

T O U R I S M P L A N N I N G W O R K S H O P  
B R I D G E R I V E R V A L L E Y

September 26, 2014

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## **1.0 Introduction and Methodology**

The following draft Community Tourism Plan for Bridge River Valley summarizes the conclusions and implications developed during a planning session held on September 26, 2014. This draft will be reviewed by participants and further edits and input will be incorporated.

The Plan that follows recommends, where appropriate, access/infrastructure strategies, product/experience development strategies and marketing and sales strategies in support of the Bridge River Valley's objective of growing the local tourism economy in a manner that supports the overarching community objective of building a sustainable community in the wilderness. As well, recommendations are made regarding how best to organize and fund implementation of this plan.

Community sustainability embraces environmental health, social vitality and economic opportunity as fundamental elements to be considered as decisions and choices are being made in the Bridge River Valley. This tourism plan focuses on economic opportunities associated with the growth of the visitor economy, however, the achievement of the objectives below and the execution of the recommended strategies are intended to occur in a manner that also promotes stewardship of the environment and enhancement of social vitality, both of which are necessary preconditions for a thriving tourism economy.

### **Background**

The Bridge River Valley (Squamish Lillooet Regional District Area A including the communities of Gold Bridge, Bralorne, Gun Lake, Tyaughton Lake and Marshall Lake) has embarked upon an update to their tourism planning process with support from the Destination British Columbia (Destination BC) Community Tourism Foundations program. A plan was developed in 2012 and many of the strategies identified therein have been successfully executed. The focus of this initial plan was on foundational infrastructure and visitor experiences including improved access via the Hurley Road, gateway signage kiosks at strategic locations, fuels service in Gold Bridge and the development of a Visitors' Guide to the region.

Given this track record of successful strategy implementation, the time was right for a plan update to establish next steps and future priorities for the continued development of the tourism economy in the region. The Community Tourism Foundations program again provided resources to assist the Bridge River Valley in developing an update to the comprehensive community tourism plan. These resources include the services of professional facilitators to assist in the planning process. Suzanne Denbak of Cadence Strategies was given the assignment of working with a group of local tourism stakeholders in order to prepare a new and updated comprehensive tourism plan for the Bridge River Valley that encompasses both destination development and market development. She has worked extensively in the Sea to Sky corridor, has been a local resident of the region for 15 years and is a frequent visitor to the Bridge River Valley.

Consequently, she is very familiar with the communities of the Bridge River Valley and their tourism offerings.

This plan incorporates the discussions and agreements reached during a one-day tourism planning session held on September 26, 2014 in Gold Bridge. A diverse range of tourism interests was represented in this group including local tourism operators (accommodators, activity operators, restaurants/pubs, heritage attractions) and the Area A Regional Director. Amy Thacker, CEO of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association also attended and provided insight to this draft plan to ensure the regional perspective, priorities and opportunities for leveraging resources have been fully considered.

## **Priorities for the Community Tourism Foundations Program**

The development of the visitor economy in the Bridge River Valley is an important component of a larger economic development initiative that is currently being led by the Bridge River Valley Community Association and its Economic Development Committee. The ultimate objective of the communities in the Bridge River Valley is to develop a 'sustainable community in the wilderness'<sup>1</sup>. Sustainability is considered to require a larger permanent resident base than exists today and a mix of ages including families with children. While there are potential opportunities related to value-added wood products and additional local sourcing of goods/services by second homeowners and by larger businesses in the area such as BC Hydro and Bralorne Mine, the wealth of incredible outdoor recreation experiences suggests that building revenues from the visitor economy is a priority economic opportunity.

During the workshop, attendees also identified the following objectives:

- Define a direction for marketing and promotional initiatives to build awareness of the Bridge River Valley as a destination in identified target markets and establish clear next steps/priorities that will lead to increased visitation and associated spending with local businesses – it was noted that much of the foundational infrastructure is now in place and the emphasis must change to identifying target markets and building awareness. Consequently, the Bridge River Valley is ready to develop a strategic marketing plan to promote the world class experiences it has to offer visitors
- Attract visitors that respect and honour the communities of the Bridge River Valley and vice versa
- Continue to work together to improve access and infrastructure (Hurley River Road, network of trails in development)
- Understand and operate within the existing constraints and established context for tourism development i.e. There are several existing exclusive and non-exclusive commercial recreation tenures that must be respected as well as a

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<sup>1</sup> Bridge River Valley Community Association website [www.brvc.ca](http://www.brvc.ca)

draft Management Plan for South Chilcotin Park that identifies acceptable activities and levels of use

- Share ideas and identify opportunities – network and connect – understand all the experiences that are available for visitors
- Leverage resources and maximize partnerships
- Find ways to support local business and, where appropriate, attract new tourism investment and entrepreneurs
- Learn together and apply that learning to generate results e.g. how to create a strategic web presence and social media presence
- Continue to build community understanding and support for the visitor economy as an important and integral element of building successful and sustainable communities in the Bridge River Valley

The tourism plan that follows is designed to generate measurable progress towards the following overarching tourism objective for the Bridge River Valley:

**Objective: Within the context of the community vision of sustainability, increase local revenues from visitor spending and, by building visitor demand, contribute to the economic base and create opportunities for investment by new and existing entrepreneurs who may choose to relocate to the region with their families.**

Destination BC oversaw this project working together with the facilitator and a core group of local tourism stakeholders. Participants at the one-day planning session contributed their ideas, experience and wisdom in the development of this plan update and their efforts are acknowledged and greatly appreciated. Participants in the planning session were:

Name	Organization
Debbie Demare	SLRD Regional Director – Area A
Sal Demare	Trails Committee
Dale Parkin	Chilcotin Holidays/Yellow D Contracting
Andre Kuebris	BRVCA/Chilcotin Holidays
Stephanie	Chilcotin Holidays
Margaret Hohner	District of Lillooet
Ken Bailey	Tyax Lodge
Bruce Simon	Bralorne Motel and Pub
Emily Slaco	Tyax Adventures
Ken Conway-Brown	Ministry of Transportation
Michelle Nortje	BRVCA/Minto Communications/Winterfest
Dave Williamson	Cascade Environmental
Lesley O’Keefe	Haylmore Heritage Site/Rock Wall Gallery/Summerfest
Jenn Keir	Ravenswood Healing Arts/Rock Wall Gallery/Summerfest

The following tourism plan provides guidance for the continued development of the Bridge River Valley's tourism opportunities. It is organized as follows:

- 2..0 Tourism Strategic Planning Process
- 3..0 Bridge River Valley Tourism Objectives
- 4..0 Market Research
  - 4.1. Macro Environment
  - 4.2. Consumer & Travel Trends
  - 4.3. BC Tourism Trends
  - 4.4. Cariboo Chilcotin Coast and Vancouver Coast & Mountains – Regional Profiles
  - 4.5. Visitor Characteristics – By Market
  - 4.6. Visitor Characteristics – By Activity
  - 4.7. Market Research Implications
- 5..0 Current Visitation to the Bridge River Valley
- 6..0 Bridge River Valley – Current Situation Analysis
  - 6.1. Access/Infrastructure
  - 6.2. Existing Visitor Experiences
  - 6.3. Existing Marketing/Promotion
  - 6.4. Existing Tourism Organization/Funding
- 7..0 Summary Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats
- 8..0 Unique Selling Proposition & Target Markets
- 9..0 Strategies and Tactics
  - 9.1 Access/Infrastructure Strategies
  - 9.2 Product/Experience Strategies
  - 9.3 Marketing/Sales Strategies
- 10..0 Implementation Plan

The plan that follows is intended to serve as a guide for the Bridge River Valley Community Association as the organization proceeds with implementation. It should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities and market conditions.

## 2.0 Tourism Strategic Planning Process

A Strategic Tourism Plan answers the key questions:

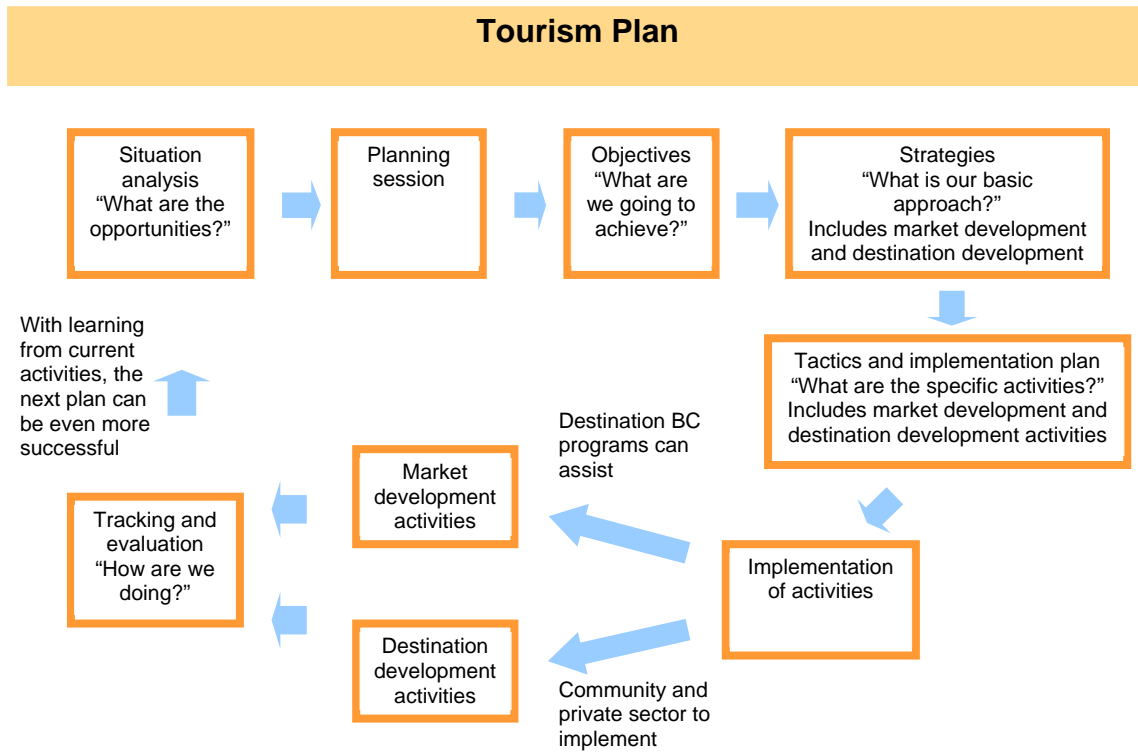
- What business objectives related to tourism does the community expect to achieve?
- What type of tourism does the community want to achieve? In the short term? Over the longer term?
- How will the community achieve these objectives? Through what tourism products? Through what types of visitors? Through which marketing initiatives?

