



# Community Tourism - Phase 1

*Funding provided by the Province of British Columbia*

## BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

August 2008



Prepared by the Union of BC Municipalities

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# Introduction

The Community Tourism Program (CTP) was initiated by the Premier at the 2004 UBCM Convention:

*“I want you to be able to tell your stories. I want you to be able to show off your communities wherever you live in the province. The Province will make a one-time grant of \$25 million to the UBCM to allow you to tell your stories of tourism across B.C. I want you to understand this is going to be your money. You can use it how you see fit, whether it’s for marketing or building products or connecting with other people.”*

Following this, CTP was developed with the goal of assisting local governments to increase tourism activity in order to build stronger local economies. A number of indirect goals were also developed, including supporting the provincial target of doubling tourism in British Columbia by 2015, supporting the Province’s “Spirit of 2010 Tourism Strategy,” and increasing the tourism industry’s awareness of the role of local government.

Phase 1 of the program (CTP1), accounting for half of the total \$25 million, was designed to avoid duplication of existing tourism initiatives, encourage innovative partnerships, and, where appropriate, complement initiatives of other agencies and recognize and accommodate the capacity of smaller communities. By developing an allocation based program, with all local governments eligible for funding, the UBCM was able to recognize the diversity of readiness and tourism needs of different communities across the province.

## Purpose of this Report

This report describes the variety of projects funded under CTP1 and provides quantitative analysis of funding distribution across the province. This analysis provides insight into the type of projects that were undertaken and gauges the success of the program in achieving the Province’s goal of doubling tourism by the year 2015.

Many communities provided measures of success as a part of their final reporting, however these indicators did not easily align with the 2015 goals determined by the Province.<sup>1</sup> In response, four performance indicators were developed to measure the success of the overall program in relation to provincial goals.

The indicators, community stories and other elements of this report are intended to demonstrate the community impact and return on investment that CTP1 has provided. However, it is important to note the staff and other in-kind contributions from local governments, dedicated community members, local organizations and leveraged funds from other sources also played an important role by translating CTP1 funds into the local tourism activities that are now helping to shape stronger local economies.

*“The investment provided through the Community Tourism Program will have long-term benefits to Westside businesses and residents.”*

*- Westbank Chamber of Commerce*

# Program Highlights

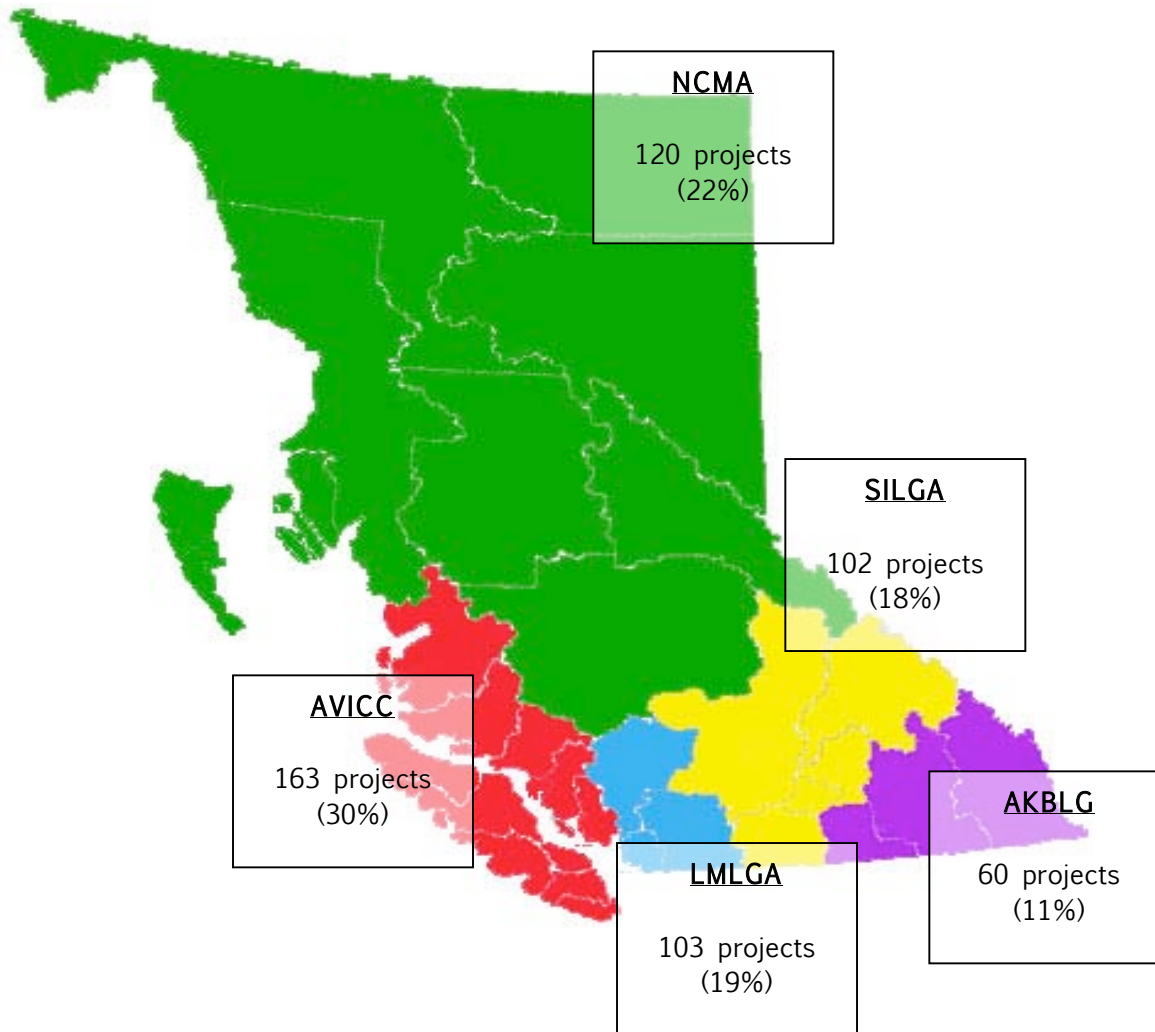
CTP1 provided each local government in the province with a funding allocation that they were free to use on any activity that contributed to tourism in their community.

