination development and management.

Cultural Values:

- * Awareness and respect for Indigenous cultures, traditions and languages
- * Awareness and respect for diverse cultures found in Northern BC

Social Values:

- * Well-being of communities and residents
- * Tourism experiences that can be enjoyed by our diverse population base
- * Thriving, inclusive societies

Environmental Values:

- * Sustainable tourism development that helps maintain and enhance the health of the environment

Economic Values:

- * Economic prosperity of Northern BC and its communities and residents

Market Values:

- * Authentic tourism experiences that motivate travel and enrich visitors

FIGURE 2: REGIONAL STRATEGY VALUES

NORTHERN BC DESTINATION VISION

A vision provides a clear, compelling, and bold picture of the preferred future for the destination and takes into consideration how values and visitor experience are connected to the brand promise. The following vision was crafted with input from those who contributed to this strategy.

A great wilderness that surrounds adventurers in vast scale & the transformative power of nature

This vast land provides four-season adventures that inspire discovery. This is where northern lights glow and wild, diverse landscapes, coastlines, rivers and lakes provide a wilderness experience unlike any other.

Visitors journey far and wide to explore thriving Indigenous cultures, appreciate the significance of what it means to be on the land, share food, and discover deep and revealing histories.

Travellers will be moved by stories both ancient and contemporary, which are shared and celebrated by Indigenous Peoples and residents.

Communities full of enthusiastic and welcoming hosts across Northern BC are enriched by the benefits a flourishing visitor economy brings.



TERRACE
Photo: @calsnape

REGIONAL STRATEGY GOALS AND SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

Destination development goals cover a range of topics that collectively affect how a destination develops and thrives. The goals presented here, together with supporting initiatives, will help address many of the challenges and opportunities Northern BC faces, and, ultimately, help achieve the destination vision.

GOALS		SUPPORTING INITIATIVES (ADDITIONAL DETAILS ARE PROVIDED IN THE BODY OF THE STRATEGY)
A. EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT Northern BC is brought to life for travellers through well-aligned experiences, touchpoints and encounters that motivate more travel to the region.	A-1	Increase Market- and Export-Ready Experiences
		Gain an accurate understanding of the number and type of market- and export-ready experiences in the North through the preparation and annual updating of an inventory.
		Identify where there are key opportunities and associated programs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help existing experiences mature - Create more guided experiences - Connect existing products to offer more extensive and enriching experiences - Create more market- and export-ready experiences.
		Prepare a regional market demand study to support potential private and/or public sector investment in alternative accommodation that is not capital intensive, such as glamping units, yurts, sky-watching pods, and/or small cabins.
	A-2	Elevate Touring Experiences

		Continue to implement touchpoint and signage priorities that are aligned with the GNCR Signage Master Plan.
		Identify itineraries and interpretive signage for communities and side routes that are not captured in the GNCR Signage Master Plan.
		Work collaboratively with interested communities, tourism attractions, and businesses along routes to profile stories and tourism offerings that will enrich the overall experience for travelers.
	A-3	Elevate Outdoor Recreation Experiences
		Create a Northern plan for mountain bike “destination” circuits that profile the unique trails and riding experience each individual stop (municipality/park) offers.
		Develop a strategy that links and profiles many of the high-quality hiking trails and experiences that enable visitors to access and explore <i>The Great Wilderness</i> .
	A-4	Elevate Indigenous Stories, Experiences and Touchpoints
		Develop a strategy that links and profiles existing and emerging Indigenous experiences as clusters and routes. This should reflect that there are several existing and emerging Indigenous experiences that have strong potential to appeal to visitor markets on their own.

		With permission from and in collaboration with First Nations, integrate Indigenous culture, stories, history, languages and values with selected tourism experiences and attractions to more accurately reflect history and Indigenous cultures.
	A-5	Connect Visitors to Routes and Places through Story
		Highlight existing and new stories when leading initiatives to develop and enhance the destination, including, for example, implementation of the GNCR Signage Master Plan. Explore the scope to link storytelling to the creation of itineraries.
	A-6	Attract Investment
		Potential Public Sector Projects - Dedicate a position that is responsible for tracking priority destination development projects that require public sector funding/grants and/or corporate donations to implement. This position would also be responsible for identifying and communicating with potential funding bodies – public sector, Crown corporations, private sector – to source funding for priority projects.
		Potential Private Sector Projects - Several potential private sector projects have been suggested in the Destination Development Strategy, primarily related to alternative types of accommodation development. Market and financial feasibility studies are required to determine if there is a business case for each project and if they could potentially attract private sector investment. This initiative is to develop a strategic approach to conducting feasibility and investment attraction studies for key projects and locations in Northern BC.

	A-7	Enhance Experiences, Encounters and Touchpoints in Each Thematic Region
		<p>(See further below and in body of Strategy for details for each Thematic Region):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northern Rockies - Peace - Prince George-Centre - Skeena-Bulkley-Nechako - Rainforest Coast - Northwest
B. ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND SUSTAINABILITY The resources upon which tourism depends –natural features, wildlife and fisheries, habitat, water resources, air quality – are well managed over the long-term.	B-1	Provide leadership to industry and tourism organizations regarding how to operate in an environmentally sustainable manner. This includes encouraging information sharing, collaboration and leveraging of capacity to support the implementation of climate solutions in communities across Northern BC.
	B-2	Work with the BC Government and relevant committees and organizations to provide input regarding the tourism industry's land and resource management and environmental quality needs.
	B-3	Advance lower-emission transportation options and ensure suitable distribution and availability of EV charging stations for all NBC travellers.
	B-4	Continue to support work related to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provincial Emergency Preparedness procedures - Tourism Emergency Framework
C. INFRASTRUCTURE,	C-1	Continue to seek funding for priority signage and touchpoint development projects emerging from the

ACCESS AND AMENITIES Infrastructure, access and amenities are provided and well-maintained and emergency services are well-organized to support destination development and ensure visitors can travel safely.		GNCR Signage Master Plan.
	C-2	Work with BC Hydro and other corporate entities whose interests align with tourism to identify opportunities for new or enhanced touchpoints (visitor centres, signage and interpretive materials) in strategic locations.
	C-3	Work with TT and Public Works and Government Services Canada (“PSPC”) to provide input regarding highway and road improvements that are important to tourism.
	C-4	Work with TT and other government organizations to provide enhanced emergency response (ambulances and emergency services) along Highway 37 and Highway 97.
	C-5	Continually monitor and improve rest stops, including their accessibility features (including implementation of the GottaGo initiative).
	C-6	Work with government authorities to raise the profile of the challenge posed by poor absent mobile network coverage across the region and identify opportunities to tackle this infrastructure challenge, improve broadband and cell service in key locations, and facilitate emergency management.
	C-7	Continue to advance work related to accessibility programs and related infrastructure improvements, including working with partners to advance the Northern BC Accessibility and Inclusion Tourism Strategy recommendations.

	C-8	Ensure key connector and access routes are well maintained to support alternative routes in the event of emergencies and to support touring experiences.
D. COLLABORATION Tourism operators, Indigenous peoples, communities, governments and DMOs collaborate and align to advance destination development priorities and achieve the common vision for tourism in the region.	D-1	Continue to foster collaboration amongst tourism interests in Northern BC through initiatives that encourage regular dialogue and networking, including continued engagement of the DD advisory committees.
	D-2	Continue to increase awareness about tourism opportunities amongst Indigenous communities, support capacity-building, identify resources, and connect with the tourism industry.
	D-3	Work to advance priority destination development projects by collaborating with key organizations and partners, monitoring funding programs and maintaining a list of “shovel-ready” projects.
E. GOVERNMENT COORDINATION AND SUPPORT Governments at all levels understand the value of tourism and support destination development and management.	E-1	Continue to communicate with regional districts and local governments, including mayors and councils, regarding tourism initiatives and the need for their support to advance priority projects.
	E-2	Continue to work closely with regional and local economic development organizations to advance priority tourism projects.
	E-3	Continue to communicate with provincial government ministries that impact tourism and provide input regarding tourism values for selected processes and plan development.

	E-4	Encourage communities to use the Value of Tourism Toolkit to communicate the value of tourism to local governments, councils, and residents.
F. TOURISM WORKFORCE A strong, well-trained, motivated tourism workforce is available to deliver high-quality experiences.	F-1	Continue to provide and raise awareness about programs and tools to support industry in efforts to attract, train and retain staff.
	F-2	Work with Community Futures, Small Business BC (SBBC), and other organizations to identify and support industry members who need business advisory assistance.
	F-3	Maintain contact with key learning institutions regarding existing and upcoming programs that can support capacity-building within the tourism industry. Communicate these programs with key industry contacts.
G. INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND REPRESENTATION Indigenous communities are aware of the opportunities that tourism presents and aspire to develop tourism in a manner that reflects their communities' interests, values, culture and economic goals.	G-1	Continue to provide programs, tools, mentorship, and funding that help build Indigenous capacity to develop tourism experiences and businesses.
	G-2	Ensure that Indigenous values and interests are incorporated into and accurately reflected in key tourism plans and initiatives, including the implementation of the Northern BC Destination Development Strategy.
	G-3	Work with ITBC (Northern Team) to support the formation of Indigenous Tourism Advisory Groups

THEMATIC REGION ICONICS EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Initiative A-7 in the previous table focuses on enhancing experiences, encounters and touchpoints in Northern BC's six thematic regions. These concepts are central to the Strategy's iconic experience development.

Experiences are the ways in which visitors can enjoy, explore, engage with, learn about, and develop a deeper appreciation of the area through which they are travelling.

Touchpoints are the places of arrival, welcome, orientation, and decision making experienced by visitors when in the destination.

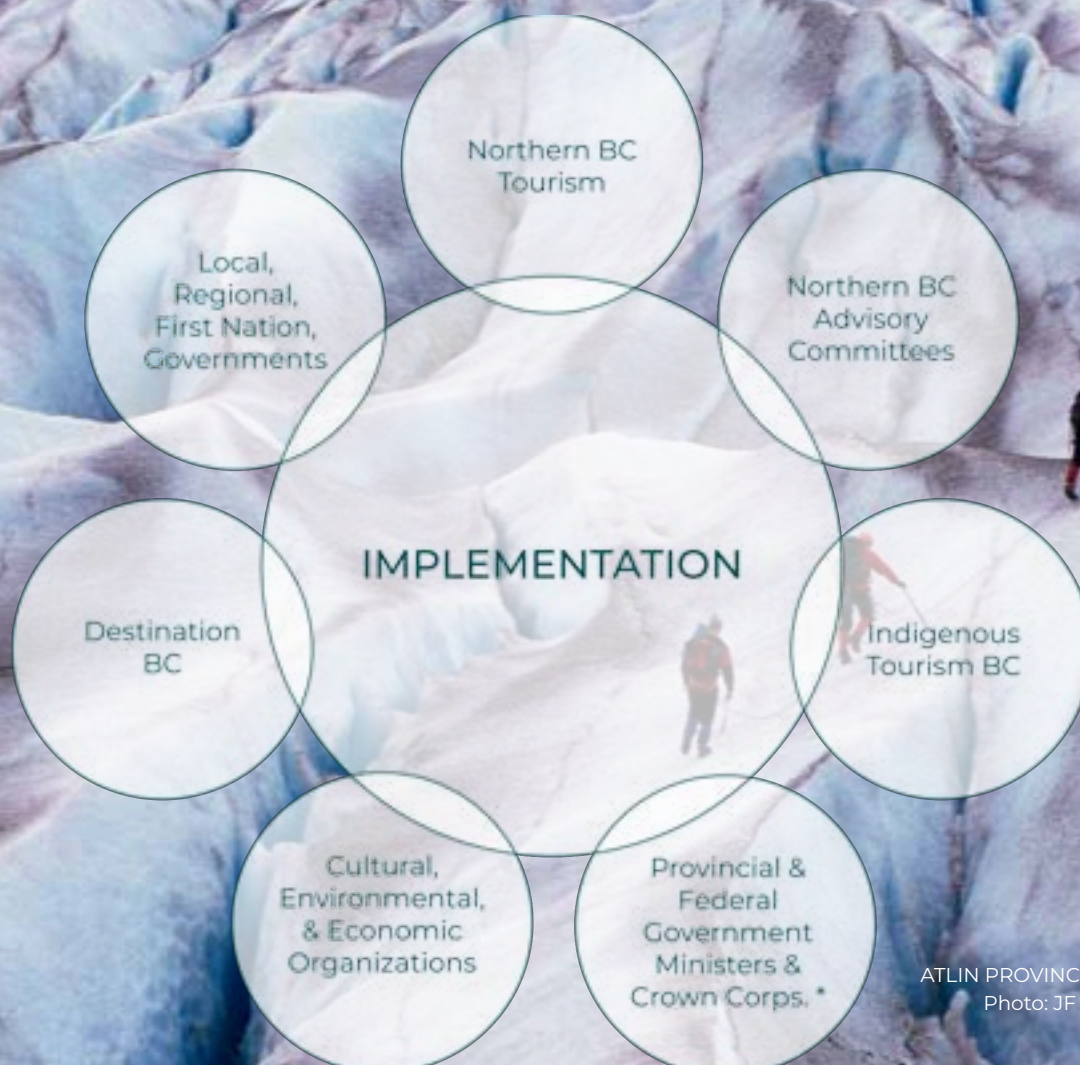
Encounters are the ways in which the stories of places are authentically and respectfully shared with visitors, with approval from the story owners.

Participants in the five in-person workshops identified experience development initiatives for each of the six thematic regions. These initiatives are detailed in the full Strategy. The thematic regions and connecting routes are illustrated below.



NEXT STEPS

This is a comprehensive Strategy that covers a large and diverse geographic area. Given that the extent of both financial and human resources to implement projects is not known, there is a need to establish priorities and to phase implementation over time. Collaboration between several organizations, in addition to identifying priorities annually, are critical to the success of implementation. There are many organizations and partners that will be instrumental to the implementation of the Regional Strategy. While the support networks associated with each of the initiatives and priorities have been identified throughout the Strategy, more detailed action plans will be prepared at a later date and will include specific roles and responsibilities. The main organizations that may lead or be involved in the implementation of specific initiatives are shown below.



