



Executive Director's Annual Report April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019

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. Karen Bennet (Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, NAEDP - appointed)
4. Daphne Hunter (Kaslo Chamber | Area D | Village of Kaslo - appointed)
5. Leandra Martin (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) 32-hour work week consists of: strategic planning; managing employees and contractors; researching innovative ideas and tourism data; researching, developing, managing and implementing the marketing plan; destination management; 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, NAEDP Advisory 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, media tours, website content, and some project specific promotions are implemented by Janneke Guenther. John Bowden writes awesome stories throughout the year. Karen Kornelson sold Travel Book ads and coordinated Winter Kickoff. The nkltourism.com website and microsites findingawesome and winterkickoff are hosted, developed, and managed by Brad Higham of Collabo.co. Alex Metcalfe evaluated our online presence leading us into a refresh of our website and implementation of the design for the new Kiosks. Additional contractors were 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 covered a variety of media reaching our traveler types: adventure traveler, free spirit, rejuvenator, and cultural explorer. Our target audiences are from Calgary to USA border, Pacific Northwest, Okanagan and Greater Vancouver. We reached them through print, videos, billboard, transit shelters, Google Adwords, digital ads and social media, focusing on Finding Awesome.

Our MRDT (hotel tax) has increased 11% this past year. It was a strong year even though the August smoke and nearby fires impacted travelers the past two years. We are now collecting over \$386,000 through the 2% and using this money to market the region in innovative and successful ways.

Traveller booking windows are now shorter than ever, going where the weather is good at the last minute. As a marketing entity we need to continue to inform travellers of our region and all there is to do, and when the time is right they will arrive, and come back again.

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

Advertising/Social Media

- **Transit Shelters:** Calgary and Fernie
- **Publications:** Kaslo Guide, Pennywise, Nelson Star, Adventure Guide, Out There Monthly, Out There Map, Nelson Star Hotel Wrap, KMC, CMC, KRT Exploring and Touring, Kootenay Ferry TV Screen, CWSAA, Backcountry Skiing Canada, Go Camping, SW Parks brochures, Arts BC, ISL guide and map, Right Sizing, Powder Highway, Go and Do
- **Radio:** EZ Rock, Kootenay Coop Radio
- **Grocery Book Tour:** North America tour promoting the region with logo on van, banner and Travel Books
- **Whitewater Ski Resort:** sponsorship and marketing
- **Youtube:** bumper and trueview ads
- **Online Ads:** Castanet, Out There Monthly, Facebook, Kootenay Mountain Culture Group, Back Country Skiing Canada, ArtsBC, GoCamping, Google adwords, SandpointOnline,
- **Facebook:** 14,000 from 13,210 - 6% up
- **Twitter:** 2329 from 2225 followers - 5% up



- **Instagram:** 11,000 from 7906 - 40% up
- **Travel Book** - 35,000 printed plus 13,000 flat maps, printed locally
- **Newsletter:** 3626 subscribers receiving an average of 25% open rate. Member open rate is over 50%!
- **Indigenous Culture:** Web page on NKLT
- **San Francisco ESummit:** Presented our Live Stream event successes to DMOs from across North America, and promoted the region
- **Familiarization Tour (FAM)** - 15 media came to the region with the biggest returns from Forecast Ski and Globe Guide
- **Finding Awesome UGC contest:** 4 winners each season
- **Stories:** 25 stories published!

Website Overview

- WinterKickoff.com
 - 4430 users - up 10.5%
 - Mobile, Desktop, Tablet
 - Social , Direct, Referral, Organic
 - Nelson, Castlegar, Kelowna, Penticton, Vernon
- Nelsonkootenaylake.com
 - Pageviews 525,000, up 28%
 - Users up 30%
 - Bounce rate increased 6% - this will reduce with a website refresh in 2019
 - Nelson, Vancouver, Calgary, Kelowna, Edmonton - top cities
 - Organic, Paid, Direct, Referral, Social - in order of user acquisitions
 - Top pages: Nelson, Calendar, Home, Stay, Annual Events, hiking, Ainsworth, Mtn Biking
 - Mobile 47%, desktop 41%, tablet 12%
 - **Google Ad Campaign** - 864,423 impressions and 42,032 clicks
 - Top Referrals: Facebook, Time.ly-Calendar, Castanet, Hellobc.com, Discovernelson, Kaslo.ca
 - Referrals are up 21%! Increasing referrals is a strength for businesses and visitors
- KasloNow.com
 - Kaslo125 redirect for celebrations last year. New content to come for SS Moyie 125 next year

