



## Executive Director's Annual Report April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018

Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism Society is a not-for-profit self-sustaining Destination Marketing Organization. It is industry-funded, research-based and membership-driven, covering an area from Nelson (including Whitewater Ski Resort, Retallack and Baldface) Balfour, Procter, Harrop, Ainsworth Hot Springs, Kaslo, Lardeau and Meadow Creek.

### **Vision**

To be the acting tourism voice of the Nelson Kootenay Lake region creating innovative and strategic marketing plans to attract visitors to its communities.

### **Mission**

Through year-round compelling marketing Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism Society promotes the region's unique cultural qualities (outdoors, sports, dining, shopping, arts, health and wellness, heritage) to potential visitors, ultimately increasing the number of visitations and length of stays.

### **Board of Directors**

1. Eleanor Stacey (Cultural Development Committee - appointed)
2. Gary McCandlish (Balfour & District Business & Historic Association | Areas E and F - appointed)
3. Mike Borch (Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, NAEDP - appointed)
4. Daphne Hunter (Kaslo Chamber | Area D | Village of Kaslo - appointed)
5. Debra Hamilton (Accommodator Representative)
6. Jake Murfitt (Accommodator Representative)
7. John LeBleu (Accommodator Representative)
8. Val Semeniuk (Retail Representative)
9. Peter Moynes (Member at Large)
10. Jay Manton (Summer Representative)
11. Rob Little (Food & Beverage Representative)
12. Rebeckah Hornung (Winter Representative)

### **Organizational Summary**

NKLT is composed of 12 board positions, an executive director (ED) and a variety of contractors. This group has worked together developing and implementing marketing initiatives, community awareness and partnerships.

The Executive Director's (ED) 40-hour work week consists of: strategic planning; managing employees and contractors; developing managing and implementing the marketing plan; destination management; hosting media tours; community development, public relations, bookkeeping and budgeting, and; attending meetings in and out of the region. The ED supports collaboration between other tourism organizations, sitting on the BCDMOA board, Cultural Development Committee, and International Selkirk Loop board, representative at stakeholder-related community meetings, and partnering with businesses throughout the region to improve awareness of what we offer to potential visitors.



The social media, photography, design, website content, and some project specific promotions are implemented by Janneke Guenther. John Bowden was hired to sell advertising in the 2018 Travel Book, write stories from time to time, and coordinate Winter Kickoff. The nkltourism.com website and two other microsites are hosted, developed, and managed by Brad Higham of Collabo.co, located in the Slocan Valley. Mitchell Scott was hired to host the Live Stream event as well as work on the Transit Shelters that fed into the creative direction for 2018-19. Additional contractors are hired at times to keep NKLT evolving in SEO, video, photography and the written word. Working as a team, sharing ideas, and discussing strategies and creative direction has allowed us to meet our goals and make high level decisions on opportunities and challenges.

## Marketing Summary

We created a three-year plan back in 2015, establishing four goals that are broken down throughout this report. We have covered a variety of media reaching our targeted audiences (from Calgary to USA border, Pacific Northwest, Okanagan and Greater Vancouver) through magazine, videos, billboard, online advertising, PPC, and digital (social media) promotions.

Our MRDT (hotel tax) has increased 2.6% this year. This was our smallest increase since 2012. Fires impacted the summer and fall travelers. We are now collecting over \$347,000 and using this money to market the region in innovative and successful ways.

The following is a summary of our initiatives that promoted the NKL region as a four-season destination.

### Advertising/Social Media

- **Billboards:** Fernie, Osoyoos, Revelstoke, Golden, Kelowna
- **Publications:** Kaslo Guide, Pennywise, Nelson Star, Discover Nelson Adventure Guide, Out There Monthly, Nelson Star Hotel Wrap, KMC, CMC, KRT Travel Guide, Kootenay Ferry TV Screen, CWSAA, BC Musician Mag, Backcountry Skiing Canada, Go Camping, Arts BC, ISL brochure
- **Radio:** EZ Rock, Kootenay Coop Radio
- **Online Ads:** Castanet, Out There Monthly, Facebook, Kootenay Mountain Culture Group, Back Country Skiing Canada, BC Musician, Kootenay Biz, ArtsBC, Bestbikingroads.com, GoCamping, PPC google adwords, remarketing display ads
- **Facebook:** 13,210 from 11,587 - 14% up
- **Twitter:** 2225 from 1949 followers - 14% up
- **Instagram:** 7906 from 5097- 55% up
- **Travel Book** - 35,000 printed (up 15,000 from previous year) plus 10,000 flat maps, printed locally and in partnership with the Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce
- **Newsletter:** email monthly to 3400 subscribers receiving an average of 20% open rate
- **Tradeshows:** Calgary, Vancouver and Spokane Outdoor Shows, Golf Shows - Calgary, Spokane
- **Familiarization Tour (FAM)** - 11 FAM throughout the year. Articles are typically published the following year.