ATLIN PROVINCIAL PARK
Photo: JF Bergeron

THE NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING THE FINALIZATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS	LEAD
Circulate Regional Strategy to Key Organizations	DBC, NBCTA, ITBC, TACS
Design Implementation Approach (include process and criteria for identifying annual priority initiatives)	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC
Design Monitoring and Reporting Approach	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC
Confirm the NE and NW Destination Development Advisory Committee Members and Roles	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC
Review the Implementation Approach and Monitoring and Reporting Plan with Advisory Committees	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC





1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY A STRATEGY?

This Destination Development Strategy aims to enhance the competitiveness of Northern BC over the next 10 years and beyond. It was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program to support and guide the long-term growth of tourism in BC. It was developed in partnership with Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA), Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC), DBC, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS), in collaboration with a diverse range of communities, organizations, businesses, and interests from across the Northern BC region.

It not only integrates into one overarching regional strategy the outcomes of the earlier [Northeastern BC](#) and [Northwestern BC](#) Destination Development Strategies, which were developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program, but it also responds to the more recent opportunity presented by Destination BC's [Invest in Iconics Strategy](#), which aims to responsibly increase the benefits of tourism throughout BC by marketing globally compelling brands and delivering a much-enhanced destination experience. Through these brands, more travellers will be inspired to visit and experience more places throughout the province at more times of the year.

Stretching across Northern BC, *The Great Wilderness*™ is the second Iconics place brand to launch globally. It should be noted that the brand's boundaries don't correspond exactly with the Northern BC administrative region. For example, while Prince Rupert will be presented as a gateway for *The Great Wilderness*, it will also be a more central part of the coastal Iconic area. While Valemount and Mount Robson are within the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) administrative region they are also included within The Great Wilderness.

1.2 HOW THE STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED

Engagement with key partners in Northern BC provided critical insights and knowledge that helped shape the strategy. Over 250 people participated in the virtual sessions and in-person workshops.

The process of developing the strategy included engagement of Indigenous communities and peoples from throughout the region through invitations to all of the engagement sessions and discussions with representatives of many Indigenous communities, in addition to one session which focused specifically on Indigenous tourism leaders.



Building upon foundational pieces of work, including the Northern BC Thematic Framework and the Great Northern Circle Route Signage Masterplan, the strategy was developed over 18 months (January 2023 to June 2024), as follows:

- **Phase One:** January – February 2023: Project planning
- **Phase Two:** March 2023 – January 2024: Engagement, research, and analysis
- **Phase Three:** February – June 2024: Development of the strategy

A summary of organizations involved in the engagement sessions is provided in **Appendix B**.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES AND VALUES

The development of the strategy supports the Province of BC’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (March 2022), the four main themes of which, as listed below, align with the objectives of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Declaration \(UNDRIP\) Action Plan](#) .

- 1. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government;
- 2. Title and Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- 3. Ending Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination
- 4. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-Being.

ITBC is one of the three organizations on the Project Team for the development of this strategy. ITBC’s Indigenous Tourism Specialists for Northwestern BC and Northeastern BC co-facilitated many of the engagement sessions and were instrumental in leading the Indigenous-focused session in January 2024. ITBC will continue to be a key leader for destination and experience development in Northern BC and will be engaged in the implementation of the strategy to help ensure that destination development is consistent with Indigenous communities’ aspirations for social, cultural and economic well-being and where appropriate, is initiated and led by First Nations.

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

CATEGORY	KEY CHALLENGES
ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is a need for all levels of governments to better understand unique local circumstances and improve coordination between different ministries and departments regarding land and resource planning and management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There are opportunities to learn from traditional Indigenous practices and knowledge and to improve networking and coordination regarding resource, environmental and land management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Issues related to emergencies and climate change are increasingly impacting the ability for tourism operators and communities to consistently offer experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and fisheries, and their associated habitats, are threatened in many areas. The health and integrity of wildlife and fish habitats are critical, as they are foundational for the North's visitor experiences and <i>The Great Wilderness</i> brand.
INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS AND AMENITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touring and the ability to move through the region comfortably and safely are critical to tourism and destination development in Northern BC. There is an ongoing need to invest in road and highway upgrades and maintenance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation to and within the region is impacted by the distance to key markets and the associated convenience and cost of travel. Coupled with this, air service has declined since the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacts the ease and cost for visitors from certain markets to travel to the North.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unreliable, lack of and/or intermittent broadband service is an issue in many parts of the North. The profile of this challenge needs to be raised and opportunities to tackle this infrastructure challenge identified.
COLLABORATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silos exist amongst and between government agencies and other organizations. This is inhibiting collaboration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to improve collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, peoples, and businesses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More inclusive roundtables are needed, involving a range of participants, and including leadership from Northern BC Tourism, Destination BC, and Indigenous Tourism BC.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced collaboration between tourism businesses and organizations is needed to encourage experience development (looking to positive examples of collaboration, such as the Ale Trail).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBCTA supports other sectors regionally like Northern Health, education (universities, colleges, school districts). Other sectors who promote the region to professionals to work, live and play in the North, rely on NBCTA and/or the Northern BC tourism sector to support their work.
GOVERNMENT COORDINATION/SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent government funding support and capacity-building programs are needed for a range of initiatives that support destination and experience development.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government funding for transportation improvements is needed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for governments at all levels to better understand the value of tourism and how tourism can contribute to a diverse and healthy economy and quality of life for residents.
TOURISM WORKFORCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges related to staff attraction, retention, and training are consistently noted as priorities. Factors that are contributing to this challenge include: wage competition from other sectors, the seasonal nature of tourism, the cost and availability of housing, inadequate and/or costly transportation options, and challenges accessing the right training programs in certain areas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for enhanced support for business development skills and overall capacity-building in Indigenous communities to support further development of viable tourism businesses and experiences.
INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND REPRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for enhanced collaboration between Indigenous communities, to coordinate experiences and learn from one another.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness about First Nations cultures, values, history, Title and rights is variable or low amongst residents and visitors. There is a need for cultural training/education, a visitor code of conduct and capacity-building for visitors and non-Indigenous communities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is imperative that Indigenous tourism development is Indigenous led.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedules for key projects need to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous interests are factored in before the project commences; and, Timelines for discussions are workable for all interests, to ensure time for meaningful input.
ICONIC FEATURES AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is low awareness in many markets about the region's assets, travel options and available experiences, which limits the North's ability to grow as a destination.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are very few market and export-ready experiences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked to the above point, most experiences in the North are self-guided and there are few businesses that offer equipment rentals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism services are very sparse in some areas, and hours of operation for many businesses are inconsistent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality and quantity of signage (touchpoints) to welcome and orient visitors and provide interpretation is deficient in

	many areas, which can negatively impact the overall visitor experience.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some communities are working together to coordinate their experiences, overall, there is an opportunity to adopt a strategic approach to experience development and delivery.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many areas in the North lack diversity in overnight accommodation of interest to some visitor markets. This can be viewed as a potential investment opportunity.



NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA
Photo: Grant Harder

3. OUR VALUES AND VISION

3.1 OUR VALUES

The values guiding the development and implementation of our strategy are embedded in sustainable tourism growth. According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.¹

In keeping with sustainable tourism growth, the following values are central to the development and implementation of the Regional Strategy. These values have guided the development of the Regional Strategy and will be touchstones for those involved in implementing key actions

CULTURAL LENS	SOCIAL LENS	ENVIRONMENTAL LENS	ECONOMIC LENS	MARKET LENS
<p>A focus on awareness and respect for Indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages</p> <p>A focus on awareness and respect for diverse cultures found in Northern BC</p>	<p>A focus on the well-being of communities and residents</p> <p>A focus on striving to ensure that tourism experiences can be enjoyed by our diverse population base</p> <p>A focus on encouraging thriving, inclusive societies</p>	<p>A focus on sustainable tourism development that helps maintain and enhance the health of the environment (land, water, air, sensitive habitats, flora and fauna)</p>	<p>A focus on encouraging the economic prosperity of Northern BC and its communities and residents</p>	<p>A focus on the enrichment of visitors and the enhancement of the visitor experience by providing authentic tourism experiences that motivate travel</p>

¹ <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>



STONE MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK
Photo: Andrew Strain

3.2 OUR VISION

A vision provides a clear, compelling, and bold picture of the preferred future for the destination and takes into consideration how values and visitor experience are connected to the brand positioning.

A great wilderness that surrounds adventurers in vast scale and the transformative power of nature.

This vast land provides four-season adventures that inspire discovery. This is where northern lights glow and wild, diverse landscapes, coastlines, rivers and lakes provide a wilderness experience unlike any other.

Visitors journey far and wide to explore thriving Indigenous cultures, appreciate the significance of what it means to be on the land, share food, and discover deep and revealing histories. Travellers will be moved by stories both ancient and contemporary, which are shared and celebrated by Indigenous Peoples and residents. Communities full of enthusiastic and welcoming hosts across Northern BC are enriched by the benefits a flourishing visitor economy brings.

4. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Destination development goals cover a range of topics that collectively affect how a destination develops and thrives. The goals presented in this section, together with supporting initiatives, will help address many of the challenges noted earlier, and, ultimately, help achieve the destination vision. Development goals include:

A: Experience Development

- Northern BC is brought to life for travelers through well-aligned experiences, touchpoints and encounters that motivate more travel to the region.

B: Environmental Integrity and Sustainability

- The resources upon which tourism depends –natural features, wildlife and fisheries, habitat, water resources, air quality – are well managed over the long-term

C: Infrastructure, Access and Amenities

- Infrastructure, access and amenities are provided and well-maintained and emergency services are well-organized to support destination development and ensure visitors can travel safely.

D: Collaboration

- Tourism operators, Indigenous peoples, communities,

governments and DMOs collaborate and align to advance destination development priorities and achieve the common vision for tourism in the region.

E: Government Coordination and Support

- Governments at all levels understand the value of tourism and support destination development and management.

F: Tourism Workforce

- A strong, well-trained, motivated tourism workforce is available to deliver high-quality experiences.

G: Indigenous Collaboration and Representation

- Indigenous communities are aware of the opportunities that tourism presents and aspire to develop tourism in a manner that reflects their communities' interests, values, culture and economic goals.

4.1 A: EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Experience development is a critical aspect of bringing the region to life in the minds of potential travellers as well as through the experience of visitors while in destination, particularly by considering how best to align experiences, touchpoints, and encounters to *The Great Wilderness* to motivate more travel to the region over the long-term.

The experience development priorities for the region are further detailed in **Section 6**.

4.2 B: ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This goal considers the importance of how resources upon which tourism depends – natural features, land, wildlife and fisheries, habitat, water resources, air quality – are managed over the long-term.

Note that the tourism industry in BC is increasingly adopting sustainable business practices and contributing to a low-carbon future.



TĀ CH'ILĀ PROVINCIAL PARK
Photo: Northern BC Tourism/Andrew Strain

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL: *The resources upon which tourism depends –natural features, wildlife and fisheries, habitat, water resources, air quality – are well managed over the long-term*

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE B.1</p> <p><i>Provide leadership to industry and tourism organizations regarding how to operate in an environmentally sustainable manner:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to promote the UN Sustainable Development Goals ▪ Continue to amplify the importance of NBCTA's Biosphere Certification through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updating and implementing the Action Plan ○ Providing regular updates to tourism industry partners ● Encourage information sharing, collaboration, and leveraging of capacity to support the implementation of climate solutions in communities across Northern BC 	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, Advisory Committees, Tourism Industry and community groups</p>
<p>INITIATIVE B.2</p> <p><i>Work with the BC Government and relevant committees and organizations to provide input regarding the tourism industry's land and resource management and environmental quality needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a strong relationship with BC Parks & Rec Sites and Trails ▪ Participate on relevant committees (such as the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board (M-KAB), Caribou Recovery Committee, Skeena Angling Committee, and others) 	<p>NBCTA, TACS, DBC, ITBC, BC Parks, Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV), M-KAB, Other Committees</p>
<p>INITIATIVE B.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advance lower-emission transportation options and ensure suitable distribution and availability of EV charging stations for all NBC travellers. 	<p>NBCTA, TACS, ITBC, ENV, Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions (ECS), local and regional governments</p>

4.3 C: INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS AND AMENITIES

This goal considers the importance of providing and maintaining infrastructure, access, and amenities to support destination development and help ensure visitors can travel safely. This includes ensuring emergency services are well-organized to help minimize disruptions to the tourism industry caused by extreme weather events, pandemics, and other unforeseen circumstances.

INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS AND AMENITIES

GOAL: *Infrastructure, access and amenities are provided and well-maintained and emergency services are well-organized to support destination development and ensure visitors can travel safely.*

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE C.1</p> <p><i>Continue to seek funding for priority signage and touchpoint development projects emerging from the GNCR Signage Master Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Note: more specific projects to enhance touchpoints related to the Great Northern Circle Route are identified in Section 7.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, ITBC, Advisory Committees. Local Governments, TT, BC Hydro, Indigenous Communities, Other Relevant Organizations and Attractions</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.2</p> <p><i>Work with BC Hydro and other corporate entities whose interests align with tourism to identify opportunities for new or enhanced touchpoints (visitor centres, signage and interpretive materials) in strategic locations.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, Advisory Committees. Local Governments, TT, BC Hydro, Indigenous Communities, Other Relevant Organizations and Attractions</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.3</p> <p><i>Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (TT) and Public Works and Procurement Canada (“PSPC”) to provide input regarding highway and road improvements that are important to tourism.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, ITBC, Advisory Committees, TT, PSPC</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.4</p> <p><i>Work with TT and other government organizations to provide enhanced emergency response (ambulances and emergency services) along Highway 37 and Highway 97.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, Advisory Committees, TT, PSPC, local and regional governments</i></p>

<p>INITIATIVE C.5</p> <p><i>Continually monitor and improve rest stops, including their accessibility features (including implementation of the GottaGo initiative).</i></p>	<p><i>Regional Districts, Municipal Governments, NBCTA, ITBC, Advisory Committees, TT, PSPC, Spinal Cord Injury BC</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.6</p> <p><i>Work with government authorities to raise the profile of the challenge posed by poor / absent mobile network coverage across the region and identify opportunities to tackle this infrastructure challenge, improve broadband and cell service in key locations, and facilitate emergency management.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, TACS, Advisory Committees, Province of BC and Government of Canada</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.7</p> <p><i>Continue to advance work related to accessibility programs and related infrastructure improvements, including working with partners to advance the Northern BC Accessibility and Inclusion Tourism Strategy recommendations.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, Advisory Committees, Spinal Cord Injury BC, Northeast Accessibility Committee</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.8</p> <p><i>Continue to support work related to the:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Provincial Emergency Preparedness procedures</i> ▪ <i>Tourism Emergency Framework</i> 	<p><i>NBCTA, TACS, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), Advisory Committees, Province of BC, regional and local governments</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE C.9</p> <p><i>Ensure key connector and access routes are well maintained to support alternative routes in the event of emergencies and to support touring experiences.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>For example, Cranberry Connector, Purden (Barkerville/McBride), Granisle, North Pacific Cannery access road, and others</i> 	<p><i>NBCTA, TACS, (EMCR), Advisory Committees, Province of BC, regional and local governments, First Nations & First Nation governments</i></p>

4.4 D: COLLABORATION

This goal considers how tourism operators, Indigenous peoples, communities, governments, and DMOs collaborate and align to advance destination development priorities and achieve the common vision for the region.

