

tourism
Tofino



Annual Report 2023



Contents

| | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Message from the Chair | Page 3 |
| 2. Corporate Structure & Strategic Direction | Page 4 |
| 3. Visitation Indicators | Page 6 |
| 4. Financial Highlights | Page 9 |
| 5. Operational Highlights – Marketing | Page 10 |
| 6. Operational Highlights – Visitor Services | Page 13 |
| 7. Operational Highlights – Destination Stewardship | Page 15 |



SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER!



Did you know that Tourism Tofino sends out an e-newsletter every second week called the Tofino Community Tourism News? It contains a wealth of information for Tofino businesses, organizations and residents including opportunities, events, data insights and more. Sign up for the Tofino Community Tourism News using the QR code.

Message from the Chair

Emerging from a strong recovery year, the board of Tourism Tofino approached 2023 with cautious optimism. With the appointment of a new Executive Director at the end of 2022, brought a renewed sense of purpose and energy toward the priorities outlined in the Tourism Tofino strategic plan.



In 2023, we took important steps to prioritize sustainability and community engagement, including the creation of the Destination Stewardship Manager role. This underscores our commitment to not only sustaining but also enhancing the well-being of our local communities and environment.

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on nurturing Tourism Tofino's relationships with key local partners. Our collaborations with various stakeholders, including Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation through Tribal Parks and Tofino First Nation Economic Development, have been invaluable and have played a role in our progress as an organization. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the ongoing dialogue and productive working relationships with partners such as the District of Tofino, Tofino Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Ahousaht First Nation through MHSS, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, and Parks Canada, among others.

We acknowledge that it takes collective effort and collaboration to achieve meaningful progress in advancing both our community and our industry. Each partnership contributes uniquely to our shared goals, and we are committed to fostering and strengthening these relationships as we continue our journey forward.

Last summer, we faced significant challenges due to climate-related events, including a severe drought and wildfires that closed Highway 4 for 17 days leading into Tofino's peak season. These events disrupted travel and tested our resilience as a community. However, they also provided essential lessons in emergency management and collaboration, which we're committed to applying in the future. Despite these obstacles, Tourism Tofino remained steadfast and adaptable for its membership. We were able to appropriate extra funds for a recovery campaign when highway 4 reopened and an additional boost to the fall 2023 campaign to offset revenue losses during our peak season.

Looking ahead, we recognize that there will continue to be challenges, including economic pressures and climate-related risks. However, we're confident in our ability to navigate these challenges together, thanks to the commitment of our incredible volunteer board, passionate staff, and dedicated partners.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our collective efforts. It's through your commitment and hard work that we're well-positioned and resourced to lead our industry in what we hope will be a very successful year ahead for tourism in Tofino.



Sabrina Donovan, Chair of Tourism Tofino

Corporate Structure & Strategic Direction

Tourism Tofino's legal name is the Tofino Destination Management Association, and it was incorporated in August 2016 as a not-for-profit organization under the Societies Act of British Columbia.

The voting members of Tourism Tofino are tourism-based businesses in Tofino and the Clayoquot Sound area that are members of the Tofino Long Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Tourism Tofino is governed by a volunteer board of directors elected from and by the voting members of the society. Directors serve a 2-year term and any member in good standing can be nominated for the board in the lead up to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.

The elected board of directors set high-level strategic priorities and financial plans for the organization and are responsible for governance and oversight. The Executive Director and staff are responsible for operating the organization in alignment with the strategic and financial direction set by the board.

Tourism Tofino 2023-24 Board of Directors

- **Sabrina Donovan, Pacific Sands Beach Resort (Chair)**
- **Jesse Betman, Ocean Village Resort (Vice Chair)**
- **Tiffany Olsen, Surf Sister (Secretary Treasurer)**
- **Samantha Hackett, Long Beach Lodge Resort (Past Chair) (resigned in March 2024)**
- **JJ Belanger, Crystal Cove Resort**
- **Rebecca Hurwitz, The West Coast Nest**
- **Bradley Linterman, Tofino Co-op (resigned in September 2023)**
- **Kyle Meagher, Daylight Cannabis**
- **Ryan Orr, Pacific Rim Navigators**
- **Keith Phillips, West Coast Aquatic Adventures**
- **Sarah Sloman, District of Tofino (appointed by council resolution)**
- **Dave Tovell, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve**
- **Jason Watts, Stay Tofino**

Tourism Tofino Vision

Tofino is deeply respected and sought out for the transformative experience of oneness (everything is connected).

