



Executive Director's Annual Report April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism Society (NKLT) is a not-for-profit self-sustaining Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). It is funded primarily through the 2% Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), with supplemented income from Destination BC and other small grants. Our region, over the past 11 years has consisted of Nelson (including Whitewater Ski Resort, Retallack and Baldface), Balfour, Procter, Harrop, Ainsworth Hot Springs, Kaslo, Lardeau and Meadow Creek.

The required five-year renewal for a DMO to collect the MRDT was approved by the BC Ministry of Finance, Cabinet of BC, and Destination BC. This renewal included the addition of RDCK, Area A (Riondel to Wynndel) to the NKLT-DMO geographical marketing region. This addition completes the circle, permitting NKLT to be inclusive of all the communities around Kootenay Lake. We are excited to share what the East Shore has to offer and include them in our marketing initiatives.

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. Craig Wilkinson (Balfour & District Business & Historic Association | Areas E and F - appointed)
3. Karen Bennet (Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, NAEDP - appointed)
4. Dana Blouin (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. Jay Manton (Summer Representative)
10. Rob Little (Food & Beverage Representative)
11. Rebeckah Hornung (Winter Representative)
12. Peter Moynes (Member at Large)

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, destination development projects, community awareness and partnerships.



The Executive Director's (ED) 40-hour work week consists of: strategic planning; managing employees and contractors; researching innovative ideas and tourism data; 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, 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. Zan Comerford sold Travel Book ads, implemented Google Ad campaigns, supported social media when required, and coordinated Winter Kickoff. The nelsonkootenaylake.com website and microsites KootenayArts.ca, FindingAwesome, and WinterKickoff are hosted, developed, and managed by Brad Higham of Collabo.co. Alex Metcalf assisted in elevating our online presence leading us into a redesign of our website and content flow. Over the year additional contractors were hired to keep NKLT evolving in SEO, video, photography, event coordination, and the written word. Working as a team, sharing ideas, and discussing strategies and creative direction allowed us to meet our goals and make high level decisions.

Marketing Summary

We purchased a variety of media to reach our traveler types: adventure traveler, free spirit, rejuvenator, and cultural explorer. Our target audiences were from Calgary to USA border, Pacific Northwest, Okanagan and Greater Vancouver. We reached them through print, videos, Google Adwords, digital ads and social media, all focusing around our theme of Finding Awesome.

Our MRDT (hotel tax) increased by 8% this past year, from \$386,000 to \$418,000. It was a solid year, all-year round, with each season collecting comparable MRDT. This speaks to NKLT and their efforts in meeting their goal of increasing the shoulder season visitor traffic. Our seasonal breakdown is as follows:

- Spring (April, May, June) - \$106K
- Summer (July, August)- \$104K
- Fall (September, October, November) - \$102K
- Winter (December, January, February, March) - \$106K (NOTE: MRDT was not required to be reported for March 2020 due to COVID-19. If it had, we would have seen Winter as our strongest season!)

Travel booking windows are still short, anchored in following the weather. NKLT cannot control the weather or acts of god, but we can react and adjust our marketing to best suit the travel patterns and needs of visitors. Events provide a longer booking window with some bookings, such as Kaslo Jazz or Starbelly Jam, a year in advance. NKLT will continue to inform travellers of all there is to do across the region, all year round. Staying front of mind is essential for tourism growth and supporting a vibrant economy long term.



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

Strategic Plan 2019-2024

When planning for the year ahead, we stay focused on our three goals (research, visitor experience and sustainability), and implement tactics and strategies to meet our objectives, as noted below.

Research:

- Community and visitor awareness of impacts of tourism and social responsibility through communication
- Marijuana licensing permitted but marketing is not yet allowed
- Additional data on MRDT and OAP is still not permitted due to privacy limitations
- Overtourism - not occurring right yet but we need to be conscious of community sentiments and direction
- Summer and Fall Stakeholder survey
- Summer and Fall Visitor survey
- Occupancy Survey
- Community Sentiment Survey (June 2020)
- Winter Kickoff Survey to Visitors
- Ferry Strike survey

Visitor Experience:

- Indigenous tourism page developed and updated
- Increased FAMs to 25 from 15
- Kiosks - attempted to implement but due to lack of locations to place kiosks we did not extend beyond the one-year Pilot Program
- Built a new website that enhances the user experience through listings and map directed points of interest, connecting each page to other sectors, communities through related pages and stories
- Enhanced Travel Book to include Area A and better maps
- Inform visitors in one season of another season to increase awareness and broaden visitor experiences across the region
- Winter Kickoff Carnival created to attract more visitors to the area in shoulder season - huge success with over 3000 in attendance
- Created KootenayArts to promote events and artists in partnership with other Kootenay DMOs