COLLABORATION

GOAL: *Tourism operators, Indigenous peoples, communities, governments and DMOs collaborate and align to advance destination development priorities and achieve the common vision for tourism in the region.*

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
INITIATIVE D.1 <i>Continue to grow amongst tourism interests in Northern BC through initiatives that encourage regular dialogue and networking, including continued engagement of the DD advisory committees.</i>	<i>NBCTA, ITBC, Industry Partners, Relevant Local, Regional and Provincial Government entities</i>
INITIATIVE D.2 <i>Continue to increase awareness about tourism opportunities amongst Indigenous communities, support capacity-building, identify resources, and connect with the tourism industry.</i>	<i>ITBC, NBCTA, DBC</i>
INITIATIVE D.3 <i>Work to advance priority destination development projects by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Collaborating with key organizations and potential partners</i>▪ <i>Monitoring upcoming funding programs</i>▪ <i>Maintaining and updating a list of “shovel-ready” projects that could benefit from relevant funding, should it become available.</i>	<i>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC</i>

4.5 E: GOVERNMENT COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

This goal considers how governments at all levels understand the value of tourism and provide support for destination development and management.

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

GOAL: Governments at all levels understand the value of tourism and support destination development and management.

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
INITIATIVE E.1 <i>Continue to communicate with regional districts and local governments, including mayors and councils, regarding tourism initiatives and the need for their support to advance priority projects.</i>	NBCTA, local and regional governments
INITIATIVE E.2 <i>Continue to work closely with regional and local economic development organizations to advance priority tourism projects.</i>	NBCTA, economic development organizations, Advisory Committees
INITIATIVE E.3 <i>Continue to communicate with provincial government ministries that impact tourism and provide input regarding tourism values for selected processes and plan development.</i>	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC, TACS, TT, EMCR, ECS, ENV, Ministry of Forests (FOR), Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS)
INITIATIVE E.4 <i>Encourage communities to use the Value of Tourism Toolkit to communicate the value of tourism to local governments, councils, and residents (note that this toolkit is available on the NBCTA website).</i>	NBCTA, communities, tourism organizations

4.6 F: TOURISM WORKFORCE

This goal considers the importance of a strong, well-trained, motivated tourism workforce being available to deliver high-quality experiences.

TOURISM WORKFORCE

GOAL: *A strong, well-trained, motivated tourism workforce is available to deliver high-quality experiences.*

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE F.1</p> <p><i>Continue to provide and raise awareness about programs and tools to support industry in efforts to attract, train and retain staff, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The HR Toolkit available on the NBCTA website</i> ▪ <i>SuperHost Program available through go2HR</i> ▪ <i>The Destination BC Learning Centre</i> ▪ <i>Tools available through ITBC</i> ▪ <i>Tools and programs available through Community Futures.</i> 	<p><i>NBCTA, DBC, ITBC, go2HR, Community Futures, and the other training providers in the training ecosystem.</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE F.2</p> <p><i>Work with Community Futures, and other organizations to identify and support industry members who need business advisory assistance. Note that there is an MOU with Community Futures in effect.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, DBC, Community Futures, and other relevant organizations</i></p>
<p>INITIATIVE F.3</p> <p><i>Maintain contact with key learning institutions regarding existing and upcoming programs that can support capacity-building within the tourism industry. Communicate these programs with key industry contacts.</i></p>	<p><i>NBCTA, DBC, go2HR, post-secondary educational institutions</i></p>

4.7 G: INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND REPRESENTATION

This goal considers the importance of Indigenous communities being aware of the opportunities that tourism presents and aspiring to develop tourism in a manner that reflects their communities' interests, values, culture, and economic goals.

INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION AND REPRESENTATION

GOAL: Indigenous communities are aware of the opportunities that tourism presents and aspire to develop tourism in a manner that reflects their communities' interests, values, culture and economic goals.

INITIATIVES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE G.1</p> <p>Continue to provide programs, tools, mentorship, and funding that help build Indigenous capacity to develop tourism experiences and businesses. Note that ITBC helps connect those interested in tourism development with tourism and business development experts that can assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan development and feasibility study • Business operations/operational adaptation; • Digital innovation; • Experience development. 	ITBC, DBC, NBCTA
<p>INITIATIVE G.2</p> <p>Ensure that Indigenous values and interests are incorporated into and accurately reflected in key tourism plans and initiatives, including the implementation of the Northern BC Destination Development Strategy. This will entail involving relevant Indigenous organizations in projects at their outset and establishing a schedule that provides time for thoughtful input.</p>	ITBC, DBC, NBCTA, Indigenous communities and tourism operators
<p>INITIATIVE G.3</p> <p>Work with ITBC (Northern Team) to support the formation of Indigenous Tourism Advisory Groups</p>	ITBC, DBC, NBCTA, Indigenous communities and tourism operators
<p>INITIATIVE G.4</p> <p>Develop a protocol, with a checklist, to be used to engage with and seek feedback from Indigenous communities when a new tourism or destination development initiative is being considered</p>	Visit Prince Rupert, Indigenous Tourism BC, Northern BC Tourism

5. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

5.1 HOW VISITORS EXPERIENCE NORTHERN BC

Insights regarding how visitors currently experience Northern BC are summarized below

TOURING MOTIVATES TRAVEL TO THE REGION

Touring is an established form of travel in the North, with the Alaska Highway, Highway 37, and Highway 16 being the major touring routes. The Great Northern Circle Route, which features the above three corridors, is also a popular experience.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE IS A MAJOR DRAW

The diversity and quality of parks, mountains, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, glaciers, trails, hot springs, and wildlife serve as key draws for adventure-seekers.

MOST EXPERIENCES ARE SELF-GUIDED

The majority of experiences are self-guided. However, there are some operators who offer guided experiences and there are several established inclusive adventure resorts/lodges, as noted below.

THERE ARE SEVERAL INCLUSIVE ADVENTURE LODGES/RESORTS

There are several established inclusive (offering accommodation, activities, and food and beverage) adventure lodges and resorts, some of which attract long-haul visitors who book many months in advance. Some cater specifically to fishing, backcountry skiing, or heliskiing, while others offer a range of guided recreational experiences.

VISITORS TYPICALLY NEED TO BRING THEIR OWN RECREATION EQUIPMENT

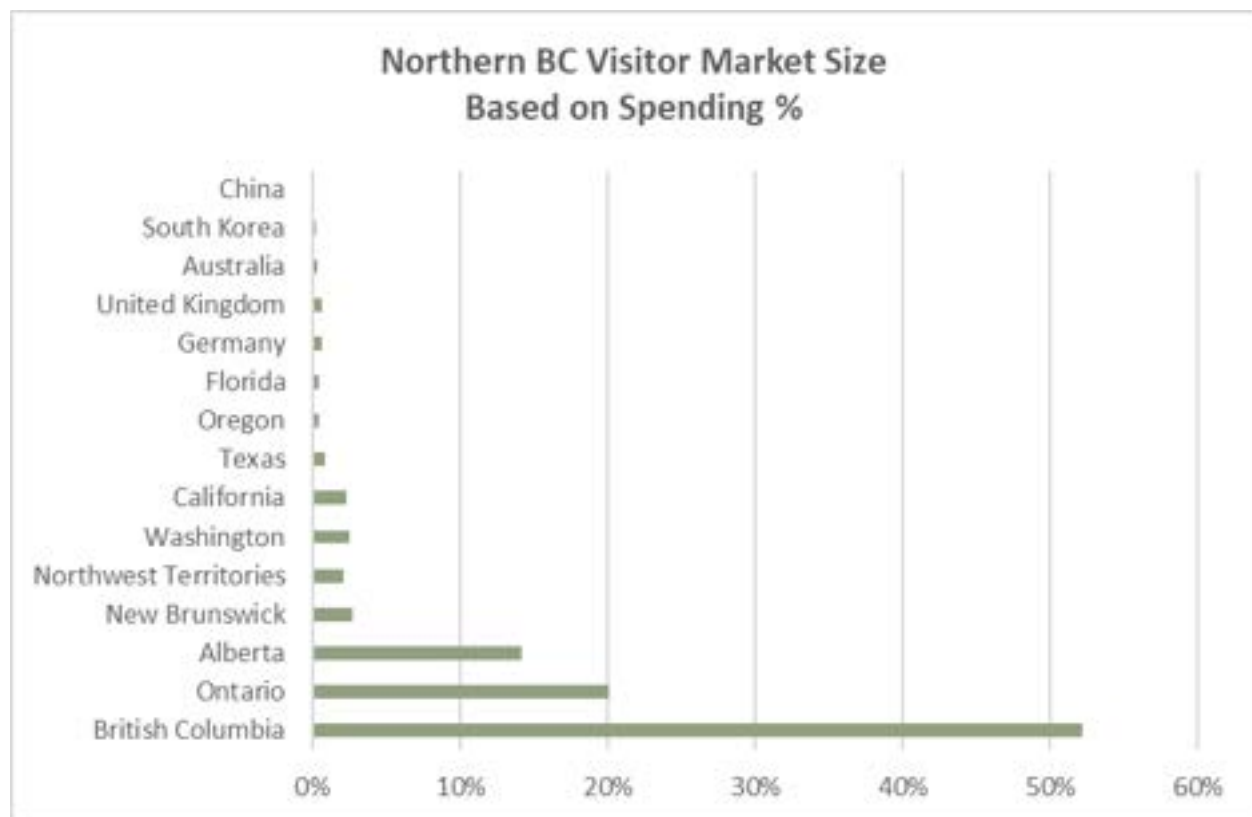
Visitors who want to participate in outdoor adventure activities and who are not using a guide or staying in an adventure resort/lodge typically need to bring their own equipment. There are some equipment rental businesses in larger centres, but not in smaller towns.

THERE ARE SEVERAL INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED GUIDED EXPERIENCES

Examples include heli-skiing, bear and wildlife viewing, sport fishing, small yacht/boat eco-adventure tours, kayaking, and river rafting. Visitors typically book these experiences several months and up to a few years in advance.

5.2 WHERE VISITORS ARE COMING FROM

The following graph shows relative geographic market size based on visitor spending data from 2019 (a baseline year prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic). These proportions are similar year-over-year. Clearly, the domestic market is key for Northern BC, with people living in BC generating the highest visitor spending, followed by Ontarians. Following Canada, the US is the largest market. Overseas markets generate much lower total levels of spending. Key overseas markets are Germany, the UK and Australia.



SOURCE: NORTHERN BC TOURISM ASSOCIATION, BC REGIONAL TOURISM SECRETARIAT, 2020

5.3 VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND THE IDEAL TRAVELLER

The Invest in Iconics Strategy integrates place branding and destination development, harmonizing marketing efforts with the creation of immersive, memorable experiences. This harmonization will be achieved through shining a light on what makes the places and communities within Northern BC distinctive and special, and, through experience development, globally compelling for those visitors who care about what this destination has to offer.

The ideal travellers for *The Great Wilderness* are:

OUTDOOR EXPLORER

"We are daring explorers who crave the thrill of unknown landscapes and overcoming challenges. Adventure travel allows us to grow, learn new skills, and establish personal traditions. We often seek adrenaline through physical activities, engaging with locals, and ensuring a positive impact. We embrace both short getaways and longer holidays, relishing in nature-related experiences"

- open to travelling to destinations with limited tourist infrastructure
- like to explore places that are off the beaten path and less explored
- want to learn about the history of the destinations I visit
- willing to put in the effort while travelling in order to see lesser-known places

For more details refer to [the full traveler segment profile for the Outdoor Explorer.](#)

5.4 ICONICS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT: AREAS OF FOCUS

Key themes relating to experience development were identified in the [Iconics Destination Development Framework](#) and remain relevant for the Northern BC Destination Development Strategy.

EXPERIENCES

Experiences are all the ways in which visitors can enjoy, explore, engage with, learn about, and develop a deeper appreciation of the area through which they are travelling. The tangible aspects of experiences include the products, activities, and events, which alone or in combination motivate travel and provide value for visitors. Equally important are the intangible aspects - the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that are aroused as a result of the experience - as well as the lasting impact in terms of the memories, impressions, and even the transformation that can occur.

TOUCHPOINTS

Touchpoints are the places of arrival, welcome, orientation, and decision making experienced by visitors when in the destination. They raise awareness of what a place has to offer while providing reassurance to visitors that they are on the right track and know where to explore next. They can provide a physical manifestation of the brand on the ground, and include the physical elements of signage, interpretation, and other navigational tools. Touchpoints also include key sites and facilities such as museums, interpretive centres, and Visitor Centres, which provide learning opportunities as well as points of orientation to the story of place and the people who live there.

