



**TOTA** THOMPSON OKANAGAN  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

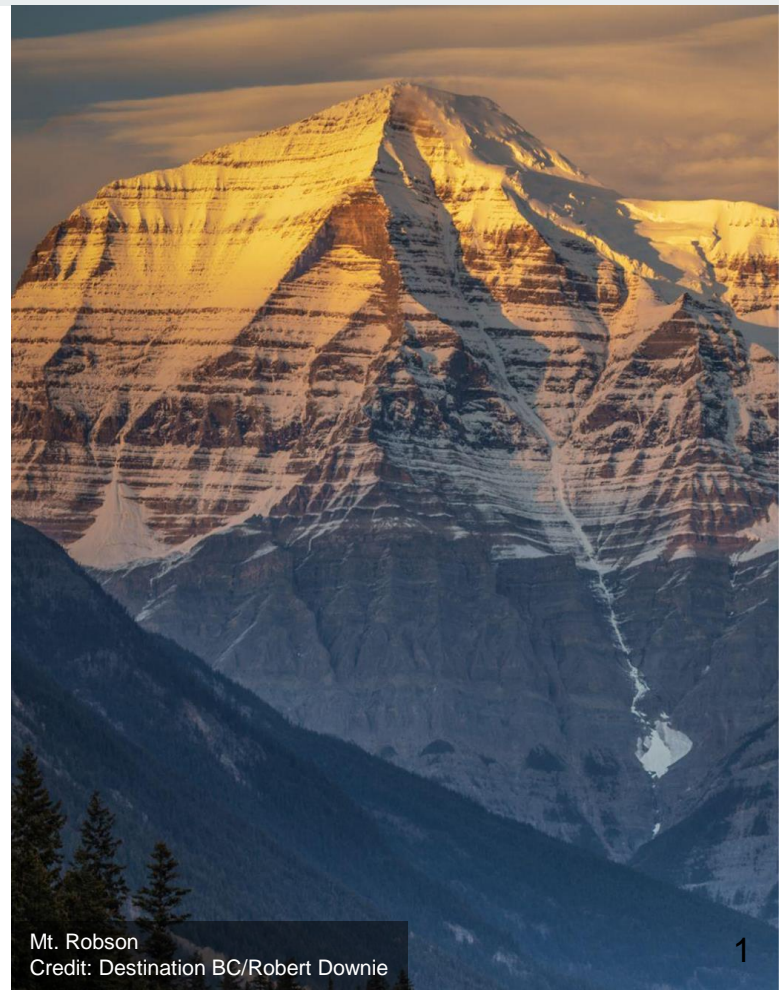
# Sustainable Tourism Observatory

2021 Annual Report



**INSTO**

World Tourism Organization  
International Network  
of Sustainable Tourism  
Observatories



Mt. Robson  
Credit: Destination BC/Robert Downie

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# Introduction

In October 2019, the Thompson Okanagan region became the first Canadian destination to join the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO).

The Year 1 Report was completed for 2020. The following is the report for Year 2: 2021.



Trans Canada Trail, Myra Canyon  
Credit: Matthew Clark

# Introduction

There are 11 core issue areas that INSTO Observatories are required to monitor at least to a certain extent:

- Tourism Seasonality
- Employment
- Destination Economic Benefits
- Governance
- Local Satisfaction
- Energy Management
- Water Management
- Wastewater Management
- Solid Waste Management
- Accessibility
- Climate Action



# Report Focus

We have chosen the following topics and associated indicators as benchmarks for Thompson Okanagan. We are working towards providing complete information for each indicator where available.

The 2021 report will focus on:

- Tourism seasonality
- Employment
- Destination Economic Benefits
- Local Satisfaction
- Energy Management
- Water Management
- Indigenous products, experiences and community impacts
- Accessibility - Universal Access & Inclusion
- Climate Action - Climate change and extreme weather events



Trans Canada Trail, Myra Canyon  
Credit: Matthew Clark

# Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

Not-for-profit society governed by an elected Board of Directors representing business and community tourism interests throughout the Thompson Okanagan region.

One of British Columbia's six Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMO), which reflect the strategic direction of the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport; Destination British Columbia; and the needs and priorities of tourism stakeholders.



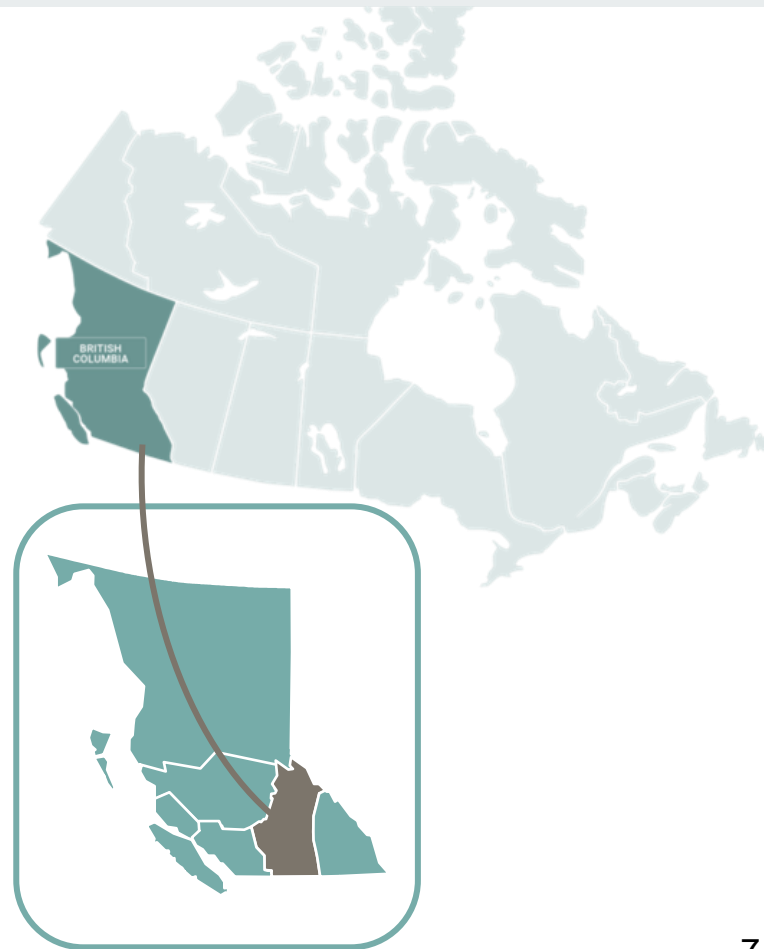
Trans Canada Trail, Myra Canyon  
Credit: Matthew Clark

# Thompson Okanagan Region

Located in the Southern Interior of British Columbia, Canada.

Diverse area covering approximately 71,600 km<sup>2</sup> (27,644 mi<sup>2</sup>), named for two major geographic features: the Thompson River and Okanagan Lake.

Home to over 120 communities, including 33 Indigenous communities, and over 3,500 tourism businesses, with landscapes as varied as the tallest peak in the Canadian Rockies to the semi-arid climate of the Okanagan Desert.



# Land Acknowledgement

Rich in Indigenous culture, the Thompson Okanagan region lies on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territory of three **Interior Salish nations**: the **Syilx**, **Secwépemc**, and **Nlaka'pamux** peoples.



Learn More at [TOTABC.org/Land-Acknowledgement](https://TOTABC.org/Land-Acknowledgement)



# Regional Tourism Strategy

The Embracing Our Potential 10-Year Regional Strategy was completed in 2012, guiding TOTA from a Destination Marketing focus to a more holistic Destination Management role.

Completed through:

- 18 month process
- 1,800 stakeholders involved
- Community engagement and endorsement
- 48 input sessions



**EMBRACING  
OUR  
POTENTIAL**

HOW DO WE CREATE  
AN EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE?  
*...a partnership approach*

A ten-year tourism strategy for the  
Thompson Okanagan Region  
2012 - 2022

**TOTA**  
Thompson Okanagan  
Tourism Association

**BC**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Canada

**TourismBC**

**Canada**

# Regional Tourism Strategy

Refreshed in 2020 with similar themes and more focus on sustainable tourism, Embracing Our Potential 2.0 is a commitment to:

- Foster sustainability and resiliency
- Broaden the story of the region
- Minimize seasonality
- Disperse visitors throughout the region.

Led to development of 7 corridor plans, which inform future destination development



# Organizational Priorities & Guiding Principles

As we moved forward to implement the revised and updated strategy, the following Guiding Principles will direct us in building the long-term health and success of the Thompson Okanagan region and will ensure the relevance of the work being undertaken by the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA).



Stewardship



Engage Stakeholders,  
Communities, and  
Residents



Advance  
Sustainability



Long Term  
Tourism  
Resiliency



Measurement

# Sustainable Tourism Team Members

In 2021, TOTA had 15 team members working towards sustainable tourism. 6 team members had roles directly related to sustainability. 9 team members had roles indirectly related to sustainability.

## Primary

1. Director of Destination Stewardship
2. Destination Stewardship Coordinator
3. Sustainability Experience Coordinator
4. Energy Analyst
5. Access & Inclusion Liaison
6. Indigenous Tourism Specialist

## Secondary

1. CEO
2. Director of Destination Development
3. Director of Market Stewardship
4. Corporate Communications Specialist
5. Event & Industry Relations Specialist
6. Consumer Communications Coordinator
7. Digital Marketing Specialist
8. Tourism Resiliency Advisor
9. Tourism Inspiration Centre Manager