In many communities, this resulted in multiple activities, initiatives, planning processes and capital improvements. In this report, each of these individual undertakings are described as a “project.”

## Funding Distribution

CTP1 resulted in 548 tourism-related projects across the province. The following sections illustrate the distribution of the projects by area association<sup>ii</sup>, category and type of activity.

### Project Distribution by Area Association



*“The [CTP] allowed us to create three products that capitalized on our brand – a ‘lure piece,’ a showcase wall in our Visitor Information Centre and a brand stewardship guide.”*

*- Town of Golden*

## Project Distribution by Focus Area

To help determine the range of activities that were undertaken and the trends across the province, each of the 548 projects was assigned to a focus area category. Table 1 outlines the percentage of projects in each of the following categories: agricultural, cultural, eco-tourism, events and festivals, heritage, information, and sport tourism, as well as general tourism (which refers to comprehensive projects with high-level goals of increasing overall tourism in the community)

**Table 1: Categories**

Category	#	%
Agricultural	17	3.1
Cultural	28	5.1
Eco-tourism	70	12.8
Events	47	8.6
Heritage	46	8.4
Information	72	13.1
Sports	35	6.4
General	233	42.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen in the table, the high incidence of general tourism points to the number of communities that had limited exposure to the tourism industry and who used their funds to increase the overall amount of tourism in their community.

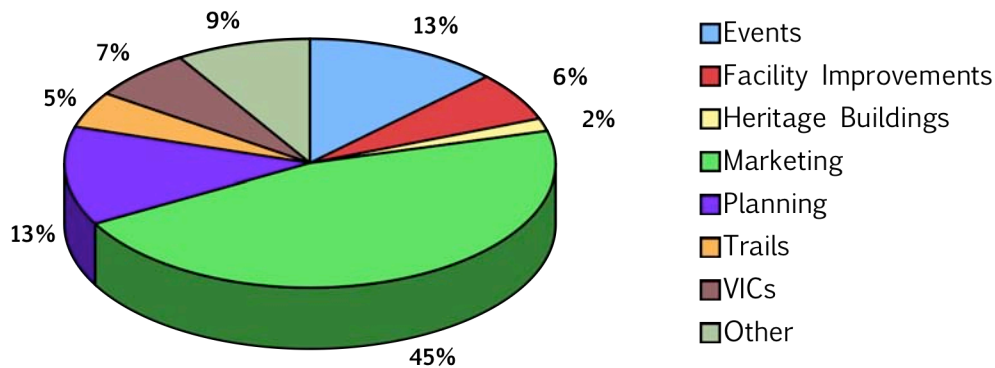
Within these communities, there is great potential for future tourism growth as communities become more specialized in the delivery of tourism services and begin to identify and capitalize on local attractions and assets.

*“The program was well administered and the funds were extremely valuable for local tourism projects.”*

*- City of Revelstoke*

## Project Distribution by Type of Activity

Chart 1 categorizes projects by activity. The emphasis placed on marketing and planning demonstrates the foundational role of CTP funding for many communities throughout the province. Additional information of these activity types follows in subsequent sections of this report.