ENCOUNTERS

Encounters are the ways in which the stories of places are authentically and respectfully shared with visitors, with approval from the story owners. This can happen through the interactions visitors have with local people, the tourism experiences they participate in, or the interpretative materials they encounter. The stories we choose to tell can change the way visitors experience a place and enable them to reach a deeper understanding of the significance of the places they visit.

5.5 SHARING STORIES - CONNECTING VISITORS TO PLACE

The brand promise and brand pillars identified in [The Great Wilderness Brand Strategy](#) ultimately manifest on the ground through the experiences the destination has to offer. Compelling experiences draw their inspiration not only from the essence and multifaceted nature of this place but also from the stories of the local destination which local communities want to share with visitors. The stories of Northern BC are grounded in the landscapes of the area, the challenges of physical connection across this varied terrain, and the human response to these landscapes. In order to share the wonder of these places and the stories of people, past and present, it is important for visitors to have opportunities to access these physical and cultural landscapes.

Individual stories and story themes emerged through the engagement sessions when discussing encounters. The focus was on ‘root stories’ defined as those unique, foundational narratives of people and place of importance to the communities that are distinctive and add a layer of depth to the experience. These themes and stories will be filtered through the lens of *The Great Wilderness* brand promise and brand pillars to identify those which best amplify the essence of the brand.

THE GREAT WILDERNESS			
Brand Positioning	<i>A great wilderness that surrounds adventurers in vast scale and the transformative power of nature.</i>		
Brand Pillars	EPIC SCALE	BEYOND LIMITS	STRENGTH & WISDOM
	<i>Towering lands:</i> This land of giants features endless skies, open roads, soaring volcanoes, deep valleys, and ancient glaciers. Though you might feel solitude here, you are not alone - you are connected to nature and those who came before you.	<i>Separated from the Ordinary:</i> Amidst the vastness of nature and under a sky filled with endless stars, we distance ourselves from everyday concerns, inspiring a shift in perspective and transformation.	<i>Stewarded Wilderness:</i> Though these lands are vast, they are anything but untouched: the First Nations of the North have lived in harmony with these lands since time immemorial.
	<i>Animal Kingdom:</i> A place where wildlife outnumbers people, and colossal creatures like elk, moose and bison roam free all around you.	<i>Beyond the Bounds:</i> The North is for trail blazers, boundary pushers, and opportunity seekers. For all who come, the reward is a sense of freedom, expansion, and the kinds of stories others can only imagine.	<i>Northern Spirit:</i> Strong, quirky characters with generous hearts and unapologetic charm. A journey here is shaped by legends which connects us to the heart of the North.

6. DESTINATION WIDE EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Experience development in Northern BC as a whole is the focus of this section.

Overarching experience development opportunities include:

- The need for more market-ready and export-ready experiences.
 - Opportunities to elevate touring experiences.
 - Opportunities to elevate outdoor recreation experiences.
 - Opportunities to elevate Indigenous stories, experiences, and touchpoints.
 - Connecting visitors to routes and places through story.
 - Attracting investment to support facility and experience development.
-

6.2 MARKET- READY AND EXPORT-READY EXPERIENCES

It is important that The North can offer a critical mass of unique market- and export-ready experiences that will motivate travel and meet visitor expectations, while maintaining the environmental and cultural integrity of the destination.

While there are several guided experiences and inclusive adventure resorts, the majority of experiences in the North are self-guided. There is an opportunity to increase market- and export-ready experiences, including guided experiences, throughout the North. This would present opportunities to broaden the market base by making experiences more accessible to different types of visitors. There is also a need for greater diversity in accommodation, to meet the needs of visitors seeking an adventure experience with a higher level of comfort than camping provides.

INCREASE MARKET- READY AND EXPORT-READY EXPERIENCES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE 1:</p> <p>Gain an accurate understanding of the number and type of market- and export-ready experiences in the North through the preparation and annual updating of an inventory.</p>	NBCTA, ITBC, DBC
<p>INITIATIVE 2:</p> <p>Identify where there are key opportunities and associated programs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help existing experiences mature Create more guided experiences • Connect existing products to offer more extensive and enriching experiences • Create more market- and export-ready experiences. 	NBCTA, ITBC, DBC
<p>INITIATIVE 3:</p> <p>Prepare a regional market demand study to support potential private and/or public sector investment in alternative accommodation that is not capital intensive, such as glamping units, yurts, sky-watching pods, and/or small cabins. This type of accommodation is compatible with many experiences offered in the North. The study must reference and acknowledge the high cost of doing business in Northern BC and the importance of emphasizing high value over high price point.</p> <p>Fort St. James, the Lakes District, 'Ksan, and Tumbler Ridge are noted in the Thematic Region sections (see later) as potential locations for this type of study; however, this study should also identify other potential locations where this type of investment may be viable and would help enhance the visitor experience.</p>	NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, Community Futures

6.3 ELEVATING TOURING EXPERIENCES

Touring is a main draw for visitors to the North. In addition to well-established touring routes, there are opportunities to further develop and elevate these routes as touring experiences. **Varied touring routes** offer journeys that are explicitly linked by experiences and by well-designed and branded touchpoints providing a welcome, re-assurance, and learning opportunities for visitors.

There are also opportunities to enhance shorter circle tours, which can help motivate visitors to stay in local areas longer.





TUMBLER RIDGE
Photo: Andrew Strain

The Great Northern Circle Route Signage Master Plan (the “[GNCR Signage Master Plan](#)”) provides detailed and comprehensive guidance for the development of new, coordinated signage in strategic locations throughout routes in Northern BC. This ties in with the above-noted opportunities to enhance and further develop journeys and touring experiences.

ELEVATE TOURING EXPERIENCES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE 1: Continue to implement touchpoint and signage priorities that are aligned with the GNCR Signage Master Plan.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, First Nations, TT, BC Parks, industry members</p>
<p>INITIATIVE 2: Identify itineraries and interpretive signage for communities and side routes that are not captured in the GNCR Signage Master Plan.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, interested communities, DMOs, local governments, industry members, TT</p>

INITIATIVE 3:

Work collaboratively with interested communities, tourism attractions, and businesses along routes to profile stories and tourism offerings that will enrich the overall experience for travelers.

NBCTA, ITBC, interested communities, DMOs, local governments, industry members

6.4 ELEVATE OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCES

The North provides outstanding **outdoor recreation** experiences on land and water that are supported by circuits and trail networks (single- and multi-use), many of which are already recognized for providing outstanding mountain biking and hiking. There are opportunities to further elevate and coordinate these and other outdoor recreation experiences, such as developing snowmobiling, providing guided experiences, launch-points, and well-designed touchpoints, services and camping/lodging facilities to further amplify **The Great Wilderness** brand by offering a higher concentration of experiences for the visitor.

ELEVATE OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCES	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE 1:</p> <p>Create a Northern plan for mountain bike “destination” circuits that profile the unique trails and riding experience each individual stop (municipality/park) offers. Consider the required infrastructure i.e. trail, camping/lodging, services, infrastructure and touchpoints. Coordinate circuits and routes with other key attractions, brew pubs (ale trail), and experiences.</p>	<p>Mountain Biking BC, Ride North, NBCTA, ITBC, local clubs, First Nations. BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) complementary attractions and businesses</p>
<p>INITIATIVE 2:</p> <p>Develop a strategy that links and profiles many of the high-quality hiking trails and experiences that enable visitors to access and explore <i>The Great Wilderness</i>. Examples of locations where trail networks are established and continue to evolve include: Hudson Bay Mountain, Tumbler Ridge, Pine Pass, Mount Robson, many Indigenous communities, and many more.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, local clubs, First Nations. BC Parks, RSTBC, complementary attractions and businesses</p>

6.5 ELEVATE INDIGENOUS STORIES, EXPERIENCES, AND TOUCHPOINTS

There is a need to better integrate Indigenous cultures, stories, history, languages and values in many tourism experiences across the North. Several high-profile heritage attractions focus on colonial versions of history and do not reflect Indigenous stories, history and values. These gaps were referenced during the engagement sessions for the Destination Development Strategy and also during the engagement completed for the Thematic Framework.

While this is a gap that needs to be addressed, it should be noted that permission from First Nations to share such stories is needed before including them in experiences and within touchpoints. During the engagement sessions, participants also emphasized that it is very important for the development of Indigenous experiences and the telling of Indigenous stories to be Indigenous led. It is critical that relationship-building occurs on an on-going basis with Indigenous communities and that planning makes space and time for meaningful and prior collaboration.

While there are also great opportunities for Indigenous communities interested in Destination Development to collaborate to offer coordinate circuits and clusters of authentic experiences, there is a need for partnering and joint-ventures with nearby towns or districts along with providing support for already established Indigenous solopreneurs. It will be important to move beyond the showcasing of Indigenous cultures to building platforms for collaboration, Indigenous control, and Indigenous agency.

ELEVATE INDIGENOUS STORIES, EXPERIENCES AND TOUCHPOINTS	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE 1:</p> <p>Develop a strategy that links and profiles existing and emerging Indigenous experiences as clusters and routes. This should reflect that there are several existing and emerging Indigenous experiences that have strong potential to appeal to visitor markets on their own. Combining these experiences as routes, circuits and clusters would present even greater opportunities to offer more enriching experiences and keep visitors in the area longer.</p>	<p>ITBC, DBC, NBCTA, First Nations</p>

INITIATIVE 2:

With permission from and in collaboration with First Nations, integrate Indigenous culture, stories, history, languages and values with selected tourism experiences and attractions to more accurately reflect history and Indigenous cultures.

ITBC, DBC, NBCTA, First Nations, relevant attractions and experiences

6.6 CONNECT VISITORS TO ROUTES AND PLACES THROUGH STORY

The Northern BC Thematic Framework (the “[Thematic Framework](#)”) is based on extensive engagement with many groups and individuals in the North, including Indigenous communities. The rich stories and themes that emerged during this engagement are central to the Thematic Framework. Individual stories for the North also emerged during the workshops to support the development of this Regional Destination Development Strategy.

A key consideration will be exploring opportunities to link storytelling to the scope for creating itineraries.

CONNECT VISITORS TO ROUTES AND PLACES THROUGH STORY	SUCCESS NETWORK
INITIATIVE 1: Highlight existing and new stories when leading initiatives to develop and enhance the destination, including, for example, implementation of the GNCR Signage Master Plan. Explore the scope to link storytelling to the creation of itineraries.	DBC, ITBC, NBCTA, CDMOs, other partner organizations

6.7 ATTRACT INVESTMENT TO SUPPORT FACILITY AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Public and private sector funding is required to support a range of facility and experience development projects across Northern BC. A planned and strategic approach to source funding will increase opportunities to effectively implement priority projects.

ATTRACT INVESTMENT	SUCCESS NETWORK
<p>INITIATIVE 1:</p> <p>Potential Public Sector Projects - Dedicate a position that is responsible for tracking priority destination development projects that require public sector funding/grants and/or corporate donations to implement. This position would also be responsible for identifying and communicating with potential funding bodies – public sector, Crown corporations, private sector – to source funding for priority projects.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, Regional Governments, Local Governments, First Nations</p>
<p>INITIATIVE 2:</p> <p>Potential Private Sector Projects - Several potential private sector projects have been suggested in the Destination Development Strategy, primarily related to alternative types of accommodation development. Market and financial feasibility studies are required to determine if there is a business case for each project and if they could potentially attract private sector investment. This initiative is to develop a strategic approach to conducting feasibility and investment attraction studies for key projects and locations in Northern BC.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, Regional Governments, Local Governments, First Nations</p>

7. THEMATIC REGION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Destination development priorities, when well-considered and strategic, can support a region's or community's aspirations for its own future as well as provide ways to deliver on the brand promise made to visitors. Having identified overarching development opportunities and associated priorities in the previous section, this next section looks in more detail at how these experience development opportunities might play out across each of Northern BC's six Thematic Regions to identify more specific priorities.

These Thematic Regions and Corridors, emerged from the [Northern BC Thematic Framework](#) (NBCTF), a foundational document which identifies the themes and topics of the Northern BC tourism region that will guide and align the future development of meaningful heritage interpretation and visitor experiences. The NBCTF reflects the voices, contributions and experiences of Northern BC residents, who shared their perspectives through workshops, interviews, research and conversations. The NBCTF organizes Northern BC geographically into regions, sub-regions, and corridors and assigns themes, sub-themes, and interpretive topics to each area.

These geographic divisions and thematic hierarchy are further reflected in the [Great Northern Circle Route \(GNCR\) Signage Master Plan](#) which documents the signage system to be implemented around the Great Northern Circle Route and on spurs off the main highways to guide visitors, provide destination information, and communicate the themes, sub-themes, and topics of the different regions throughout Northern BC.