Tourism Tofino Mission

To deliver sustainable growth for our members that contributes economic and social benefits for our community.



Strategic Direction

Tourism Tofino is guided by a 5-year strategic plan that covers the years 2022 through 2027. The plan was developed in consultation with member businesses, residents, First Nations, District of Tofino, Parks Canada, and other partners. The 5-year strategic direction is also in alignment with other plans like the Tofino Official Community Plan and the Tofino Tourism Master Plan.

The 2022-2027 Strategic Plan can be viewed on the [Tourism Tofino website](#) and has four pillars:

1. Balance growth
2. Deepen experiences
3. Strengthen connections
4. Sound operations

Tourism Tofino Team

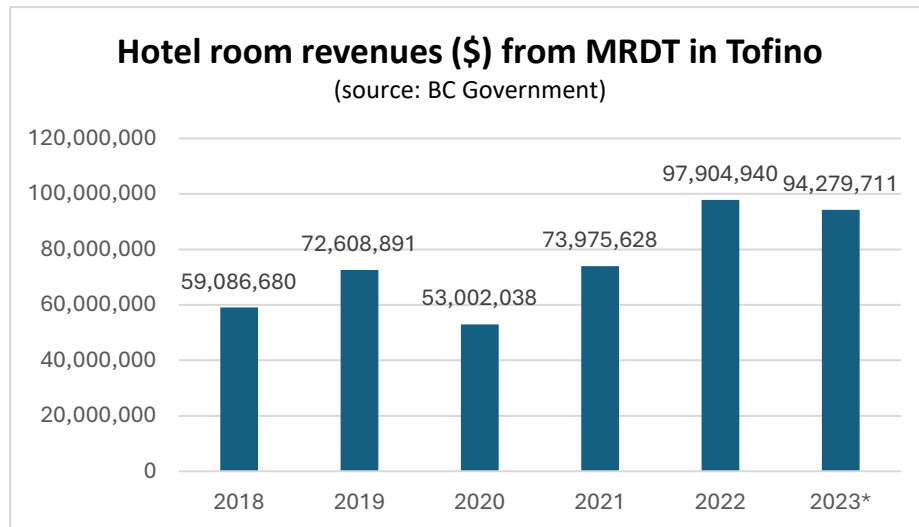
- **Executive Director – Brad Parsell**
- **Destination Stewardship Manager – Jody Kirk**
- **Marketing Manager – Samantha Fyleris**
- **Media Relations & Business Development Manager – Danielle Fox**
- **Content Coordinator – Jessica Cloutier**
- **Visitor Services & Member Manager – Jess McGarry**
- **Visitor Services Supervisor – Katie Bilodeau**
- **Visitor Services team (2023) – Jenny Bain, Rebecaa Slood, Krista Wagner, Marcus John, Vy Nguyen, Doan Nguyen, Ariel Vaikla**