# Measurements of Success

A key component of the Community Tourism Program is to support the goal of doubling tourism in BC by 2015. According to Tourism BC, in 2007 most indicators of the provincial tourism sector continued to show solid growth, with overseas and inter-provincial travellers making up a significant component of visitors. Room revenues maintained an upward trend with increased revenues and hotel occupancy rates at an 11-year high. As well, jobs in tourism-related industries, especially the food and beverage sectors, continued to expand in 2007.<sup>iii</sup>



There is significant evidence that CTP has contributed to this success. In order to analyse the impact of CTP1, we have identified four measurements of success that point to significant growth in the tourism industry: the development of tourism plans, attendance at events, enhancements in marketing and communications, and capital improvements.

As well, we have provided estimates of the return on investment that CTP1 projects are generating across the province. Based on statistics developed by Tourism BC (including the finding that tourists spend between \$45 and \$70 per day and \$150 to \$550 on overnight stays in BC<sup>iv</sup>) and on visitor statistics provided in CTP1 final reports, local revenues have been estimated for a number of CTP1 projects. These estimates demonstrate that in only 16 of the 548 CTP1 projects, the investment of less than \$1 million has generated more than \$33.8 million. In fact, these 16 projects alone have returned more than triple the \$12.5 million that was committed to all of Phase 1.

## Creation of Tourism Plans

Thoughtful planning provides the basis for sound investment in tourism projects that have the potential for additional tourism growth – and return on investment - across the province. The development of a comprehensive tourism plan is also the first step in creating or enhancing a viable, local tourism industry. This plan may stand alone, relate to a specific attraction or sector, or become a chapter in a larger economic development plan.

It is encouraging to note that 71 local governments utilized some or all of their CTP1 allocation for tourism planning activities. Some communities that had general planning documents in place took the opportunity to develop specialized plans to explore opportunities in such areas as cultural, agricultural, and sport tourism. Business plans were also developed for trails and parks.

Some of the of the specialized plans that were developed under CTP1 have already demonstrated local and economic success. For example:

- The **Cariboo Regional District** is working with the 108 Mile First Nations to conduct a museum cultural centre feasibility study. While this project is not yet complete, the regional district has reported that the contribution from CTP1 was instrumental in leveraging an additional \$250,000 from other funding sources.
- Local governments in the **Fraser Valley Regional District** worked co-operatively to develop an *Agricultural Tourism Plan* to enhance the existing Circle Farm Tours – a self-guided tour that promotes close to 50 year-round agri-tourism destinations as well as numerous seasonal markets ([www.circlefarmtour.com](http://www.circlefarmtour.com)).

A study undertaken by the Fraser Basin Council has documented that, on average, people spend between \$11 and \$21 per person at farmers markets and that farmers markets contribute between \$210,000 and \$1.5 million annually to the local economy.<sup>v</sup> Based on this, it is estimated that the venues in the Fraser Valley could be generating more than \$10 million dollars per year.

- In the **City of Dawson Creek**, a *Master Attractions Plan* was developed to capitalize on the more than 300,000 tourists that drive the Alaska Highway each year and who are estimated by Tourism Dawson Creek to spend about \$56 per person per day.<sup>vi</sup> If even 10% of these travellers visited Dawson Creek in 2007, it is estimated that more than \$1.6 million would have been generated in the local economy.



**\$10 million  
generated in  
the Fraser  
Valley**



**\$1.6 million  
generated in  
Dawson  
Creek**

### **Community Success Story - Sunshine Coast Tourism Partnership**

In 2006, a commissioned economic and market scan sponsored by Tourism BC clearly showed that the lower Sunshine Coast tourism industry was lagging behind other BC tourism jurisdictions. The lack of a marketing strategy was identified as a significant constraint in stimulating tourism growth

In response to this report, the **Sunshine Coast Regional District** and its member municipalities pooled funds from CTP1 to develop a destination marketing organization for the entire Sunshine Coast. Powell River Regional District already had a marketing organization in place, so an MOU was signed with Powell River Tourism to ensure a stronger tourism economy for the entire region.

The Tourism BC Community Foundations program was used to supplement CTP1 funding and to develop a coast wide marketing plan. Tourism Powell River was contracted to develop a regional brand and produce promotional materials for website, travel shows, advertising and media. A co-operative marketing program was launched with advertising in variety of venues in BC and Alberta. Gateway signage was also installed with CTP funding. The project final report anticipates that, as a result of these efforts, visitor spending will grow by 15%, or \$9 million between 2008 and 2012.