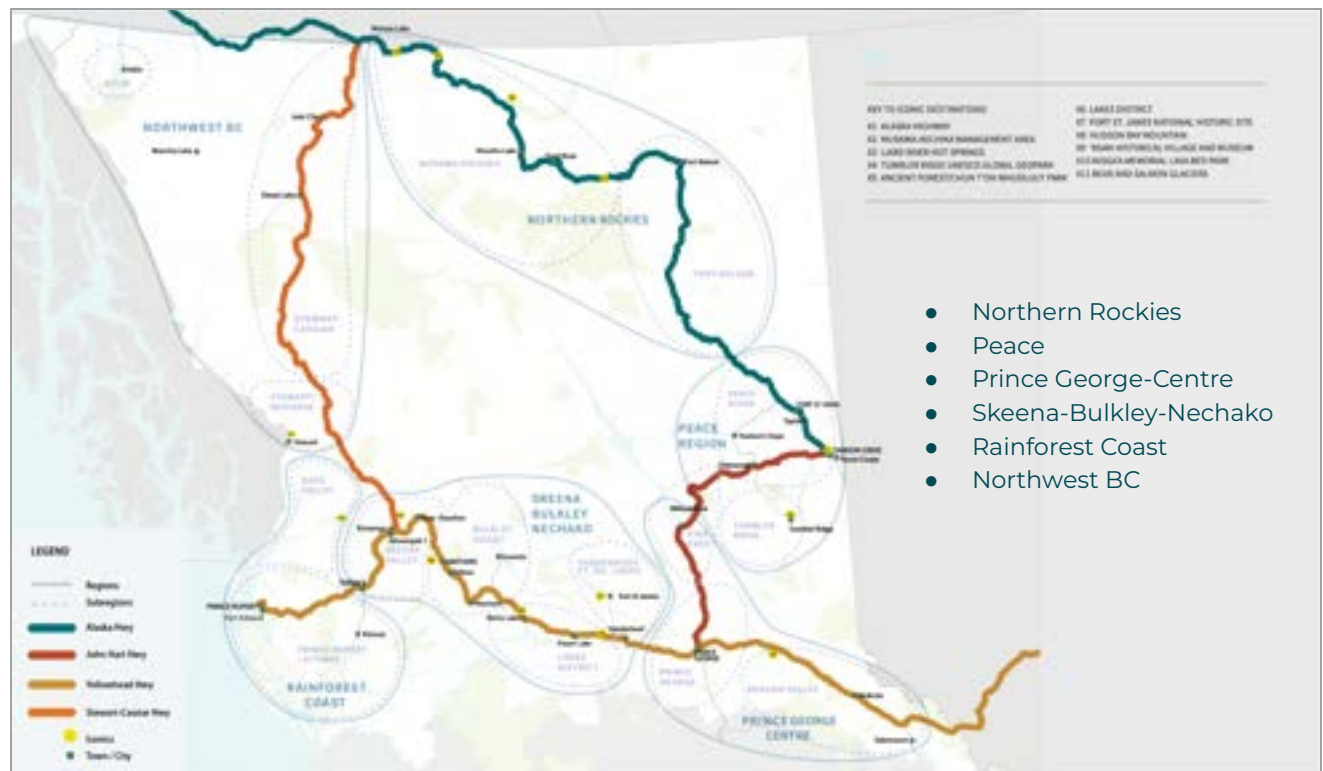
Importantly, both the NBCTF and the GNCR Signage Master Plan advance the implementation of the [Northwestern BC](#) and [Northeastern BC Destination Development Strategies](#) which were developed by DBC in collaboration with NBCTA, ITBC, TACS, and tourism partners to strengthen the supply side of tourism by guiding the resources, investments and tourism destination development planning activities that support the delivery of on-the-ground visitor experiences.

A key element of each of these Destination Development Strategies was the identification of iconic features around which experiences and destination identity and branding could be developed. This is particularly important for Northern BC, given that the area is in the earlier stages of tourism development and there is very low awareness about Northern BC in many markets. Focusing on nine of the 53 iconic features that were identified in the two strategies, the [Northern BC Tourism Iconic Features Product Assessment](#) sought to further the iconic product and experience development objectives of both strategies, inform the emerging Invest in Iconics Strategy, and support the destination development planning process.

7.2 THEMATIC REGIONS, CORRIDORS, AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The NBCTF is organized geographically into 6 regions, 16 sub-regions and 4 connecting travel corridors. Several factors were used to determine the boundaries such as shared perspectives, histories and stories; regional district boundaries; highway connections and common travel routes; geographic features; and the distribution of iconic destinations. The NBCTF themes are presented in a hierarchy. Regional themes sit at the top of the hierarchy and describe the overall regional emphasis. Sub-regions have a main theme and sub-themes that support and expand on the regional theme and delve deeper into each area. Each sub-theme has potential topics to be explored by interpretation. Corridor themes and topics help to tie the emphasis from regions and sub-regions together, through the lens of travel over time and across distance.

THE **THEMATIC REGIONS**, AS IDENTIFIED IN THE NBCTF AND ILLUSTRATED BELOW INCLUDE:



The **Connecting Travel Corridors** include:

- Highway 97 (the Alaska Highway)
- Highway 97 (the John Hart Highway)
- Highway 16 (the Yellowhead Highway)
- Highway 37 (the Stewart-Cassiar Highway)

Guided by the NBCTF, experience development priorities across Northern BC have been profiled as follows:

- Thematic Region
- Sub-Regions
- Associated Corridor(s)
- Main Passenger Airport(s)
- **Iconic Features** *(the unique features of Northern BC around which a strong common identity can be developed)*
- **Main Theme** *(emphasises the unique characteristics of the region as a whole and answers the question- “how does the landscape shape the communities, key visitor destinations in and experience of the region”)*
- **Experiences and Story Themes** *(highlight the unique perspectives, experiences and characteristics of a sub-region and detail the unique stories that support the sub-region themes, and that the community is comfortable sharing with visitors)*
- *Experience Development Focus (details what the strategy is trying to achieve)*
- *Experience Development Priorities (details how the strategy objectives will be achieved)*



FORT NELSON
Photo: Ryan Dickie

7.3 THEMATIC REGION: NORTHERN ROCKIES

Sub Regions: Muskwa-Kechika, Fort Nelson

Associated Corridor: Highway 97 (Alaska Highway)

Main Airport: Northern Rockies Regional Airport, Fort Nelson

Iconic Features: Alaska Highway, Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (MKMA), Liard Hot Springs, Muncho Provincial Park

Main Theme: The Northern Rockies is defined by big, intact mountainous landscapes, abundant wildlife and a warm welcome.

Experiences and Story Themes:

- *Alaska Highway Journey*
- *Outdoor adventure in wild and special landscapes, mountains, rivers, and lakes*
- *Northern lights, Indigenous culture and celebrations*

TOP RIGHT: DUNE ZA KEYIH PROVINCIAL PARK | Taylor Burk **CENTER:** FORT NELSON | Northern BC Tourism/Ryan Dickie

BOTTOM LEFT: PRINCE GEORGE | Northern BC Tourism/6ix Sigma Production **RIGHT:** FORT NELSON | Northern BC Tourism/Ryan Dickie



7.3.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Elevate the Alaska Highway journey as an iconic experience.
- Enable more visitors to experience the iconic natural attractions of this region - Liard River Hot Springs, Muncho Lake Provincial Park, and the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area – by offering additional guided adventure experiences. A balanced approach to encouraging more use of these areas needs to be employed, given some areas that are more environmentally fragile. Ensure there is a visitor management plan in place and provide additional visitor amenities.

7.3.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

NORTHERN ROCKIES THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
Alaska Highway Infrastructure Improvements: Continue to complete upgrades to rest stops as per the Gotta Go Project.	Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, Peace River Regional District, Tourism Northern Rockies, NBCTA
Alaska Highway Experience Enhancement Strategy: Invite operators, businesses and tourism organizations to participate in upcoming experience development initiatives for NEBC. Focus on making the journey more interactive, offering experiences that connect to others “down the road” and providing a critical mass of visitor experiences. Through this process, explore how to better showcase the other iconic features of the region – Liard River Hot Springs and the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (MKMA) – in addition to other businesses and attractions.	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC, Industry, Indigenous communities, MKMA Board, local tourism organizations and local governments, BC Parks

<p>Alaska Highway Regional Interpretive and Adventure Centre Feasibility Study: Conduct a feasibility study for the potential development of a Regional Alaska Highway Interpretive and Adventure Centre. Potential concepts and topics to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-regional focus showcasing the “Best of the Northern Rockies and the Peace” including: Indigenous cultures, heritage and history, attractions, experiences, culinary experiences, etc. • Interactive displays/activities • Adventure booking service • Mobile exhibits • Retail and food and beverage • Leasing opportunities for businesses (to generate additional revenue) • Joint funding management (between the relevant governments and First Nations) • Consider pairing up with Muskwa-Kechika and or progressing this as a collaborative venture with all Treaty 8 First Nations’ Territories <p>A first step before committing to conduct a feasibility study would be to conduct a scan of similar centres, including, for example, Squamish Adventure Centre.</p>	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, DBC, local governments and Indigenous communities along the Alaska Highway,</p>
<p>Muncho Lake Provincial Park Experiences: To support the completion of the Management Plan for Muncho Lake with the potential to attract operators to offer more guided experiences in the park, including water recreation, biking and hiking.</p>	<p>BC Parks, NBCTA, Tourism Northern Rockies, stakeholder groups</p>
<p>Liard River Hot Springs Lodge and Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park Improvements and Alaska Highway businesses within the area: Support the inclusion of Indigenous-focused experiences within the area. An Indigenous Experience Enhancement Strategy could support this and potentially include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous cultural experience development • Fly-in packages including Fort Nelson, northern lights, hot springs • Wellness-related experiences – massage, spa, yoga • Ecological interpretive tours; and, • Work with BC Parks to investigate options for heated change rooms and welcome area • Indigenous place names at the trailheads • More interpretive signage as identified in the GNCR Signage Master Plan 	<p>Fort Nelson First Nation, Kaska Dena, Indigenous communities, Tourism Rockies, ITBC, NBCTA</p>

Muskwa-Kechika Management Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the MK Advisory Board (M-KAB) and Ministry of Water, Space, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) development of an Access Management Strategy that establishes a common vision for access management for visitors and industry and respects the Indigenous perspective. Support the MK Advisory Board (M-KAB) continued conversations to support prescribed burns. 	NBCTA, M-KAB, WLRS
--	--------------------

NORTHERN ROCKIES THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Muskwa-Kechika Management Area (MKMA) and Muncho Lake: In concert with signage enhancements through the GNCR Signage Master Plan, determine if and how the following improvements can be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information kiosks in different locations along the highway Signage at Muncho Lake Safety signage warning travelers about distances to the next fuel station Interpretive signage that includes orientation maps. 	NBCTA, Public Works and Procurement Canada, TT, Local governments and Indigenous communities along the Alaska Highway, BC Parks, MKMA Board
<p>Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park: In concert with signage enhancements through the GNCR Signage Master Plan and working with BC Parks, determine if and how the following improvements can be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage that helps draw more people off the highway, including gateway signs on the highway Updating of signs that are outdated and need new content and branding Addition of Indigenous content and language to touchpoints 	NBCTA, ITBC, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Fort Nelson First Nation, [16] [17] Kaska Dena First Nation, Tourism Rockies (NRRM)

7.4 THEMATIC REGION: PEACE

Sub Regions: Tumbler Ridge, Peace River

Associated Corridor: Highway 97 (Alaska Highway and John Hart Highway)

Main Airport: Fort St. John, Dawson Creek (limited service)

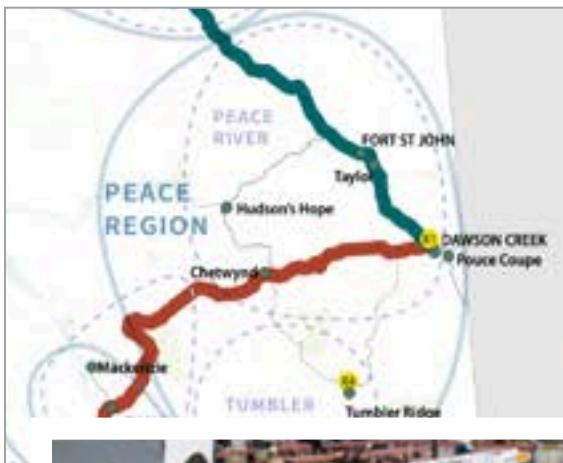
Iconic Features: Alaska Highway, Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark

Main Theme: The landscape of the Peace Region, including its waterways, geography and geology, has made it a major economic engine for BC, providing wood, food, coal, oil, gas and hydroelectric energy.

Experiences and Story Themes:

- *Alaska Highway Journey, including Mile 'O' in Dawson Creek*
- *Outdoor adventure in wild and special landscapes, mountains, rivers, and lakes*
- *Paleontological discoveries*
- *Tumbler Ridge - one of five UNESCO Global Geoparks in Canada*
- *Fossils and fossil fuels - the intertwining of the geology, paleontology and human industry (mining and forestry) of this area.*

TOP RIGHT: TUMBLER RIDGE | Mike Seehagel **CENTER:** FORT ST. JOHN | Northern BC Tourism/Shayd Johnson **BOTTOM LEFT:** DAWSON CREEK | Northern BC Tourism/Jason Hamborg **RIGHT:** DAWSON CREEK | Northern BC Tourism/Andrew Strain



7.4.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Elevate the Alaska Highway journey as an iconic experience, complemented by shorter circle tours.
- Increase the breadth and depth of experiences in and around Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark to help it further develop as an Iconic Experience.
- Expand the selection of visitor accommodation in key areas, focusing on glamping, yurts, small cabins, sky-viewing pods, and/or, where appropriate, teepees and pit houses and address the challenges around the availability of land for new accommodations.
- Profile successful Indigenous experiences to serve as motivation for other Indigenous communities who would like to offer tourism experiences.
- Develop and offer additional market- and export-ready experiences and coordinate these experiences with areas and communities in the Northern Rockies Thematic Region.

7.4.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

PEACE THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Alaska Highway Rest Stop Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to complete upgrades to rest stops as per the Gotta Go Project. 	Peace River Regional District, TT, NBCTA, NRRM
<p>Alaska Highway Experience Development Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite operators, businesses and tourism organizations to participate in upcoming experience development initiatives for NEBC • Focus on making the journey more interactive and offering experiences that connect to other experiences “down the road”. 	NBCTA, DBC, ITBC, Industry, local tourism organizations and local governments
<p>Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark Experience and Accommodation Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several guided experiences exist. However, there are good opportunities to develop additional market- and export-ready experiences, as noted below. 	