Visitation Indicators

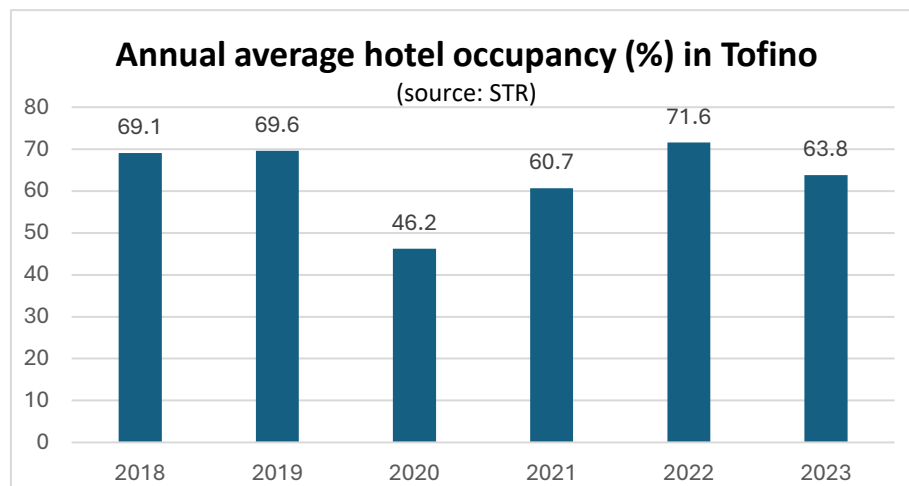
Tourism Tofino uses local hotel revenues and average hotel occupancy data as one measure to compare visitation to Tofino month-over-month and year-over-year.

Total hotel room revenues in Tofino were \$94.28 million in 2023 (figure does not include December 2023) – down from \$97.90 million in 2022.