In preparing the Bridge River Valley Community Tourism Plan, the following principles were considered:

- Visitor Needs. BC communities must be responsive to the needs of visitors. Communities need to understand visitor needs first, develop tourism experiences to meet those needs, and then market the appropriate tourism experience to the appropriate type of visitor.
- Inclusiveness. To address the issues and opportunities facing the tourism industry, consultation and collaboration across all areas of the province and all levels of the tourism industry need to form the basis of plan development.
- Effective partnerships. Tourism can be a fragmented industry and effective partnerships among tourism operators, sectors, destination marketing organizations, educational institutions, and all levels of government are essential to building a cohesive, strong and sustainable industry in BC.
- Sustainability. Tourism in BC generally and in the Bridge River Valley specifically will be developed in a sustainable manner, recognizing the need for economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- Community Support. To be successful, tourism development in communities needs to be supported by all areas of a community, including businesses, local government and residents.

Once the tourism plan is completed and implementation begins, results should be tracked regularly such that an updated plan, with learning from the current year's activities, can be even more effective in increasing benefits to the community. The objectives and strategies should be reviewed, with most of the updates occurring on the detailed tactics. The planning cycle can be illustrated as follows:





### 3.0 Bridge River Valley Tourism Objectives

As noted above, the objective of this update to the Bridge River Valley Community Tourism Plan is:

**Objective: Within the context of the community vision of sustainability, increase local revenues from visitor spending and by building visitor demand, create opportunities for investment by new and existing entrepreneurs who may choose to relocate to the region with their families.**

In order to gauge progress towards this objective specific and measurable goals should be established and processes put in place to permit regular tracking and reporting of progress to the community.

Destination BC through its Research, Planning & Evaluation department offers tools to communities and tourism businesses to assist with measuring results and tracking trends in the value of the local tourism economy. An example is the Community Value of Tourism model that estimates the total value of tourism spending in the local economy arising both from overnight and day visitors. The Bridge River Valley Community Association is currently collecting data from accommodation providers for

input to this model. This will create a baseline against which annual progress can be measured.

Additional measures of progress and success in achieving the noted objective and goals include:

- Visitor Centre statistics
- Website traffic and social media presence
- Trail passes sold at trailhead (local vs. non-local)
- Event attendance at signature events
- Level of tourism employment measured in full-time equivalents

It is recommended that where a baseline does not already exist, that it be established in 2015 with regular measurement and reporting occurring thereafter.

Monitoring of social and environmental sustainability has not been addressed in this tourism plan but should be considered within the context of higher level planning such as a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan.

## **4.0 Market Research**

A wide range of market intelligence provided by Destination BC was reviewed in the development of this Community Tourism Plan for the Bridge River Valley including:

- Provincial Value of Tourism in 2012 – February 2014
- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Regional Profile and Vancouver, Coast & Mountains Regional Profile – April 2013
- Hiking Sector Profile – April 2009
- Cycling & Mountain Biking Sector Profile – April 2009
- Heritage Sector Profile – April 2009
- Snowmobiling Sector Profile – April 2009
- Fishing Sector Profile – April 2009
- Touring Sector Profile – April 2009

Copies of these research reports are available on [www.destinationbc.ca/research](http://www.destinationbc.ca/research) . Highlights from this market research follow:

### **4.1 Macro Environment**

- Tourism is an international industry
- British Columbia's product offerings are in demand but the Province is a relatively small player in the growing, highly competitive international environment
- In the short term, tourism performance can be volatile as it is highly tied to uncontrollable events, such as weather conditions or rapid changes in economic events

- In the long term, healthy growth is forecasted – UNWTO forecasts global growth in international tourist arrivals annually until 2030.<sup>2</sup>

## **4.2 Consumer & Travel Trends**

- Fluctuating world economy continues to create uncertainty resulting in continued lower levels of consumer confidence/outlook and impact on discretionary spending; some signs of increasing consumer confidence arising from positive outlook for US economy
- Declining fuel prices increase the affordability of drive vacations and support the potential for increasing travel from the drive markets such as BC, AB and nearby US states (WA, MO, ID)
- Recent declines in the value of the Canadian dollar increase the attractiveness of Canada to US travellers
- All things considered, travel interest is on the rise

## **4.3 BC Tourism Trends**

- In 2012, there were 17.9 million overnight visitors in British Columbia, an increase of 1.1% over 2011, who spent \$8.6 billion, a decline of 2.2% from 2011
- Over half of the visitors (58.5%) were British Columbia residents
- Visitors from other parts of Canada accounted for 17.6% of all visits
- International visitors accounted for the remaining 23.9% of visitor volume (US 16.4%; Asia/Pacific 4.0%; Europe 2.8%)
- British Columbia has been experiencing steady, reliable growth from BC residents and from the rest of Canada with more volatility in other markets
- The greatest proportion of overall visitor spending is from BC residents (35.6%); the rest of Canada represents 24.79% of expenditures; while US resident spending represents 18.59%; Asia/Pacific 10.9%; Europe 8.2%
- While BC residents spend less per visit, they still represent an attractive target market because they:
  - Experience less volatile travel patterns
  - Travel year-round
  - Accept varying qualities of facilities
  - Are willing to explore the Province

## **4.4 Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Regional Profile and Vancouver, Coast & Mountains – Regional Profiles (2014)**

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<sup>2</sup> Tourism Towards 2030, World Tourism Organization UNWTO, 2011

While the Bridge River Valley is officially part of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region, much of its current visitation either resides in or passes through Vancouver Coast & Mountains tourism region. Consequently, both tourism regions were reviewed.

In 2012, overnight tourism in British Columbia generated 17.9 million person-visits and \$8.6 billion in related spending. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region represents 3% of provincial overnight visitation and 1% of related spending.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast received 549,000 overnight person-visits in 2012 and generated over \$118 million in related spending. Domestic overnight travellers accounted for 86% of visitation and 72% of related spending. International travellers accounted for 14% and 28% respectively. The top five markets by area of origin for the region are:

	Area of Origin	Share of Visitation	Share of Spending
1	British Columbia	80%	67%
2	Alberta	3%	3%
3	Washington	3%	3%
4	Germany	2%	3%
5	Switzerland	1%	3%

On average, domestic travel parties in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region stayed 3.2 nights and spent \$82 per night during their trip. US travel parties stayed 3.1 nights and spent \$222 per night during their trip and other international travel parties (excluding the US) stayed 5.9 nights and spent \$127 per night during their trip in the region.

Most people travelled in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast during the peak summer months, particularly Canadians from outside of British Columbia, US residents and other international travellers. British Columbians travelled throughout the year. Over a third of US residents and other international travellers visited during the spring time (April to June). The period from October to December experienced the lowest travel volume in all markets.

Top five trip activities of visitors to the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region often include a range of outdoor activities as well as museums, art galleries and historic sites.

Top 5 trip activities:

	BC Residents	Other Canadians	US Residents	Other International
1	Camping	Beach	National, provincial or nature park	National, provincial or nature park
2	Boating/ kayaking/ canoeing	Boating/ kayaking/ canoeing	Historic site	Historic site
3	Hiking or backpacking	Golfing	Camping	Camping
4	Wildlife viewing or bird watching	Camping	Fishing	Zoo or aquarium
5	National, provincial or nature park	Museum or art gallery	Museum or art gallery	Boating

The Vancouver, Coast & Mountains region represents 46% of provincial overnight visitation and 54% of related spending. In 2012, the region received 7.2 million overnight person-visits in 2012 and generated \$4.7 billion in related spending. British Columbia residents make up the largest proportion of visitors (46%) and spending (22%) in the region (spending is relatively low compared to BC's other tourism regions).

Washington (10%), Alberta (6%) and Ontario (5%) represent the next 3 largest sources of visitors to this region. California residents represent 4% of visitation and 5% of spending. International travellers accounted for 40% of visitation and 57% of spending.

When business travellers are excluded and only leisure travellers are measured, the source of visitation changes somewhat:

- BC residents – 45% of visitor volume; 24% of spending;
- Other Canada – 8% of visitor volume; 14% of spending;
- US residents – 32% of visitor volume; 28% of spending;
- Other international – 14% of visitor volume; 34% of spending;

On average, domestic travel parties in the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains region stayed 3.4 nights and spent \$155 per night during their trip. US travel parties stayed 3.6 nights and spent \$236 per night during their trip, and other international travel parties stayed 13.6 nights and spent \$126 per night during their trip in the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains region.

## Top 5 Trip activities:

	BC Residents	Other Canadians	US Residents	Other International
1	National/provincial/nature park	National, provincial or nature park	National, provincial or nature park	National, provincial or nature park
2	Camping	Beach	Historic site	Zoo or aquarium
3	Boating/canoeing/kayaking	Hiking/backpacking	Zoo or aquarium	Museum or art gallery
4	Beach	Museum or art gallery	Museum or art gallery	Historic site
5	Fishing	Historic site	Downhill skiing/snowboarding	Festival or fair

## 4.5 Visitor Characteristics – By Market

Destination BC provides market research related to visitor characteristics by their area of origin as well as by the activities in which travellers participate. Detailed reports are available on [www.destinationbc.ca/research](http://www.destinationbc.ca/research) and summary highlights are provided below:

### 4.5.1 British Columbia Residents

- British Columbians took 10.5 million overnight trips within BC in 2012
- All age groups are represented – 38% are aged 18-34
- 74% have some post-secondary education
- Affluent – 44% have household incomes over \$100,000
- 2.9 night average stay for a trip in 2012
- Beaches, hiking and camping are most popular activities

### 4.5.2 Albertan Travellers

- Alberta travellers took overnight 2.1 million trips to BC in 2012
- Peak travel is summer months – July/August
- Largest age group was 25-34 in 2012 with 25% of travellers
- Affluent – 54% had household incomes over \$100,000
- 72% have at least some post secondary education
- Alberta visitors spent 5 nights on average during their trip in BC
- Beaches, hiking and camping are most popular activities

### **4.5.3 Ontario Travellers**

- Ontario travellers took 562,000 overnight trips to BC in 2012
- Peak travel is summer months – July/August
- Largest proportion of travellers 18-44 years of age
- 74% had household incomes over \$100,000
- 79% had at least some post-secondary education
- Ontario visitors spent 6.2 nights on average during their trip to BC
- Visiting parks, hiking and visiting museums and galleries are the most popular activities

