



# West Kootenay Tourism Alliance - WKTA Branding Process

WEST KOOTENAY TOURISM ALLIANCE

IN THIS ISSUE

## The Conversation Continues

On Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> groups from each area met in Silverton to continue the discussion around the WKTA Branding Process.

Introduced by Community Champions Peter Welkerling and Jan McMurray, Tom Hudock led the discussion and information session. The focus of the discussion was how important it will be to work together as a Region. Even after the Brand is revealed, the importance of every area within the region to support and collaborate together will be what makes our Brand successful.

Tom identified through their research that the WKTA Region would attract an "Explorer" type tourist, who is looking for a journey by such things as the open road, wilderness trails, self-discovery, or individual water and land activities. These are travelers who may not follow an itinerary. The objective of the Regional collaboration will be to attract these explorers to stay 2 or 3 days in each of the three areas that make up the Region longer and visit each one of the individual areas.

Many interesting and provocative ideas and suggestions were offered by the group including:

- Collaborative efforts between similar Resorts, Restaurants & Hotels
- Capture the essence of packaging the 3 unique lakes
- Experiential Learning through exposure to Nature

Tom indicated that each community will continue to have its own unique brand, but what's being created is a Brand for the WKTA Region. Generally the consensus is that the Region will be stronger than an individual community because of two reasons: a) the resources available through funding sources, and, b) the larger region is able to cut through the noise of other tourism brands more than an individual village. Funding would be available to establish the WKTA, but they will need to find innovative ways of attracting businesses to financially support the ongoing success of the Alliance.

Going forward, Tom also stressed that it will take years to establish the Brand but if supported, it will grow to its full potential. Within their agreement, Reinfluence will produce a Brand Statement as a strategic guide to follow for future planning, a completely designed Rack Card for Visitor Centers, and Website and Wayfinding Signage designs.

The most important message that came out of this meeting was the need to think regionally,



### Project Background

The West Kootenay Tourism Alliance is a new group that consists of local businesses, tourism organizations, and citizens of Nakusp/Arrow Lakes, the Slocan Valley, and the Kaslo/Balfour/North Kootenay Lake area represented by each area's Chamber of Commerce.



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not just individually minded, which includes passing tourists along to enjoy other parts of the region. This goes to the cooperative nature of a region.

Also, the efforts of the community champions to move this branding process forward, within each of their communities, is not enough. What is needed is the involvement and support of everyone, from businesses to the public, Village Councils to Community Organizations to make our Brand effective and sustainable over the long term.

## Project Background

The West Kootenay Tourism Alliance had its beginnings at a tourism workshop in Nakusp last year in January. We formed in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation. It wasn't only because we're friendly, cooperative, collaborative people, but also out of almost a necessity. We recognize that we will do better if we band together as a region and promote one another as part of a regional experience. We see more potential for sustainable growth in our communities by working together as a region.

The tourism assessments and plans that have been done for our communities have said that there's not really enough in any one of our communities to attract visitors for any length of time. But together, we have an attractive tourist destination for certain types of visitors to come and stay for a week or two.

The studies have also said that most of the marketing for our area through Destination BC, Kootenay Rockies Tourism and the International Selkirk Loop tells people that we are just a day trip – so people would stay in Nelson and Revelstoke and come through our region for the day.

We'd like people to come through and stay in the Arrow Lakes Valley for a couple of days, the Slocan Valley for a couple of days, and the North Kootenay Lake Valley for a couple of days. We'd like to bring in people who are attracted to this area for what it is, and we believe we'll attract new residents and businesses as well. Most of us came here as visitors before we decided to move here.

Revelstoke and Nelson are also part of the WKTA. Revelstoke has been with us from the beginning, a year ago at the tourism workshop in Nakusp, and Nelson joined us last August, when we did a strategic planning session with KRT. This is the report that came out of that session. It's here to look at, and we can email it to anyone who'd like it. At that session, we came to an understanding that Nelson and Revelstoke are our gateway communities, and would be involved in an advisory capacity.

Nelson and Revelstoke are quite a ways ahead of us in terms of tourism development. As you know, we do tourism development in our three valleys as volunteers and with grant money, project by project.

In Revelstoke, they have a Destination Marketing Organization that brings in \$500,000 a year for tourism and the Nelson-KL DMO brings in \$200,000 a year for tourism. They have dedicated staff and a budget.

So the three valleys face similar challenges: we're being marketed as a day trip and we have few resources for marketing or tourism in general.

We decided early on that we wanted to do a branding exercise to determine our commonalities and come up with a name for the region and some visuals for marketing purposes. We agreed at the strategic planning session that the branding would be for the three valleys, with Nelson and Revelstoke on board in an advisory capacity.

So, we put out an RFP for the branding project. We received three proposals and chose Reinfluence out of Victoria. Tom Hudock, a branding consultant, is originally from Nelson, and it was Reinfluence who did the Nelson-Kootenay Lake brand.

### GETTING AROUND THE REGION



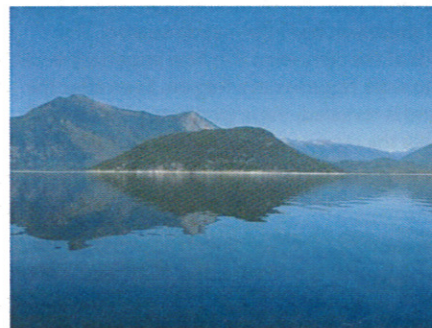
#### Nakusp/Arrow Lakes

The **Arrow Lakes** is part of the Columbia River System, with water flowing through the lakes from north to south.



#### New Denver/Slocan Lake

**Slocan Lake** is a lake in the West Kootenay region, it is drained by the Slocan River, which flows south from the lake's foot at Slocan City through the Slocan Valley to South Slocan, British Columbia.



#### Kaslo/North Kootenay Lake

**Kaslo** first made its way onto the map in the late 1800s as a gold and silver mining hub.

More than a century on, it has retained its historic charm and continues to lure tourists from far and wide for its iconic heritage sites and Kootenay Lake playground