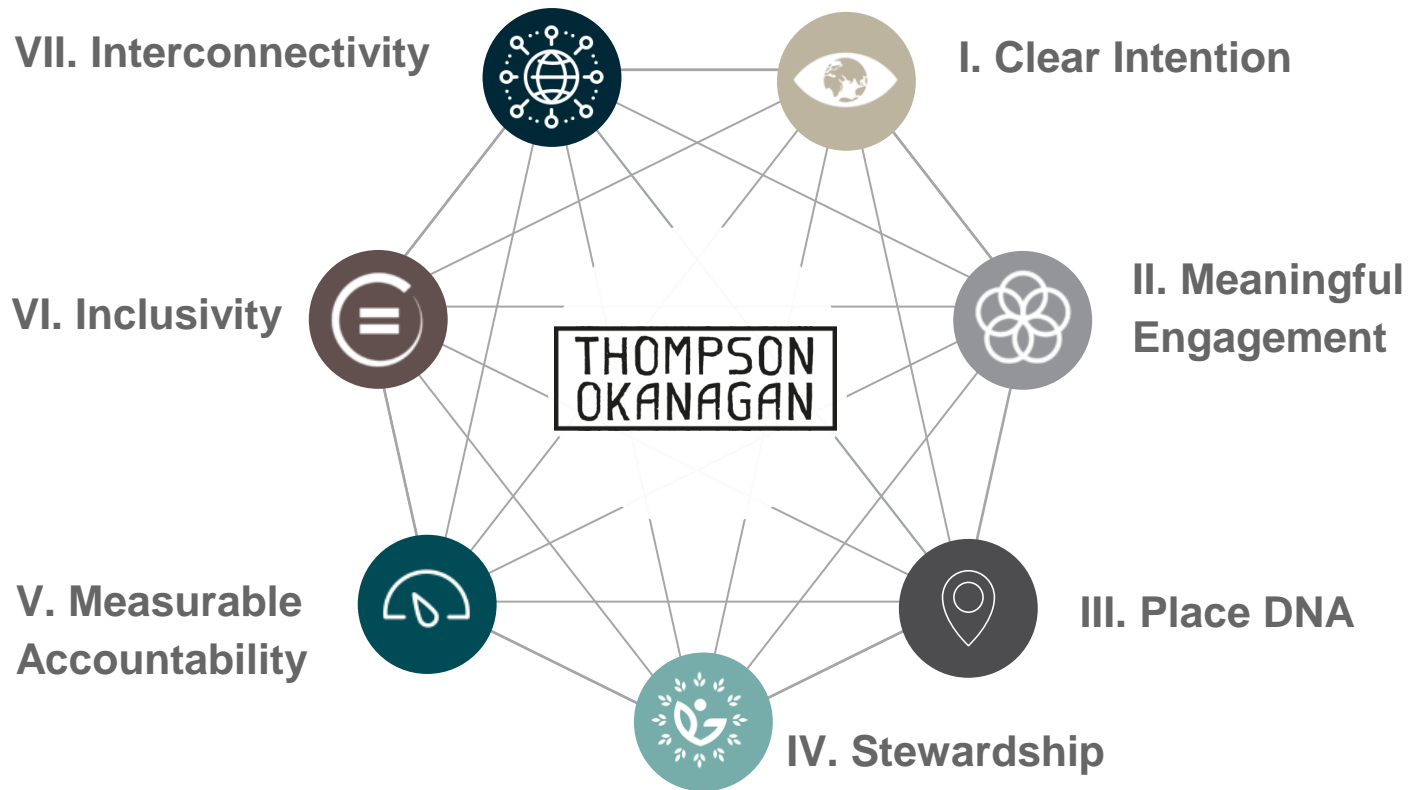


## I. Clear Intention

# Objectives of the Observatory



# Observatory Approach

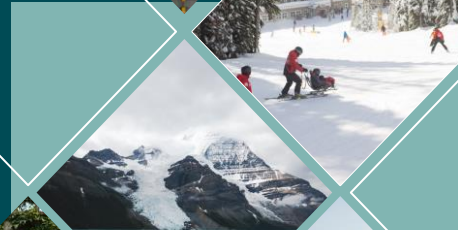


# Observatory Objectives

The primary objective is the continued implementation of measurement and management practices to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the region. As a result of TOTA's work to date and the March 2020 Regional 10 year strategy update, the following objectives have been identified for continued monitoring and development:

- Strengthen the delivery of responsible tourism with a focus on Biosphere sustainability, accessibility, and Indigenous tourism.
- Create alignment and synergy through strengthened partnerships and further cross industry collaboration.
- Utilize big data through data collection, cross referencing, validation, analysis, and interpretation.
- Crisis management through monitoring, mitigation, planning, and communications.
- Strategic marketing and communications through research, education, and feedback mechanisms.
- Influence change through municipal, provincial, and federal advocacy and resident awareness.

# Year 2 Overview





# Reflecting on 2021

The Thompson Okanagan tourism industry faced many challenges in 2021. Collectively these issues are of serious concern to tourism industry stakeholders and partners, both today and well into the future.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, many hoped for recovery in 2021. However, COVID restrictions continued and additional measures were taken that affected business and travel. A heat dome sparked unprecedented challenges to the region and contributed to ongoing wildfires and smoke throughout the summer of 2021. Flooding and landslides followed in November and December contributing to severe highway damage virtually cutting the region off from the lower mainland.

Finally, tremendous labour shortages affecting most industries, but significantly felt in all tourism-related businesses caused new levels of concern. Accommodators closed rooms and even floors, limited days open to arrivals, and greatly reduced services. Similarly restaurants and attractions shortened their hours and/or opening fewer days per week.



# Reflecting on 2021

Fortunately, provincial and federal funds have been available to help mitigate some of the impacts. As well, the BC Tourism Resiliency Network and other organizations continued to offer supports and direction to tourism businesses.

Overall, the Thompson Okanagan region was not as impacted as other regions of British Columbia that rely more directly on international markets. Stakeholders focused on serving domestic visitors and while staying in contact with and preparing for the return of international travellers.

These crises have also provided a unique opportunity to step back and reassess. Tourism is interconnected with the economic and socio-cultural wellbeing of communities. Social license is required to continue operating with the good-will and consent of residents.

There's also a deeper appreciation for the business case for sustainability. There is a significant opportunity to reduce operating costs and implement more sustainable practices as part of the recovery process.



# Travel Impacts of COVID 19

## Limited international visitation since March 2020

- July; Canada eased border measures for entering travellers.
- August; Canada allowed entry to American citizens and permanent residents to Canada for non-essential travel. Soon after, proof of vaccination became a requirement for international travel.
- September; Canada allowed non-essential travel for vaccinated travellers.
- November; Canada required vaccination to board all aircraft



## Limited domestic visitation; varied as provincial restrictions and messaging changed

- April 23 to June 15; the Province introduced travel restrictions [limiting non-essential travel between health authority regions in B.C.](#) and advised against inter-provincial travel until July 1.
- July 29 to December 1; Interior Health (Thompson Okanagan Health Authority) had additional measures and travel advisories in place impacting this region only.

# Impacts of COVID-19

## **Tourism Service/Experiences - altered / restricted**

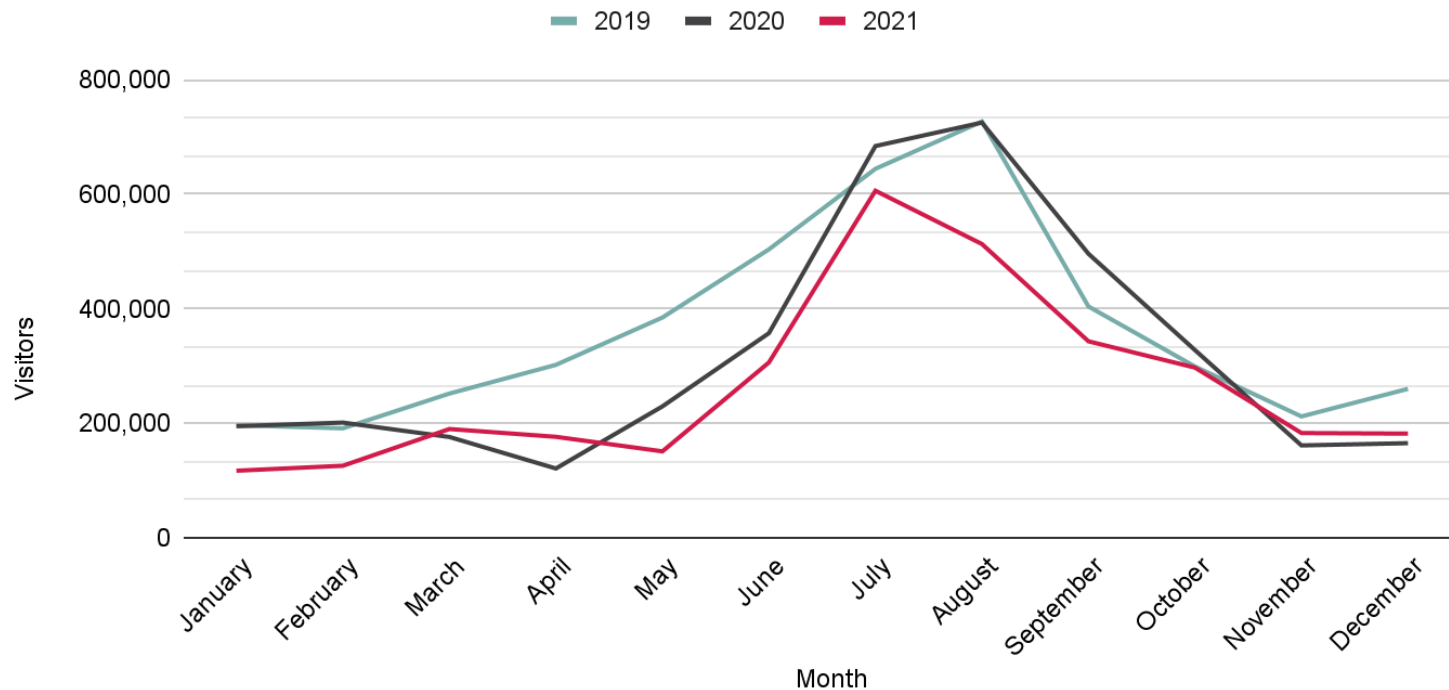
- Masks were required indoors, which continues today
- Indoor dining was restricted to households or limited to 6 people for much of the year.
- Organized gatherings were limited to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors for much of the year.
- September 13 into 2022; B.C. proof of vaccination was required to access a broad range of social, recreational, and discretionary events and businesses throughout the province.

## **Severe and continuing labour shortage**

- Additional work was required by limited staff, such as developing COVID Health & Safety Plans, checking proof of vaccination, and following changing restrictions.
- Labour shortages throughout the various tourism stakeholder businesses resulted in reduced services, reduced hours and closures.



# Canadian Visitors to Thompson Okanagan



Source: Environics Analytics. Monthly Visitors, Thompson Okanagan Region. January 2019 - December 2021

# Impacts of Wildfires, Smoke, & Extreme Heat

From June 25 to July 7, 2021, the Pacific Northwest experienced an extreme heat wave, resulting in some of the highest temperatures ever recorded in the region, including the highest temperature ever measured in Canada at 49.6 °C in Lytton, in the northeast section of the Thompson Okanagan. Outdoors activities were limited. The heat “dome” as it was referred to, sparked numerous extensive wildfires early in the season and many parts of the Thompson Okanagan were blanketed in smoke in August and September.



Impacts on Thompson Okanagan tourism businesses included:

- New and varied regulations, including travel advisories prohibiting travel to and through communities with evacuation alerts.
- Negative media messaging.
- Inaccurate and misinformation.
- Continued loss of trees, root systems, and ground cover, leading to slides and severe flooding

# Impacts of Floods & Landslides

A major flood event in November 2021 directly impacted the neighbouring Fraser Valley sub-region and the Thompson Okanagan communities of Princeton, Merritt, and surrounding areas.



## **The entire Thompson Okanagan region was impacted due to:**

- Continued flooding and landslides causing road closures.
- Dramatic infrastructure loss of major highways and access to Lower Mainland
- Evacuation alerts and orders.
- Displaced residents for extended periods.
- Fuel restrictions in the Lower Mainland.
- Travel restrictions.
- Supply chain challenges and concerns.
- Ongoing uncertainty.



## II. Meaningful Engagement

# Tourism Resiliency Program



Thompson  
Okanagan  
Tourism  
Resiliency  
Program





# COVID Response & Recovery: Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program

After the Province of British Columbia declared a State of Emergency in March 2020 due to a rise in case of COVID-19, TOTA connected with regional, provincial, and national levels of government and organizations.

Together with the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, TOTA launched the **BC Tourism Resiliency Network** on April 27, 2020 to offer support to tourism businesses throughout the province. TOTA leads the regional branch, the **Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program**, offering one-on-one advising and information resources for tourism companies in the region.

The logo for the British Columbia Tourism Resiliency Network is a dark red square with white text. The text is arranged in four lines: "British", "Columbia", "Tourism", and "Resiliency Network".

British  
Columbia  
Tourism  
Resiliency  
Network

The logo for the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program is a teal square with white text. The text is arranged in four lines: "Thompson", "Okanagan", "Tourism", and "Resiliency Program".

Thompson  
Okanagan  
Tourism  
Resiliency  
Program

# Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program

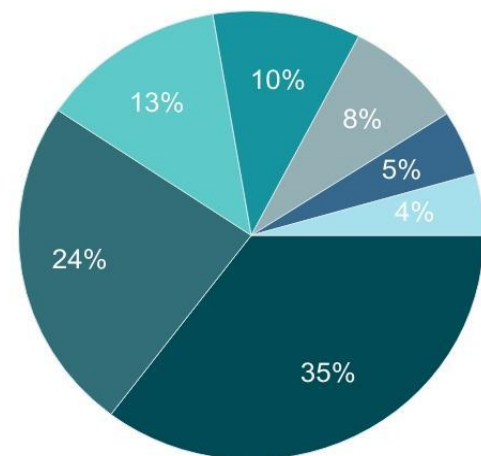
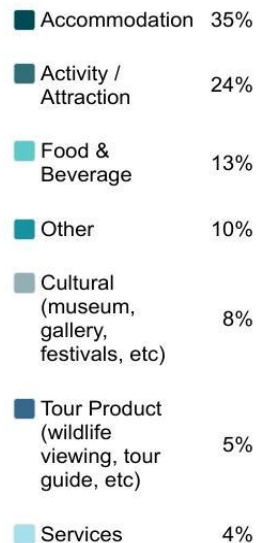
The Tourism Resiliency Program continued in 2021, offering complimentary business support with TOTA Resiliency Advisor through one-on-one virtual meetings or calls. Advisors followed up with resources and support to access financial, digital marketing, human resources, legal, mental health, and business education resources.