Sustainability:

- Adjusted membership to improve accessibility and relationships with all tourism-related businesses. Non-fee-based membership.
- Adjusted board to meet needs of Area A and all sectors represented



- Ensure experiences offered meets visitor needs by connecting with stakeholders and other organizations across BC
- Sentiment Survey completed June 2020

Advertising/Social Media

- **Publications:** Kaslo Guide, Pennywise, Nelson Star, Out There Monthly, Out There Map, 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, Powder Highway, Go and Do
- **Radio:** EZ Rock, Kootenay Coop Radio
- **Whitewater Ski Resort:** sponsorship and marketing
- **Online Ads:** Castanet, Out There Monthly, Facebook, Kootenay Mountain Culture Group, Back Country Skiing Canada, ArtsBC, GoCamping, Google adwords, SandpointOnline,
- **Travel Book** - 35,000 printed plus 13,000 flat maps, printed locally
- **Newsletter:** 3800 subscribers receiving on average a 26% open rate. Member open rate fluctuates between 38-51% open rate.
- **Familiarization Tour (FAM)** - 25 media came to the region
- **Breaths Video and Campaign:** pushed out a very relaxing, inviting video in the spring to counter act the poor air quality due to fires from the previous years. Video received 93k views.
- **Stories:** 9 new stories published
- **Kiosks:** 3 kiosks around the region with backend listing and mapping features (Kaslo Hotel, Ladybug Coffee, Nelson Olive Oil)
- **Winter Kickoff:** BIG carnival added this year that was a smashing success
- **Website:** Redesigned the structure and enhanced the content - maps, stories and listing pages for all members
- **AMP Stories** - 20 created by Kootenay Mountain Culture and pushed out through Destination BC, Kootenay Rockies, and our website
- **Sector Partnerships:** Mountain Biking Tourism Association (MBTA), BC Fishing, Resort & Outfitters Association (BCFROA), KootenayDirt.ca, KootenayArts.ca, KooteanyXC.ca, Canada West Ski Association (CWSA)

Social Media & Video Stats

Followers

- Facebook: 15,358 from 14,000 - 9.7% up
- Twitter: 2418 from 2329 followers - 4% up
- Instagram: 13,568 from 11,000 - 24% up
- Pinterest: 1.6k monthly viewers, 356 followers

Overall Instagram Insights

- 315 Posts
- 105k Engagements
- 46k video views (organic)



- #findingawesome is now at 35,032 posts - since we started it in 2017
 - Growth is significantly slower now than the first two years when we were aggressively promoting the contest. Growth is now much slower but still well used/known in the region.
- Landscape shots are most successful - aerials provide our best reach
- Hero, Hub, Help planning works well

Overall Facebook Insights

- 408 posts
- 56k engagements

Overall Facebook Video Insights

- 121.5k Minutes of video viewed +157%
- 259.6k 3 second Video Views + 75.3%
- 8.3k Engagements on videos + 97.4%
- Reused previous videos, extracting short segments
- Previous year: 47,200 minutes | 148,000 views | 4200 engagements

Breathe Video

- 93.9k Reach
- 45.5 Views
- Probably more analytics available in report from Web Advisors from all of the ads they did. I remember you had to include them all in a previous report to Destination BC, maybe pull some out of there??
- A bunch of short segments of the video were also pulled and used in a variety of Instagram Story ads
- Pull from Web Advisors



Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism · Follow

Breathe - Take it all in



Imagine a place where nature feeds your body and soul, where clean air encourages outdoor ... [See More](#)



Like

Comment

Share

Dianna Ducs, Zan Comerford and 284 others · 50 Comments

MSP Films

- #BeHere partnership ad with Whitewater Ski Resort
- Ad played at all MSP movie premieres (150-200) across North America
- Film featured local athlete Sam Kuch, Whitewater, and Nelson



Kootenay Arts Video

- Partnership with 6 DMOs
- Analytics on NKLT and Kootenay Rockies Tourism channels (would be greater if included other DMO channels)
 - 25k reach
 - 12k views
 - 358 post Engagements



Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism · Follow

Kootenay Arts

6 communities. 25+ galleries. 15+ museums. 30+ festivals. Unlimited culture.... See More



Galleries and artist centres
in every community

Like Comment Share

Dianna Ducs, Karen Eady Bennett and 72 others · 6 Comments

Fishing BC Video

Video with Reel Adventures on Kootenay Lake.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=485407272252885>

- On NKLT Facebook - 4800 reach, 1937 views
- On fishing BC Facebook - 17k Views



Fishing BC · Follow
May 13, 2019 · 🌐

Fishing BC Presents: Fishing Kootenay Lake Year-round with Reel Adventures

Kerry has been fishing since he was a very young man, though now he has turned his pa... See More



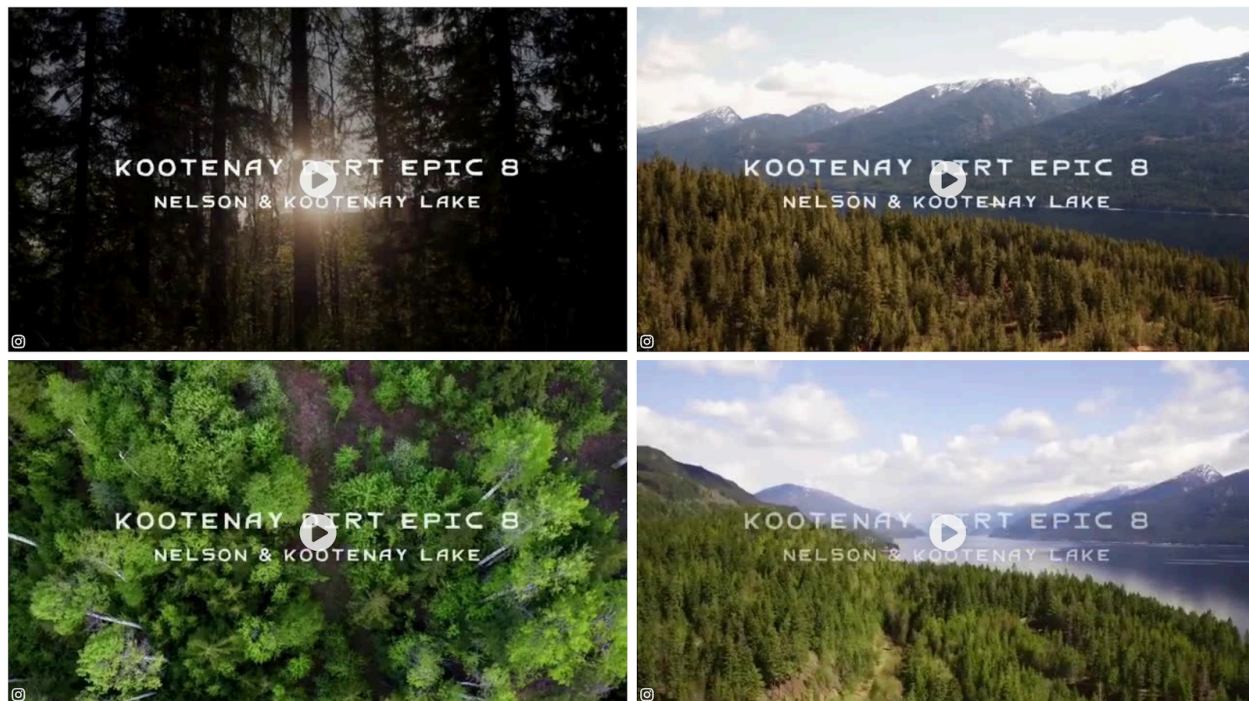
👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍❤️😬 150 · 15 Comments

Kootenay Dirt

4 short videos shot by Tamarack Media using gopro footage of local riders

- 84,115 Reach
- 235,752 Impressions
- 17,935 Unique Thru Plays
- Ad spend \$350
- PLUS youtube campaign done by Mountain Biking BC (would have to ask them for these analytics)



Winter Kickoff Videos

- Pre-event - 21.4k views, 292 Engagements
- Post-event - 844 Views, 70 Engagements

Fam Highlights

- [Forbes Article- The Top 10 Ski Resorts In North America For 2019](#)
- [Pinkbike - Exploring BC's Lesser Known Riding Destinations on the Bikes & Beers Tour](#)