**\$9 million  
generated on  
Sunshine  
Coast**

## Attendance at Events & Festivals

Festivals and events are a key drawing card for visitors. As festival themes are often determined by the nature of the community itself, these events provide an opportunity for communities to showcase their assets and strengths and generate local revenues.

Rodeos, art shows, music festivals, cultural activities and other events draw participants and spectators from the community, the region, and beyond. Whether large scale or more modest – a one-time opportunity or an annual event - successful events have a positive long-term impact on a community: economic benefits are felt; social networking opportunities are developed; recreational opportunities are enhanced; and volunteers and community pride are cultivated. Often a successful event can result in new or enhanced events being planned for the future.

Many of the events supported by the CTP1 demonstrated remarkable successes. For example:

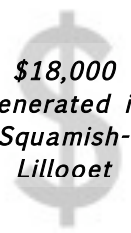
- The **Squamish-Lillooet Regional District** supported the “Copper and Fire” event at the Museum of Mining and enjoyed a 21% increase in paid visitors in 2007 - resulting in an estimated revenue of over \$18,000.
- The Pender Harbour Chamber Music Festival was supported by the **Sunshine Coast Regional District** and generated a 25% to 35% increase in off coast attendance in 2006.

### **Community Success Story – Logan Lake Disc Golf Course**

In 2002, the **District of Logan Lake** completed a *Recreation Tourism Master Plan* that identified the development of an 18-hole disc golf course as an opportunity. The community was able to take advantage of CTP1, as well as corporate donations from Highland Valley Copper and 510 volunteer hours, to make the disc golf course a reality.

The Copper Ridge Course opened in 2007 and has been a great success. The course includes heritage signage that depicts local mining history in the area, adding another element to the tourism experience. Recreational opportunities are enhanced for residents as well, complimenting provincial goals of healthy living through physical activity.

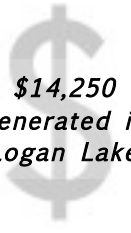
In its first year of operation the BC Disc Sports Society, District of Logan Lake, and Kamloops Disc Golf Club hosted the 2007 BC Provincial Disc Golf Championships at the Course - bringing 95 registered players and 30 volunteers to the community. Assuming each visitor spent the minimum average expenditure for overnight visits - \$150 – the event would have generated more than an estimated \$14,000 for Logan Lake.



**\$18,000**  
*generated in  
Squamish-  
Lillooet*



**25-35%**  
*increase in  
visitors on  
Sunshine  
Coast*



**\$14,250**  
*generated in  
Logan Lake*



- The **Town of Sidney** implemented a strategy to become a small meeting convention destination. Since 2004, they have hosted ten two-day conferences, and are reporting an estimated \$1.24 million in tourism spending - a ten-fold increase since 2004.
- The BC Performing Arts Festival in the **City of Prince George** drew 356 performers and 1,100 tourists. As a multi-day event, this festival brought significant revenues to Prince George - resulting in at least an estimated \$650,000 being spent locally.
- The Canada Post Freestyle Ski event, supported by the **Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District**, boasted 121 volunteers and 137 athletes from 17 countries. 5,050 spectators attended and had the potential to generate a minimum of \$225,000 in estimated local spending.

*\$1.2 million  
generated in  
Sidney*

*\$650,000  
generated in  
Prince  
George*

*\$225,000  
generated in  
Okanagan*



## Enhancement of Marketing & Communications

Marketing and communications tools are critical components of implementing a tourism plan or increasing tourism activity. This includes the development or enhancement of websites, creation and distribution of print materials and the implementation of advertising programs. It is interesting to note that nearly 47% - or 256 of the 548 CTP1 projects - were focussed on marketing and communications; indicating the local need for these materials.

### Print materials


Print materials are a cornerstone of all tourism programs. Many communities produce general brochures describing the area and local attributes, but many are directed at promoting a particular venue or event. Professionally developed print materials are critical. They are provided to web visitors requesting more information

by mail and materials are racked in Visitor Information Centres and other venues frequented by the travelling public. Consequently, these materials have the ability to influence a visitors travel itinerary. It is worthwhile to look at some of the statistics that illustrate the strength of a well-designed brochure or guide:

- In the **District of Hope**, 40,000 hiking brochures were produced to market Eco Tours in the area and the District has estimated that 1,119 new hikers came to the area because of the brochure. If each visitor spent the minimum average daily amount of \$45, this would mean more than an estimated \$50,000 was generated.
- The Lower Thompson Valley Visitor Information Centre, in the **Thompson-Nicola Regional District**, experienced a 42% increase in visitors as a result of tourism brochures and the website development.
- Since the Kicking Horse Country brochure was created, the **Town of Golden** has entertained 40,000 visitors at the Information Centre. The Town reports this is 10,000 more visitors than projected. Assuming a minimum expenditure of \$45 per person, the brochure could have generated more than an estimated \$1.8 million.
- In the **Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District**, the Okanagan Similkameen Agricultural Resort Area initiative and Naramata marketing initiatives have generated a 24% increase in visitors at the VIC and 29% increase in the winery and fruit industry.