The program has grown to over 965 registered clients and over 23,680 points of contact, for 25 average points of contact per client. There were 26 Indigenous-owned companies and 126 female-owned companies (meaning 51% or more).

	2021	Total
<b>Registered Clients</b>	123	965
<b>Points of Contact</b>	11,900	23,680
<b>Average Points of Contact per Client</b>	20	25
<b>Indigenous Owned Companies</b>	+10	26
<b>Female Owned Companies</b>	+45	126

# Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program - Clients

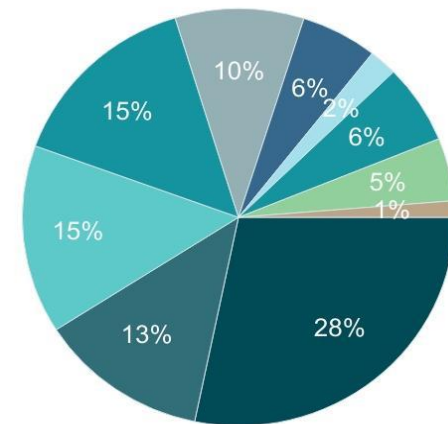
Tourism Resiliency Program clients come from a variety of business categories. The main categories were accommodation (35%), Activity / Attraction (24%), Food & Beverage (13%), and Cultural (8%).



# Thompson Okanagan Tourism Resiliency Program - Areas

Clients represented a range of sub regions with the Thompson Okanagan region. The main sub regions were the Central Okanagan (28%), North Thompson (15%), South Okanagan (15%), and North Okanagan (13%).

Central Okanagan	28%
North Okanagan	13%
South Okanagan	15%
North Thompson	15%
South Thompson	10%
Shuswap	6%
Similkameen	2%
Boundary Country	6%
Nicola & Gold Country	5%
Other/Multiple Sub-Regions	1%



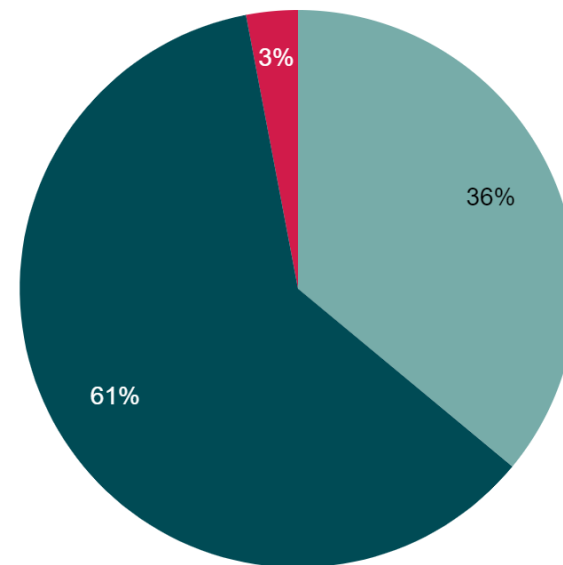
# COVID Tourism Impact Report

The percentage of firms operating with a reduction in hours, staff, and/or services due to COVID-19 in July and August combined was 61%, while the percentage reporting business as usual was 36%, up from 19% in June. 3% of firms reported being closed due to COVID-19 during the summer, representing a drop of 10 percentage points from June.

However, there was a resurgence of COVID in August in the Okanagan, which led to a broader slowdown.

### Impact of COVID-19 on Current Operations

● Business as usual ● Operating with reductions due to COVID  
● Temporarily closed due to COVID

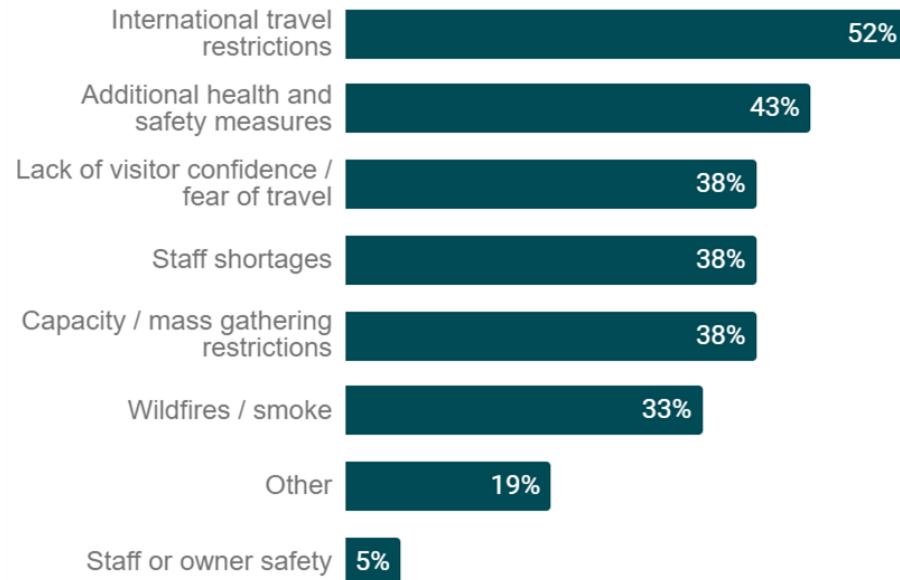


# COVID Tourism Impact Report

Of those businesses not fully reopened, the top reason businesses cited that is preventing them from fully reopening is international travel restrictions (52%).

The second most cited reason was additional health and safety measures (43%) staff shortages, with almost half businesses believing that to be a main issue.

## Main issues preventing businesses from reopening





### III. Place DNA

# Regional Pledge



## 7 Affirmations Pledge

The Thompson Okanagan Regional Pledge was created in 2019 to articulate guidelines for realizing sustainable tourism in the region.

Individuals and companies are invited to commit to these ideals and practices in writing through the signature of a personal or business Pledge.

Based on the Indigenous Seven Generations Principle, it recognizes that the decisions an individual makes today have an impact for seven generations to come and that it is the individual's responsibility to consider the long-term implications of their actions.



7 AFFIRMATIONS FOR 7 GENERATIONS  
Thompson Okanagan Regional Pledge

**238**

**Signatures**



# 7 Affirmations Pledge

The goal of the 7 Affirmations Pledge is to encourage mindfulness, appreciation, and responsibility from visitors, businesses, and residents alike as they travel around and explore the Thompson Okanagan region or as they deliver their products and services.

The 7 Affirmations are:

1. True Roots
2. Tread Lightly
3. Be a Good Neighbour
4. Travel Safely
5. Live in Harmony
6. Shop Local
7. Educate Others



True Roots



Tread Lightly



Be a Good Neighbour



Live in Harmony



Travel Safely



Shop Local



Educate Others



## IV. Stewardship

# Key Destination Stewardship Initiatives



BIOSPHERE  
certified destination



# Destination Stewardship

TOTA's Destination Stewardship objectives are derived from our ten-year tourism strategy, **Embracing Our Potential 2.0.**, released in March 2020. This strategy is the evolution of the regional development strategy, originally completed in 2012.

At the core of all Destination Stewardship initiatives has been a commitment to work toward the development and delivery of sustainable tourism that supports the region's natural and cultural heritage, its social well-being and its economic vitality.

Furthermore, a key focus has been extending the tourism season through the development of a broader and deeper product and story, supported by the advancement of Indigenous tourism and universal accessibility and inclusion.

Achieving the **Biosphere Gold Destination** certification in 2017 was a major milestone for TOTA and provided a framework for all of our destination stewardship activities, in alignment with the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

In parallel to the Tourism Resiliency Program, TOTA has made progress to expand its Biosphere Commitment Program, launch Eco-Efficiency Assessments for energy, water and solid waste and initiate the preparation phase for a new, centralized Tourism Data Platform.



Sun Peaks Resort  
Credit: Reuben Krabbe

# Biosphere Commitment Program

TOTA has been a Gold Certified Destination by the Responsible Tourism Institute since November 2017.

In 2021 our regional counterparts in the Province of BC are also pursuing their own Biosphere certification process.

TOTAs Biosphere Commitment Program continued to engage tourism stakeholder in our region in 2021, refining the engagement strategy to businesses with capacity to address sustainability and who had a physical building.

The program also added a number of tools and resources providing added value for committed companies and expanding our impact. For 2021 TOTA had 73 Biosphere Committed Companies.



# Biosphere Commitment Program - 2021 Engagement



**73** Biosphere Committed Companies



**34** companies engaged in Eco Efficiency Program



**32** companies participating in Energy Assessments

# Tourism Impact Portal

In order to take the next step towards more evidence-based decision making, TOTA embarked on a journey to develop a tourism data platform in 2020. This work has continued throughout 2021. After successfully completing the initial data discovery phase, the project was extended beyond the Thompson Okanagan to include four more regions in British Columbia: Kootenay Rockies Tourism; Northern BC Tourism Association; Tourism Vancouver Island; and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association. While this increased complexity of the project and changed timelines, it also increased collaboration across the regions, aligning insights for data collection, analysis and overall quality.

TOTA continued as a pilot region with the preparation, and integration of the first data points for the platform, leading the development of the visuals for each indicator and the creation of the first wireframes for the impact portal website through summer 2021. At the same time, the other participating regions started with their data discovery journey. By fall 2021, the project officially moved from the first to the second development phase: preparing the prototype of the platform (frontend) and consolidating first data points for all regions. By the end of 2021, work started on the backend, with the goal to launch the platform by summer 2022.

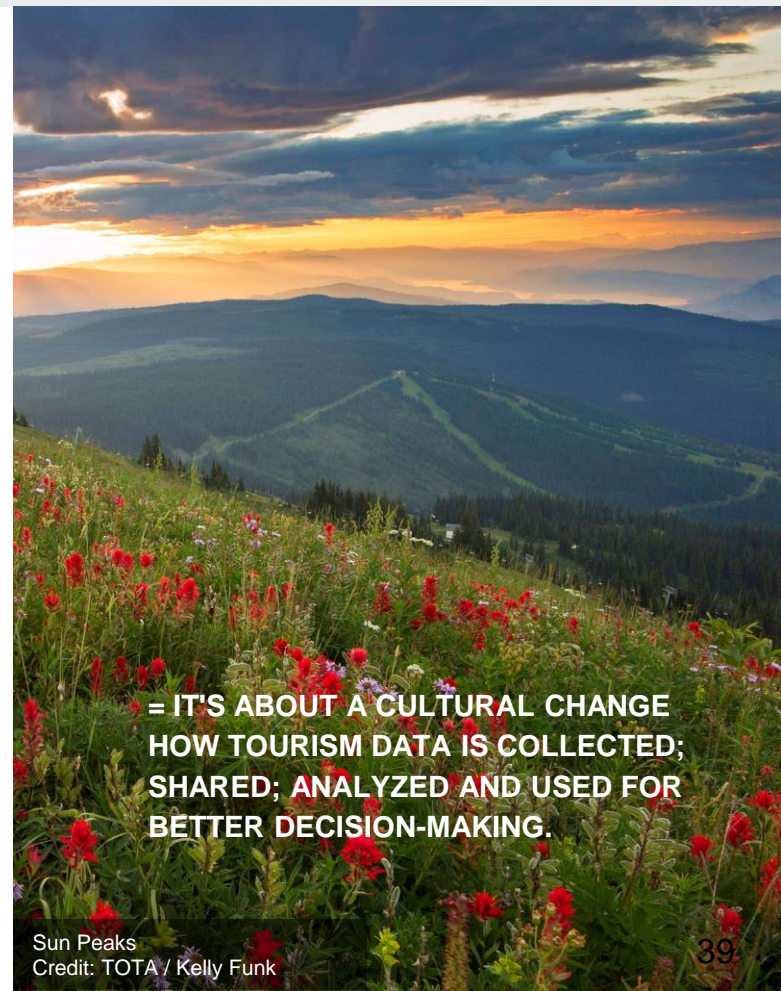


# Tourism Impact Portal Goals

The project aims to build the foundation for an open, central information portal for the destination (TOTA initially and now other participating regions within BC) that provides continuous insights into tourism-relevant trends and dynamics in the regions, including social, economic and environmental insights. This is done through a variety of dashboards for different, relevant themes and indicators, in alignment with the INSTO issue areas and beyond.