<p>Conduct a feasibility study to determine potential private sector investment in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More diverse and unique accommodation (possibly yurts/glamping/adventure lodge/sky-viewing pods) combined with retreat activities and outdoor adventure. 	<p>District of Tumbler Ridge, Visit Tumbler Ridge, TRUGG Board and Office Industry, Recreational Clubs</p>
<p>Work with existing operators and businesses to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More guided experiences featuring recreation, adventure and paleontological resources (summer and winter) • Experience packages (guided tours, accommodation, food and beverage). 	<p>NBCTA, DBC, District of Tumbler Ridge, Visit Tumbler Ridge, TRUGG Board and Office Industry</p>
<p>Identify actions to further develop experiences, branding and awareness related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UNESCO Global Geopark designation • The Dinosaur Museum • Awards, such as the “the best place to snowmobile in Western Canada” • Key iconic events, such as the annual Emperor’s Challenge half-marathon • Game of Thrones. 	<p>District of Tumbler Ridge, Visit Tumbler Ridge, TRUGG Board and Office NBCTA, Industry</p>
<p>Indigenous Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build on the good work related to the Tse’k’wa National Historic Site, including the interpretive components, trails and programming • Profile the success of Tse’k’wa to enable it to serve as a catalyst for the development of complementary Indigenous experiences in the Peace Region. • In the spirit of reconciliation and in relation to the third dam located on the Peace River, BC Hydro is working with local First Nations to create an Indigenous led cultural centre. • Nations in the Peace Region are creating new experiences that celebrate their culture and heritage. Some examples are Dunne-za Lodge, Urban Reserve, 548 Trading Company, Kema Experiences, and local rodeos and cultural camps. 	<p>ITBC, Tse’k’wa Heritage Society, Doig River First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, West Moberly First Nations, Treaty 8 Tribal Association, NE Native Advancing Society (NENAS), Sauteau First Nation, Blueberry First Nation, Halfway River First Nation</p>

<p>Short Circle (Driving) Tours Enhancement/Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance existing, short circle tours in the Peace Region to help keep visitors in the region longer. <p>Characteristics of the existing tour include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 445-kilometer journey that takes approximately five days to complete The towns of: Tumbler Ridge, Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek, Taylor, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, and Chetwynd Local culture and geological wonders The towns and operators associated with this route could work collectively to further enhance and profile experiences along this route, using Oregon's Infinity Loop and other established circle tours as examples. 	<p>NBCTA, ITBC, Local Governments, Tourism Organizations from each Community</p>
---	--

PEACE THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with communities to develop an interpretive signage plan at TT rest stops and in communities to highlight the area and key attractions such as the TRUGG. 	<p>TRUGG Board and Office, NBCTA, TT, District of Tumbler Ridge, Visit Tumbler Ridge, NBCTA, ITBC</p>
<p>Short Circle Tours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the development/enhancement of short circle tours is implemented, provide effective touchpoints/signage to complement the circle tour experience. The GNCR Signage Master Plan can serve as a resource for this. 	<p>NBCTA, TT, BC Parks, local governments</p>

7.5 THEMATIC REGION: PRINCE GEORGE - CENTRE

Sub Regions: Prince George, Robson Valley, Pine Pass

Associated Corridor: Highway 97 (John Hart Highway) and Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway)

Main Airport: Prince George International Airport

Iconic Features: Ancient Forest – Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park – Mount Robson Provincial Park

Main Theme: Prince George Centre is the confluence of many key elements of Northern BC: rivers, lakes, rail, economic activity, abundant recreation and diverse people.

Experiences and Story Themes:

- *Outdoor adventure featuring special landscapes, mountains, rivers, and lakes*
- *Winter adventures (Pine Pass and Mount Robson)*
- *Chun T'oh Whudujut/Ancient Forest Provincial Park - part of the only inland temperate rainforest in the world*
- *Mount Robson – one of seven parks that form the Canadian Rocky Mountains World Heritage Site*
- *The mighty Fraser River – an important resource for Indigenous Peoples, local agriculture and recreation.*

TOP CENTER: PRINCE GEORGE | Northern BC Tourism/Jongsun Park **TOP RIGHT:** FORT ST. JOHN | Northern BC Tourism/Shayd Johnson **BOTTOM LEFT:** PRINCE GEORGE | Destination BC/6ix Sigma Productions **RIGHT BOTTOM:** NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA | Northern BC Tourism/Jongsun Park



7.5.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Continue to develop experiences in the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park, led by the Lheidli T'enneh.
- Continue to develop adventure tourism using a balanced approach that respects residents' desire to mitigate overcrowding and environmental damage.

7.5.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

PRINCE GEORGE-CENTRE THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Powder King Mountain Resort Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Powder King infrastructure, experience enhancements and the ability to implement the Master Development Agreement (MDA) with the Province of BC and future updates to the Resort Master Plan. 	<p>RDFFG, NBCTA, Tourism Prince George, Province of BC</p>
<p>Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park Ongoing Facility and Experience Development: The Lheidli T'enneh are leading initiatives related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Facility and Experience Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Continue to support efforts underway to further develop infrastructure and experiences in the park ◦ The goal of improvements is to enable the visitor to learn about this special place from its original people • The Lheidli T'enneh are leading initiatives related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Touchpoints: wayfinding and interpretive signage ◦ Substantial enhancements to the park: new interpretive centre, cultural area, and widened boardwalks 	<p>Lheidli T'enneh, ITBC, BC Parks, NBCTA, Tourism Prince George</p>

<p>Differentiate the Mount Robson and McBride areas from destinations such as Jasper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NBCTA to work with Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) to address recommendations for Mount Robson/Valemount at the RDMO level. • Mount Robson and the McBride area offer outstanding settings for a range of popular adventure activities. Infrastructure to support activities – such as mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding — is continually being expanded and/or improved • Use a balanced approach to further develop infrastructure for mountain biking, hiking, winter activities, and other outdoor adventure experiences associated with Mount Robson Provincial Park and the McBride Area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ These areas currently offer and have potential to grow mountain biking and other year-round outdoor adventure experiences. ◦ Local participants indicated that, while they support sharing these activities and infrastructure with visitors, they would like to be cautious not to over-promote and over-develop the area. ◦ Planning and investment need to ensure that proper visitor management systems are being implemented jointly with experience development (proper parking, reservation systems, washrooms, signage, fences, etc.). • Develop a corridor strategy to mitigate the impact of Jasper wildfire on the Robson Valley area and Highway 16. 	<p>BC Parks, Village of McBride, Robson Valley Mountain Bike Association, TOTA, other relevant recreation clubs</p>
<p>Mountain Bike Trail Network development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Prince George Cycling Club, Association of Caledonia TrailBuilders, and Caledonia Nordic Ski Clubs investment in infrastructure, experience enhancements, and accessibility on their mountain bike specific trail networks. • Work with the city and other partners to develop a trail network access management strategy to provide consistent access for visitors and residents and to increase competitive advantage for events. 	<p>RDFFG, NBCTA, Tourism Prince George, RecSites and Trails, PG Cycling Club, Association of Caledonia TrailBuilders, Caledonia Nordic Ski Club</p>

PRINCE GEORGE-CENTRE THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p><u>Caledonia Nordic Ski Club</u> (CNSC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the facility to develop year-round experiences and packages that include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and mountain biking. • Improve year round transit access from Prince George with the ability to transport outdoor recreation equipment. • Continue to support CNSC's Sport Tourism initiatives. 	<p>Caledonia Nordic Ski Club, Tourism Prince George, City of Prince George, RDFFG, BC Transit</p>
<p>Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to develop new and enhance existing signage. The GNCR Signage Master Plan provides guidance for the development of signage for Highway 16 and the areas around Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park. 	<p>Lheidli T'enneh, ITBC, BC Parks, NBCTA, Tourism Prince George, TT</p>
<p>Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance interpretive signage about the Ancient Forest and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation within the City of Prince George and community of McBride to build awareness about the attraction to generate interest and visitation. 	<p>City of Prince George, Village of McBride, Tourism Prince George, McBride Tourism Committee, Lheidli T'enneh, BC Parks, NBCTA</p>
<p>Mount Robson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed enhancements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A south side pull-out ◦ Signage at the access to river paths/trails <p>In addition to the above enhancements, there are opportunities to better promote travel to the North using signage at Mt. Robson, where some touring visitors need to decide which route to take for the next leg of their journey. There is a four-sided kiosk available for interpretive signage at Mt. Robson.</p>	<p>BC Parks, TT, TOTA</p>

7.6 THEMATIC REGION: SKEENA-BULKLEY-NECHAKO

Sub Regions: Skeena Valley, Bulkley Valley, Vanderhoof - Fort St. James, Lakes District

Associated Corridor: Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway)

Main Airport: Smithers Regional Airport, Northwest Terrace Regional Airport

Iconic Features: Lakes District, St. James National Historic Site, Hudson Bay Mountain, K'san Historical Village and Museum

Main Theme: The area is defined by its numerous connecting rivers and lakes: they are historic travel routes, incredible food sources for thousands of years, and boast friendly small communities to discover along their shores.

Experience and Story Themes:

- *Abundance of connecting rivers and lakes*
- *The Skeena River – heart of the region serving as a First Nations travel route historically and an incredible source of food*
- *Wealth of outdoor adventure activities – renowned steelhead fishing, fishing lodges, downhill and heliskiing, hiking, mountain biking and more*

TOP CENTER: TERRACE | Northern BC Tourism/Andrew Strain **RIGHT:** KSAN | @calsnape **BOTTOM LEFT:** HAZELTON | Northern BC Tourism/Shayd Johnson



7.6.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Develop the capacity to support interested Indigenous communities to further develop their visitor experiences and businesses in an economically viable manner.
- Collaborate to offer visitor experiences that capitalize on the depth of attractions and experiences available in this region.
- Expand the selection of visitor accommodation in key areas, focusing on glamping, yurts, small cabins, sky-viewing pods, and/or, where appropriate, teepees and pit houses.

7.6.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

SKEENA-BULKLEY-NECHAKO THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Indigenous-focused business capacity building to support sustainable business and experience development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is good potential to further develop and elevate tourism experiences centered around attributes such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum◦ 'Ksan Performing Arts◦ Gitsegukla Totem Poles◦ Kispiox Totem Poles◦ Seven Sisters Mountains◦ Gitanyow Reconciliation Trail Project◦ Traditional fishing practices and food preparation◦ Wildlife viewing.• Indigenous communities in this area have expressed interest in learning how to better start-up and manage small businesses focusing on tourism experiences.	<p>ITBC, First Nation Governments, NBCTA, DBC, Community Futures, NDIT</p>

<p>'Ksan Historical Village and Museum Master Plan: This iconic feature is included in tour operator bus itineraries, and is also popular with self-guided touring visitors. Given existing awareness about this attraction and its potential to provide expanded, authentic Indigenous experiences, the proposal is to develop a master plan that addresses the following opportunities and gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the existing village, to develop an entire experiential and functional village and historical site;[31] [32] • Reopen the Carving School and provide additional workshop areas for other artists, such as jewelers; • Offer Indigenous-focused food and showcase traditional food preparation; • Expand the retail shop which showcases and sell artwork from local Indigenous artists; • In addition to the campsite that exists, investigate opportunities to develop other forms of accommodation such as glamping, and cabins; • Develop a sustainable funding model to support capital improvements and ongoing operations; and, • Develop a program for staff capacity-building, to help attract, develop and retain labour. • Develop an itinerary framework that considers 'Ksan as the anchor experience and includes other holistic Indigenous experiences that include Kispiox, other communities and locations by the river. <p>Note that this can only occur if it is initiated and led by the First Nation.</p>	<p>Gitanmaax Band, ITBC, Community Futures, NBCTA</p>
<p>Hagwilget Bridge area improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop and promote the pathway from 'Ksan to the bridge, which features views of the canyon and surrounding with due regard to First Nations' protocols and public safety. 	<p>Gitanmaax Band, Village of New Hazelton, District of Hazelton, Hagwilget First Nation, ITBC</p>
<p>Gitanyow Reconciliation Trail Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Gitanyow Reconciliation Trail Project which is a vision for a year-round hiking, riding and sledding route that follows and restores the historical grease trail – a 180 km trail and cabin system between Kitwancool and Stewart. The idea is to have community-built cabins along the trail, with cache pits, smokehouses, garden spaces, outdoor kitchen areas and signage. 	<p>Gitanyow Band, ITBC, NBCTA</p>

<p>Lakes District Accommodation Diversification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a market study to establish if there could be demand for alternative forms of accommodation such as glamping, yurts, cabins in key locations. If the market study is positive, conduct a feasibility study and promote the opportunity to suitable investors. 	<p>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, First Nation governments, local governments, Community Futures</p>
<p>Fort St. James National Historic Site Accommodation Diversification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a market study to establish if there could be demand for alternative forms of accommodation such as glamping, yurts, cabins. If the market study is positive, conduct a feasibility study and promote the opportunity to suitable investors. 	<p>Parks Canada, District of Fort St. James, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation, Community Futures</p>
<p>Fort St. James National Historic Site Indigenous History: Collaborate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate Indigenous history into the story of the Fort St. James National Historic Site • Offer Indigenous-led experiences at the Historic Site and in the surrounding area. 	<p>Parks Canada, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation, ITBC</p>
<p>Hudson Bay Mountain Coordinated Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with regional businesses, towns and attractions to develop linking experiences[33] [34] , featuring the following types of assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hotels in Terrace and Smithers ○ Ale Trail and brewpubs and mountain biking – “Bikes and Brews” ○ Connecting trails to link nearby towns and accommodation for hikers ○ Indigenous-led experiences, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum ■ Widzin Kwah Diyik Be Yikh (Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum) ■ Gisegukla Totem Poles ■ Kispiox Totem Poles. 	<p>Tourism Smithers, Tourism Terrace, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Kispiox Band, Cas Yex (Gizzly House) - Wet'suwet'en, Gitanmaax Band, Local Breweries, Smithers Mountain Bike Association</p>

<p>Integrity of the Nechako Watershed:</p> <p>The Nechako Watershed offers outstanding lakes and natural environments that support current and future visitor experiences. It is very important to ensure that this watershed is well managed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the work of the Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR) to protect and improve the health of the Nechako Watershed for future generations. • Support the actionable recommendations of the Lakes Monitoring Working Group in implementation of the Large Lakes Monitoring Strategy, which aims to advance the health and resilience of lake ecosystems in the Nechako, Stuart, and Takla Watersheds by collecting critical data on lakes through water quality monitoring. • Participate in opportunities for collaboration and input, such as the NWR's Annual Meeting and Spring Technical Meeting, and report findings to Destination Development Advisory Committees and NBCTA stakeholders. • Look for opportunities to partner with the Roundtable to cross-promote and support sustainability and environmental projects that may be of interest to visitors of the region. 	<p>Fraser Basin Council, Nechako Watershed Roundtable, Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, Northern BC Tourism</p>
---	---

SKEENA-BULKLEY-NECHAKO THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Proposed 'Ksan area touchpoint improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved signage along the route to Old Hazelton • New signage for 'Ksan Campground. 	<p>ITBC, Gitxsan Nation, TT, NBCTA</p>
<p>Hagwilget Bridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interpretive signage with information about the natural features and the history of the bridge. 	<p>Hagwilget First Nation, Village of New Hazelton, District of Hazelton, ITBC, NBCTA</p>

Totem Drive, Kispiox Village:

- Develop signage and digital touchpoints in collaboration with Kispiox Band
- Work with the Kispiox Band to develop relevant content for visitor centre and related materials
- Create a double-sided map with all of the Indigenous communities, maps and community guides.