*\$50,000  
generated in  
Hope*



*42% more  
visitors in  
Thompson-  
Nicola*



*\$1.8 million  
generated in  
Golden*



*29%  
increase in  
winery/fruit  
industry in  
Okanagan*

### **Community Success Story – Chilliwack Marketing Program**

Tourism Chilliwack is the lead agency in the **City of Chilliwack** charged with marketing, developing tourism and creating a strong local tourism industry. They recognize that a dynamic and growing tourism industry is an important part of the overall provincial tourism industry.

The City of Chilliwack recognized the need to market its facilities and other assets, and saw the launch of CTP1 as a perfect opportunity to develop the marketing tools it needed. Elements of the marketing program included the Chilliwack Greeter Program, Sport Tourism Marketing campaign, Agri-tourism regional initiative, highway signage and expanded community based marketing initiatives

The greeter program provides the opportunity to meet face-to-face with visitors at special events, sport tournaments, conferences and festivals. Each volunteer is trained in customer service and provided with a uniform to create a positive professional impression. Volunteers are expected to be scheduled to be present at 15 – 20 events in 2008 alone.

"Go Chilliwack" is the marketing brand developed by the City of to market sports venues and assist sport organizations and teams considering Chilliwack as an option for tournaments, training camps and special events. Support for teams will also be provided during sporting events in the community.

## Web-based Marketing

In today's world, an up-to-date website is critical to the success of any marketing campaign. It is therefore encouraging to note that many communities reported a significant increase in hits after using CTP1 funding to update their websites. Some of the improvements made included enhanced search functions, language translation options and the addition of fresh information and images.

Although, not every hit translates into a purchase, website visits do translate into a potential traveller learning more about British Columbia and its tourism products.



A good example is the Selkirk Loop website ([www.selkirkloop.org](http://www.selkirkloop.org)), supported by the **Central Kootenay Regional District**, that is enjoying 34,000 visits per month. The site includes detail on their 2006 tourism study and indicates that \$1.15 million dollars was generated by visitors in the 2006 season and that the return on investment for advertising the Loop is \$22 to \$44 per dollar spent.<sup>vii</sup>

In addition, the revitalized website for Nakusp Hot Springs (<http://nakusp.iwebz.com>) is experiencing 400 hits a day, the Thompson Nicola Copper Desert Country Research and Development website ([www.copperdesertcountry.com](http://www.copperdesertcountry.com)) increased visitations by 85% over two years, and the Comox-Strathcona Regional District web-based photo display ([www.comoxstrathcona.ca/section\\_photogallery](http://www.comoxstrathcona.ca/section_photogallery)) experienced 1,359 hits after only two weeks. These 3 websites alone could account for over 500,000 consumers discovering what BC has to offer.

### Community Success Story – Powell River, the “Other West Coast”

The **Powell River Regional District's** “Discover BC's other West Coast” promotional campaign was a huge success. Target markets included the lower mainland and Vancouver Island, as it was felt these areas had the greatest potential. Marketing materials included printed brochures, newspaper advertising, and radio. A contest with a follow-up survey was designed to measure the success of the program.

In addition to contest entries, the [www.discoverpowellriver.com](http://www.discoverpowellriver.com) saw an increase of 2,000 visits per month, and e-mail and visitations were up 33% over the previous year.

**\$1.1 million**  
generated in  
Central  
Kootenay

**500,000 hits**  
on 3 tourism  
websites

**33% more**  
visitors in  
Powell River

## Capital Improvements

Many communities chose to invest their CTP1 allocation in capital improvements. These improvements included signage, hiking trails and boardwalks, installation of washrooms and other improvements to public venues and facilities. These activities have had a positive impact on the visitor experience within the community and enhanced opportunities for local residents to enjoy local assets.

### Boardwalks and Trails

Walking trails are a popular tourist draw. Travellers are offered the opportunity to leave their vehicles and experience the community on foot by exploring the local countryside; experiencing natural wonders such as waterfalls, glaciers, and wildlife; and participating in healthy activity such as walking and hiking.