### **4.5.4 US Travellers**

- In 2013 almost 3 million Americans visited BC and stayed overnight
- Washington (41%) and California (14%) accounted for over half of the total overnight US visitation in BC
- Travellers 55 years and older accounted for almost half of travellers from the US in 2012 although the proportion of younger travellers is rising
- June, July and August were the most popular travel months for US visitors in 2012 accounting for almost 50% of visitation
- Shopping, sightseeing were the most popular activities for US travellers in 2012; increasing participation rates in sports or outdoor activities since 2009 data
- Gravitate to Vancouver Coast & Mountains region (Vancouver/Whistler) and Vancouver Island

### **4.5.5 United Kingdom**

- In 2013, almost 650,000 UK residents travelled to Canada; 30% entered directly through BC
- In 2012, over 50% of UK visitors to Canada were 55 years of age or older;
- In 2012, UK travellers to Canada spent on average 15 nights in Canada and 12 nights in BC
- Most frequently, UK visitors to Canada stayed one to two weeks
- Almost half of UK residents visited Canada in June to August
- Sightseeing and shopping remained the most popular activities for UK travellers to Canada

### **4.5.6 Germany**

- In 2013, over 300,000 Germans travelled to Canada; just over one-quarter entered directly through BC
- In 2012, almost one-third of German visitors to Canada were young adults (20 to 34 years)
- In 2012, German travellers to Canada (who also visited BC) spent on average 20 nights in Canada and 15 nights in BC
- Nearly 30% of German travellers spent three to eight weeks in Canada
- In 2012, almost 70% of German visitors Canada arrived between May and August and three-quarters arrived in July and August

- In 2012, sightseeing (87%) and shopping (79%) were the most popular activities for German travellers

## **4.6 Visitor Characteristics – By Activity**

Destination BC also provides market research on visitor characteristics defined by the activities they participate in while travelling. The most relevant activities for the Bridge River Valley are:

- Hiking
- Cycling and Mountain Biking
- Touring
- Heritage
- Snowmobiling
- Fishing
- Festival Enthusiasts (considered given the potential opportunity to create 1-2 signature events)

Highlights of this research by activity are as follows:

### **4.6.1 Hiking**

- Canadian day hikers – skew female; Canadian overnight backpackers skew male
- American hikers – both day and overnight skew male
- Majority are aged 18-34; American hikers have larger number of older participants aged 45 years+
- Well educated; moderate to affluent income
- Hiking travellers also enjoy visiting natural wonders, swimming in lakes (Canadians) and visiting heritage sites/museums (Americans)

### **4.6.2 Cycling and Mountain Biking**

- Male skew to those participating in cycling activities, particularly from US (63% male); Canadian 55% male
- 40% of Canadian cyclists are aged 18-34; US participants older with the largest group aged 45-54 (30%)
- Canadian travellers motivated by mountain biking skew younger and male with 42.8% aged 18-34 years and 74.5% male. They are affluent and educated with 46.6% having household incomes of \$100,000 or more and 64.2% having completed post secondary education
- US travellers motivated by mountain biking are 73.8% male;
- Majority (48.3%) of motivated US mountain bikers are aged 18-34 years; like their Canadian counterparts, they are affluent and well educated with 32.7% having household incomes of \$100,000 or more and 59% having completed post secondary education
- Canadian and US cycling travellers can be considered frequent travellers when compared to the overall travelling population



- Cycling travellers also enjoy swimming in lakes, strolling the city/seeing buildings, visiting parks, natural wonders, sitting on a beach/sunbathing, visiting historic sites. Many travellers who participate in cycling also enjoy hiking.

#### **4.6.3 Touring**

- Approximately one-third of Canadian touring travellers are aged 18-34 years; US touring travellers tend to be older with approx. one-quarter over the age of 65 years;
- Approximately one quarter of both Canadian and US touring travellers are in adult-only households
- American travellers more likely to take guided tours than Canadian travellers
- Touring travellers are also interested in city strolls, visiting national/provincial parks, historic sites, natural wonders

#### **4.6.4 Heritage**

- Canadian heritage travellers tend to be younger than their US counterparts – 31% of participating Canadians are aged 18-34 years; largest group of participating Americans is over 65 years of age (25%)
- 32% of US travellers motivated by heritage are over age 65; only 15% of motivated Canadian heritage travellers are in this same age group
- Motivated American heritage travellers are relatively affluent when compared to the overall population of travellers to BC and are on average more affluent than motivated Canadian heritage travellers
- Heritage travellers also enjoy city strolls, visiting national/provincial parks, sunbathing/sitting on a beach, visiting well known natural wonders

#### **4.6.5 Snowmobiling**

- Male skew for both travellers participating in and motivated by snowmobiling
- All age groups under 55 participate – after age 55, steep decline in participation
- Relatively affluent
- Canadian travellers motivated by day use trips skew younger 18-34 years (31%); while those motivated by overnight snowmobile touring skews to 45-54 years of age (40%)
- US travellers motivated by day use trips skews to 45-54 years of age (37%); overnight touring skews to 18-34 years of age (50%)
- Canadian and US snowmobiling travellers can be considered frequent travellers when compared to the overall travelling population

#### **4.6.7 Fishing**

- Predominately male; 18-34 and 45-54 years of age
- Reasonably affluent, educated
- Majority come from adult only households
- Fresh water fishing dominates Canadian market (BC residents have a higher salt water fishing rate)
- Other activities – swimming, motor boating
- Show some interest in ‘natural wonders’, visiting national/provincial parks

#### **4.6.8 Festival Tourism Enthusiasts**

- Educated with moderate income levels
- Want to experience
  - Stroll through the city
  - See historic sites and buildings
  - Farmers markets/country fairs
  - Visit parks

### ***4.7 Market Research Implications***

#### **Sector/Market Implications**

- BC Residents are an attractive target market for the Bridge River Valley– their younger demographic will appreciate the wealth of outdoor activities accessible from the Valley
- BC Residents are also most likely to travel throughout the year and venture into all regions of the province
- Mountain biking, hiking, snowmobiling are activity-based market segments that fit well with the current product offering in the Bridge River Valley
- The Bridge River Valley’s world-class mountain biking experiences are an excellent fit to attract cycling tourists. Average income levels are moderate (Canadian) and more affluent (American) and many cycling tourists also enjoy day hikes so there is an opportunity to create multi-activity packages and experiences using local accommodation and tourism operators
- The summer touring market also offers opportunity to create a ‘side trip’ or circle tour for those travelling the primary corridor between Calgary and Vancouver provided highway/road access is suitable for rental vehicles and RVs
- Canadian hiking travellers represent a good segment for the Bridge River Valley. Their interests are consistent with the product offered in and around the Valley and they have above average income and education. Their American counterparts do not tend to travel outside of the US and consequently are not a target market for the Bridge River Valley

- Canadian and American snowmobilers are affluent winter enthusiasts and are often also interested in fishing, creating an opportunity for seasonal cross promotions
- Fishing tourists are also a potential target market for the Bridge River Valley although care should be taken when considering the American fishing market since many of these visitors tend not to travel outside of the United States. BC residents and Canadian anglers may yield stronger returns from promotional investments
- Similarly, a large proportion of American festivals/events travelers and history/heritage travelers do not travel outside of the United States and while the Bridge River Valley could develop product in both these categories, a Canadian focus is recommended if this segment is pursued.
- Visiting natural wonders, parks and protected areas, camping, historic sites, fishing are listed in the top-five trip activities for many so the world-class parks in the region, camping, fishing and historic sites should be featured as a 'lure' while still managing carrying capacity
- Heritage activities are of interest to many travellers and can contribute to a larger overall experience in the Bridge River Valley
- The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region has successfully been growing its profile as a geo-caching destination and this travel sector should also be considered in the Bridge River Valley
- While there is no specific research available on travellers motivated by or participating in dirt biking and/or all-terrain vehicles/quads, anecdotally workshop participants noted that this is a component of current visitation that could be grown

## **5.0 Current Visitation to the Bridge River Valley**

The Visitor Booth in Gold Bridge opens seasonally and accurate visitation numbers are not currently available through Destination BC. However, a review of the rough data that has been captured indicates that the majority of visitors recorded are from British Columbia. BC residents appear to be interested primarily in trail maps/guides, camping facilities and available services (restaurants). The second largest market appears to be Europe with some visitation also noted from Pacific Northwestern States (WA, OR) and from CA.

However, beyond these Visitor Booth statistics, in the Bridge River Valley it is critically important to planning to consider and define the nature of a 'visitor'. Certainly this definition includes the visitor typically contemplated in tourism planning – the free and independent traveller that resides elsewhere and visits a destination for a vacation experience. The Bridge River Valley experiences significant visitation from the Sea to Sky Corridor and Lower Mainland as captured in a visitor intercept survey conducted by the Bridge River Valley Community Association in 2012.

Beyond this 'typical' visitor however, the Bridge River Valley also experiences a disproportionate number of second homeowners who have the capacity to contribute to the visitor economy as well. There are 280 property owners on Gun Lake and Tyaughton Lake that have primary residences elsewhere as indicated on their property tax assessment mailing address. These second homeowners, in turn, frequently host guests in their own residences who too have the ability to contribute to the visitor economy.

The Bridge River Valley's target markets identified below and associated strategies to build awareness and motivate travel to the region and spending consider this broader definition of 'visitor' so as to also capture opportunities arising from fulfilling the service and experiential needs of second homeowners and their guests alongside the typical transient visitor.

In all cases, the challenge of securing additional visitor spending must be addressed rather than simply increasing visitation and use of 'free' amenities such as trails, campsites.

## **6.0 Bridge River Valley – Current Situation Analysis**

An assessment of the current situation of the Bridge River Valley from a tourism perspective is also required in order to develop strategies to achieve the plan objective:

**Objective: Within the context of the community vision of sustainability, increase local revenues from visitor spending and by building visitor demand, contribute to the economic base and create opportunities for new investment by entrepreneurs who may choose to relocate to the region with their families.**

The following analysis considers the Bridge River Valley's access and infrastructure for visitors, existing visitor experiences, current marketing and promotional efforts and the manner in which the Bridge River Valley is currently organized to pursue tourism opportunities.

