



# ᑭᑭᓂᓂᓂ

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stands for respect

A Destination Stewardship Plan




A wooden totem pole stands prominently in the foreground, featuring a large owl with its wings spread wide. The owl is carved from light-colored wood and is perched atop a thick, vertical wooden post. The post is mounted on a rectangular concrete base. The background is a lush, green forest of tall evergreen trees, with misty, forested mountains visible in the distance under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# ᑲᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ | Tofino stands for ᑲᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ respect



# Respect for the land, the people, and all living things.



Many people love to visit Tofino for its awe-inspiring natural and cultural environments. As we welcome visitors, we must also respect and protect this place.

The tourism industry in Tofino operates on Indigenous land and is hosted by the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation. The Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region spans across multiple Nuu-chah-nulth Nation Territories.

The sea, land, and sky surrounding Tofino are teeming with life. Over generations, many people have fought to protect this stunning place. That important stewardship work will never be finished.

Tourism presents an exciting alternative to the resource extraction industries of the past, but it has not yet fully lived up to its potential. The area's growing popularity and a lack of awareness of the traditional protocols place numerous pressures on area residents and biodiversity.

For the travel industry here to thrive, it must respect natural laws and benefit the host Nation, Indigenous biodiversity, and protect the water, air, and land which make it all possible.

Guests are welcomed with open arms in Tofino and are expected to respect the land, animals, people, and communities while travelling.

The entire tourism industry has a responsibility to be part of a strategy leading to abundance, to take care of and improve their impacts on the natural, cultural and social aspects in and around Tofino.

# We want an abundant future



A deep respect for all living things is  
the foundation that enables all of  
ńáćiqs | Tofino to flourish.



# What if this place became a beacon for respect?

We imagine an abundant future where:



Indigenous rights and knowledge lead, guiding how we restore, govern, and thrive.



The salmon are back, and so are the stories, teachings, and traditions tied to their return.



Youth rise as stewards of culture and land, proud to shape the future here.



Visitors don't just come for the beauty, they come to learn how to care for it, too.



Tourism works in balance with our limits, and strengthens our connections to each other.



People live and work here with pride, because this place supports everyone who calls it home.

“Tofino is a living example of Indigenous environmental leadership for the world to follow.”





# Our responsibility

Tourism's role is to foster respect  
and connection so that guests  
leave ńačiqs | Tofino better than  
when they arrived.

# The Pledge

Hereditary Chiefs of Tla-o-qui-aht, citing British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, have declared that *"everyone residing in or visiting Tofino... has a responsibility to adhere to Tla-o-qui-aht laws and protocols...and [we ask] all area residents and visitors to take the ʔiisaak Pledge."*

We can all work together to ensure that:

By 2030, every visitor, resident and business will take the ʔiisaak Pledge.

These Nuu-chah-nulth teachings have been handed down through generations. They will lead us to an abundant future.

**ʔiisaaksinhiʔin (ii-saak-sin-hi-in)**

Let us be respectful of Natural Law. Let us observe, appreciate and act accordingly.

**Łaayaksiinhiʔin (thlaa-yak-siin-hi-in)**

Let us be generous and helpful: There is no end to the work of building community.

**taaquuqh̓tiʔin (taa-quuqh-thli-in)**

Let us speak truthfully and act honorably. Let us learn the history of this place and its People, correcting colonial narratives like the myth that this is a wilderness.

**qʷaasiinhapin (qwaa-siin-hap-in)**

Let us leave healthy habitats undisturbed, keeping them as they are for future generations of life.

These teachings make up in the ʔiisaak Pledge.





# What can we do to live the pledge?

Share knowledge with guests about the people, place and how to behave.

Enable opportunities for people to directly contribute so that the wealth of tourism helps local priorities.

## Visitor education

Tofino is more than a place to visit. It is our home, and it is filled with life. We must show visitors how to treat this place with respect. That means leaving a light footprint behind by preserving water, using low-carbon transportation, and minimizing waste and energy use. It means supporting local entrepreneurs. And it means teaching people about the history of this place alongside the language and culture of First Nations.

### Initiatives:

- Ask all visitors to adopt and follow the ʔiisaak Pledge.
- Weave together the stories of this area and its people, including its history and values, as Tofino invites people to visit.
- Teach guests how to visit responsibly before they arrive. Include local language, culture, environment, and preparedness tips.
- Provide learning opportunities for visitors throughout the area through signage and communications in print and online.