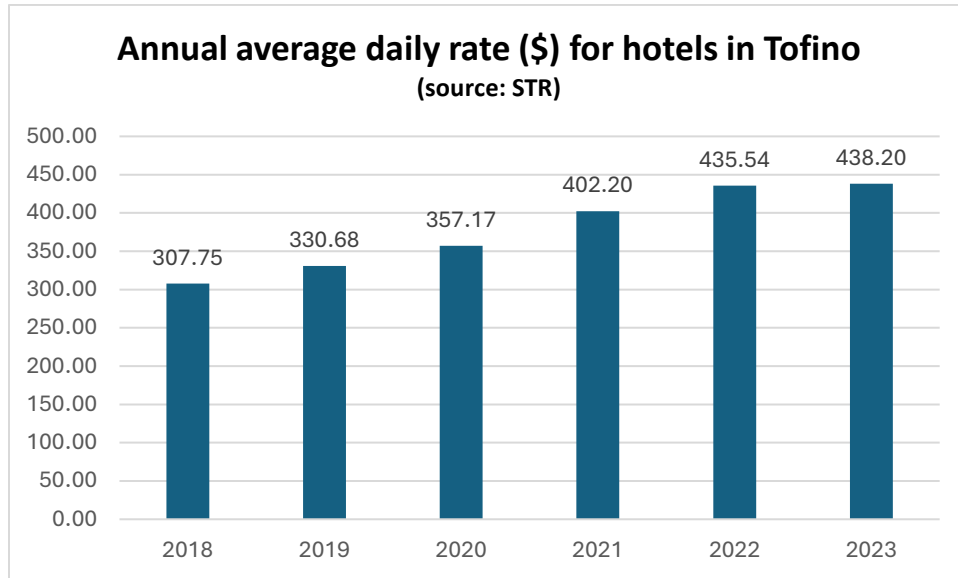


**2023 includes up to Nov 2023 only*

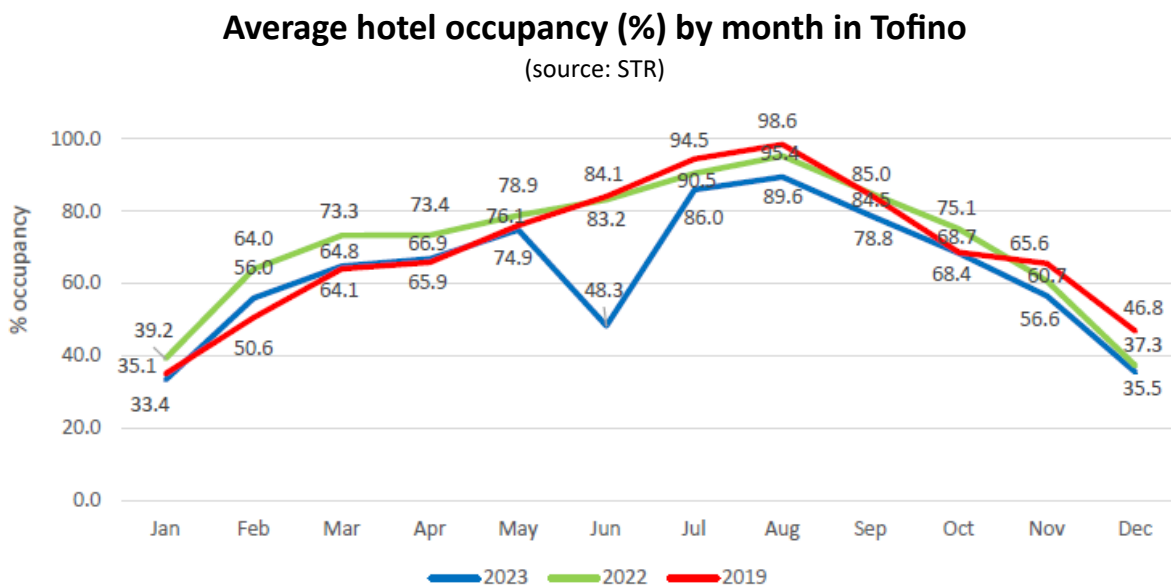
The annual average for hotel occupancy in Tofino was 63.8% in 2023 - down from 71.6% in 2022.



The annual average for a nightly hotel rate in Tofino was \$438.20 in 2023 – up slightly (0.6%) from \$435.54 in 2022.

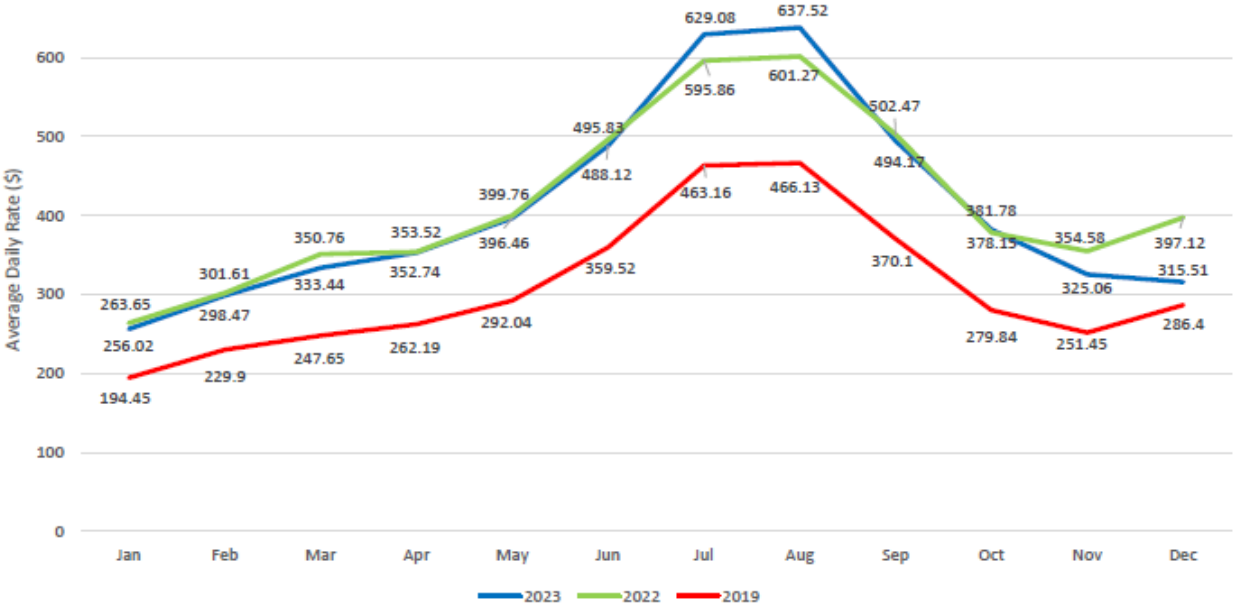


Zooming into a monthly view of average hotel occupancy, you can see the seasonality issues that still exist in Tofino with visitor demand dropping sharply in the winter months. You can also clearly see the impact the Highway 4 closure in June 2023 had on hotel occupancy for the whole summer, and particularly June.