### ***Access and Infrastructure***

#### **Access to the Bridge River Valley**

The Bridge River Valley is accessed on a year round basis by Highway #40 from Lillooet. From June through October, it is also accessed from the Pemberton Valley along the Hurley River Road, a gravel Forest Service Road. As much of the current visitation to the Bridge River Valley is from the Sea to Sky Corridor, this latter route, if properly maintained, is considered preferred as it is 60 minutes shorter than the Lillooet option. However, over the last 8-10 years, the standard of maintenance on this road has been highly variable and generally deteriorated to the point where it became a deterrent to visitation. In 2014, Hurley River Road maintenance became the responsibility of one Provincial Ministry and noticeable improvements occurred. While still a 'backcountry road,' it can now be traversed by owned vehicles of any sort.

However, rental vehicles are still not insured for travel on the Hurley River Road and this represents a significant limitation particularly for longer-haul travel markets.

Highway #40 is still considered by many to be a challenging drive, however when combined with the Hurley River Road, offers an appealing circle route where travellers along popular touring routes such as the TransCanada from Calgary/Banff to Whistler/Vancouver could detour at Lillooet, travel by Highway #40 to the Bridge River Valley and then reconnect with Pemberton via the Hurley River Road and then travel onwards to Whistler and Vancouver.

## **Visitor Infrastructure**

The Bridge River Valley offers limited infrastructure to support visitor experiences including some accommodation options in Bralorne, Gold Bridge, Gun Lake and Tyaughton Lake, a grocery store/liquor/hardware store in Gold Bridge and fuel in both Gold Bridge and Bralorne. There is a pub and café in Bralorne and a restaurant in the Gold Bridge Hotel. In addition to the full suite of spa services at Tyax Lodge, there is one independent massage therapist (Ravenswood Healing Arts). Outdoor experiences/ infrastructure include an extensive trail network for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding; Provincial parks; lakes; rivers and campsites. Additional details of this visitor infrastructure are provided below:

## **Accommodation**

While accommodation contributes to the visitor experience, in and of itself it is rarely a motivator for travel. Rather it serves as the base from which visitors engage in travel experiences. Consequently, it is considered a form of visitor infrastructure since it must exist in sufficient quantity and quality to support growth in visitation.

In the Bridge River Valley, there are a limited number of accommodation options. A review of the website [www.bridgerivervalley.ca](http://www.bridgerivervalley.ca) lists the following:

- Tyax Wilderness Resort, Tyaughton Lake
- Gold Bridge Hotel, Gold Bridge
- Highland Cream Resort on Gun Lake
- Mines Motel, Bralorne
- Morrow Chalets, Tyaughton Lake
- Gold Dust Motel, Gold Bridge
- Chilcotin Holidays, Gun Creek Road
- Bralorne Pioneer Motel, Bralorne

As well, the Bralorne Adventure Lodge has recently opened in Bralorne.

Campgrounds within or near the Bridge River Valley are listed as follows:

- Gun Creek Hydro Site
- Bridge River Retreat, Gold Bridge
- Friburg Forest Service Campground, Tyaughton Lake

- Tyax Lodge Campsite
- Chilcotin Holidays Campsite
- Kingdom Lake Forest Service Campground, Bralorne
- Gun Lake Forest Service Campground, Gun Lake
- Gwentyth Lake Forest Service Campground, Hurley FSR

The property types range from full-service to basic facilities. This existing inventory of accommodation appears to support the objective of increasing overnight visitation, length of stay and visitor spending on a year round basis.

### **Restaurant/Retail**

Much like accommodation, visitors require a range of restaurant and retail options to support their experience. The 2014 Visitor Guide lists the following food and beverage options:

- Gold Bridge Hotel Pub & Restaurant
- Lone Goat Coffee – Bralorne
- Mineshaft Pub (aka Sallys Pub) – Bralorne
- Tyax Wilderness Resort & Spa (restaurant also open to the public during the summer season)

Retail experiences are limited but do include groceries (Gold Bridge); gifts (Bralorne) and local crafts (Haylmore site). Fuel, tire repair and towing services are also available locally.

### **Conclusions/Implications – Access and Infrastructure**

Access to the Bridge River Valley is challenging for most. Consequently, the quality of road maintenance must remain a continued priority. While there is no intention to pursue a ‘four lane paved highway’, a certain minimal and consistent level of maintenance must be achieved to remove access as a significant deterrent to travel. As well, the nature of experiences offered must be world-class and compelling if they are to overcome the hurdle of access. By the same token, once in the area there is a sense of remoteness – the Bridge River Valley is truly the closest 360-degree wilderness experience to Vancouver and Whistler. Challenging access can be used to justify and promote longer lengths of stay provided the range and quality of visitor experiences are available.

Exceptional experiences must be promoted and more importantly fulfilled. That which is truly iconic and unique to the Bridge River Valley must become the focus and be leveraged at every opportunity in order to eliminate any negative impacts associated with current road access and limited visitor infrastructure.

The existing accommodation, retail and restaurant and other services is considered adequate in the short-term to begin to achieve the Bridge River Valley’s tourism goals and objectives as outlined in this plan. Consequently, the focus of the tourism plan will be primarily on the promotion of existing experiences to target markets that will stay and

spend in the local economy. The resultant growth in business volumes and revenues will naturally fuel a growth in the number of businesses servicing visitors and in the hours of operation of current businesses.

### ***Existing Visitor Experiences***

Visitor experiences available today have been considered by nature of the experience. Except where noted, the majority of this information has been extracted from [www.bridgerivervalley.ca](http://www.bridgerivervalley.ca) and the Bridge River Valley Visitor Guide. As well, the following websites were reviewed:

[www.southchilcotin.ca](http://www.southchilcotin.ca) and  
[www.bridgerivertrails.wordpress.com](http://www.bridgerivertrails.wordpress.com)




### **Summary of Experiences**



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Visitor Experience</b>
Parks	South Chilcotin Mountain Park; Big Creek Park; Gwenyth Lake Park; Bridge River Delta Park
Heritage	Bralorne Pioneer Museum is currently being relocated; Will Haylmore site – gold panning; local crafts open during summer season; Boultsbe Memorial Church; Bridge River Valley Cemetery; Bradian ghost town and a variety of other abandoned sites, mining relics; Japanese internment site; miners’ memorial;
Arts and Culture	Local artists display work at Rock Wall Gallery in conjunction with Will Haylmore site
Festivals and Events	SummerFest 2 day event over August long weekend; Winterfest – February long weekend;
Mountain Biking Trails	Extensive trail system both within and outside Parks in development – Consultation with stakeholders, legalization of trails, detailed maps, trail signage underway through Bridge River Trails Society
Hiking Trails	Extensive trail system both within and outside Parks – detailed maps, trail signage underway through Bridge River Trails Society
Horseback Riding	Extensive trail system both within and outside Parks – detailed maps, trail signage underway through Bridge River Trails Society
Boating/Kayaking/ Canoeing/ SUP	Gun Lake, Tyaughton Lake, Marshall Lake, Gwenyth Lake – however, equipment rentals are not available unless staying as a guest of Tyax Lodge on Tyaughton Lake
Angling	Pearson Pond, Mowson Pond, Tyaughton Lake, Plateau Ponds, Lajoie Lake, Kingdom

	Lakes
Cat Skiing	Hurley Pass
Backcountry Ski Touring	Extensive terrain for experienced ski touring
Cross country/Nordic and snowshoeing	On lakes, through valley on trails
Snowmobiling	Extensive trails and access to open backcountry terrain/ice cap – grooming of key access trails performed by local club and snowcat operator

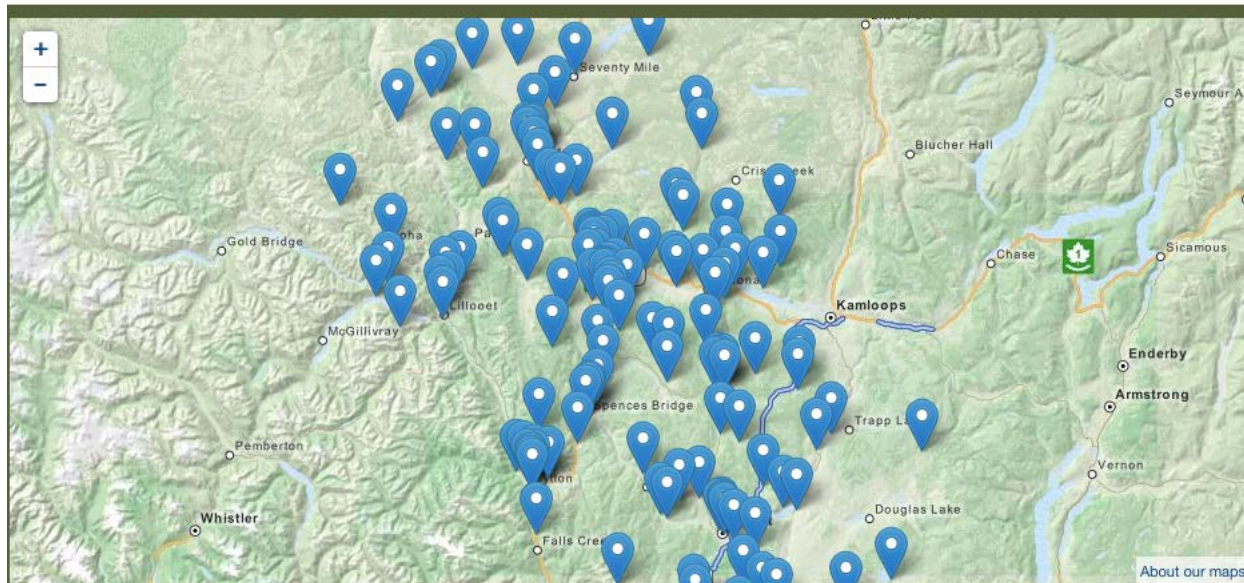
There are geo-caching caches noted on the principal website [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) in the Bridge River Valley. Geo-caching has been a strategic focus for the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association and Gold Country and has successfully motivated travel to the area. Caches are strategically located to require travellers to stay overnight in the region thereby increasing yields associated with what is otherwise a 'free' activity.

Gold Country's GeoTourism Program has researched sites of interest throughout the region under a variety of themes & hidden caches for you to find! Learn about each site while unearthing treasures! Use your GPS or letterbox clues to locate each cache, swap some swag, then re-hide the cache.