Examples of successful projects include the Somenos Marsh bird watching boardwalk in the **City of Duncan**, interpretive signage in the **District of North Cowichan** and the boardwalk and trails in the **District of Stewart**.

### Signage

Signage is a critical component of any tourism initiative. Gateway signage improves wayfinding on provincial highways and provides a welcoming image to the community. Interpretive signage enhances the visitor experience by telling stories of the community and providing information on the assets the community has to offer.

#### ***Community Success Story – Ashcroft Heritage Walking Trails***

The **Village of Ashcroft** is a small town with a rich history. In co-operation with Community Futures, the Village undertook a series of public meetings to develop a vision for the future of Ashcroft. One of the first projects identified through this process was the promotion of historical buildings and the stories associated with them.

A self-guided Historical Walking Tour was developed that covers the downtown core of the Village and highlights prominent individuals and events. Many of the buildings have historical plaques on site, providing additional background information for those participating in the walk.

A brochure was designed to provide participants with a map of the area and a brief history of the 24 buildings profiled. The walk is approximately 0.5 km in length and is on level ground, making it accessible to everyone. Benches are provided to stop and rest along the way.

Gateway signage was a very popular project across the province. Some examples of include:

- The Selkirk Loop project in the **Central Kootenay Regional District** resulted in gateway signage being developed for communities “on the loop.”
- The **District of Mackenzie** developed two gateway signs as well as improved signage at the Highway 97 turnoff to the community. Mackenzie has reported an additional 800 visitors to the community in the first year since the signage was installed – and these visitors could have contributed at least an estimated \$36,000 to the local economy.

*\$36,000  
generated in  
Mackenzie*



Signage within the community was also a popular choice for communities. Unlike gateway signage, these projects were designed to aid the visitors when they have arrived within the community, including directional signage, storyboards, trail markers and historical information.

The installation of decorative signage and banners also provided local governments with the opportunity to increase the aesthetic appeal of their community. In addition, a good example of an interpretive sign program is the **City of Merritt's** interpretive “Walk of Stars” project that builds on the Merritt Mountain Music Festival and celebrates the country music stars that have played there.

## Visitor Information Centres

In many communities the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) serves as the central location for information on the community, tourist attractions and local amenities. Most visitors to British Columbia recognize the VIC brand and make a point of visiting the VIC when they arrive in a community. A number of communities used their CTP funding to build or enhance VIC facilities. Others made necessary repairs to existing facilities.

Some highlights are included below:

- The **District of New Hazelton** reported that their VIC saw an increase of more than 600 groups from out of area, thanks to a themed gateway and information program. The District's report notes these additional visitors generated an estimated \$250,000 in local revenue.
- In the **Village of Valemount** a new VIC was built and the operating season was extended by four months. Funds were highly leveraged with grants from the Province and Northern Development Initiative trust. The success of this project was demonstrated by the increase of more than 14,500 visitors between 2006 and 2007 – who potentially spent more than an estimated \$650,000 in the Valemount area.
- Improvements to the **District of Cache Creek's** VIC resulted in an increase in the average number of daily visitors from 32.4 in 2006 to 38.4 in 2007. Assuming the daily visitors spend the minimum average amount of \$45 per person per day, this could result in an estimated daily generation of more than \$1,700 or an estimated annual contribution of more than \$600,000.



**\$250,000**  
*generated in  
New  
Hazelton*



**\$650,000**  
*generated in  
Valemount*



**\$600,000**  
*generated in  
Cache Creek*

### **Community Success Story – Pemberton Visitor Information Centre**

By 2005, the **Village of Pemberton's** VIC was proving to be inadequate in serving the needs of visitors to Pemberton and those travelling the Sea to Sky Corridor. The existing VIC was 10'x16', had issues with structural integrity, and did not have washroom facilities for visitors or employees. The community had been attempting to secure funding for a new VIC for several years and, with the announcement of CTP funding, the project was finally able to proceed.

The old VIC was removed and replaced with a trailer. Volunteer labour and donated materials were used to construct a false front on the building so that it fit in with the character of the community. The surrounding area was landscaped as well. The new VIC has more visual impact with passing highway traffic. It is heated, has hot water, air conditioning, a meeting room, and a public washroom.

With the addition of washroom facilities, the Pemberton VIC now qualifies and operates as a full status Visitor Centre under Tourism BC's Visitor Centre Network and qualifies for the international "i" signage. With the upcoming Olympics and the growing popularity of Pemberton's annual "Winterfest," there will be increased opportunity for the VIC to play an essential role in welcoming visitors and promoting the area.