While hotels on average were able to command approximately 5% higher nightly rates in July and August, for most of 2023 hotel rates stayed very close to where they were in 2022 and even saw a significant dip in the last few months of the year. The result was a modest 0.6% increase in average hotel rates in Tofino year-over-year.

Average daily rate (\$) in hotels by month in Tofino (source: STR)



Note: The data provided to STR is aggregated from approximately 10 of the larger hotels and resorts in Tofino. Data from smaller motels, hostels and bed & breakfasts is not captured in STR data. Nightly room rates or average daily rates (ADR) may therefore skew higher, for example.



Financial Highlights

Each year, Tourism Tofino has its financial statements audited and the audit for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2023 was completed by Grant Thornton LLC. The Tourism Tofino board of directors is happy to report that we have another clean audit in 2023 that was approved at a special board meeting held March 12, 2024. The audited financials were sent out to the membership as part of the AGM package and can be downloaded from [our website](#).



A few financial highlights from this year include:

- Tourism Tofino ran a very balanced operating budget in 2023 spending pretty much all its annual revenue within the fiscal year with a small surplus of \$62,310.
- The District of Tofino retained \$400,000 of the Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT) in 2023 to put towards Tofino's new wastewater treatment plant.
- \$500,000 of cash from previous years' surplus was invested in GICs to realize interest revenue.
- The loan to build the Tofino Visitor Centre was completely paid off in January 2023 – a huge milestone for the organization!
- The District of Tofino once again granted a property tax exemption on the Tofino Visitor Centre which we are extremely grateful for. This exemption reduces our operating expenses and allows us to invest more funds in visitor services, destination marketing and destination stewardship initiatives that contribute to the success of your business and our community as a whole.

Operational Highlights – Marketing

Responsibly marketing Tofino outside of the peak summer season to address seasonality challenges continues to be a priority for Tourism Tofino. We have a range of channels and programs to do this including paid media (digital & print advertising), owned media (website & social media), earned media (travel media stories) and business development (attracting mid-week groups like business meetings/incentive travel).

Paid Media

- Launched three successful paid digital seasonal campaigns targeting leisure travelers for spring (Feb 13 – May 14), fall (Aug 28 – Oct 29) and winter (Jan 3 – Jan 29 and Oct 30 – Dec 24).
- Paid digital advertising activity by Tourism Tofino in 2023 generated over 80 million impressions online (up significantly from 54 million impressions in 2022).
- Launched a 'Highway is Open' campaign in June 2023 in partnership Tourism Ucluelet, 4VI and Destination BC to recover from Highway 4 closure impacts.



- Additional emergency marketing funds were allocated by the board from surplus for a recovery campaign and boosted fall campaign, with talks underway about a permanent emergency marketing reserve. The additional spend on the fall 2023 campaign resulted in 12 million more impressions than the fall 2022 campaign.

- Supported the marketing of 15 local festivals and events outside of peak summer (up from 11 in 2022), including the debut run of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation's naa?uu event series.



- Launched and promoted Tofino Winter Nights with the District of Tofino to drive visitation in December. A total of 17 local businesses participated in the Hot Cocoa Trail component of Tofino Winter Nights.



Try the Tofino Hot Cocoa Trail
This December only!