Kispiox Band. ITBC,
NBCTA, DBC Visitor
Centre Network



HAZELTON
Grant Harder

7.7 THEMATIC REGION: RAINFOREST COAST

Sub Regions: Prince Rupert-Kitimat, Nass Valley

Associated Corridor: Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway)

Main Airport: Prince Rupert, Northwest Terrace Regional Airport

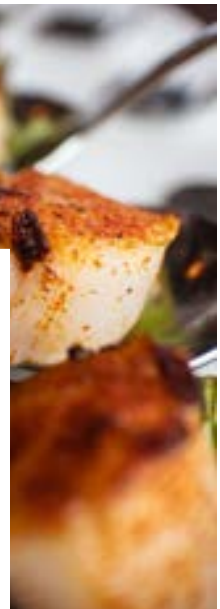
Iconic Features: North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site, Skeena River Drive, Great Bear Rainforest, Khutzymateen Bear Sanctuary, and Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a Park (Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park)

Main Theme: Life on the rainforest coast is defined by an enduring connection and reliance on the ocean.

Experiences and Story Themes:

- *The oceans and rivers have provided sustenance fishing, transportation and trade routes for thousands of years.*
- *Prince Rupert is a cosmopolitan community: vibrant arts, exceptional seafood, cultural and ethnic diversity*
- *Historic Tsimshian culture and village sites and associated stories.*
- *Nisga'a Nation welcomes visitors and offers unique cultural and recreational opportunities.*
- *Exceptional coastal adventures and bear viewing.*
- *The Khutzymateen Valley – Canada's only grizzly bear sanctuary and the home of one of BC's most important coastal populations of grizzly bears*

TOP CENTER: NISGA'A HOT SPRINGS | Grant Harder **RIGHT:** PRINCE RUPERT | **BOTTOM LEFT:** TERRACE | Northern Bc Tourism/Marty Clemens **BOTTOM CENTER:** PORT EDWARD | Andrew Strain



7.7.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Continue to build on the range of experiences available in this region, focusing on:
 - Existing and emerging Indigenous experiences
 - Renowned coastal wildlife viewing (coastal areas and The Great Bear Rainforest)
 - Coastal heritage, including the North Pacific Cannery
 - Adventure tourism
 - Experiences specifically targeted at the cruise tourism market.
- Elevate the Skeena River Drive corridor as a key touring draw for Northern BC through experience development and enhanced touchpoints.
- Profile the experience development success of the Nisga'a Nation to encourage Indigenous experience development in this region and throughout the North.

7.7.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

RAINFOREST COAST THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Kasiks Wilderness Resort Ongoing Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and support the improvements that the Kitsumkalum Band is making to this resort, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tours ◦ Canoe adventures ◦ Cultural experiences ◦ Indigenous food and beverage offerings. <p>Note that, if the Kitsumkalum are receptive to this idea, their experience regarding purchasing, improving and operating this resort could be used as a model for other Indigenous communities that are interested in developing tourism businesses and experiences.</p>	<p>ITBC, Kitsumkalum Band, NBCTA, Tourism Prince Rupert, Tourism Terrace</p>
<p>Elevation of Skeena River Relay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop and promote this relay to help attract more out-of-town participants and showcase the scenic beauty of the Skeena River route. 	<p>Tourism Prince Rupert, Tourism Terrace, Rupert Runners (club), Skeena Valley Runners (club)</p>

<p>Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site Experience Enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support improvements to experiences offered at Kitselas Canyon, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Trail expansion ◦ New tours (guided, self-guided and private tours) ◦ Hosting of events. 	<p>Gitksanu Stewardship Society, Kitselas First Nation, Tourism Terrace, ITBC, NBCTA</p>
<p>Great Bear Rainforest and Khutzeymateen Bear Sanctuary Tours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on engagement outcomes there is capacity to offer additional whale watching and grizzly bear viewing boat tours. <p>Note that this is highly-regulated, with a need for Park Use Permits, licensing and insurance.</p>	<p>Private Sector Operators, Provincial agencies</p>
<p>North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site Experience Enhancement: Further improve the North Pacific Cannery experience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and offering more interactive experiences • Expanding the “artist in residence” program so that it is offered more regularly • Organizing performing arts events • Staging special events that include coastal cuisine and entertainment/music • Expanding the tours to include more areas of the cannery • Encouraging docents from different ethnic backgrounds to volunteer (Japanese, Chinese, Indigenous) • Offering a shuttle service for visitors from Prince Rupert. 	<p>North Pacific Cannery, Tourism Prince Rupert</p>
<p>Haisla Nation Experience Development: Continue to encourage and support the Haisla Nation in their efforts to develop the following types of experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain biking trails • Guided kayaking experiences in the Douglas Channel • Enhancing camping facilities at MK Bay • Providing appropriate public- facing space for Indigenous craft workers and artisans • A new museum featuring Haisla history, arts and culture. 	<p>Haisla Economic Development Corporation, Kitimat Tourism, ITBC, NBCTA</p>

<p>Nisga'a Nation Experience Development: Continue to encourage and support the Nisga'a Nation in their efforts to develop the following types of experiences and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partnerships, such as: an Indigenous carver on site and overnight stays at Gingolx • Growth in adventure tourism experiences: river tours, mountain biking (at Gitwinksihlkw) • Mountain bike rentals • New Interpretive Centre in New Aiyansh. • New Visitor Support Services 	<p>Nisga'a Nation, ITBC, NBCTA</p>
<p>Nisga'a Nation Success Stories: Profile the successes of the Nisga'a Nation and how tourism is helping their culture thrive, as this is of interest to many visitors. Collaboration, leadership and good planning have enabled them to develop and offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic experiences • Storytelling • Nisga'a Museum, including the telling of their treaty • Hotsprings • Visitor Centre • Lava volcano tours • Welcome House Café and Gift Shop • Nisga'a Nation's new year celebrations (Hobiye) • Oolichan camps and fishing. 	<p>Nisga'a Nation, ITBC, NBCTA</p>
<p>Experience development in this area is heavily reliant on BC Ferry, air and cruise transportation. Reductions in transportation services can have a strong impact on the area's tourism experiences and industry. In addition, the introduction of new services – such as a shuttle service to key attractions – may enhance experiences for visitors. This initiative focuses on developing a succinct transportation services strategy to enable tourism partners to provide input to transportation service providers. This strategy should not be onerous to prepare and should be updated annually.</p>	<p>Visit PR, City of PR, TT, BC Ferries, Regional District, Airport Authority, PR Port Authority</p>

RAINFOREST COAST THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Skeena River Drive Enhancement: This drive offers outstanding scenery, but needs more coordinated and strategically positioned touchpoints. Suggested improvements are as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the Skeena River Drive after the Nass Auto Tour with more interpretive signage, print materials, stops and Indigenous experiences • Provide signage on the highway marking iconic stops for waterfalls, lookout points, climbing areas and photogenic stops • Provide more interpretive signage at the designated pull outs • Provide trailhead signage with responsible use messaging • Provide QR codes to expand stories and history. 	<p>TT, Kasiks Wilderness Resort, North Coast Regional District, ITBC, NBCTA, Tourism Prince Rupert, Tourism Terrace</p>
<p>Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Touchpoint Improvements: The following touchpoints and developments would improve the overall experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive kiosks at key locations • A welcome area located at the start of the Lava Bed with a map board and washrooms • Completion of the planned Interpretive Centre. <p>Nass River Drive Enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional signage, pullouts and washrooms on Highway 113 between Gitwinksihlkw and Gingolx <p>Fishery Bay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a pullout specifically at Fishery Bay with washroom and welcome building to provide interpretive service • Assist in development of access trails and boardwalk between interpretive area, parking lots and Oolichan camps 	<p>Nisga'a Nation, BC Parks</p>

7.8 NORTHWEST BC THEMATIC REGION

Sub Regions: Stewart-Meziadin, Stewart-Cassiar, Atlin

Associated Corridor: Highway 37 (Stewart-Cassiar Highway)

Main Airport: Smithers Regional Airport and Whitehorse, Yukon (to access Atlin) and Northwest Terrace Regional Airport (note, both these airports lie outside this region's boundaries)

Iconic Features: Stewart-Hyder Glaciers, Atlin Tatshenshini, Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park, Mount Edziza Park

Main Theme: Northwest BC is sparsely populated and has incredible natural attributes: towering Coast Mountains, ancient glaciers, raw wilderness, diverse wildlife, protected landscapes and mineral riches.

Main Experiences and Story Themes:

- *Unique and raw landscapes featuring ancient glaciers, rich minerals and salmon-filled rivers.*
- *This is home to abundant wildlife and sparse human populations.*
- *This region offers touring, fishing, bear viewing, river rafting, heli-skiing, whitewater rafting and other backcountry experiences for the truly adventurous visitor.*

TOP CENTER ATLIN PROVINCIAL PARK | JF Bergeron **BOTTOM LEFT:** NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA | Matthew Massa
BOTTOM RIGHT: TERRACE | Andrew Strain



7.8.1 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Enhance the main touring routes – Stewart-Meziadin and Stewart Cassiar – by coordinating and profiling the unique, niche activities and attractions this region offers in concert with key partners and organizations and, for the Stewart-Cassiar Highway, the Talthan Central Government.
- Focus on combining several experiences to attract visitors and keep them in these remote destinations longer.

7.8.2 EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

NORTHWEST BC THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Stewart Area Experience Improvements: Combine several experiences to draw visitors and to keep them in the area for longer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heli hiking tours • Develop mountain bike trails • Bear viewing tours • Tours to view glaciers • Winter skidoo tours. 	<p>Stewart Tourism, NBCTA, Hyder, AK</p>
<p>Atlin Area Collaborative Tourism Planning: Support the collaborative efforts of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Atlin residents to develop tourism experiences. This focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Atlin community to recognize the Wóoshtin wudidaa Atlin Taku Land Use Plan negotiated under a shared decision-making framework respecting land use and wildlife management between the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the B.C. government. • Supporting the revitalization of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation to Bear Viewing Tourism Venture and a business plan for Wilderness Eco Tourism plan for 183 Acres of Warm Springs property. • Support the development of storytelling about other aspects of the area's Indigenous and gold rush history, Goat Island and Tarhen boat • Possible development of a Community Tourism Plan incorporating the Taku River Tlingit First Nation traditional law.. 	<p>Atlin Community Improvement District residents, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, ITBC, NBCTA</p>

Stewart-Cassiar Touring Route Experience Enhancements: This is an established touring route that has appealed primarily to the more adventurous traveler, given its remoteness and the limited services and amenities available along the route. As part of the Great Northern Circle Route, there are opportunities to enhance this touring route by elevating and coordinating unique, niche experiences and attractions, such as:

- River based activities, rafting and canoe tours
- Indigenous cultural tours (showing guests cultural practices and guided hiking)
- Mount Edziza Provincial Park (multi-day hikes for the experienced adventurer)
- Whitewater kayaking (independent adventure traveller)
- Jade City and related stories (overlap Tahltan territories)
- Boya Lake Provincial Park (fishing, lake recreation, Northern lights viewing)
- Spatsizi Plateau Provincial Park (multi-day hikes for the experienced adventurer)
- Gold rush history
- Heli skiing

Any of the above-noted planning needs to be conducted in concert with the Tahltan Central Government for policy and communication and the Tahltan and Iskut Bands for feedback and engagement. The Tahltan Central Government is working closely with Tourism Yukon, Northwest Territories Tourism and Destination Canada on the development of a Northern Indigenous Lodge Network ([Northern Indigenous Lodge Network](#)).

ITBC, Tahltan Central Government, NBCTA, BC Parks, attractions and tour operators along the route

NORTHWEST BC THEMATIC REGION PRIORITIES FOR TOUCHPOINT INVESTMENT	SUPPORT NETWORK
<p>Stewart-Meziadin Drive: Signage for this route needs to be improved, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New touchpoints (directional and interpretive) at Meziadin Junction and Kitwanga Junction • Improved signage and signage maintenance along Highway 37A • Signage in Hyder, Alaska, to direct visitors to Salmon Glacier • Interpretive signage at the trailhead for Salmon Glacier. 	<p>TT, Stewart Tourism, NBCTA, First Nations</p>
<p>Stewart-Cassiar Touring Route:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement signage recommendations included in the GNCR Signage Master Plan. • The Dease Lake by Arctic Divide (conceptual map of territory, place names and welcome to territory) • Information and welcome signage near Iskut service station and Telegraph • TT upgrades to Bob Quinn pullout and key rest stops (wifi, public washrooms and opportunities for signage) • Stikine Bridge is another key spot that is used by visitors and residents 	<p>TT, NBCTA, Tahltan Central Government, BC Parks, attractions and tour operators along the route</p>
<p>Northwest Region overall: Address several touchpoint deficiencies related to region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Wilderness Park - interpretive signage • “Welcome to BC” signs at the Yukon-BC border need upgrading – note that visitors use these signs as photo opportunities, posted on social media. 	<p>TT, NBCTA, First Nations, BC Parks, NBCTA</p>

8. NORTHERN BC: PRIORITY PROJECTS

Thematic Region priority projects are highlighted below, followed by priority destination-wide projects on the next page.

8.1 THEMATIC REGIONS : PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following projects were selected from the preceding section and relate to each Thematic Region. Implementing these priority projects can serve to motivate the implementation of other experience development projects.