Photography and Video - 148,000 views | 47,200 minutes | 4200 engagements

- Nordic Skiing - 37K views
- Xmas Yulelog with WH20 - 19K
- Finding Awesome summary - 18K
- Kokanee Creek Skater - 17K
- Angry Hen Beer Can Chicken - 12K
- Winter Kickoff Broll and Summary video - 7.5K



- Spokane Shuttle promo video - 4.5K
- New images are ongoing by internal and external photographers
- Crowdriff aggregated over 25,250 photos and videos using #findingawesome

Destination Management and Communications

- New MRDT collected by OAPs
- TIABC conference and KRT AGM/Conference
- Logging in the Argenta area, Helicopter tours in Kaslo, Logging at Cottonwood, Friends of Kootenay Lake
- Newsletter /Emails to members and visitors
- Meet with Village of Kaslo and City of Nelson and RDCK Representatives, and other organizations
- CDC monthly meetings
- ISL quarterly meetings
- BCDMOA quarterly meetings
- Monthly NKLT Board meetings
- Closed Facebook Group to members weekly

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
- AB testing for various ad
- Fire Survey to members
- MRDT 2% survey to members
- Event Manual survey to venues and festivals
- Winter Kickoff survey

3. Shoulder Season

- Videos - findingawesome
- Findingawesome.ca contests #findingawesome
- Crowdriff - gather more content and reshare
- WinterKickoff.com
- Transit Shelters in Calgary and Vancouver
- Digital ads - Castanet provides us our greatest return
- Google Ads
- Fire Funding application approved for 2019 implementation
- Grocery Tour and distribution of Travel Books



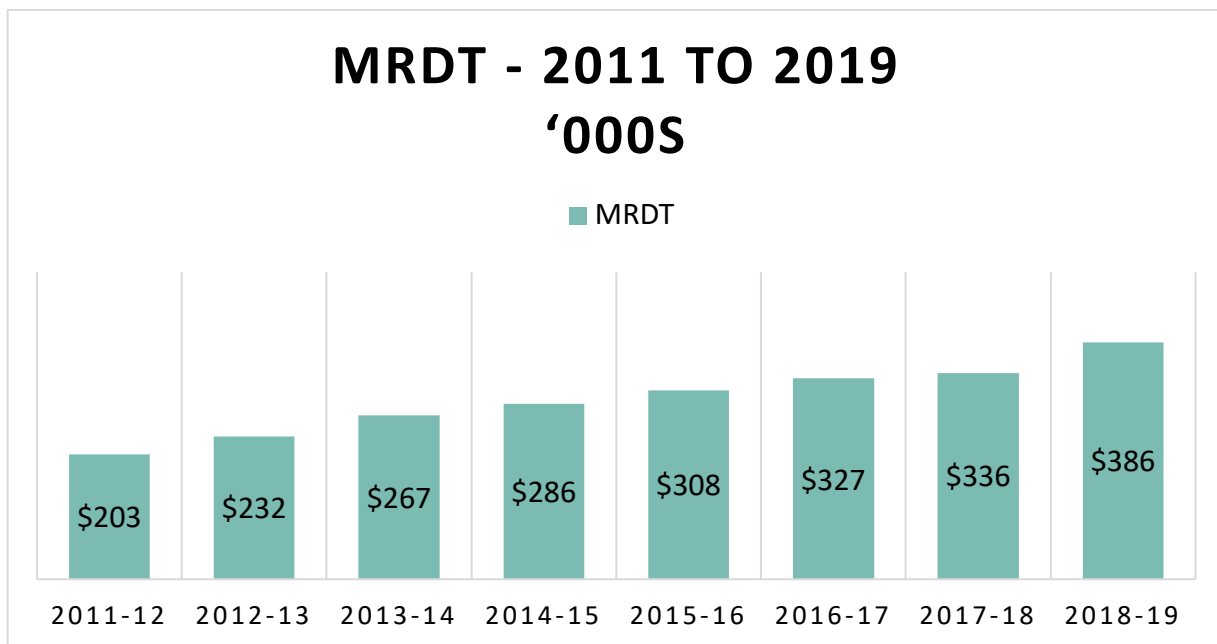
- 4. **Collaboration** - NKLT as an advocate for tourism-related topics will ensure our tourism partners are heard and we will support fair and responsible initiatives to maintain and improve the tourism industry.
 - o Memberships with Nelson, Kaslo and Balfour
 - o Kootenay Arts newly created
 - o Kootenay Dirt and Kootenay XC with 8 other DMO communities
 - o International Selkirk Loop
 - o SMRT1 Kiosk project started
 - o Familiarization Tours (FAMs) with Destination BC (DBC) and KRT
 - o #realtime - used it during smoky season to inform visitors of the real weather
 - o DBC - requested members update TripAdvisor as tool for listings on hellobc.com.