## VALUE CREATION

- Easier to find information
- Facilitate better understanding of data
- Strengthen cooperations between regions, organizations and (sub)sectors
- Encourage stakeholders to lean on data
- Improve the ability to analyze data
- Increase commitments to data sharing
- Foster regular data inquiries & research & better alignment of such



**= IT'S ABOUT A CULTURAL CHANGE  
HOW TOURISM DATA IS COLLECTED;  
SHARED; ANALYZED AND USED FOR  
BETTER DECISION-MAKING.**

# Tourism Impact Portal Timeline

## Preparation Phase

## Platform Development

## Version 1 Goes Live

## Extension & Maintenance

Summer / Fall 2021

Fall / Winter 2021

Spring/Summer  
2022

2022 and beyond

### Preparation Phase

- Review of existing data
- Review of existing infrastructure
- Indicator prioritization (TOTA / Stakeholders)
- Identification of needed building blocks
- Initial design process
- Research & decision on data platform provider
- Decision to extend the project to four other regions within BC
- Onboarding other regions

### Platform Development

- Define metrics of success
- Start with initial indicators
- Data preparation, ingestion, processing (cleaning, enriching, aggregating) and storage
- Data visualization
- First mockup of data platform

### Extension & Maintenance

- Data preparation & integration of initial data for participating regions
- Fine-tuning data
- Extension of TOTA insights
- Development of backend



# Tourism Impact Portal



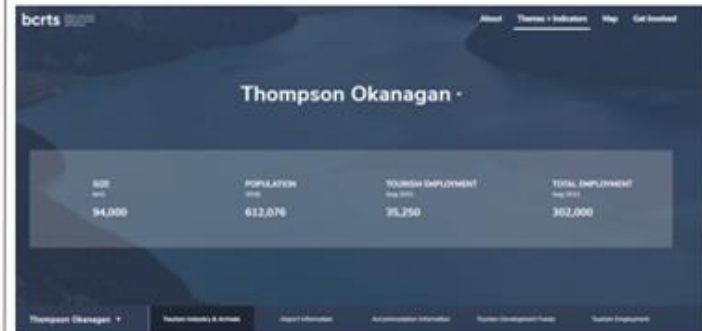
British Columbia is one of the most attractive destinations worldwide. With this initiative, the participating regions within the province seek to strengthen their commitment towards sustainable development through more transparent reporting and continuous monitoring of economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism.

Discover the committed regions and their tourism assets on the map.



## Explore the data

This platform includes a variety of tourism-relevant information gathered from different sources across BC. It is an ever-evolving platform where data is regularly added to continuously extend the available economic, environmental and social insights and improve their spatial and temporal quality.





## V. Measurable Accountability

# Monitored Issue Areas & Indicators



# Issue Areas & Indicators

The UNWTO guidelines for Observatories outline nine mandatory issue areas to monitor sustainability in tourism. These are local satisfaction with tourism, destination economic benefits, employment, tourism seasonality, energy management, water management, waste water (sewage) management, solid waste management and governance. TOTA has identified six additional areas of interest to the region (carrying capacity, climate change and extreme weather events, land use and conservation, intra-regional connectivity, sustainable tourism practices and universal inclusivity).

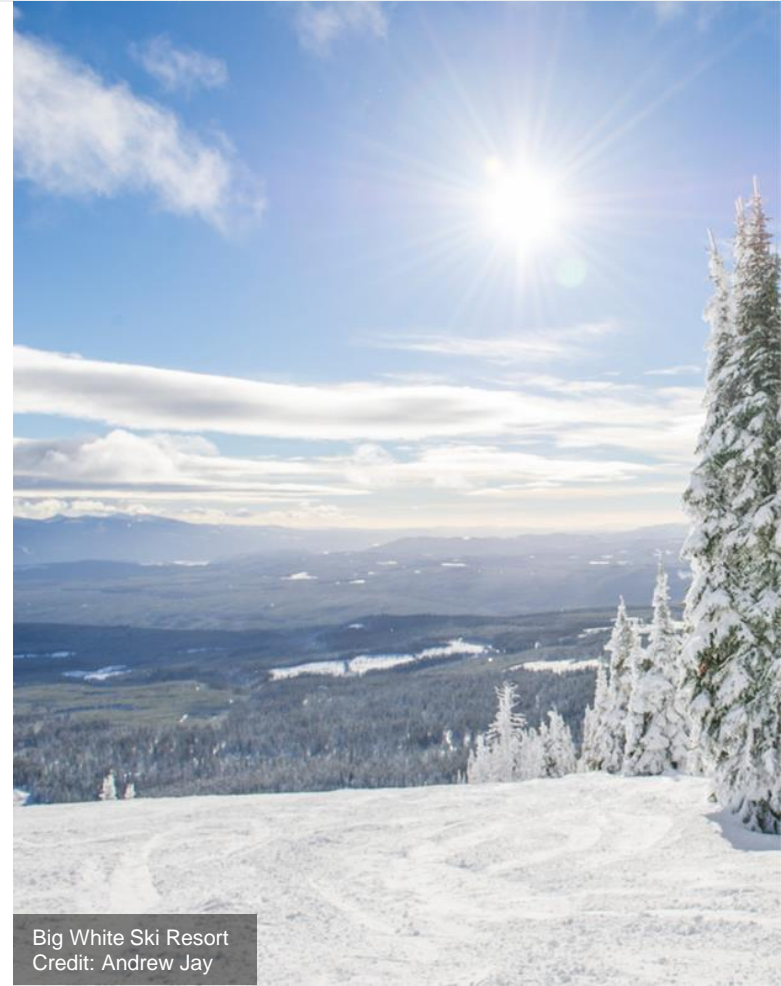
As part of the Year 1 activities, TOTA reviewed the previously defined 14 issue areas and 181 indicators to determine the feasibility and priorities, which led to redefining the overall indicator list.



# Issue Areas & Indicators

For Year 2, TOTA has prioritized the following **issue areas**.

1. Tourism seasonality
2. Employment
3. Destination Economic Benefits
4. Local Satisfaction
5. Energy Management
6. Water Management
7. Indigenous products, experiences and community impacts
8. Accessibility - Universal Access & Inclusion
9. Climate Action - Climate change and extreme weather events



# 1. Tourism Seasonality

1.1 Length of tourism season (number of days)

1.2 Proportion of annual (domestic and international) visitation occurring by month and by quarter

1.3 Change in hotel occupancy rates by month

1.4 % of tourism businesses open year round (by type of business)

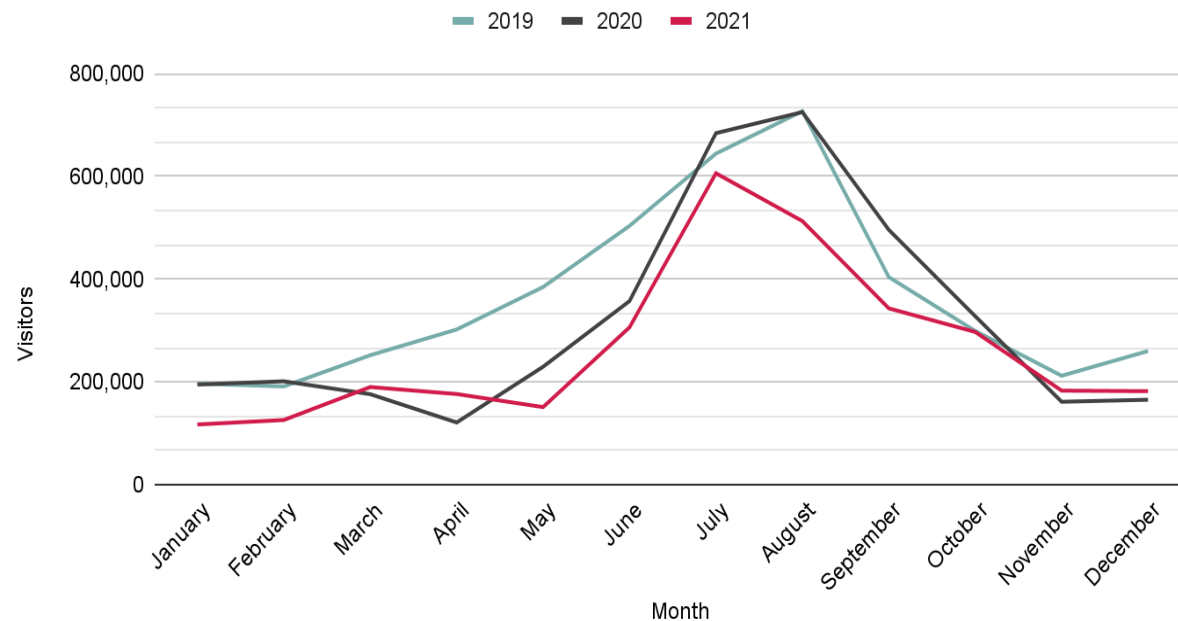
1.5 Ratio of inquiries at tourism information centres in the region (peak month to lowest month)

TOTA has made significant progress in extending the region's tourism season.

The data shows for 2021 that 80% of tourism visitation occurred over 8 months of the year.

This is an improvement over historical data where 80% of tourism visitation occurred in the summer months.

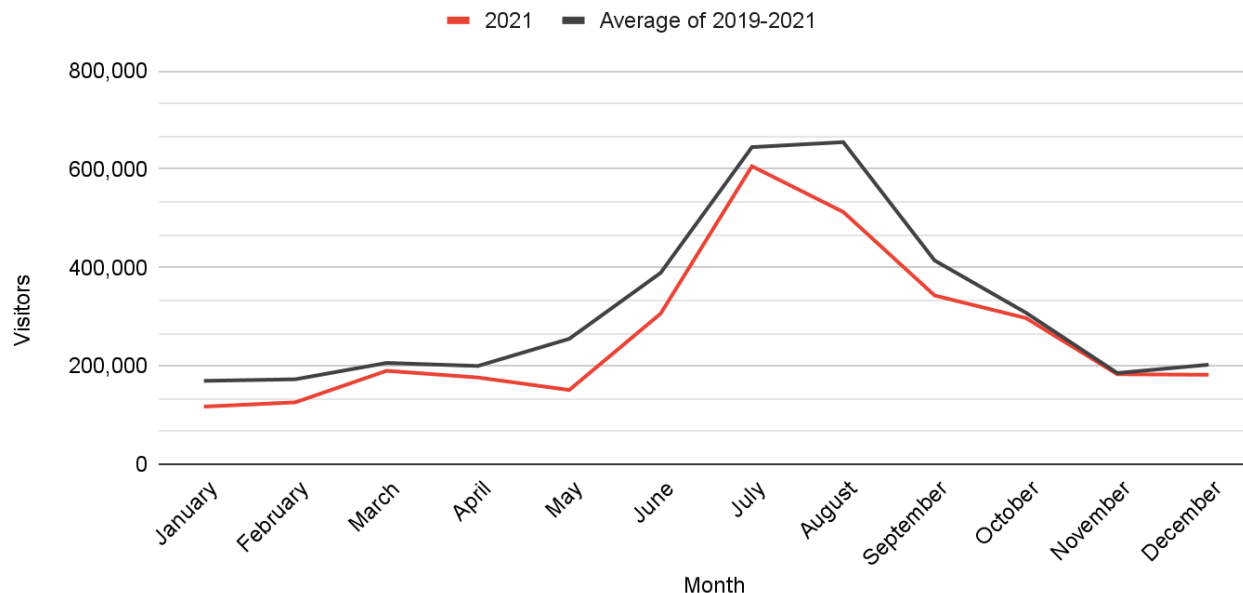
# 1.1 Length of Tourism Season



82% of Canadian visitors in 2021 occurred in 8 months (March, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December)