[Visit Website](#) |   

[What is Geocaching?](#)



Caches in the area are can be found at the following link:

<http://www.geocaching.com/seek/nearest.aspx?lat=50.85591&lng=-122.83414&dist=100>



## Summary of Existing Tourism Operators

While there is a wealth of experiences for visitors, one of the most significant challenges to growing visitor revenues in the Bridge River Valley arises from the publicly accessible nature of these experiences combined with the limited number of tourism operators offering guided adventures or other services. Many of the experiences noted above are accessible to visitors without charge if they have the necessary gear/equipment, are willing to research trails, routes etc. and have the confidence to enter the backcountry unguided. As well, there are many no-cost or low-cost options to camp in the area from spring to fall and if visitors transport all their own supplies (food etc.) then there can be few reasons for a visitor to actually contribute to the local economy.

The following tourism operators currently offer guided experiences in the Bridge River Valley:

- Tyax Adventures – [www.tyaxadventures.com](http://www.tyaxadventures.com) offering guided adventures (hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding), aircraft flights and backcountry camps
- TLH Heli-Skiing – [www.tlheliskiing.com](http://www.tlheliskiing.com) offering heli-skiing/boarding trips within exclusive tenure area
- Chilcotin Holidays – [www.chilcotingholidays.com](http://www.chilcotingholidays.com) offering horse-pack trips, wildlife viewing pack trips, hiking adventures, mountain biking expeditions, mountain fishing getaways, backcountry cabin/camp rentals, wilderness skills training programs, adventure guide training and hunting within combination of exclusive and non-exclusive tenure areas
- Backcountry Snowcats – [www.snowcats.ca](http://www.snowcats.ca) - offering snowcat skiing/snowboarding in the Hurley Pass area
- Whitecap Alpine – [www.whitecapalpine.ca](http://www.whitecapalpine.ca) - offering backcountry lodge for ski touring in McGillvray Pass area

## Conclusions/Implications of Existing Visitor Experiences

There is a wealth of outdoor experiences in the Bridge River Valley that are suitable for all levels of adventurers. Travellers wishing to engage in a variety of different activities can be pursued as well as visitors who are passionate about a single activity and wish to pursue their love. While more equipment rental opportunities would be beneficial, it is possible to build visitor volumes/revenues by focusing on those who come to stay with a full-service provider or who come complete with their own 'gear'. Once traffic grows, in all likelihood, entrepreneurs will step forward who recognize the business opportunity for equipment rental, more guided tours, transportation services etc.

The myriad of outdoor experiences is well complemented by heritage and history as well as the unique 'vibe' and lifestyle in the Bridge River Valley. The stunning mountain vistas and 360-degree authentic wilderness combine with a sense of personal freedom

and space that differentiates the area from destinations such as purpose-built Whistler and the farming valley of Pemberton.

In order to progress towards the objective of growing visitor revenues and contributing to a sustainable economic base in the Bridge River Valley, two core strategies related to visitor experiences must be considered:

- Drive additional visitors/increase visitor yield through the promotion of the region and experiences with existing tourism operators. These operators will in turn support the local economy through employment, local purchasing of services and supplies. This growth in visitation must focus on target markets that are interested in paid overnight accommodation, multi-day guided commercial excursions with tenured tourism operators, and have a predisposition to spend on local arts, crafts, food and beverage.
- Create broader impacts from existing base of visitation and associated tourism spending in the region by:
  - 1.1 Offering transient visitors staying at full-service facilities (Tyax Resort & Spa, Chilcotin Holidays, Highland Crème, Morrow Chalets) additional guided activities such as heritage tours and additional quality services (groceries, grocery delivery, personal health (massage therapy etc.), equipment rentals, transportation services etc.
  - 1.2 Offering second homeowners and their guests (which are anecdotally reported to be significant) these same additional guided activities, as well as additional quality services (groceries, grocery delivery, personal health, equipment rental, transportation services)

The relevant analogy is appropriately that of a river – in order to have tourism contribute to the creation of a sustainable economic base for the Bridge River Valley, it is necessary to both increase the flow in the ‘river’ (i.e. business to the existing operators) while also increasing the number of tributaries that send benefits more widely throughout the communities in support of smaller existing and potential entrepreneurs.

Specific strategies related to visitor experiences/product development are considered below.

### ***Existing Marketing and Promotion***

At present, marketing and promotion of the Bridge River Valley as a destination is led by the Bridge River Valley Community Association. Resources are derived from contributions from SLRD Area A discretionary funds and from other granting agencies such as Northern Development Initiative Trust. These funds are leveraged with programs like Community Tourism Opportunities (CTO) offered by Destination BC through the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association.

Recent CTO projects have included:



1. Print media – Bridge River Valley Visitors Guide
2. Gateway kiosk project
3. Comprehensive assessment of signage requirements throughout the Bridge River Valley

The Visitor Booth is open as follows:

Winter hours are Monday and Thursday's from 12 - 4pm. Summer hours are the same with the addition of Friday to Sunday 12 - 4pm at the alternate Haylmore Heritage Site.

For visitors in the trip planning stage, there is one primary websites for visitor information that rotates between summer and winter content and several supporting sites:

[www.bridgerivervalley.ca](http://www.bridgerivervalley.ca) managed by the BRVCA

[www.southchilcotin.ca](http://www.southchilcotin.ca)

[www.bridgerivertrails.wordpress.com](http://www.bridgerivertrails.wordpress.com) - managed by the Trails Society

[www.sledbralorne.com](http://www.sledbralorne.com)

[www.isurvivedthehurley.com](http://www.isurvivedthehurley.com) - Hurley Road conditions

The Bridge River Valley Community Association maintains a Facebook presence and as of December 28, 2014 had 239 'likes'.

Local tourism businesses also market themselves with signage, websites, social media engagement, brochures and word of mouth. Several larger operators including Chilcotin Holidays and Tyax Resort & Spa (including TLH Heli Skiing and Tyax Adventures) are actively engaged in regional and provincial marketing initiatives including the guest ranch sector association, travel trade shows, media relations and other international marketing efforts.

The Bridge River Valley is promoted to consumers by Destination BC as well as by Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association. Destination BC's primary consumer website is [www.hellobc.com](http://www.hellobc.com), where there is currently some limited content on the Bridge River Valley.. Additional reference to Spruce Lake Provincial Park can be found on the [BC Biking page](#) of the website, as well as on the [CCC regional-level biking page](#). Several operators have also purchased listings including Chilcotin Holidays, Tyax Resort & Spa and the Gold Bridge Hotel. No reference could be found to the exceptional snowmobiling opportunities based from Bralorne on the website.

The Bridge River Valley is mentioned as part of the Duffey Lake/Hurley River Road Circle Route. However, it is characterized as a day-trip and provides little information regarding attractions and experiences that would motivate overnight stays.

## **Conclusions/Implications of Existing Marketing and Promotion**

A review of current marketing and promotional efforts indicates that promotion of the Bridge River Valley as a visitor destination has been modest to date. Foundational efforts have been undertaken in the development of a website and visitor guide, however there is opportunity to enhance these marketing efforts both independently and in partnership with other organizations such as the CCCTA and Destination BC.

Of particular note is the varying use of names for the area – all of the following have been used in existing marketing and promotion:

- Bridge River Valley
- South Chilcotin Mountains
- Spruce Lake
- Gold Bridge
- Bralorne
- Gun Lake
- Tyaughton Lake

Stakeholders advise that the area has also been known as 'south' Bridge River Valley. Before significant additional investment is made in marketing and promotion of the region, a strategic review of destination naming conventions should occur – see strategies below.

## ***Existing Tourism Organization and Funding***

At present approximately \$5,000 is invested in destination marketing and promotion by the BRVCA. Funds are generated from a variety of government and granting agencies including the SLRD – Area A, Northern Development Initiative Trust and others. Printing costs of the Visitor Guide have been offset by advertising revenues. Maps, t-shirts, calendars etc. also generate modest funds for reinvestment in BRVCA programs including tourism.

Typically, these funds have been leveraged with CTO funding through the CCCTA and Destination BC.

## **7.0 Summary Tourism Strengths/Weaknesses/ Opportunities/Threats**

The access/infrastructure strategies, tourism product development strategies and the marketing and promotional strategies which follow are intended to leverage the Bridge River Valley's tourism strengths and seize high return opportunities while being cognizant of the weaknesses and threats being faced.

### ***Strengths***

- Spectacular scenery and natural environment (water quality of the lakes, streams, rivers; fish and wildlife; variety of ecosystems from wetlands, forests to alpine meadows)
- Remote but accessible backcountry
- Uncrowded and for the most part, 'off the grid' – (no cell phones or internet service) which offers visitors the opportunity to reconnect by disconnecting
- Developing network of trails in some areas and iconic status of trails around Spruce Lake – high market awareness in mountain biking community
- South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park and several other unique Provincial Parks offer assurance of authentic wilderness
- Strong historic values (mining town) and presence of heritage buildings (some restored)
- Proximity to Sea to Sky Corridor combined with improved Hurley Road maintenance
- Well-developed winter and summer outdoor adventure products including snowmobiling, heli-skiing, cat-skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking
- A number of high quality tourist operators are bringing national and international travellers to the Valley for unique outdoor adventure experiences
- A variety of both roofed accommodations and campgrounds are available at strategic locations
- Committed local leadership through the BRVCA

### ***Weaknesses***

- Small permanent population, so unable to sustain effort in any particular area
- Road access is challenging for some visitors (no fully-paved road access) and rental vehicles are not authorized on the Hurley River Road
- Minimal local tourism product development beyond several major tourism operators
- Gold Bridge experiencing difficulties with its small hotel in decline

- Competition/conflicts among commercial operators, motorized/non-motorized and within non-motorized (hiking, mountain biking, horse riding) for areas to operate in
- Old and out of date maps
- Limited visitor services available, including few retail outlets
- Lack of facilities in Provincial Parks and difficulty of access to some parks
- Lack of signage and visitor information (although new kiosks have improved this)
- Lack of local agreement and consensus on appropriate activities within South Chilcotin Mountain Park and on location/usage/legalization of trails

### ***Opportunities***

- Maximize winter backcountry activities and winter tourism of all kinds - snowmobiling, ski touring
- Leverage awareness of experiences with tenured operators including mountain biking, hiking, horse riding in South Chilcotin Mountains park with stayovers and rides in other areas of the Valley
- Consolidate and professionalize the Valley's heritage assets and market them within a larger heritage tour
- Develop improved visitor information, signage and mapping of the Valley and its attractions and features (including maps of designated trails, interpretive signage for both historic and natural features)
- Promote drive trips/circle routes to take advantage of declining fuel prices
- Bralorne picnic sites development
- Local engagement and consultation related to appropriate activities within South Chilcotin Mountain Park, location/nature of trail usage both within and outside the park boundaries
- First Nations' partnerships to promote Aboriginal cultural tourism
- Enhanced marketing efforts within a strong and compelling brand (name/brand identity, logo, tag)

### ***Threats***

- Natural environment can be adversely affected by extractive industries, inappropriate use of motorized vehicles, recreational use beyond environmental carrying capacity, grazing practices and spread of invasive species
- Restricted recreational and commercial activities within South Chilcotin Mountain Park as documented in the draft Parks Management Plan may affect some local tourism business viability (while supporting other tenured businesses)
- Economic uncertainties affect disposable income and travel plans
- Further population decline could undermine sustainability of community infrastructure (school closing, roads not maintained to same level)
- Competition from other nearby markets with stronger local tax bases to finance marketing and other initiatives (e.g.- Pemberton and Lillooet)
- Intrusion into Valley of snowmobile and ATV clubs based in outside communities such as Pemberton and Lillooet who come self-contained, impact the quality of

the experience and potentially harm the environment while leaving little or no economic benefit

- Lack of local public funds to invest in community facilities and infrastructure which limits the ability to access matching funding from various government programs

## **8.0 Unique Selling Proposition & Target Markets**

Foundational to further investment in the marketing and promotion of the Bridge River Valley is a clear understanding of the area's distinct competitive advantage or unique selling proposition. While the Bridge River Valley has much to offer visitors, positioning the region as 'having it all' or 'having something for everyone' will not be effective as it fails to capture the imagination or passion of anyone in particular.