Finances

Our revenue has increased each of the past seven years through MRDT, grants and advertising. Since 2011 we have increased the MRDT by 90%, overall Revenue by 125%, and as a result Expenditures by 112%. See chart below that shows MRDT, Revenue and Expense growth 2011 to 2019.

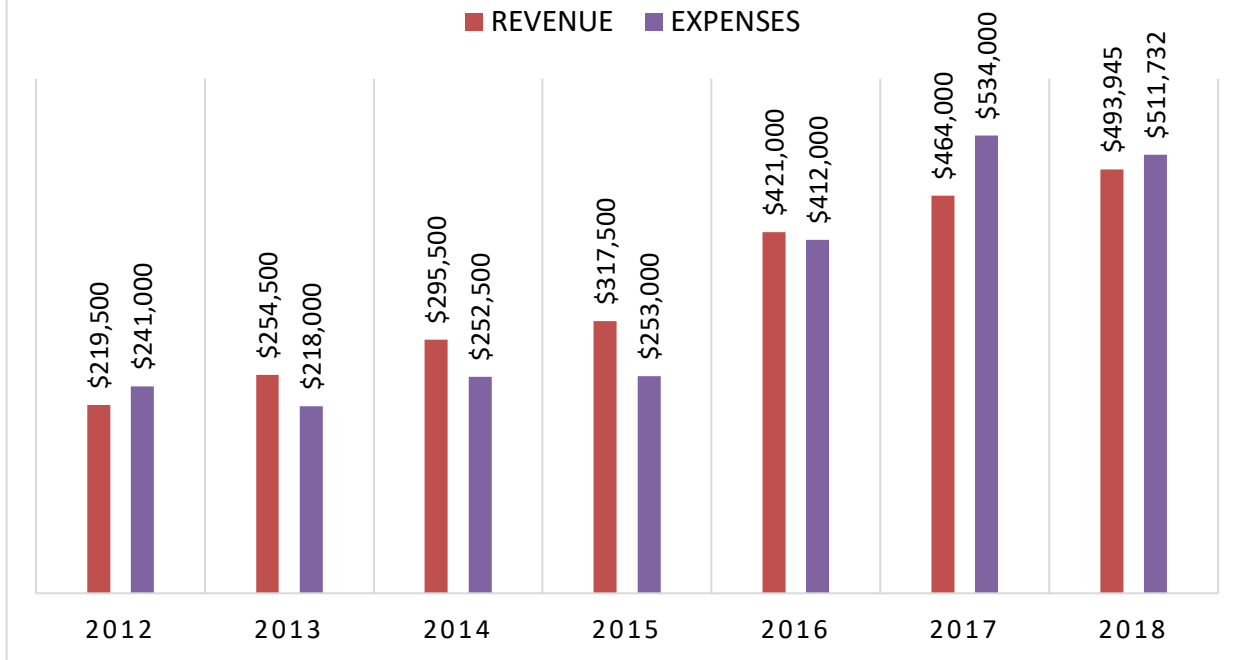
We did not apply for Rural Dividend Fund, but will consider it in the future. We did request funding to market the arts through CIP and received \$750 from RDCK areas D,E,F. City of Nelson declined funding to this initiative.

OAP (Online Accommodator Platforms) is a new funding source. Based on our first deposit in January we are anticipating about \$40,000 annually in additional funds through the MRDT.





ANNUAL REVENUE & EXPENSES 2012-2018



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 | 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