20% of Canadian visitors in 2021 occurred in the other 4 months (April, May, January and February)

# 1.1 Length of tourism season (by month)



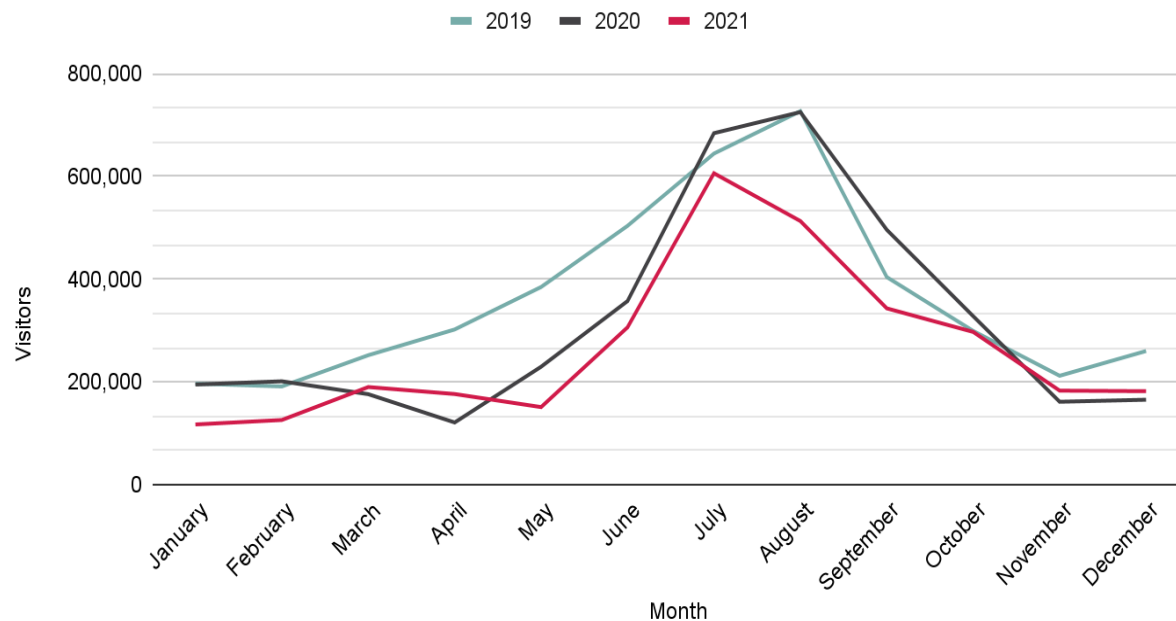
## Average Canadian Visitors to Thompson Okanagan

2021 saw a slightly lower overall average visitation compared to 2019 - 2021.

The Thompson Okanagan also saw a reduction in visitation in August 2021 due to the significant wildfires in the region.

Source: Monthly Visitors, Thompson Okanagan Region. January 2019 - December 2021

# 1.2 Proportion of annual (domestic and international) visitation occurring by month



In 2021, there were 3,194,318 Canadian visitors to the Thompson Okanagan.

July (606,200) had the most visitors, followed by August (513,200), September (343,400), and June (306,500).

January (117,500) had the least amount of visitors, followed by February (126,200), May (151,300), and April (176,700).

Source: Monthly Visitors, Thompson Okanagan Region. January 2019 - December 2021



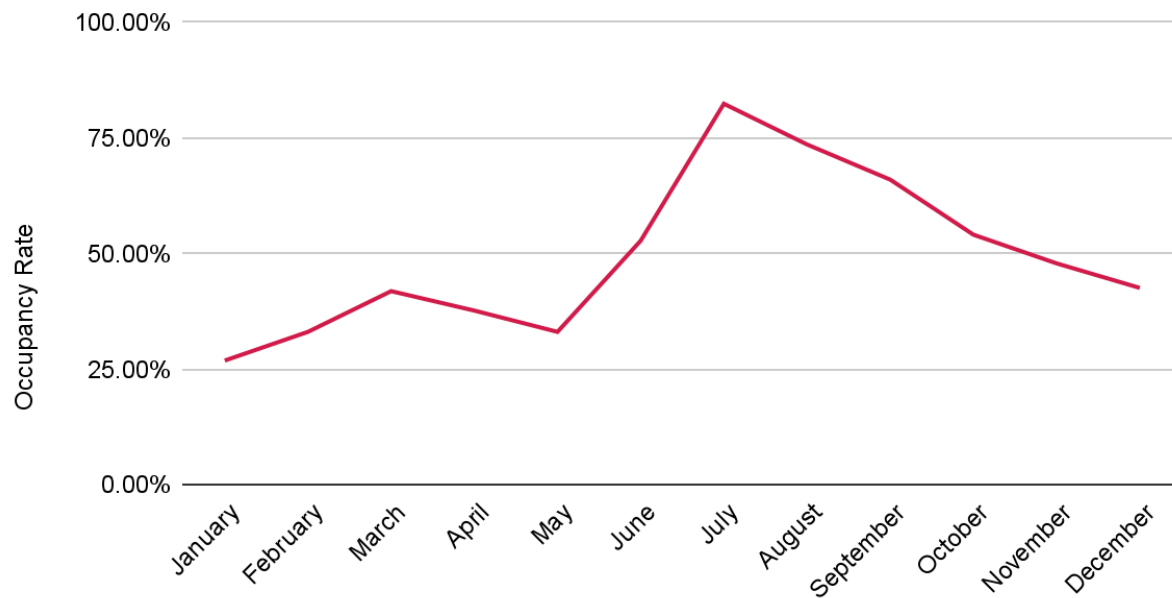
## 1.2 Proportion of annual (domestic and international) visitation occurring by quarter

In 2021, there were 3,194,318 Canadian visitors to the Thompson Okanagan.

The Summer quarter had the most visitors (1,462,800) The next most popular quarter was Fall (663,018) followed closely by Spring (634,500).

Quarter	2019	2020	2021	Average of 2019-2021
Winter (Jan - March)	640,600	573,100	434,000	549,233
Spring (April - June)	1,191,100	708,800	634,500	844,800
Summer (July - September)	1,775,700	1,905,600	1,462,800	1,714,700
Fall (Oct - Dec)	772,049	655,363	663,018	696,810

# 1.3 Change in hotel occupancy rates by month



Hotel Occupancy Rate - STR

Source: STR Destination Report 2021

## Hotel Occupancy Rate

In 2021, the Thompson Okanagan Average Occupancy Rate was 49%.

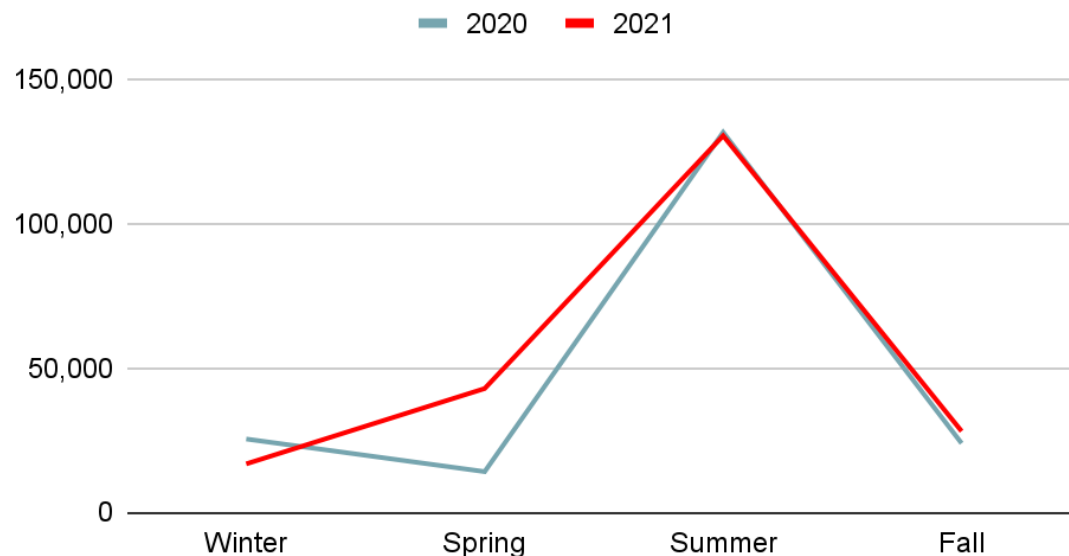
In 2020, the AOR was 41%. In 2017-2019, the average AOR was 59%.

July (82%) had the highest occupancy rate, followed by August (74%), September (66%), October (54%) and June (53%).

January (27%) had the lowest occupancy rate, followed by February (33%), May (33%), and March (38%).

# 1.5 Ratio of inquiries at tourism information centres in the region (peak month to lowest month)

## Thompson Okanagan Visitor Centres - Total



**Total number of visitors to Visitor centres in the Thompson Okanagan**

In 2021 the total number of visitors to Thompson Okanagan Visitor Centres was 218,506.

Most visitors were accessing centres in the Summer (July August and September)

## 2. Employment

2.1 Proportion of regional employment in the accommodation & food service sector

2.2 Number of local people employed in tourism

2.3 Ratio of men to women employed in tourism

2.4 Average accommodation & food service weekly wage compared to other sectors

2.5 Regional unemployment rate in tourism off-season

2.6 Ratio of part time to full time employment in tourism

As of March 2022 this data was not available to us.

We will retroactively include 2021 data in next years report.

# Training Opportunities

TOTA works with education providers to deliver training programs that support professionals to develop their career in the Thompson Okanagan tourism industry.

Developed in 2021 in response to the major industry disruption caused by COVID-19 and the ongoing skilled labour shortage, these programs support skills development, benefitting both professionals and tourism businesses.

Programs are delivered by the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) in cooperation with the University of Victoria-Peter B. Gustavson School of Business and Okanagan College.

Training programs are offered online or at the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Inspiration & Training Centre on Highway 97C (Okanagan Connector) near Peachland.



**5** Training Courses offered



**142** Number of Registrants (2021)

Course Title	Registrants
Tourism Skills Training	80
Agri-Tourism Entrepreneur Skills Training Program	20
Storytelling for Tourism Success	8
Grant Writing for Tourism Businesses	19
Indigenous Community Engagement for Tourism Businesses	15

## 3. Destination Economic Benefits

3.1 Overall contribution of tourism to the regional economy (CAD)

3.2 Domestic and international overnight stays

3.3 Average length of stay (domestic vs. international overnight visitors)

3.4 Average expenditure per tourist per day

3.5 Hotel room revenues by community

3.6 Average daily room rate by community

3.7 Proportion of tourism businesses that are locally owned

Tourism remains the largest economic driver for the Thompson Okanagan Region, outpacing more traditional sectors like forestry, mining and agriculture.

TOTA works with provincial government agencies and associations as well as private research firms to gather data regarding visitor arrivals, length of stay, spending, hotel room revenues and average daily room rate.

In some areas, regional data is extrapolated from provincial data and TOTA intends to get a more granular understanding of the true local economic benefits through expanded partnerships and data sources.