As well, the Bridge River Valley is faced with fierce competition in many markets from destinations that are far better funded. Squamish, Whistler and now Pemberton are aggressively marketing their mountain biking experiences, guided snowmobiling is popular in Whistler and backcountry snowmobiling can be accessed from Pemberton.

Far greater marketing impact will be achieved by focusing on the iconic – that which no other destination can offer and by choosing promotional vehicles whose content can be readily tailored to various passions of potential visitors such as websites and social media rather than printed material or advertising.

The Bridge River Valley's unique selling proposition is considered to incorporate the following elements:

- Gateway to South Chilcotin Mountains Park offering epic alpine trails for mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking as well as a network of ancillary trails outside the Park for mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, quads/ATV's, dualsport motorcycles
- Home base for world-class backcountry snowmobile adventures and back country ski touring with deep, dry snow and access to the Ice Cap
- Remote and uncrowded with 360-degrees of wilderness – completely surrounded by mountains
- Unique community culture and vibe that draws inspiration from the stunning wilderness and pioneering heritage that feeds a 'blaze your own trail' mentality – there is a sense of freedom here that comes from having space to yourself (population base of 200 residents is rare), from being disconnected (cell phones/internet not accessible in most areas) and from being remote yet accessible (Road 40 or the Hurley)

From the perspective of target markets for the Bridge River Valley (BRV), highest return target markets appear to be as follows:

Target Market	Description	Messaging
Mountain Biking – Short Haul	Sea to Sky/Lower Mainland/ Washington State and other short-haul markets motivated to travel specifically for mountain biking	South Chilcotin Mountain Park epic rides – bucket list experience + extensive network of trails outside the Park – exclusive guided experiences available with tourism operators
Mountain Biking – Long Haul	BC residents, Other Canada, US, Other International	World’s best mountain biking – create a dream package that features South Chilcotin Mountain Park but also includes Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton mountain biking i.e. 10 day package with tenured operators/accommodations etc.
Hiking	BC Residents; US drive market; Europe/UK	BRV is the ideal base for an epic hiking vacation – valley bottoms to alpine ridges – meadows in bloom, wildlife in sight – showcase tenured operators
Touring	Calgary-Banff-Whistler-Vancouver touring traffic	‘Super Side Trip’ on your tour of Western Canada – suggested itinerary of several days featuring a variety of activities/attractions – showcase iconic Provincial Parks; wildlife; scenery; packages with Tyax Resort, Chilcotin Holidays – hiking, horse riding, canoeing, fishing – 360 degrees of Canadian wilderness
Family Vacation	BC Residents; Other Canada; US drive market – WA, OR, CA	BRV is the best place to reconnect with your family – catch a fish, ride a horse, go for a walk, a paddle or a hot tub – safely access



		authentic wilderness – start a tradition; create memories together – showcase accommodations, tenured operators
Snowmobiling	BC Residents; Alberta; Ontario; US – travellers specifically motivated by this activity	Bralorne is the best base to access epic sledding on the Ice Cap; third party endorsements (awards, ratings etc.) – showcase accommodations, tenured operators
Heli and Cat Skiing	Europe; ON; BC	Epic deep, dry powder; no waits no delays no crowds – showcase tenured operators
Back Country Ski Touring	Sea to Sky; Lower Mainland; PNW US; Europe	Deep dry snow; uncrowded; remote but accessible; huts
Dual Sport/ATV/Quad's	Sea to Sky; Lower Mainland; PNW US	Countless challenging roads and trails leading to spectacular vistas – showcase accommodation base; profile trails suitable for mechanized use
Angling	Lower Mainland; PNW US	Secluded, uncrowded lakes and rivers filled with rainbow and brook trout, kokanee
Second Homeowners and their Guests	Sea to Sky; Lower Mainland	Share your secret – join the fun – showcase various 'outings' – festivals, events, pub night, romantic dinner etc.

## 9.0 Strategies and Tactics

Given the reality of limited resources to invest in destination development and the many opportunities to promote and position the Bridge River Valley as a travel destination, it is necessary to prioritize investments to ensure marketing impact that leads to returns measured by growing visitor revenues. The following strategies and tactics are recommended priorities for implementation.

## 9.1 Access and Infrastructure Strategies

Access and infrastructure to support visitor experiences in the Bridge River Valley exists today and are considered sufficient in the short-term. However, the following strategies should be considered:

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.1.1 Continue to advocate for adequate road maintenance of Road 40 and for maintenance/early opening of Hurley River Road</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	Continue to communicate with relevant Ministry staff to convey local tourism operators' priorities and feedback regarding road maintenance
Rationale/Objectives	Access to the Bridge River Valley is a significant hurdle to increasing visitation. Road 40 should be maintained to support all nature of vehicles (rental vehicles, RV's, 2WD) and the Hurley River Road should be adequately maintained from May to October for four-wheel drive vehicles. Note: The intention of this strategy is to support access by target markets and not to create easy access that gives rise to excessive visitation by public recreationalists who utilize the area beyond its environmental carrying capacity without any return to local businesses and residents.
Responsibility	BRVCA together with SLRD Area A Director
Timing	Ongoing
Budget	Volunteer time of Board/Economic Development Committee
Measuring Success	Annual visitor intercept survey with specific question(s) regarding access experience

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p><b>9.1.2 In consultation with local residents and existing tourism operators, work with the volunteer Trails Committee to identify appropriate investments in legalized trail development including access considerations/usage levels within and outside Parks, types of activity considered appropriate, new trail development (including walking trails), trail maintenance and interpretive/directional signage</b></p>
<p>Specific Initiatives/Actions</p>	<p>Working with the volunteer Trails Committee, the BRVCA can provide a process and governance structure for consultation with local residents and tourism businesses in order to support appropriate trail development, define acceptable usage levels, identify 'sub-zones' for specific types of uses in order to prevent/manage conflict, establish trail maintenance standards/processes, build mapping of legal trails, install directional and interpretive/invasive species signage both within and outside Provincial Parks.</p>
<p>Rationale/Objectives</p>	<p>The trail system throughout the Bridge River Valley offers motorized and non-motorized experiences for all skills, ages and abilities through spectacular scenery and ecosystems. The alpine trails in South Chilcotin Mountain Park are already considered 'epic' in the mountain biking sector. However, there is concern from some residents that increasing use of these trails undermines the agreed wilderness values identified in the draft Parks Management Plan. Appropriate investment in trail development, identification and management of potential trail conflicts, acceptable levels of usage, maintenance and interpretive/directional signage both inside and outside of the Park, will position the area as a world-class hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking destination thereby generating longer lengths of stay and mitigating concerns related to overuse of Parks trails. The choice of trail routes should be made with local consultation and ideally should not adversely impact other existing uses by tenured operators and recreationalists. However, many of these trails already exist and are being used regularly by public recreationalists. Where the potential for conflict exists e.g. horseback riders/mountain bikers, ATV's/quads and non-motorized users etc., consensus-based agreements should be considered in a broader trail development and usage strategy within a Recreation Management Plan for the area.</p> <p>Walking trails through the Valley are reportedly requested by guests (as opposed to hiking) and several short, easy, interesting walks with interpretive signage would motivate guests at full-service facilities such as Tyax Resort &amp; Spa to explore the communities of Gold Bridge and Bralorne.</p> <p>Wayfinding and interpretive signage at trailheads and at other select locations that explain the ecological, cultural</p>

	and historical significance would contribute to the creation of multi-night destination experiences for visitors. This signage should include best management practice signage related to prevention of invasive species – Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society is a resource for additional information as is <a href="http://www.cleanplaygo.org">www.cleanplaygo.org</a>
Responsibility	Community/stakeholder engagement process led by the Trails Committee and the BRVCA
Timing	Ongoing
Budget	Volunteer time of Trails Committee, Board/Economic Development Committee of BRVCA
Measuring Success	Number of legal trails; community and tourism stakeholder support for trail development; annual visitor intercept survey with specific question(s) regarding trails experience;

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.1.3 Investigate potential for internet 'hotspots' at key locations (Haylmore Heritage Site, select gateway kiosks)</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	Investigate technology/cost of installing internet 'hotspots' at key locations such as the Haylmore Heritage Site and select gateway kiosks that provide free WiFi to visitors and take them directly to the 'What's On in the Bridge River Valley Today' section of the website and overnight accommodation 'specials' etc.
Rationale/Objectives	<p>The gateway kiosks offer information to visitors regarding accommodation and activities on a static basis. An internet 'hotspot' would enable more frequent updating of information to lure visitors to longer stays in the area. As well, number of 'visits' sourced from each kiosk would contribute to market knowledge and understanding of access points, focus on interest/inquiries (pages visited, duration on page) etc. Visitors may be asked to share their email address in order to support development of a marketing database. These hotspots can also periodically be used to support visitor intercept research.</p> <p>As a secondary objective, this 'connection' will contribute to visitor safety and facilitate any requests for assistance (tire repair, towing etc.)</p>
Responsibility	BRVCA potentially in partnership with Minto Communications Society
Timing	Investigate 2015; secure funding and implement for summer 2016
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Functioning internet 'hotspots' in place by summer 2016 and visitor usage monitored