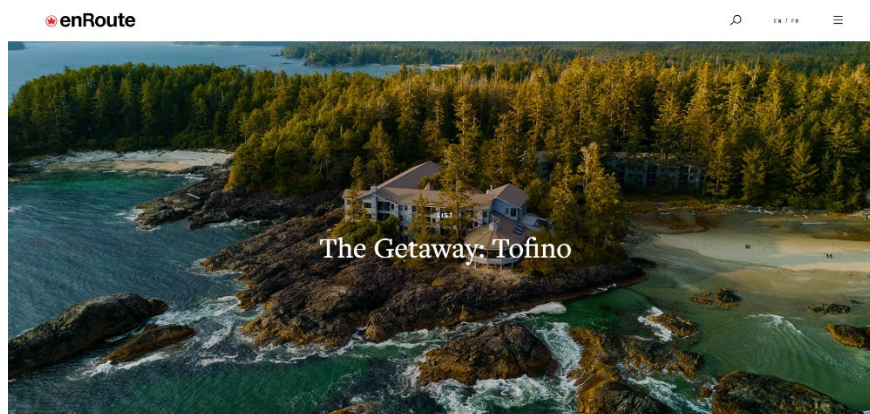
Owned Media

- A new role of Content Coordinator was added in the Marketing team to build capacity in the critical areas of digital content and social media.
- The new Tourism Tofino website project for was successfully tendered receiving 82 proposals! The contract was awarded to VentureWeb from Squamish, BC with work well underway for a target launch date of May 2024.
- Launched Tik Tok as a new channel and tested it with paid ads for the 2023 Workforce Attraction campaign with more playful content aimed at a younger audience on that platform.
- Reached 100,000 followers on Instagram.



Earned Media

- Tourism Tofino hosted 9 travel media journalists in 2023 (up from 5 in 2022) resulting in 15 media stories featuring Tofino as a destination.
- A highlight from the journalists Tourism Tofino hosted include two placements in Air Canada's Enroute magazine featuring multiple Tofino businesses and experiences.



<https://enroute.aircanada.com/en/travel-inspiration/what-to-do-in-tofino-british-columbia/>

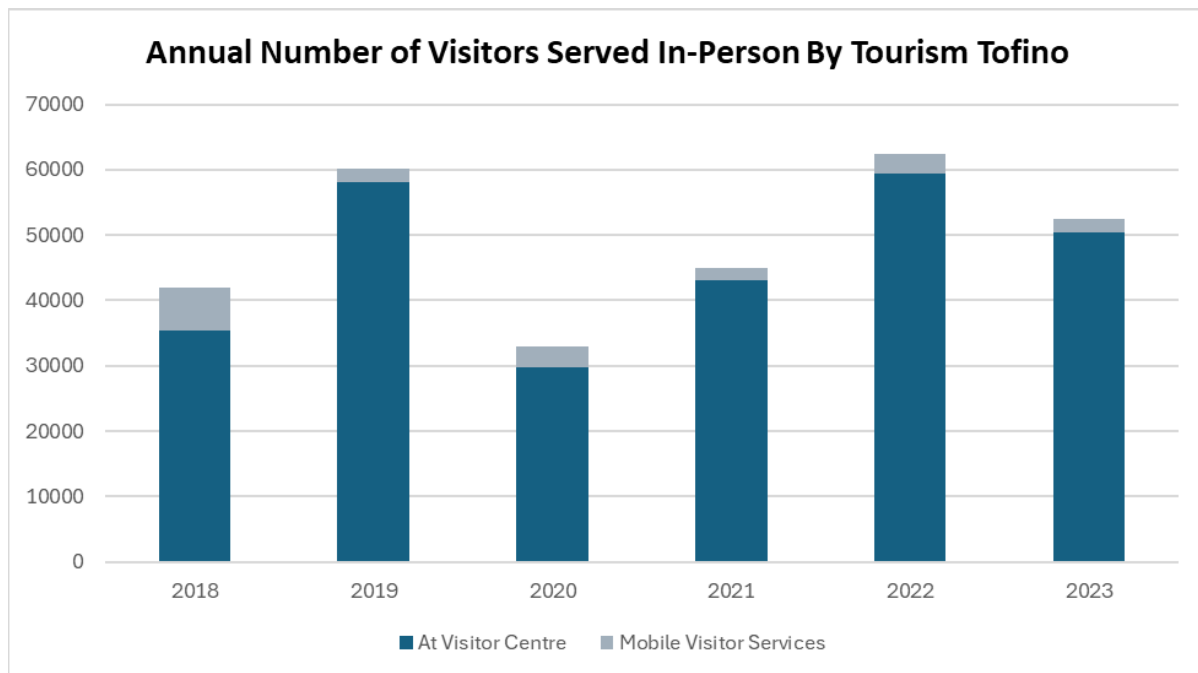
- Tourism Tofino assisted with over 300 other travel media stories featuring Tofino – providing connections to local businesses, suggested itinerary development, sourcing imagery and fact-checking for media stories initiated by our members or partners like 4VI and Destination BC.