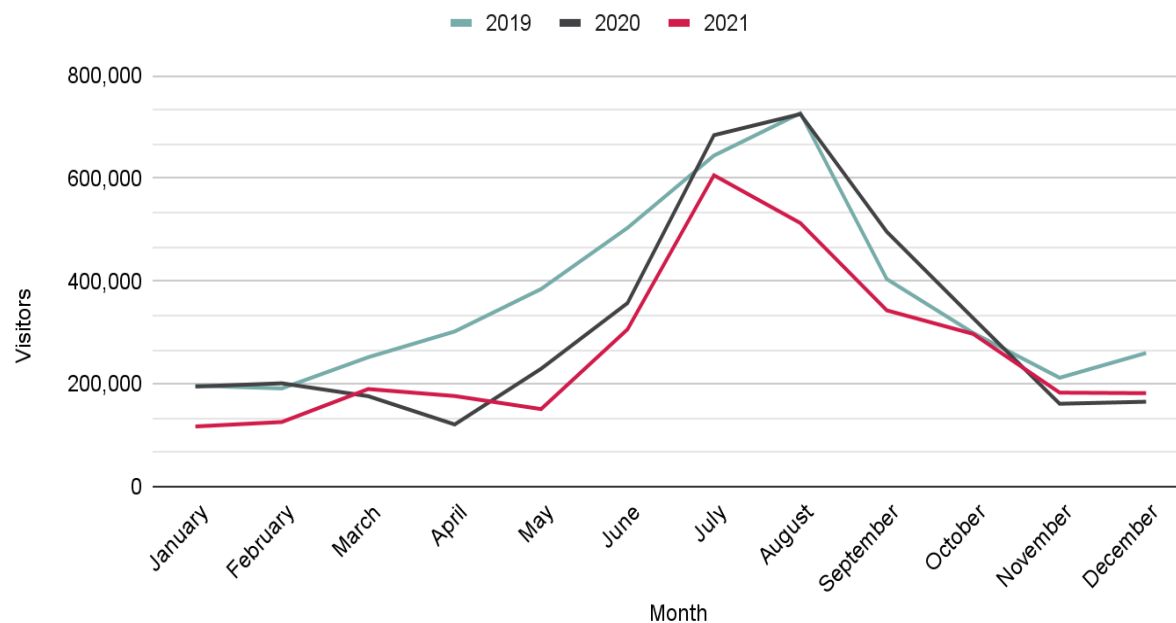
# Thompson Okanagan Canadian Visitation Highlights

In 2021, approximately 3,194,318 Canadians visited the Thompson Okanagan and stayed 11,358,509 nights.

The monthly average was 266,193 visitors and 946,542 night stays.



# Canadian Visitors to Thompson Okanagan



In 2021, there were 3,194,318 Canadian visitors to the Thompson Okanagan.

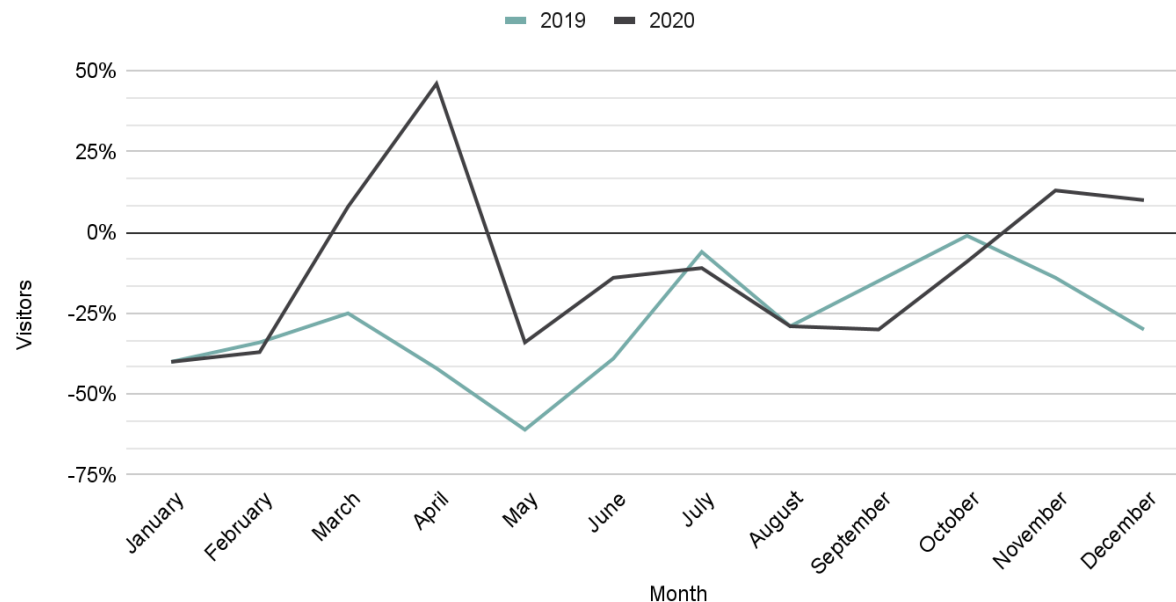
July (606,200) had the most visitors, followed by August (513,200), September (343,400), and June (306,500).

January (117,500) had the least amount of visitors, followed by February (126,200), May (151,300), and April (176,700).

Source: Monthly Visitors, Thompson Okanagan Region. January 2019 - December 2021



# Canadian Visitors to Thompson Okanagan 2021 Compared to Previous Years



Source: Environics Analytics. Canadian Visitors, Thompson Okanagan Region. 2021 Compared to Previous Years

In 2021, **Canadian** visitation was lower than previous years due to COVID-19 restrictions, extreme heat and wildfires beginning at the end of July, into September.

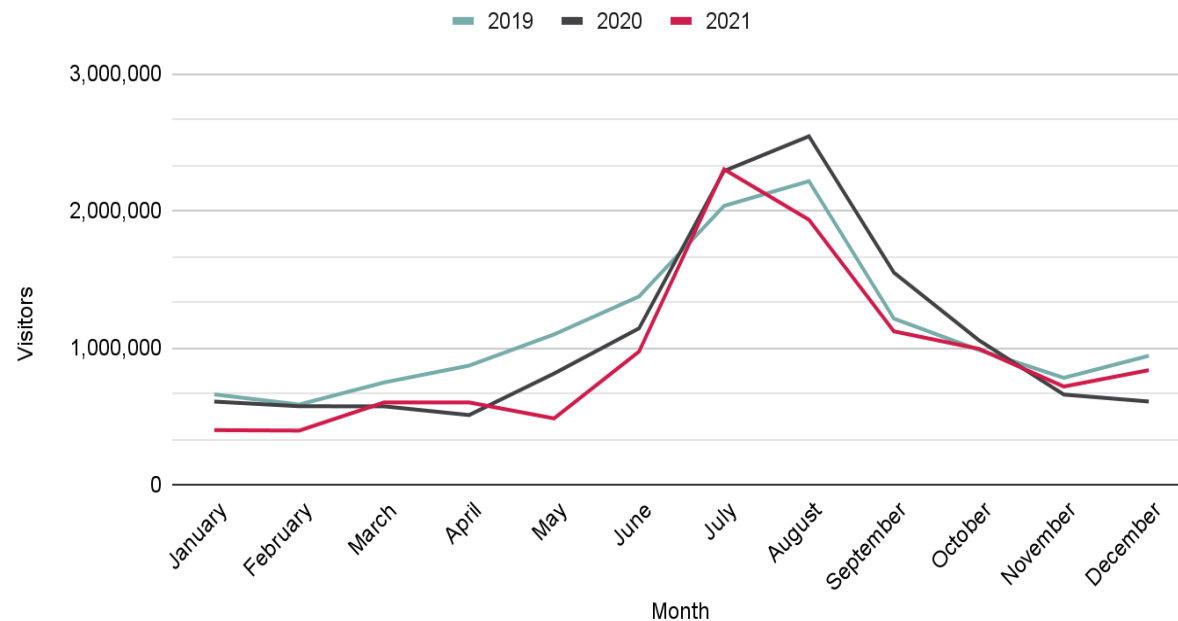
2019 data is included for comparison because 2020 visitation was impacted by COVID restrictions.

Compared to 2019:

May was impacted the most significantly (-61%), followed by April (-42%), January (-40%), and June (-39%).

October was the least significantly impacted (-1%), followed by July (-6%), November (-14%), and September (-15%).

## 3.2 Domestic and international overnight stays



### Canadian Nights Stayed in Thompson Okanagan

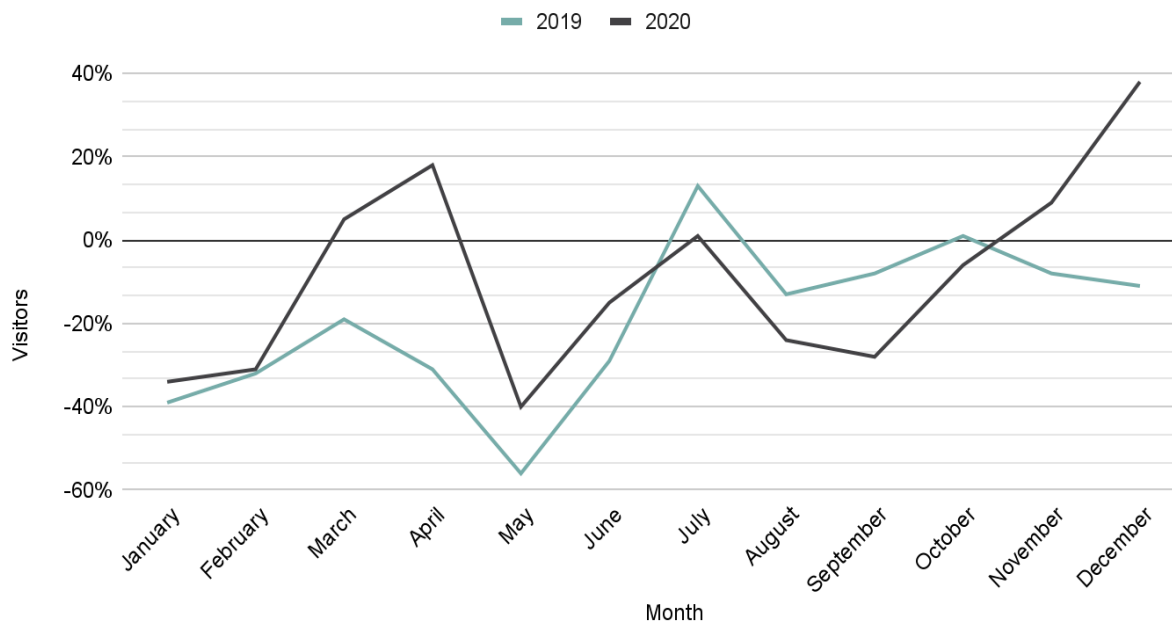
In 2021, there were 11,358,509 nights stayed by Canadians in the Thompson Okanagan.

July (2,302,533) had the most nights stayed, followed by August (1,934,098), September (1,119,848), and October (992,493).

February (395,793) had the least nights stayed, followed by January (399,209), May (484,882), and April (601,325).

Source: Canadian Nights Stayed in Thompson Okanagan Region. January 2019 - December 2021

# 3.2 Domestic and international overnight stays 2021 Compared to Previous Years



In 2021, **Canadian** visitation was lower than previous years due to COVID-19 restrictions, extreme heat and wildfires beginning at the end of July, into September.

2019 data is included for comparison because 2020 visitation was impacted by COVID restrictions.