## Other Capital Improvements

There was a tremendous variety in the types of capital improvements that were accomplished under CTP1. Some were larger scale projects, and accomplished by leveraging funding from other agencies. Others were smaller in scale, but critical to ensuring a positive visitor experience.

Some of the larger scale projects included:

- Upgrades to the train station in the **City of Quesnel** were made to accommodate the new Rocky Mountain Raitour route. Visitor Information Centre statistics reflect a 20% increase in visitors - generating 2,311 room nights in two hotels and roughly \$2 million spent in the community.
- In the **City of Prince Rupert**, which has recently begun servicing the cruise ship industry, the Northcoast Rail is providing service to passengers and the Millennium Walkway and Train station projects have been completed. Project funding was leveraged with funds from the Coast Sustainability Trust and local statistics estimate that cruise ship passengers accounted for more than 45% of visitors in 2007 and contributed more than \$4.5 million to the local economy.<sup>viii</sup>

Smaller scale projects also increased tourism potential in many communities. For example:

- In the **Central Coast Regional District**, Discovery Coast made considerable improvements to their fair grounds by using funding from CTP and the Coast Sustainability Trust. Once those improvements were made it was possible to enhance the promotion of their music festival. Since these activities were completed the VIC reports that they have seen a 32% increase in visitors. Ferry passengers have increased by 20% and hotel room revenues have increased by \$200,000.
- By pooling their CTP allocations, the **North Okanagan Regional District**, **City of Vernon**, and **District of Coldstream** were able to conduct much needed repairs on the historical buildings at the O'Keefe Ranch.
- The Wells Gray Country Projects in the **Thompson-Nicola Regional District** generated an over 20% increase in visitors as a result of the Dutch Lake Beach upgrade project, the trails project and the website translation project ([www.wellsgraycountry.ca](http://www.wellsgraycountry.ca)).



*\$2 million  
generated in  
Quesnel*

*\$4.5 million  
generated in  
Prince Rupert*

*\$200,000  
generated in  
Central  
Coast*

*20% more  
visitors in  
Thompson-  
Nicola*

# Community Development

The previous sections detail the success of CTP1 in bringing direct tourism dollars to communities across the province. However, many projects funded under CTP1 also helped to improve the quality of life in communities and facilitated a broad range of community development.

In some communities, CTP1 projects were found to increase local employment. In the **Bulkley-Nechako Regional District**, the implementation of a tourism plan resulted in the creation of ten tourism jobs. In other cases, the creation or re-development of a local Visitor Information Centre (VIC) created new service positions. For example, the re-development of the VIC in the **District of Fraser Lake**, resulted in extended hours of operation and the creation of a new full time customer service position.

Many projects were designed to promote local events and festivals to attract tourists to BC communities. Not only did these festivals attract visitors, they also aided in developing inclusive and vibrant communities across the province. CTP1 funded festivals alone drew over 100,000 visitors to communities around the province and provided local residents with the opportunity to experience musical and cultural performances and to witness sporting games and events.



However, perhaps the most significant community development impact was the contribution made to local sustainability. For example, some communities invested in small capital projects that enhanced venues utilized by visitors to the area.

The addition of such items as sound systems, video equipment, and washroom facilities to entertainment

venues will allow communities to attract additional special events and celebrations to their communities and further expand their tourism potential.

This is the case in the **Town of Princeton** where the enhanced sound system at the rodeo grounds will increase the quality of experience for visitors and locals alike and will provide the community with a stronger foundation from which to promote the venue.

Improvements in eco- and sport-tourism facilities have also increased the quality of tourism infrastructure in many communities and provided residents with enhanced opportunities for exercise and leisure activities. For example, in the **City of Salmon Arm** a new skateboard park was developed and is providing youth of the community and surrounding region with a much-needed public recreation space in the region.

*10 new jobs  
in Bulkley-  
Nechako*

*100,000  
visitors to  
BC festivals  
and events*



## Community Tourism Phase 2

The Community Tourism program was designed for release in two phases of \$12.5 million each. The reasons for this were two-fold. First, the UBCM would have an opportunity to review the program and implement any changes if required. Second, and more importantly, it allowed communities to embark on tourism projects in Phase 1, with confidence that a second round of funding would be made available to build on successes in Phase 2.

Community Tourism phase 2 (CTP2) was launched June 29, 2007 after a comprehensive review of CTP1 - which included consultation with the UBCM membership. Due to the enthusiastic response to CTP1 it was decided that the CTP2 would not be changed significantly from Phase 1. As of August 28, 2008:

- Applications for 248 projects have been received.
- Of these, 218 have been approved and 6 have been approved in principle, 18 are complete and the remainder are under review.
- \$6.3 million of the total \$12.5 million has been committed.