Website Overview

- Nelsonkootenaylake.com
 - Redesigning the website was a priority over the year to help increase time on site, pageviews, and bounce rate. The release of the website did not occur until mid-May due to web development delays and COVID-19.
 - Google Analytics shows users and sessions down. This is due to cancelling our Google Ad Grant through War Room. Funds were not being allocated responsibly over the year, resulting in odd audiences being targeted and high bounce rates.
- WinterKickoff.com
 - Users increased by 53%
 - Sessions increased by 53%
 - Kelowna, Penticton, Spokane and Seattle visits increased
 - Travel Deals increased by 200%
- KootenayArts.ca



- Partnered with 6 other DMOs but NKLTL lead and managed this initiative
- Developed the website but did not have funds to market it. We had intended to put money behind it in 2020-21, but without events being permitted due to COVID-19 we have put the project on hold. The funds were part of our co-op partnership with DBC and the 6 Kootenay DMOs.

Destination Management

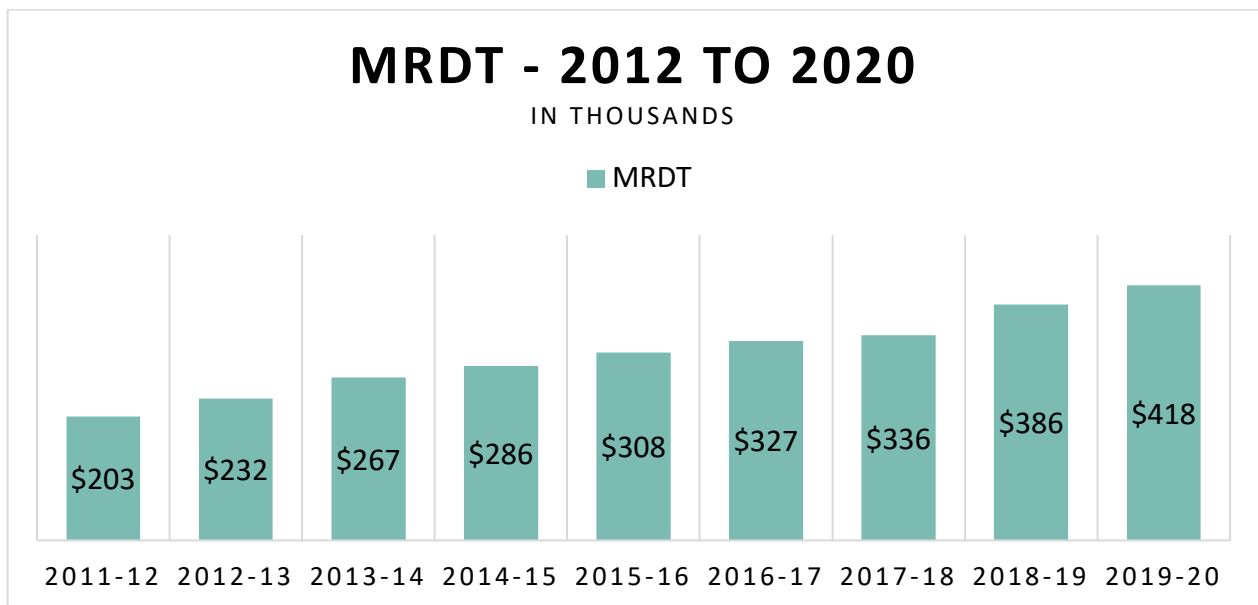
- West Kootenay Destination Development - Signage research study to be completed in 2020
- CDC monthly meetings
- ISL quarterly meetings
- BCDMOA quarterly meetings
- Monthly NKLTL Board meetings
- NKLTL Committee meetings throughout the year
- Closed Facebook Group posts to members weekly
- Newsletter to members and potential visitors monthly
- MOTI - Big Orange Bridge - addition of wider lanes for cyclists, and Pullouts for photos

Finances

Our revenue has increased each of the past eight years through MRDT, grants and advertising revenue. Since 2011 we have increased the MRDT by 106%.