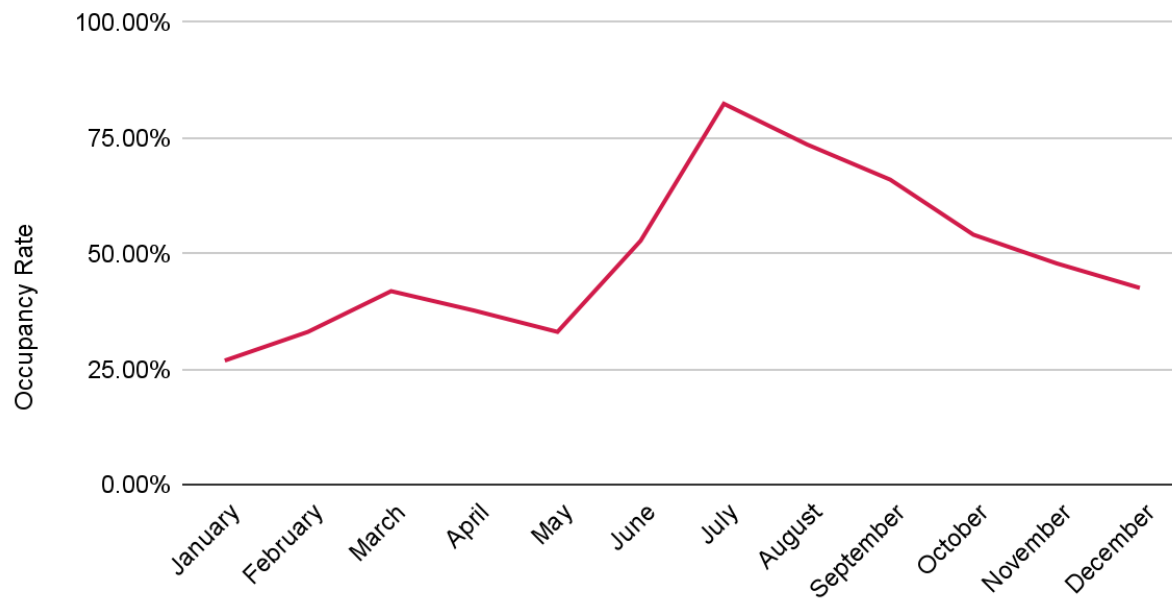
Compared to 2019:

May was impacted the most significantly (-61%), followed by April (-42%), January (-40%), and June (-39%).

October was the least significantly impacted (-1%), followed by July (-6%), November (-14%), and September (-15%).

Source: Environics Analytics. Canadian Nights Stayed, Thompson Okanagan Region. 2021 Compared to Previous Years

# Hotel Occupancy Rate



Hotel Occupancy Rate - STR

Source: STR Destination Report 2021

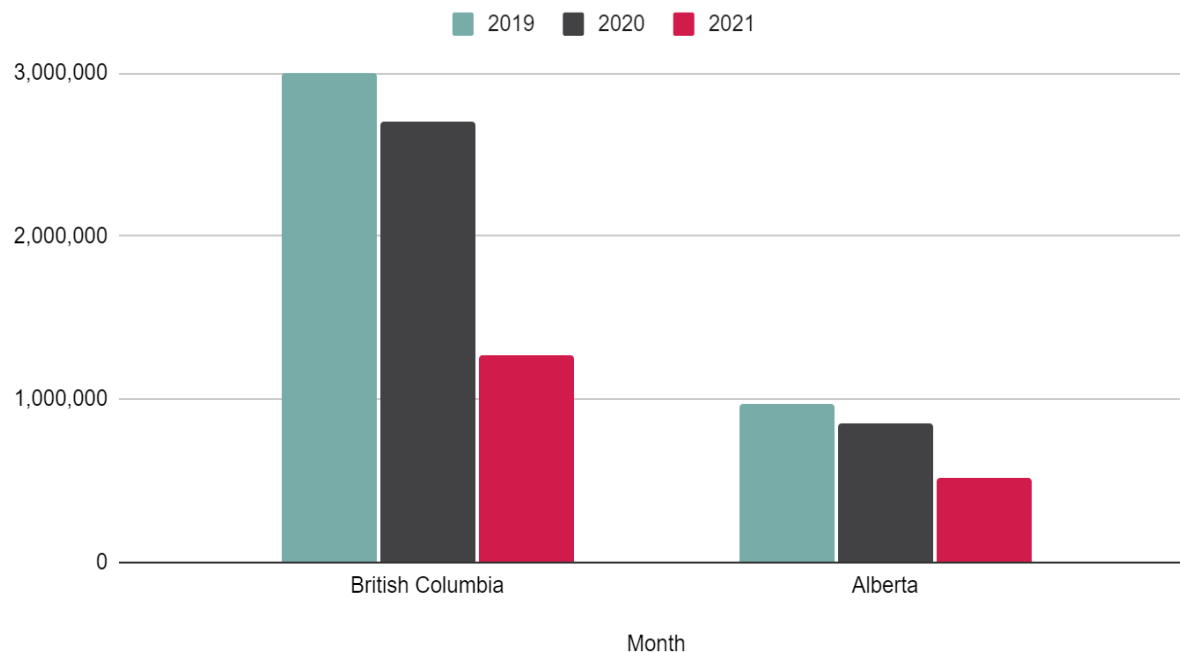
In 2021, the Thompson Okanagan Average Occupancy Rate was 49%.

In 2020, the AOR was 41%. In 2017-2019, the average AOR was 59%.

July (82%) had the highest occupancy rate, followed by August (74%), September (66%), October (54%) and June (53%).

January (27%) had the lowest occupancy rate, followed by February (33%), May (33%), and March (38%).

# Visitors to Thompson Okanagan by Province



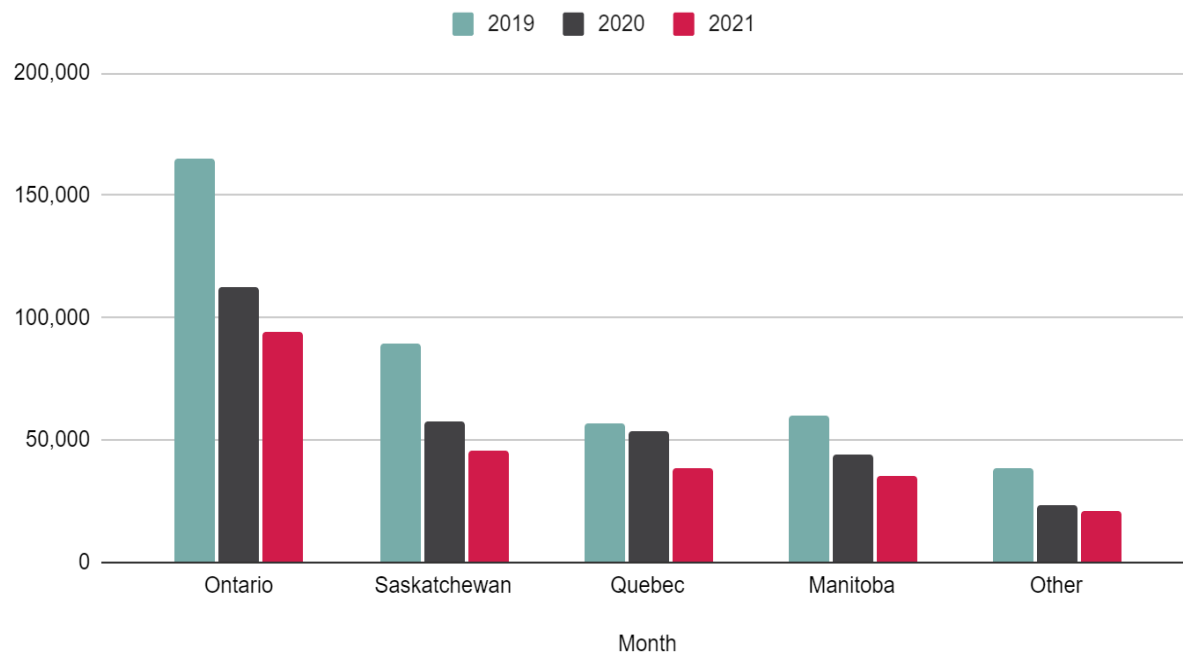
Source: Environics Analytics. Canadian Visitation by Province.

Each year, the Thompson Okanagan region gets the most visitors from other parts of British Columbia and Alberta.

In 2021, 63% or 1,270,193 visitors were from B.C. and 26% or 521,308 visitors were from Alberta visitors.

Compared to 2019, there were -1,726,373 fewer B.C. visitors and -451,027 fewer Alberta visitors.

# Visitors to Thompson Okanagan by Province



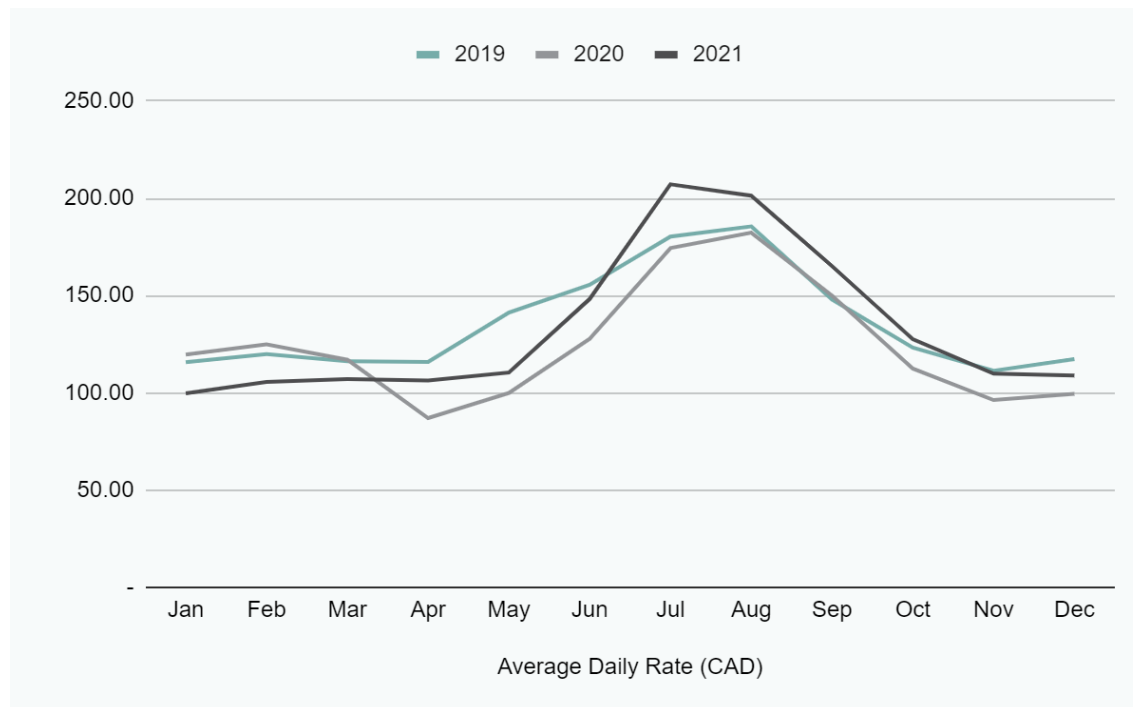
Source: Environics Analytics. Canadian Visitation by Province.

Each year, the Thompson Okanagan region gets many visitors from other provinces in Canada.

In 2021, 5% or 94,134 visitors were from Ontario and 7% or 140,564 visitors were from other provinces.

Compared to 2019, there were -70,887 fewer Ontario visitors and -103,091 fewer visitors from other provinces.