The final date for applications under CTP2 is November 30, 2008.

As we review applications to CTP2, we are encouraged to note that the majority of local governments appear to have embraced tourism due to their experience with CTP1. Proposed projects build on work done in Phase 1, and tend to be more thoughtful, and perhaps more sophisticated than those seen in the first phase.

## Moving Forward

Some communities have received extensions to their CTP1 reporting deadline and are working hard to complete projects that are underway. Many more have moved forward and are working on, or in some cases completing, their CTP2 activities. No matter what the status of individual community projects may be, there are highlights that will carry forward in the years to come.

### Implementation of Plans

Many of the tourism planning documents that were funded under CTP1 are now being implemented with CTP2 funds. This will lead to a thoughtful, long-term tourism development process.

### Developing Relationships

CTP1 has assisted communities in developing and enhancing tourism partnerships. This is perhaps best seen in regions where communities have worked together on larger scale projects. One example of this is the Selkirk Loop project in the Kootenays, where contributions from all communities on the route supported a large-scale marketing project.

Relationships have also been developed between local governments, regional tourism organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and other groups interested in tourism. Local non-profit groups involved with tourism have also developed relationships with their local governments. By encouraging these relationships, the CTP program has assisted in developing a more cohesive approach to tourism activities within the province.

### Leveraged funding

The design of the CTP made it possible for local governments to utilize their allocation to leverage funding from other agencies. The generous application window allowed communities time to explore other funding opportunities and make application. This has allowed communities to embark on larger scale projects than they otherwise would have been able to contemplate and generated an increased economic impact in the area. Relationships with other funders that were nurtured through CTP1 funds will continue into the future.

### Synergies with Provincial Goals

CTP projects also support other provincial goals. The growth of agri-tourism illustrates the interest in healthy eating, food security and reduced transportation costs related to food.

*“The application was fair, simple and provided for the promotion and funding of innovative programs that promote sustainable tourism development.”*

*- Village of McBride*

Trail development projects and the promotion or enhancement of outdoor activities will support the provincial goals of increased physical activity and health, as well as increased accessibility for those with access issues.

## Conclusion

CTP1 has generated a lot of enthusiasm for tourism in communities across British Columbia and the \$12.5 million allocated to this phase has generated revenues that far exceed that investment. As previously noted, an investment of less than \$1 million in only 16 of the 548 projects completed has returned more than \$33.8 million to local economies.

In addition, communities that had not considered tourism as an economic development opportunity have embarked on tourism plans, organized festivals, and enhanced venues frequented by visitors to their communities and communities with vibrant tourism industries used the CTP1 as an opportunity to explore additional opportunities and enhance existing ones.

*"I feel this program is one of the best available as it is simple to access and allows our communities to get on with our projects."*

*- Village of Telkwa*

## End Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> Refer to appendix 1 for excerpt from Province of BC Tourism Action Plan to 2015.
- <sup>ii</sup> North Central Municipal Association (NCMA); Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC); Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA); Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA); Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG)
- <sup>iii</sup> Dobinson, Neil. 2008. 2007 in Review Steady Growth In BC's Tourism Sector. BC Stats. [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus\\_stat/busind/tourism/timcurr.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/tourism/timcurr.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> Province of British Columbia. 1998. BC Visitor Study: Report on Travel in British Columbia. Tourism British Columbia. [www.tourismbc.com/PDF/BC%20Visitor%20Study%20-%20Provincial%20Overview.pdf](http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/BC%20Visitor%20Study%20-%20Provincial%20Overview.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> Fraser Basin Council. 2006. 2006 State of the Fraser Basin Report Sustainability Snapshot. [www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/publications/documents/FBC-snapshotreport3.pdf](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/publications/documents/FBC-snapshotreport3.pdf)
- <sup>vi</sup> City of Dawson Creek. 2000. Frequently Asked Questions. Tourism Dawson Creek. [www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/documents/ContactSheetsNorth.pdf](http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/documents/ContactSheetsNorth.pdf)
- <sup>vii</sup> [www.selkirkloop.org/index.php?msid=13&smid=2](http://www.selkirkloop.org/index.php?msid=13&smid=2). Date Accessed: August 19, 2008, last updated: 2007
- <sup>viii</sup> Tourism British Columbia and Liddi, Sorenson, and Lawrence. 2008. Prince Rupert Visitor Study Summer 2007. Research and Planning Tourism British Columbia. [www.tourismbc.com/PDF/PrinceRupertVisitorStudy\\_2007.pdf](http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/PrinceRupertVisitorStudy_2007.pdf)