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.1.4 Restore Haylmore Heritage Site and use as launch point for proposed heritage tours, visitor welcome/information, local artisans' retail sales, and central location for development of festivals and events</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	Secure funds to restore buildings, site and add infrastructure (restrooms etc.) to Haylmore Heritage Site Commence restoration  Visitor kiosk on location on summer weekends (as occurred in 2014)  Summer Festival primary location
Rationale/Objectives	The Haylmore Heritage Site is a unique heritage asset located at an ideal location at the entrance to Gold Bridge, en route to Bralorne and has attractive river frontage. It provides opportunity to welcome and orient visitors to the area, and is an important heritage site in the history of the Valley and its relationship to the Gold Rush Trail. Festivals, theatre productions, retail space for local artisans etc. can all be accommodated on the site. Ultimately it would serve as the launch point for heritage tours of the entire Valley that will be offered to transient visitors as well as guests at Tyax Lodge, Chilcotin Holidays and second homeowners.
Responsibility	BRVCA with grant funding
Timing	Secure funding and begin phased restoration 2015
Budget	\$175,000
Measuring Success	Restored heritage site that serves as visitor welcome/information centre in high season and as the launch for heritage tours throughout the valley

## 9.2 Product/Experience Development Strategies

As noted in the current situation analysis, there is little need to focus on the creation of additional visitor experiences. Rather, most of the plan's strategies are centred on promotion of existing experiences in a manner that grows visitor revenues. However, the following strategies should be considered:

Description	<b>9.2.1 Develop a guided Bridge River Valley heritage interpretive tour</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Identify a collection of heritage sites that could comfortably be visited in 3 hours (including transfers from accommodation).</p> <p>Develop 'stories' to be shared by tour guides.</p> <p>Secure transfer vehicle, licensing, insurance (or negotiate use of accommodation providers' vehicles).</p> <p>Establish pricing/commission structure.</p> <p>Create marketing materials to be used for promotion to guests at existing accommodation providers and with second homeowners.</p> <p>Hire and train staff (establish set and limited tour schedule to manage cost e.g. one tour per week every Sunday morning).</p>
Rationale/Objectives	A heritage tour provides motivation for guests at existing accommodation providers, second homeowners and their guests to explore the communities of the Bridge River Valley and contribute more broadly to the local economy
Responsibility	BRVCA
Timing	Define visitor experience 2015; launch summer 2015
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Number of heritage tours sold; increase in visitor spending in local businesses

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.2.2 Promote live entertainment and dinner specials every Saturday night in partnership with Sally's Pub and Gold Bridge Hotel on alternating weeks including shuttle transfers from Gun Lake</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	Second homeowners and their guests (particularly on Gun Lake) have little reason to visit Gold Bridge or Bralorne - live entertainment, dinner specials along with complimentary shuttle service would reignite a tradition of 'heading into town' on Saturday night.
Rationale/Objectives	Most second homeowners and their guests arrive in the Bridge River Valley fully provisioned for their stay and utilize local businesses only for minor supplemental purchases. The creation of a weekly 'event' offers reason to visit Gold Bridge or Bralorne and contribute to local businesses.
Responsibility	BRVCA to facilitate discussion of opportunity with Sally's Pub and Gold Bridge Hotel
Timing	Discussions spring 2015; launch summer 2015
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Event attendance



<b>Description</b>	<b>9.2.3 Establish a series of geo-caching sites throughout the Bridge River Valley at places of interest/historic significance</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Research and document specific requirements of <a href="http://www.geocaching.com">www.geocaching.com</a> for inclusion in their program (public sites, accessible at any time etc.)</p> <p>Identify a series of geo-caching locations in the Bridge River Valley at place of interest/historic significance that meet these requirements and have varying degrees of access difficulty. Sites should be sufficiently far apart to warrant one or more overnight stays in the area.</p> <p>Approach Gold Country Communities Society and The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association to investigate possible opportunities for Bridge River Valley participation in geo-caching efforts already underway regionally</p>
Rationale/Objectives	<p>The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region is becoming known as an outstanding geo-caching destination. However, a review of current sites indicates that the Bridge River Valley has not yet been included in this regional effort. Geo-caching travellers are highly motivated, frequent travellers with an interest in local history and high level of comfort in the backcountry and consequently represent an excellent segment for the Bridge River Valley to pursue.</p>
Responsibility	BRVCA in partnership with Gold Country Communities Society and the CCCTA
Timing	Discussions spring 2015; launch summer 2015
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Number of geocache log entries

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.2.4 Enhance business service and training levels; offer opportunities for local businesses to improve industry and market knowledge`</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Work with local tourism businesses to achieve minimum participation level and approach Destination BC to offer <a href="#">WorldHost®</a> training program to Bridge River Valley businesses that focuses on providing exceptional visitor experiences;</p> <p>Develop a self-assessment checklist for ‘market- ready’ and ‘export-ready’ standards and best practice to be used by local businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Destination BC market-ready checklist as a starting place and further enhance with specific standards and best practices related to Bridge River Valley: <a href="http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Tourism-Planning-Resources/Market-Ready-Standards.aspx">http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Tourism-Planning-Resources/Market-Ready-Standards.aspx</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Resources/Tourism-Planning-Resources/Market-Ready-Standards/Market_Ready_Standards.pdf.aspx">http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Resources/Tourism-Planning-Resources/Market-Ready-Standards/Market_Ready_Standards.pdf.aspx</a></p> <p>This tool will help to build understanding of ‘market-ready’ and ‘export-ready’ product standards and experiential requirements.</p> <p>Promote <a href="#">Tourism Business Essentials</a> educational tools and online resources available through Destination BC at no charge to local businesses.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Enhanced market knowledge and service/training levels will continue to improve the visitor experience.
Responsibility	BRVCA
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	WorldHost delivery cost to be paid by participants
Measuring Success	Number of members utilizing on-line resources.

### 9.3 Marketing/Promotion Strategies

The following strategies are recommended for consideration and are applicable to all target markets. Specific strategies by motivating activity follow.

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.1 Develop a compelling brand identity for the area and incorporate into all destination development investments (signage, marketing/promotion etc.)</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Work with a graphic designer to develop a compelling brand identity that captures unique selling proposition of the area from a visitors' perspective. This identity should leverage the iconic and inimitable.</p> <p>Include consideration of various naming conventions as well as brand attributes.</p> <p>Develop several preferred options and review with BRVCA and community.</p> <p>For maximum impact, ensure brand identity is aligned with provincial brand managed by Destination BC.</p> <p>If funding permits, secure primary market research from target markets to ensure identity resonates in the marketplace.</p> <p>Develop brand standards manual.</p> <p>Launch brand and incorporate in all destination efforts.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	The Bridge River Valley does not have a compelling and memorable brand identity and is currently referred to by a variety of names. While an identity alone will not increase visitation, it is an important tool to build awareness and convey the area's unique selling proposition to those considering travel.
Responsibility	BRVCA Economic Development Committee
Timing	Brand identity by June 30, 2015
Budget	\$2500
Measuring Success	Community supported brand identity launched in 2015

Description	9.3.2 Launch brand identity/messaging
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Confirm proposed key messages for each geographic region and targeted sub-segment.</p> <p>Build knowledge and understanding of the Canada brand and the British Columbia brand.</p> <p>Secure high-quality experiential photography and videography that captures compelling images for each market segment targeted and is aligned with provincial branding.</p> <p>Meet with key marketing partners (CTC, Destination BC, CCCTA etc.) to share target markets, key messages and brand imagery and to ensure area is appropriately represented in partner destination marketing efforts;</p> <p>Share brand identity with tourism operators to ensure an understanding of brand positioning and how they can align their efforts;</p>
Rationale/Objectives	High quality experiential photography will allow potential visitors to see themselves 'in the activity' and motivate participation. Marketing partners' excitement needs to be built for Bridge River Valley as a destination.
Responsibility	BRVCA
Timing	2015 photography; meetings
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Growth in value of sector revenues

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.3 Update destination website to reflect unique selling proposition, brand identity and key messages in a user friendly, easily navigated format</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Secure an intuitive, visitor-oriented url for the website consistent with preferred name for the area.</p> <p>Commence website update including navigation and content specific to target markets(keeping in mind key words/links etc. that will drive high organic search engine placement). Navigation and imagery should reflect target segments/travel motivators.</p> <p>Redesign should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home page: “What’s your passion?” – click through directly to mountain biking information, hiking, wildlife viewing information etc. rather than more generic navigation that lists activities available</li> <li>• Additional photography/videography to convey emotional appeal of experiences</li> <li>• Third party endorsements of experiences</li> <li>• Suggested itineraries – 3 day tour; 5 day tour</li> <li>• Circle routes</li> <li>• Trail maps (possible link to Trails Society site)</li> </ul> <p>Ensure website is mobile device friendly.</p> <p>Utilize Google Analytics to understand website statistics e.g. referral source, unique visits, length of stay; pages visited; page visit duration etc.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	A strong web presence that is user friendly and easy to navigate to relevant information for the traveller will support all segments and responds to market research regarding growing use of the internet for travel planning.
Responsibility	BRVCA contract with website designer;
Timing	2015 update with annual improvements thereafter
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Number of unique visits; number of referrals to member websites; size of database for future direct marketing;

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.4 Actively participate in online marketing and social media engagement to build awareness, excitement and motivate travel to the Bridge River Valley</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p><b>Integrated Online Marketing Campaigns including:</b> Build an opt-in email database which records activities of interest and begin series of email campaigns with suggested itineraries matching indicated interests;</p> <p>Consider introducing contests and build a database for future direct marketing efforts. (See Camping and RV BC “It’s my camping story blog contest” as an example - <a href="http://www.campingrvbc.com/contest/">http://www.campingrvbc.com/contest/</a>).</p> <p><b>Social Media/Trip Advisor/Website Blog:</b> Establish a presence in social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram with frequently updated and relevant information that, in particular, appeals to target markets (including What’s Happening this Week).</p> <p>Ensure integration of social media tools on website.</p> <p>Maintain connections with Destination BC, CCCTA, AtBC and other DMO social media feeds (Lillooet, Pemberton). See <a href="#">How to Engage with Destination BC’s Social Media Channels</a> for more information.</p> <p>Ensure local tourism operators are on TripAdvisor and encourage them to actively manage their online reputation. <a href="http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Programs/Guides-Workshops-and-Webinars/Guides/Tourism-Business-Essentials-Guides/TBE-Guide-Online-Reputation-Management-2nd-Edition-Sep-2014-(2).pdf.aspx">http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Programs/Guides-Workshops-and-Webinars/Guides/Tourism-Business-Essentials-Guides/TBE-Guide-Online-Reputation-Management-2nd-Edition-Sep-2014-(2).pdf.aspx</a></p> <p>Introduce a website blog (possibly in partnership with Trails Society) with ‘must do’s; highlights of recent trips – integrate with Instagram photo’s/stories similar to highly successful campaign ‘Whistler Unfiltered’ see <a href="http://www.origindesign.ca/instagram-powers-tourism-whistler-s-whistlerunfiltered-campaign/">www.origindesign.ca/instagram-powers-tourism-whistler-s-whistlerunfiltered-campaign/</a></p>
Rationale/Objectives	Integrated online marketing campaigns that include contesting, paid advertising, email opt-ins etc. and participation in social media that accesses the family and youth markets and can create ‘viral’ excitement about travel experiences in the Bridge River Valley.
Responsibility	BRVCA and contract for on-line marketing/social media
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Size of email database for future direct marketing; contest participation rates; Social media ‘Likes’/‘Follows’ and reach; Instagram posts; blog engagement.