## Giving back

The tourism industry has the opportunity and responsibility to make Tofino a better place to live by contributing its knowledge, time, and wealth.

### Initiatives:

- Encourage voluntourism and citizen science.
- Find opportunities to share knowledge and strengthen understanding.
- Fund or collect donations at businesses for community programs
- Make direct investments in the shared resources and infrastructure that underpin the tourism economy.
- Contribute to environmental conservation and restoration.
- Promote locally owned-businesses.



Foster a rich and unique visitor experience that resonates with those who share our values.

Encourage travel that has a low impact on the planet and community.

## Visitor experience

ᓃačiqs | Tofino's greatest opportunities for an abundant future happen when visitors have remarkable experiences that are true to the area's culture and values. Local care for nature amid First Nations culture and language creates compelling and unique experiences.

### Initiatives:

- Promote stories and businesses that uphold the teachings of the ʔiisaak Pledge.
- As part of tourism experiences, share stories that illustrate history and promote language and culture.
- Enable new tourism experiences to emerge.


## Low-impact travel

With popularity comes responsibility. We must conserve resources and respect public infrastructure, the environment, and all who live here.

### Initiatives:

- Encourage longer stays.
- Focus on nearby travel markets.
- Use clean transportation to travel here.
- Promote active and public transportation within the area.
- Teach visitors about environmental preservation.
- Conserve water and eliminate waste.
- Shift to renewable and efficient energy usage.





Invite respectful visitors to return outside of busy summer months.

Create opportunities with First Nations People to participate in the tourism economy.

## Seasonality

We can balance tourism's impact and become more resilient by inviting people to return at less busy times of year. We hope that those who share our values will develop a deeper connection with Tofino, are likely to contribute more and leave a lighter footprint.

### Initiatives:

- Build an audience (such as an email list) of repeat visitors.
- Work with non-profit organizations to invite people back to contribute to community priorities and learn more about Tofino's values. Create these opportunities by hosting gatherings, events, or themed weeks focused on weekdays.
- Focus marketing strategy on inviting visitors at different times of year.

## Workforce

Ensure a strong, year-round workforce by providing equitable opportunities for First Nations People to participate in the tourism economy. This will help to uplift First Nations culture, develop a strong, year-round workforce across the area, and provide improved experiences for visitors.

### Initiatives:

- Understand and remove systemic barriers preventing First Nations People to participate in the visitor economy.
- Decolonize tourism businesses to create safer spaces for First Nations People to work.
- Ensure there is equitable access to transportation year-round.
- Support entrepreneurial opportunities for First Nations People.
- Recruit and offer opportunities to First Nations youth.



Advocate for the foundational elements of a thriving visitor economy.

## Advocacy

We can overcome our greatest challenges by working together to change systems that affect tourism. Tofino's tourism industry can advocate for local priorities and values at provincial, national, and international levels.

### Initiatives:

- Understand the basic elements required for tourism to thrive in Tofino, and represent those interests within our spheres of influence.
- Continue to seek inclusive representation in planning and decision making.
- Leverage the tourism sector's strong influence to advocate for issues such as housing, water protection, environmental care, First Nations rights under UNDRIP, crisis preparedness, and climate adaptation and mitigation.

# How we will know we're successful



These are examples of some meaningful metrics we could measure:

- ✓ **Community wellbeing**  
Resident sentiment
- ✓ **Local environmental health**  
Keystone species (salmon health)
- ✓ **Economic health**  
Business sentiment
- ✓ **Visitor experience**  
Visitor sentiment
- ✓ **Macro environmental impact**  
GHG emissions estimate per visitor
- ✓ **Equity**  
Sentiment of First Nations People

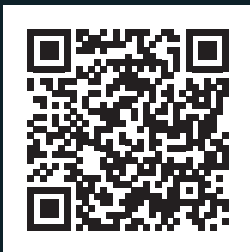




Photo credit: Jeremy Koreski

Caring for a place as special as Tofino cannot be the responsibility of any single individual or organization.

We need everyone's help.



Join us



This plan was created by Tourism Tofino and the District of Tofino with support from Destination Think, in collaboration with náčiqs | Tofino-area residents.