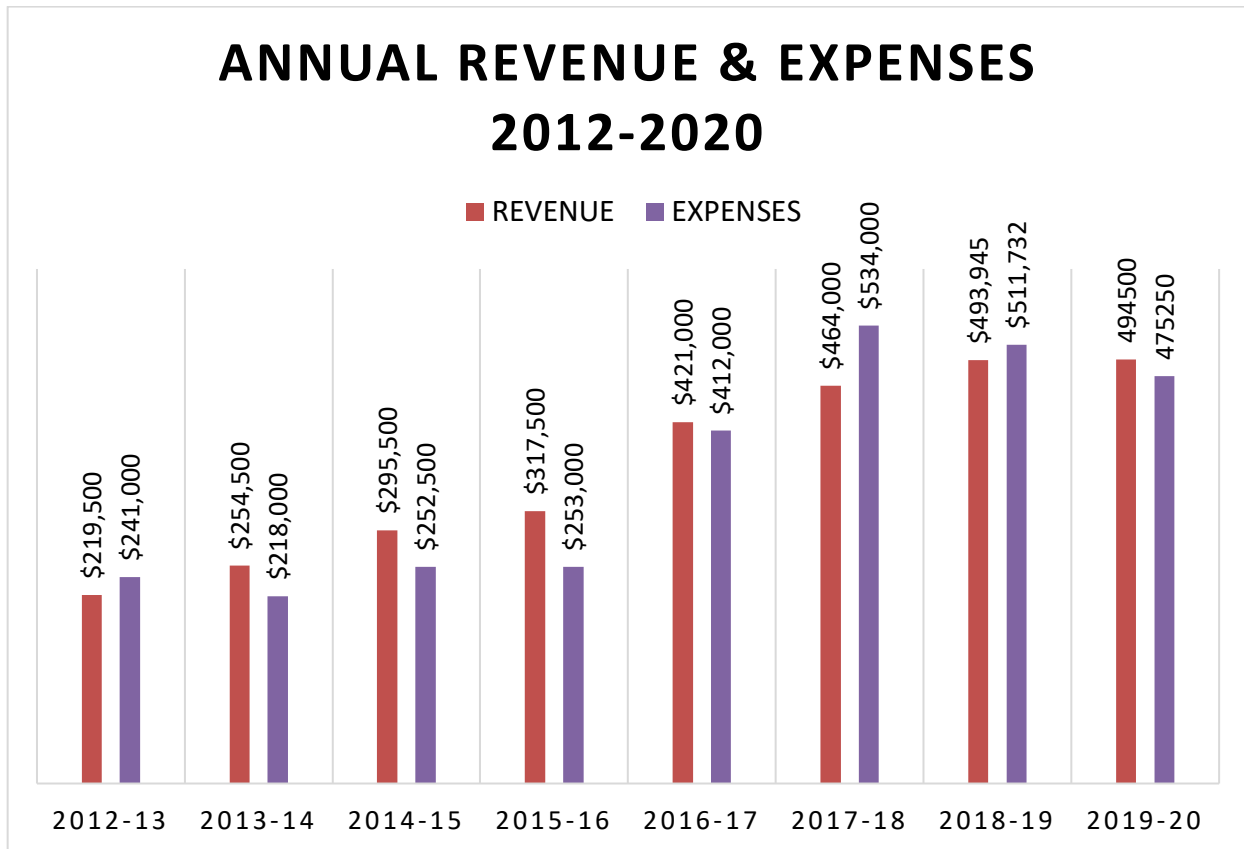
MRDT consists of two revenue streams: 1) OAP-MRDT (Online Accommodator Platforms) collected from Short Term Rentals across the region brought in \$50,000; and 2) Regular MRDT (accommodation with 4 rooms or more) brought in \$368,000.

See chart below that shows MRDT growth over the years.





Revenue and Expense 2011 to 2020 have fluctuated based on marketing campaigns, and available funds. A snapshot is below.



NKLT applied for CIP 2020 funding to assist with hosting and marketing Winter Kickoff in 2020, but due to COVID-19 things have been put on hold.

Destination BC Coop Marketing provided us \$42,600. In 2020-21 we have been provided \$85,000! Fire Recovery funding distributed through Kootenay Rockies Tourism was 505/50 at \$7500 each. We used these funds to implement our spring Breathe Campaign in 2019.

Memberships, at \$15, brought in \$3100. The board reviewed our pay to play membership process and came to the conclusion that it was not benefiting all the tourism-related businesses, Chambers who were collecting the fee, nor in the end the relationships between stakeholders and NKLT. The board concluded that we would shift our membership to be a non-fee-based membership, and adjusted the Bylaws accordingly to be moved at the 2020 AGM. The criteria to be in good-standing annually with NKLT are three-fold: distribute Travel Books, link back to NKLT from the members website, share a few NKLT social posts.



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.
<https://nelsonkootenaylake.com/about/board-director-annual-reports>