THEMATIC REGION PRIORITY PROJECTS

Northern Rockies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alaska Highway Experience Enhancement Assessments and Program Delivery• Alaska Highway Regional Interpretive and Adventure Centre Feasibility Study
Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark Experience and Accommodation Development• Indigenous Experiences• Short Circle (Driving) Tours Enhancement/Development
Prince George-Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park Ongoing Facility and Experience Development.• Differentiation of the Mount Robson and McBride areas from destinations such as Jasper (using a balanced approach to further developing mountain biking experiences, hiking, and other outdoor adventure).
Skeena-Bulkley-Nechako	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous-focused business capacity building to support sustainable business and experience development.• 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum Master Plan.• Hudson Bay Mountain Coordinated Experiences (with area services and attractions).
Rainforest Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skeena River Drive Enhancement.• Haisla Nation Experience Development.• Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site Experience Enhancement.• Kasiks Wilderness Resort Ongoing Improvements.• Nisga'a Nation Experience Development.
Northwest BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stewart-Cassiar Touring Route Experience Enhancements (featuring unique, niche experiences for the adventurous traveler).• Stewart Area Experience Improvements.

8.2 DESTINATION-WIDE PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following projects are relevant to experience development in the North as a whole. They are considered priorities, as they would help amplify *The Great Wilderness* brand and would contribute to destination-wide experience development.

DESTINATION-WIDE PRIORITY PROJECTS

Increase Market- Ready and Export-Ready Experiences

- Gain an accurate understanding of the number and type of market- and export-ready experiences in the North through the preparation and annual updating of an inventory.
- Identify where there are key opportunities and associated programs to:
 - Help existing experiences evolve to better meet market demand
 - Create more guided experiences
 - Connect existing products to offer more extensive and enriching experiences
 - Create more market- and export-ready experiences.

Diversify Accommodation

- Prepare a regional market demand study to support potential private and/or public sector investment in alternative accommodation that is not capital intensive, such as glamping units, yurts, sky-watching pods and/or small cabins. This type of accommodation is compatible with many experiences offered in the North.

Facilitate Touring

- Continue to implement touchpoint and signage priorities that are aligned with the GNCR Signage Master Plan.
 - Identify itineraries and interpretive signage for communities and side routes.
 - Work collaboratively with interested communities, tourism attractions, and businesses along routes to profile stories and tourism offerings that will enrich the overall experience for travellers.
 - Develop an initiative - “The End of the Road is Just the Beginning” - to address the opportunities around “end of route” communities.
-

Expand Experiences, Services and Amenities in BC Parks

- Work with BC Parks to explore opportunities to:
 - Extend the operating seasons for specific provincial parks by extending seasons for dry camping.
 - Form a committee/group to work with BC Parks regarding opportunities to extend the season through dry camping. This will entail developing and recommending a policy to the government for changes to the fee structure.
 - Add new amenities and services, such as: food and beverage, retail, guided experiences, accessible trails, story trails, etc.

Develop Trail Circuits

- Develop a regional/subregional strategy that links and profiles many of the high-quality destination trails and experiences that enable visitors to access and explore *The Great Wilderness*.
- Utilize planning to capitalize on the integration of multiple sports, cultural heritage, and servicing infrastructure.

Support Authentic, Indigenous-led Experience Development

- Develop a strategy that links and profiles existing and emerging Indigenous experiences as clusters and routes.
- This should reflect that there are several existing and emerging Indigenous experiences that have strong potential to appeal to visitor markets on their own. Combining these experiences as routes, circuits and clusters would present even greater opportunities to offer more enriching experiences and keep visitors in the area longer.
- With permission from and in collaboration with First Nations, integrate Indigenous culture, stories, history, languages and values with selected tourism experiences and attractions to more accurately reflect history and Indigenous cultures.
- Address the need to provide Indigenous-focused business capacity building to support sustainable business and experience development.

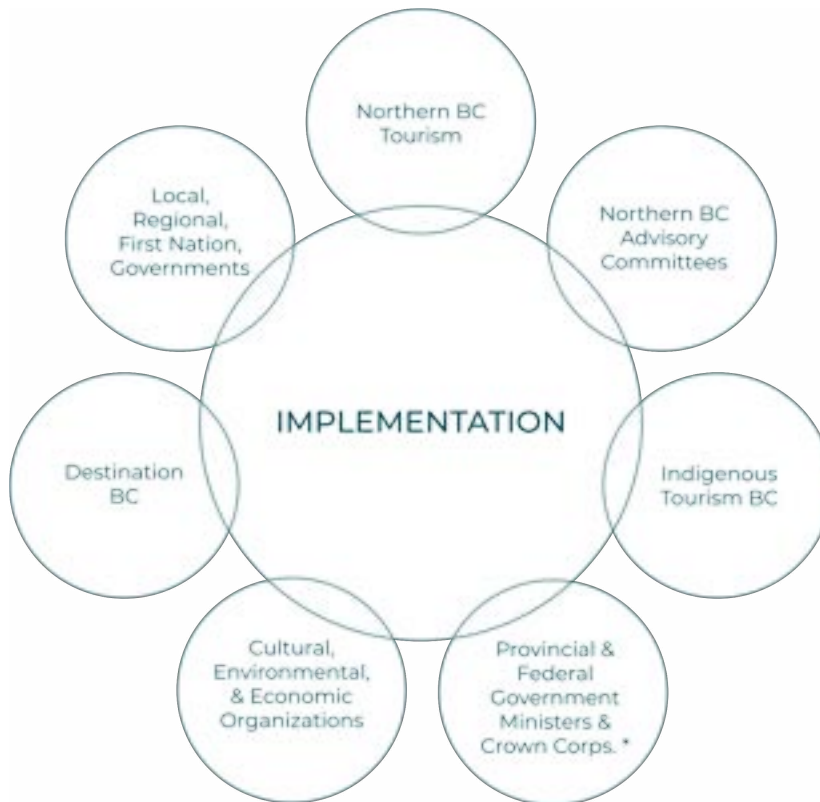
Support Agritourism

- Support the development of agritourism strategies and initiatives that incorporate farm tours, the BC Farmer's Market Trail, farm-to-table experiences, farm stays, Indigenous-led farming and food security experiences, fall fairs.
 - Explore cannabis and its role in agri-tourism as an agricultural product within the guidelines of legislation.
-

9. GEARING UP FOR DELIVERY

9.1 COLLABORATION

This is a comprehensive Strategy that covers a large and diverse geographic area. Given that the extent of both financial and human resources to implement projects is not known, there is a need to establish priorities and to phase implementation over time. Collaboration between several organizations, in addition to identifying priorities annually, are critical to the success of implementation. There are many organizations and partners that will be instrumental to the implementation of the Regional Strategy. While the support networks associated with each of the initiatives and priorities have been identified throughout the Strategy, more detailed action plans will be prepared at a later date and will include specific roles and responsibilities. The main organizations that may lead or be involved in the implementation of specific initiatives are shown below.



**Tourism, Arts and Culture, Environment and Parks, Transportation and Transit, Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, Forests, Infrastructure, Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, BC Hydro, Parks Canada*

NBCTA, ITBC and DBC will guide implementation of the Strategy, together with Advisory Committees and tourism partners. They will help:

- Align with strategic priorities for Iconics;
- Ensure that destination and experience development supports *The Great Wilderness* brand promise;
- Connect with other potential project partners and programs;
- Access and make available information on best practices or case studies;
- Help develop action plans and identify funding opportunities; and,
- Identify programs and resources tourism organizations and businesses can access.

9.2 INVESTMENT

The Destination Development program in BC has seen success supporting new public investments; however, there is a tremendous opportunity in BC to uncover the potential of tourism as a priority sector for attracting private investment. Through partnerships, NBCTA, ITBC, and DBC will seek ways to support communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) within *The Great Wilderness* to increase awareness about tourism investment readiness factors, understand the steps needed to increase the attractiveness of communities to tourism investors and promote tourism investment opportunities to regional, provincial, national and international investors. It will be important to continue to work with community groups to identify appropriate sources of funding based on projects, and explore opportunities to access angel investors and non-collateral driven business start-up funds.

9.3 MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The following table provides high-level metrics for the Regional Strategy overall. When detailed action plans for priority projects are prepared, more precise metrics for monitoring and measuring results specific to those projects can be identified. A commitment to reporting out on results to key audiences is very important to the overall success of the Strategy. Reporting commitments will be built into annual action plans.

CATEGORY	METRIC	FREQUENCY OF MEASUREMENT
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans for priority projects • Completion of milestones for priority projects • Completion of priority projects • Advisory Committee meetings • Meetings/Collaboration with key organizations/partners • Capacity-building initiatives – general • Capacity-building initiatives - Indigenous • Reporting-out on results 	Annually Annually Annually Quarterly Quarterly Annually Annually Annually
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in the number of market-ready experiences • Growth in the number of export-ready experiences • Increase in the number of relevant, quality touchpoints 	Annually Annually Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of coordinated experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Along routes ◦ Amongst and between Indigenous communities ◦ Featuring linking mountain biking experiences ◦ Featuring linking hiking experiences 	Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in new accommodation that supports <i>The Great Wilderness</i> brand 	Biannually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in new travel trade itineraries that support <i>The Great Wilderness</i> brand and responds to market demand • Growth in sales of travel trade experiences 	Annually Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the net promoter score 	Annually

9.4 NEXT STEPS

The next steps following the finalization of the Regional Strategy are as follows:

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS	LEAD
Circulate Regional Strategy to key organizations	DBC, NBCTA, ITBC, TACS
Design implementation approach (including process and criteria for identifying annual priority initiatives)	NBCTA
Design Monitoring and Reporting Plan	NBCTA
Confirm the NE and NW Advisory Committee members and roles	NBCTA & ITBC
Review the Implementation Approach and Monitoring and Reporting Plan with Advisory Committees	NBCTA & ITBC



10. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ACRONYMS

- CDMO Community Destination Management Organization
- CNSC Caledonia Nordic Ski Club
- DBC Destination BC
- EMCR Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
- GNCR Great Northern Circle Route
- IPACs Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas
- ITBC Indigenous Tourism BC
- MDA Master Development Agreement
- MKMA Muskwa-Kechika Management Area
- MOU Memorandum of Understanding
- NDIT Northern Development Initiative Trust
- NENAS NE Native Advancing Society
- NBCTF Northern BC Thematic Framework
- NBCTF Northern BC Thematic Framework (duplicate)
- NRRM Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- NWR Nechako Watershed Roundtable
- RDFFG Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
- RDMO Regional Destination Management Organization
- RSTBC BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC
- TRUGG Tumbler Ridge Global Geopark
- UNDRIP UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Declaration

Regional Tourism Association Acronyms

- TOTA Thompson Okanagan
- NBC /NBCTA Northern British Columbia Tourism

Government of BC Ministry Acronyms

- ECS Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions
- ENV Ministry of Environment and Parks
- FOR Ministry of Forests
- M-KAB
- PWGSC Public Works and Government Services Canada
- TACS Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport
- TT Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- WLRS Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

Public Sector

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
BC Parks
BC Rec Sites and Trails
North Coast Regional District
Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
Peace River Regional District
North Rockies Regional Municipality
City of Dawson Creek
City of Prince Rupert
City of Prince George
District of Fort St. James
District of Tumbler Ridge
District of Hudson's Hope
City of Fort St. John
Prince Rupert Port Authority
Village of Burns Lake
Village of McBride
District of Taylor
District of Houston
District of Vanderhoof
Village of Granisle
District of Mackenzie
Village of Pouce Coupe
Regional District Fraser Fort George
BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
District of New Hazelton
District of Smithers

Tourism Smithers
Village of Telkwa
Village of Port Edward

First Nations/Indigenous

West Moberly First Nation
Haisla First Nation
Lheidli T'enneh First Nation
Gitanyow First Nation
Kitsumkalum First Nation
Iskut First Nation
Nisga'a Village of Laxgaltsap
Nisga'a Village of Gingoix
Gitanmaax First Nation
Lax Kw'alaams Band
Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw
Nisga'a Village of New Aiyansh
Old Masset Village Council
Prince George Aboriginal Business Development Centre
Fort Nelson First Nation
Nisga'a Nation Economic Development
Kyah Development Corporation
Nisga'a Lisims Government
Aboriginal Advisor
Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Northeast Native Advancing Society
Indigenous Tourism BC
Kasiks Wilderness Resort
First Nations Entrepreneur

Tahltan Central Government (Tourism Director)
'Ksan Historical Village and Museum
Nisga'a Museum
Witset RV Park and Campground
Treaty 8 Tribal Association

Not-for-Profit

go2HR
Spinal Cord Injury BC
Community Futures
Visit Valemount
Visit Prine Rupert
Tourism Prince George
Tourism Smithers
Smithers Visitor Centre
Hazelton's Visitor Centre
Chetwynd Visitor Centre
Dawson Creek Visitor Centre
Smithers Chamber of Commerce
Fort Nelson Chamber of Commerce
Houston Chamber of Commerce
Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark
Exploration Place
North Pacific Cannery
Northern Lights Festival
Cold Snap Festival
Stewart Museum
Hudson's Hope Museum
Fort Nelson Museum
Prince Rupert Community Arts Council
Hike Fort St. John

Tumbler Ridge Mountain Biking Association
North Peace Cultural Centre
Muskwa Kechika Management Board
BC Craft Farmers Cooperative
Fraser Basin Council
Community Energy Association

Private Sector

Northern Rockies Lodge
Inn on the Harbour
Highliner Hotel
Prestige Hotel (Hudson's Bay Lodge)
Sandman Hotel
Muskwa Kechika Adventures
Shames Mountain Ski Hill
Peak Wyld
Peak West Coast Launch Ltd.
Tour Guide and Rental Business (Tumbler Ridge)
Jadefit
RG Strategies (Marketing)
Nyce Gifts and Creations
Dalex Auto Service
JSDCo
Glacier Toyota
Grizzly Den RV & Gas Station
Chances Casino (Dawson Creek)
BC Hydro
Powder King Mountain Resort
Gavin Conner, G Concepts
Tiny Life Media



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®

©2025 - Destination BC Corp. All rights reserved.
"Super, Natural British Columbia", "Super, Natural", "Rainforest to Rockies" and "Visitor Centre" and all associated
logos/trade-marks are trade-marks or Official Marks of Destination BC Corp.
Cover photo: Stone Mountain Provincial Park | Andrew Strain