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.5 Update Visitor Guide to incorporate brand identity, key messages and unique selling proposition</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Review current Visitor Guide design/content and incorporate revised content, imagery and format to reflect key messages and branding.</p> <p>Consider application of following design concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature the iconic in imagery and leading content – South Chilcotin Mountain Park and all the activities within it (emphasis on guided tours and operators offering them)</li> <li>• Trails, trails, trails – the best hikes, descents, horse rides</li> <li>• Family time – gold panning, fishing, boating – suggested family vacation itineraries</li> <li>• Day tours – showcase new heritage tour; walking trails if developed; possible partnership with Xwisten Experience Tours</li> <li>• Go local – where to go to meet the locals (Sally’s Pub, Gold Bridge Hotel – particularly if featured nights with live entertainment are launched)</li> <li>• Where more generic information is provided on ‘things to do’ provide tourism operator information and contacts on same page as activity information to encourage utilizing a commercial operator</li> </ul>
Rationale/Objectives	<p>The Visitor Guide produced in 2014 is an excellent foundational document from which to build. It currently functions as more of a directory listing of all the many things to do in the area and upon completion of the brand identity/approval of key messages, it can be updated to create more of a direct appeal to highest opportunity target markets.</p>
Responsibility	BRVCA and contract for brochure design
Timing	2015 and ongoing annual updates
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Value of visitor economy; broader distribution of spending throughout local businesses

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.6 Design and print a rack card promoting Haylmore Heritage site and Valley heritage tours for distribution by local accommodators, Visitor kiosk etc.</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	Design two-sided rack card featuring Haylmore Heritage site and heritage tours of the Bridge River Valley  Print and distribute to second homeowners, local accommodators and through the Visitor kiosk
Rationale/Objectives	Heritage tours offer significant opportunity to bring visitors into local communities, offer a memorable experience and give them reason to return. While in community, there will be enhanced opportunity for local spending creating broader economic impact than is currently experienced
Responsibility	BRVCA and contracted design services
Timing	2015
Budget	\$5,000
Measuring Success	Brochure distribution; visitor attendance at Haylmore site



<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.7 Undertake primary consumer research to confirm effectiveness of brand/website and immediate marketing efforts and to inform future investments</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Approach DBC Research and Evaluation team to request support for primary market research definition and implementation (support for intercept survey design).</p> <p>Document research objectives and secure resources for research efforts (volunteers?) for research efforts.</p> <p>Conduct annual visitor intercept survey.</p> <p>Test target market response to brand identity, website design/content/navigation, as well as current perceptions of Bridge River Valley experiences, travel motivators and travel influencers.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Disciplined primary market research will inform marketing investments and increase the probability of marketing returns for sector stakeholders thereby increasing the overall value of sector revenues.
Responsibility	BRVCA with potential support from DBC Research Services.
Timing	2015 and annually thereafter
Budget	TBD
Measuring Success	Secure analysis of target market perceptions of Bridge River Valley experiences, purchase motivators, purchase influencers to inform future marketing and promotional investments.

<b>Description</b>	<b>9.3.8 Secure media coverage to build awareness in all target sub-segments regarding Bridge River Valley experiences highlighting key messages, positioning and unique selling proposition</b>
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Develop tools to engage in and maximize media opportunities – i.e. develop unique story ideas, itineraries, imagery, etc.</p> <p>Work with CCCTA and DBC on media opportunities. Regularly share story ideas, itineraries and imagery so that these organizations can include the Bridge River Valley in their media outreach tactics.</p> <p>Investigate and identify influential blogs, forums and key influencers and secure coverage relevant to markets being targeted.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Travellers are influenced by word of mouth and personal experience. Editorial coverage provides a proxy for this word of mouth and builds awareness in target markets.
Responsibility	BRVCA
Timing	2015 and annually thereafter
Budget	Leverage media relations efforts of CCCTA and DBC; storylines and journalist visit coordination; secure hosting/photography from local tourism operators;
Measuring Success	Advertising equivalency of media coverage; number of journalists/key publications hosted; growth in visitation and revenues vs. baseline.

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p><b>9.3.9 Create marketing partnerships with other organizations in order to leverage resources and market penetration</b></p>
<p>Specific Initiatives/Actions</p>	<p><b>Destination BC:</b>  Maximize <a href="http://www.hellobc.com">www.hellobc.com</a> –work with Destination BC’s Travel Information Management team to ensure Bridge River Valley content is up to date and reflective of branding, messaging and unique selling proposition.</p> <p>Explore the opportunity of working with the Consumer Marketing team to develop potential content ideas for a series of Bridge River Valley related eDMs to be sent out to those consumers in Destination BC’s database that indicated hiking, biking, horse riding, snowmobiling, heritage etc. as a primary interest.</p> <p>Engage with Destination BC’s social media channels <a href="http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Consumer-and-Industry/Social-Media.aspx">http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Consumer-and-Industry/Social-Media.aspx</a>.</p> <p>Working with CCCTA, share story ideas with Destination BC’s Travel Media Team (see 9.3.7).</p> <p>Working with CCCTA, share iconic trip ideas in the Bridge River Valley for consideration by Destination BC’s North America Travel Trade’s quarterly e-newsletter distributed to 2,000+ travel agents and tourism operators.</p> <p><b>CCCTA/Community DMO’s:</b>  CCCTA –Opportunities to educate RDMO staff on the Bridge River Valley brand and experience should be pursued and joint annual planning should occur to strategize on highest return marketing and promotional opportunities.</p> <p>Gold Country Communities Society – Geocaching program in particular – Identify opportunities where it is possible to include Bridge River Valley and incorporate into <a href="http://www.geocaching.com">www.geocaching.com</a> promotions.</p> <p>Explore partnerships with Tourism Pemberton, Tourism Whistler, Tourism Squamish - Best of BC mountain biking promotion of multi-destination experience in anticipation of new cooperative marketing program in 2016.</p> <p>District of Lillooet – Promote regional experiences, circle routes with particular emphasis on capturing larger proportion of touring traffic en route between Vancouver – Whistler-Banff-Calgary.</p>

Visitor Centres - Partnerships with Visitor Centres are also important. Front-line staff in regional Visitor Centres in Lillooet, Lytton, Cache Creek, Vancouver, Squamish, Pemberton and Whistler should be knowledgeable about the Bridge River Valley (including road/driving conditions) and should distribute the Visitor Guide.

**Other Partners:**

First Nations with traditional territory in the Bridge River Valley – identify mutually beneficial opportunities

BC Parks – work collaboratively to educate recreationalists on appropriate Park uses and monitor recreational use levels related to environmental carrying capacity.

Xwisten Experience Tours – Co-promote experiences; include in circle route promotions.

Historic Hat Creek Ranch – Co-promote experiences; include in touring/circle route promotions.

Gold Rush Trail Management Committee – Ask to join Committee and participate in ongoing promotions related to Gold Rush Trail.

BC Fishing Resorts & Outfitters Association (BCFROA) representing freshwater angling sector – promote angling experiences in the Bridge River Valley on sector website.

Canadian Tourism Commission - Work with CCCTA to pursue a 'Signature Experience' in the Bridge River Valley – South Chilcotin Mountain Park?

Camping/RV sector [www.campingrvbc.com](http://www.campingrvbc.com); [www.gocampingbc.com](http://www.gocampingbc.com) ; [www.camping.bc.ca](http://www.camping.bc.ca) –Enhance content related to Bridge River Valley camping experiences.

Dual sport/ATV/quad clubs – Create suggested itineraries for club events and distribute to all Lower Mainland; Central BC clubs.

Snowmobile clubs – Create suggested tours/itineraries for club events and distribute to all Lower Mainland, Central BC clubs.

Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society – Work collaboratively to integrate best management practices for trail signage, invasive species monitoring and treatment. Include messaging as appropriate in marketing tactics.

Rationale/Objectives	Leveraging resources with other organizations for mutual benefit is necessary with limited funds for marketing and promotion.
Responsibility	BRVCA and partner organizations listed
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	BRVCA
Measuring Success	Growth in sector participation vs. baseline; number of referrals from partner websites; number of leveraged marketing programs; value of leveraging.

## 10.0 Implementation

The strategies and tactics recommended above will require a commitment of resources and funding for a multi-year period. The Bridge River Valley Community Association is the lead for implementation and should continue to secure grant funding from various entities such as Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) and Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition. While a more sustainable funding model is desirable, the reality of this area is that there are too few tourism operators to generate sufficient resources locally for destination marketing.

NDIT marketing grants fund up to \$20,000 in eligible costs (all the recommended strategies above would be considered eligible), however dollars must be leveraged i.e. for every \$1 from NDIT, \$2.50 must be sourced elsewhere. More details are available at [www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca](http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca). Consequently, in order to receive the maximum \$20,000 from NDIT, other funds of \$50,000 must be secured for a total project budget of \$70,000. Potentially, the BRVCA could access Community Tourism Opportunities funds offered through the CCCTA from Destination BC in the upcoming year. If CTO funds were supplemented with Area A discretionary funds from the SLRD, a pool of \$10,000 could be generated, which would access \$4,000 from NDIT for a total budget of \$14,000.

Reliance on volunteer resources will be necessary beyond this budget. The BRVCA is fortunate to have a committed group of volunteers upon which it can rely for the expertise and effort that will be needed to implement this plan.