Business Development

- Completed successful campaign in 2023 targeting off-peak, mid-week business travel for meetings, board retreats, and incentive travel – including attending trade shows.
- These efforts generated in 13 million impressions online and resulted in 35 potential leads for group bookings in Tofino representing 4,760 lead room nights.

Operational Highlights – Visitor Services

Our Visitor Services team are a key part of our organization and worked extremely hard in 2023 fielding not only the usual volume of inquiries from visitors on what to do, but also answering numerous questions about the Highway 4 closures over the summer and pointing visitors to correct information. Interacting with visitors face-to-face not only gives us an opportunity to influence how they spend their time and money, but also allows us opportunities to relay responsible visitor messaging.



**The new Tofino Visitor Centre opened in June 2019*

- Visitor Services staff interacted with over 52,000 visitors in-person in 2023 – mostly at the Tofino Visitor Centre but also with our mobile visitor services in the summer downtown with Chestervan (Tourism Tofino’s 1966 VW Van), at community events, and on beaches.
- Another 4,500 inquiries were taken via phone or online by Visitor Services in 2023.
- Tofino Visitor Centre hosted 7 Indigenous-led workshops including 3 ‘Nuu-chah-nulth Lands & Waters’ workshop by Giselle Martin and art workshops using beads & cedar with Elizabeth George.
- Hosted the ‘Truth, Honour & The Way Forward’ exhibit put on by the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust in conjunction with the Legacy of Hope Foundation, featuring student art reflecting on the legacy of residential schools.
- Added inclusive washroom signs to the Tofino Visitor Centre as part of our efforts to create an inclusive destination.
- Installed a new bike repair station along the Multi Use Path (MUP) and an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station in the parking area of the Visitor Centre.



- Visitor Centre received 43 x 5-star reviews on Google in 2023 with an average of 4.5 for Google reviews overall – demonstrating the outstanding service provided by the team.
- The Visitor Centre continued to be an Ocean-Friendly Business as certified by Surfrider Pacific Rim with our marine debris recycling station, and in 2023 started work on the Wildsafe BC Pledge to remove wildlife attractants from our grounds.
- Continued to sell local artisans products at the Visitor Centre and started selling merch for local non-profits like muʻāa (Rising Tide Surf Team), Coastal Queers and Tofino Jazz Festival.
- Installed a plaque on the Visitor Centre grounds acknowledging the donation of land from the Pettinger family to the District of Tofino to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pacific Sands Beach Resort.
- Continued to see high demand for our beach wheelchairs as part of our efforts to make Tofino a more accessible destination.

Beach Wheelchair Review from Daniel, Port Moody:

I would like to express my appreciation to Tofino Tourism for the free rental of the Sand Rider beach wheelchair on April 10, 2023. My sister Kat and I visited Tofino with our mom Jolana, who was a palliative patient living with cancer and unable to walk anymore.

Taking her out on Long Beach in Sand Rider was an unforgettable highlight of our trip and to our amazement she lasted almost two hours in chilly and windy conditions where she enjoyed collecting shells and playing with sea weeds.

Our mom passed away a month later on May 10, 2023 and we are grateful for the memories that Tofino Tourism's beach wheelchair program allowed us to create.



Operational Highlights – Destination Stewardship

Destination Stewardship has become a major focus for Tourism Tofino as we seek to make tourism a force for good for our community. This means managing the impacts of tourism on the environment, First Nations, and residents as we move towards a regenerative tourism model that results in a net benefit for people and place in this special part of the world for generations to come.