## Website Overview

- There is a lot of analytics to view. Below is a snapshot of our three websites. Link building is still a challenge. Referrals from members could all benefit by affiliating and linking to the NKLT website that holds rich content for visitors.
- WinterKickoff.com
  - 3900 visits from October 1 - December 31, 2017
  - Mobile 45%, Desktop 40%, Tablet 15%
  - Direct 39%, Social 30%, Referral 24%
  - Nelson, Kelowna, Vancouver, Penticton
- Findingawesome.ca
  - 7366 visits from April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018
  - Display 38%, Direct 28%, Referral 18%, Social 10%
  - Kelowna, Nelson, Vancouver, Calgary
- Nelsonkootenaylake.com
  - Visits 155,000, up 30% to previous year
  - Pageviews 401,000, up 12.5%
  - Bounce rate up 14.5% - this needs to be addressed through Behaviour analysis
  - Nelson, Vancouver, Calgary, Kelowna
  - Organic, Paid, Direct, Social, Referral
  - Top pages: Calendar, Nelson, Hiking, Ainsworth, Stay, Annual Events
  - Pay-Per View Campaign - 864,423 impressions and 42,032 clicks

## Photography and Video

- Videos: 20 total this year - huge and all produced by locals
  - a) Regional child-focused Finding Awesome series - 9 plus the final video collage
  - b) Food & Culture series of 9 videos plus final video collage
- New images are ongoing by internal and external photographers
- Crowdriff aggregated over 10,000 photos and 1500 videos using #findingawesome

## Destination Management and Communications

- BCDMOA conversations around MRDT and STR policy and legislation, and board meetings
- DBC lead Destination Development for West Kootenay region
- TIABC conference and KRT AGM/Conference
- Logging in the Argenta area, Helicopter tours in Kaslo, Fisheries
- Closed Facebook Group for members to share what's happening in tourism
- Newsletter /Emails to members and visitors
- Presentation to Village of Kaslo and City of Nelson and other organizations
- CDC monthly meetings
- ISL quarterly meetings



## Strategic Plan 2015-2018

### 1. Creative Direction

- This was established in 2016 and carried through until 2018 creating continuity in all our messaging.

### 2. Research

- Tourists survey via facebook and face-to-face
- EQ Survey
- Travel Book surveys face-to-face

### 3. Shoulder Season

- Videos - findingawesome series
- Findingawesome.ca contests through Instagram #findingawesome
- Crowdriff - Live Stream event and contests
- Social content mini videos for live stream
- WinterKickoff.com
- Billboards x 5 in Keremeos, Revelstoke, Fernie, Golden, Kelowna
- Digital ads - Castanet provides us our greatest return

### 4. Collaboration - NKLT as an advocate for tourism-related topics, will ensure our tourism partners are heard and we will support fair and responsible initiatives to maintain and improve the tourism industry.

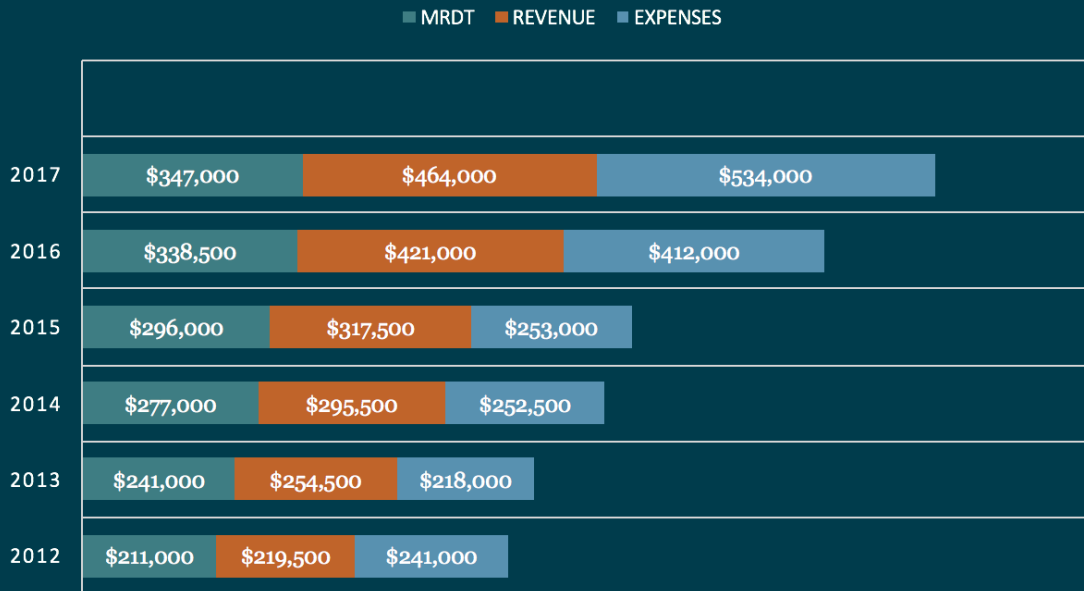
- Members - 219: Balfour 13, Kaslo 33, Nelson 71, 44 MRDT accommodators, and 58 STRs
- Kootenay Golf Trail
- Kootenay Dirt and KootenayXC with 8 other DMO communities
- International Selkirk Loop
- Nelson Visitor Centre kiosk/APP website available for all communities
- Amazing Race
- Familiarization Tours (FAMs) with Destination BC (DBC) and KRT
- News page: weather, fires, flooding, roads and access information
- NKLT Closed Facebook Group for all members
- DBC - using TripAdvisor as tool for listings on hellobc.com. NKLT will also be pulling from TripAdvisor in the future

## Finances

Our revenue has increased each of the past six years through MRDT, grants and memberships. To reach our goals and ensure we are spending the funds we expanded our expenses, cashing in one of our two GICs. These funds were used to advertise on billboards, create videos, and will also be put into transit shelters in the following year. Since 2012 we have increased the MRDT by 65%, overall Revenue by 111%, and as a result Expenditures by 121%. See chart below that shows MRDT, Revenue and Expense growth 2012 to 2017.



## ANNUAL MRDT, REVENUE & EXPENSES 2012-2017



### Feedback

We value your participation and opinions. For NKLT to meet the needs of the communities and its stakeholders, please connect with us: [info@nelsonkootenaylake.com](mailto:info@nelsonkootenaylake.com) | 250.352.7879

Dianna Ducs, Executive Director  
*Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism Society*

This Annual Report is available on the Nelson Kootenay Lake website.  
[www.nelsonkootenaylake.com/info/about/board-reports](http://www.nelsonkootenaylake.com/info/about/board-reports)