Tourism Tofino is guided in these efforts by global principles like the United Nation’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which was unanimously adopted by the Legislative Assembly of BC into law in November 2019 as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) – the first jurisdiction to do so in Canada. The tourism industry in BC has a lot of work to do to live up to its obligations under DRIPA and Tourism Tofino is committed to continuing to work meaningfully with First Nations.

- Created new role of Destination Stewardship Manager to build capacity in destination management and regenerative tourism initiatives.
- Began consultations with Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation on incorporating the ʔiisaak Pledge into our responsible visitor messaging – starting with a redesigned ‘Welcome to Tofino’ brochure racked across the destination and in BC Ferries. A full ʔiisaak Pledge campaign will launch in 2024.



“Let me be careful in what I say and do while I’m in somebody else’s territory.”

– Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation prayer

Čaamaapitsiinhi?in The ʔiisaak Pledge (iisaak)

ʔayaahu?al – the closest word to “Welcome” in the Tla-o-qui-aht language – extends both an invitation and an expectation. Guests are welcomed here with open arms, but they are expected to **yuuts-hap**: to carry themselves with dignity, honour, humility, and respect while travelling through the **hahuuli** of the **ʔaʔuukwiath hawiih**. We invite you to take the **ʔiisaak pledge**, carrying these words in your heart as you travel:

ʔiisaaksinhi?in (il-saak-sin-hi-in)

Let us be respectful of Natural Law.
Let us be observant, appreciative and act accordingly.

Yuuchapsiinhi?in (yuuts-hap-sin-hi-in)

Let us behave with honour, dignity, respect and humility in the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.

Qʔaasiinhapin (kwa-siin-hap-in)

Let us leave things as they are.
Avoid disturbing, destroying or removing Indigenous plants, animals, shells, stones, & minerals.

Tiicsiinhi?in (tiich-siin-hi-in)

Let us protect life by staying safe, being prepared, and by supporting the continuation of life for generations to come.

Taaquuqhi?in (taa-quugh-lthi-in)

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

ʔaayaksiinhi?in (lthaa-yak-siin-hi-in)

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

Čaamaapitsiinhi?in (cha-ma-pilth-siin-hi-in)

Let us stand in dignity, honour, respect and humility, practicing the above!

Visit clayquotbiosphere.org and tribalpark.com for more information.



“The land we walk on is made of the dust of our ancestors. So we walk with dignity, honour, love and humility.”

– Elder Levi Martin,
Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

Photo by: Noel Hendrickson

tourismtofino.com

@tourismtofino

@tourismtofino

@tourism_tofino

Share your story › tag us.

- Continued to be a proud Tribal Parks Ally donating \$26,282 in 2023 (1% of total 2022 MRDT). We encourage our member businesses to strongly consider participating in this important initiative that supports DRIPA and is generating interest across BC & Canada.
- Entered into a social media content sharing agreement with Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks to increase representation and visibility on these channels.
- The first ever Tourism Tofino scholarships totalling \$20,000 were awarded to three graduating students of USS who were studying tourism-related fields.
- Supported our community in amplifying emergency messaging related to the Highway 4 closure and serious water conservation measures in summer of 2023.
- Another successful workforce attraction campaign launched in late winter to attract seasonal summer staff to address ongoing labour shortages, with a second flight launched after the highway re-opened.
- Successful collaboration with Coastal Queers with a Shifting Frameworks workshop put on for member businesses.
- Foundational work underway to update Tourism Tofino's market research post-pandemic (Environics Analytics, AirDNA and renewing economic impact study)
- Joined Destination Think's global collective of destinations working on destination management and regenerative tourism.
- Tourism Tofino once again hosted Washed Up Wednesdays over the summer – encouraging visitors to participate in beach clean-ups to leave the destination better than they found it. Over 2,167 pieces of debris were collected in 2023.
- Continued to develop responsible visitor messaging to encourage better visitor behaviour, including using billboard messaging across island at Nanoose Bay on the way to Tofino.