## 3.6 Average daily room rate

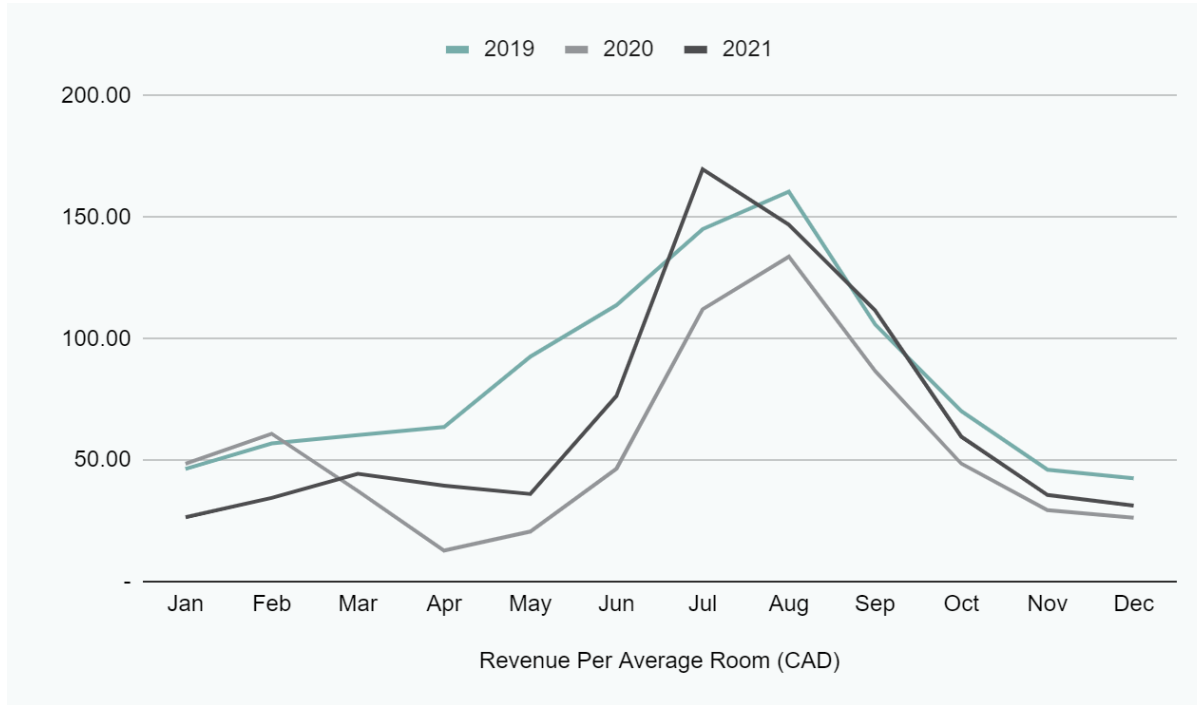


### Average Daily Rate (ADR) \$CAD

The average daily rate peaks along with occupancy, with the highest occurring in July - Aug.

2020 saw the lowest ADR in April at \$87.02.

2021 saw higher ADR than 2019 and 2020 from June onwards through until November.



Historically, **RevPAR** steadily grows from the start of the year to July - Aug where it declines to an average of around \$37 in December.

In 2020 the lowest RevPAR was April at \$12.76.

In 2021, the Thompson Okanagan saw lower RevPar than 2019 through most of the year, peaking and surpassing 2019 in July, before wildfires and renewed COVID restrictions in August led to a drop, and then floods in the fall led to reductions in occupancy and therefore RevPAR as well.



## 4. Local Satisfaction with Tourism

4.1 Resident perceptions of the importance and volume of tourism

4.2 Happiness Index Score

4.3 Proportion of residents ready to welcome back visitors from various source markets

4.4 Tourism Sentiment Score

Resident sentiment and the importance of the social license to welcome visitors have offered a valuable reminder that tourism is a privilege, not a right. As the Thompson Okanagan region reopens and welcomes tourists back, it is crucial that DMOs take appropriate measures to engage locals in the restart of the visitor economy.

Together with its Community DMO partners and Destination BC, TOTA is undertaking several initiatives to measure local satisfaction with tourism through surveys and online monitoring.

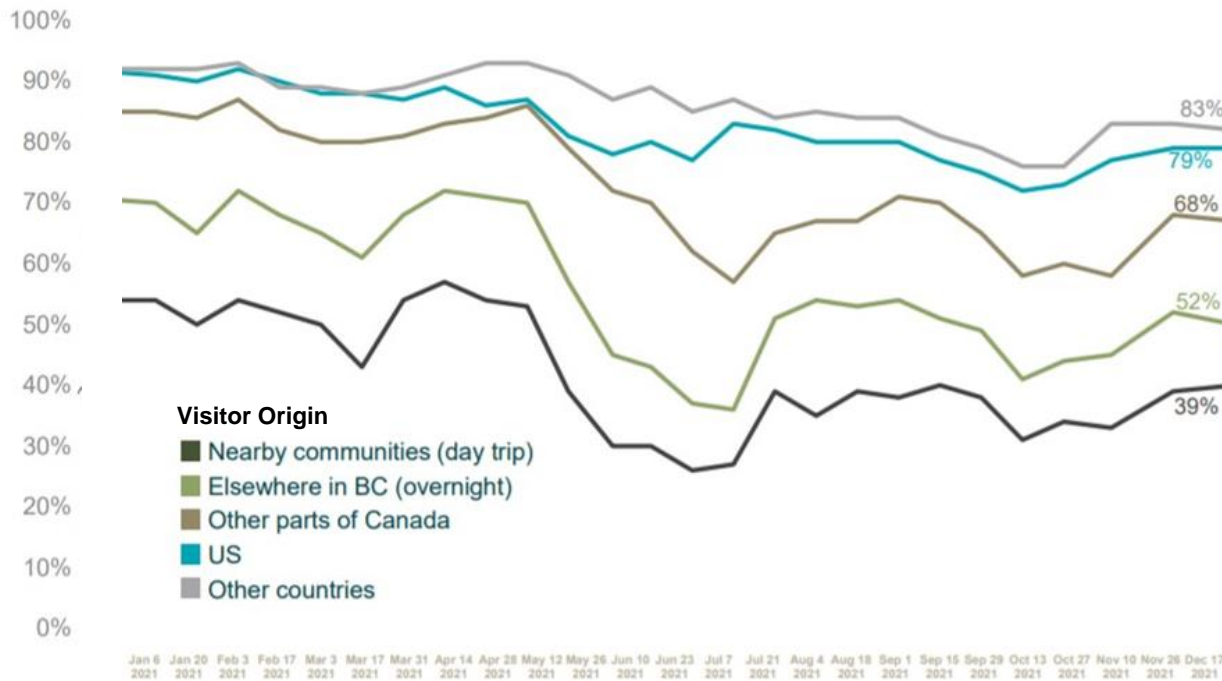
## 4.2 Happiness Index Score

In order to measure the impact of tourism on the well-being of residents and communities, TOTA has entered into a formal partnership with Planet Happiness to utilize the Happiness Index survey. Key indicators include satisfaction with life, access to nature and arts, community engagement, standard of living, lifelong learning, and health. TOTA initiated this project in the summer of 2021 but paused activities until a more appropriate time in recognition of the impacts of the pandemic and natural disasters.

TOTA will coordinate and launch a one month community engagement blitz on the International Day of Happiness, March 20, 2022.



# 4.3 Proportion of residents ready to welcome back visitors from various source markets



## Resident Concerns about Visitors

Destination BC monitors British Columbians' current views on travel and tourism to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry.

Respondents were asked "How concerned would you be with the following types of Canadian visitors making non-essential trips into your community over the next few weeks?"

In 2021, British Columbians continue to be concerned about international visitors.

## 4.4 Tourism Sentiment Score

The Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI) TSI Live Tourism Sentiment Score® is a consolidated measure of a destination's ability to generate positive word of mouth about its tourism offering. It focuses solely on online conversations that reference or affect a potential traveller's perceptions of a destination's tourism offering.

TSI Live gathers data from 500k+ online, peer-to-peer communication platforms including all major social networks and review sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor, Reddit, Tumblr and YouTube.

The aggregate data comes from over 1 million online conversations, providing unprompted data on unbiased perceptions and attitudes.



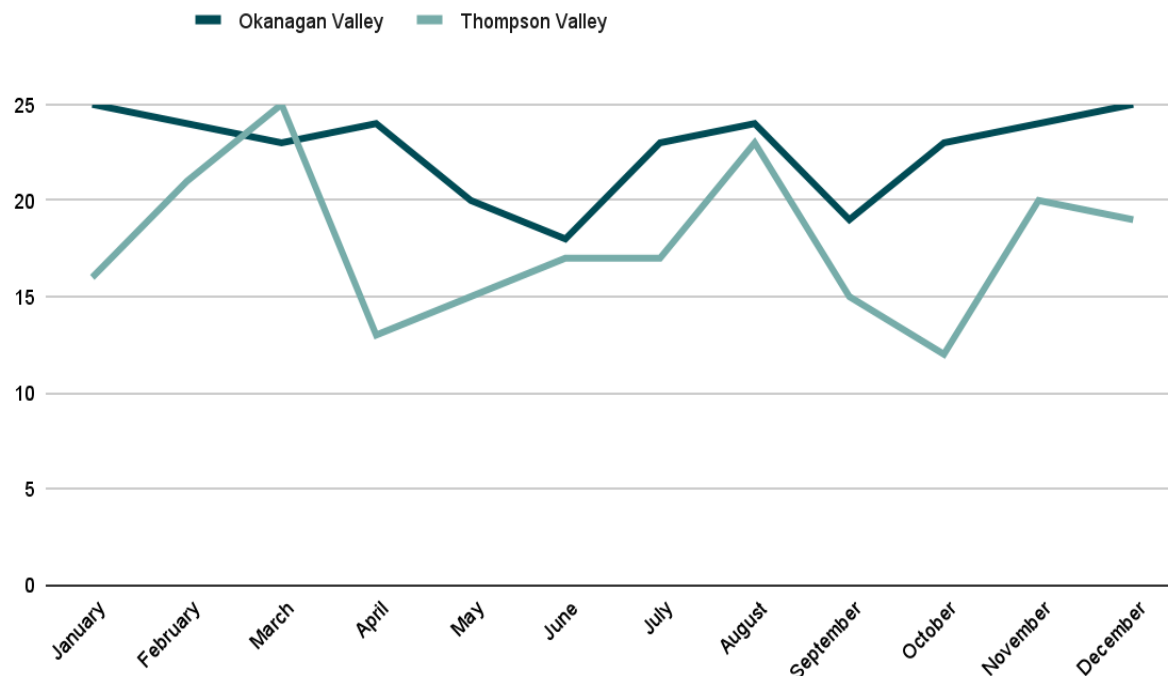
## 4.4 Tourism Sentiment Score

Over the period January 1 to December 31, 2021, the Thompson Okanagan saw a 1 point increase in its overall Tourism Sentiment Score and a 35% increase in overall conversation volume. This illustrates the continued growth in positive perceptions and awareness of the Thompson Okanagan tourism experience.

Of all conversations online being driven by Thompson Okanagan tourism experiences or products, 57% of those conversations were identified as destination promoters, with 2% identified as destination detractors, for an overall Tourism Sentiment Score of 55.



## 4.4 Tourism Sentiment Score



Source: TSI Live. 2021 Tourism Sentiment Score

The annual **Tourism Sentiment Score** was 18 for the Thompson Valley and 23 for the Okanagan Valley.

For the Thompson Valley, the month with the highest tourism sentiment score was April (25), followed by September (23) and March (21). The month with the lowest score was July (18).

For the Okanagan Valley, the month with the highest tourism sentiment score was February (25), followed by January, March, May, September, and December (24). The month with the lowest score was July (18).

## 5. Energy Management

5.1 Energy consumption - overall and per tourist per day

5.2 Site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (GJ/m<sup>2</sup>)

5.3 Number of tourism businesses using renewable energy sources

5.4 Number of tourism businesses that have implemented energy conservation policies and practices

5.5 Number of electric vehicle charging stations in the region

Energy production and consumption is the largest source of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Destination Management Organisations can play a significant role by supporting tourism businesses to reduce overall energy consumption. In British Columbia we are fortunate to have ample access to renewable energy in the form of hydro power making us the third “greenest” province in Canada behind Quebec and Ontario for renewable sources of electricity production.

## 5.1 Energy consumption - overall and per tourist per day

In the context of building energy consumption here in the Okanagan region, the overall energy usage mainly comprises of the electricity and natural gas. Although it is important that we look into the overall energy consumption of the region, however metrics like Total Energy Use Intensity (TEUI) gives us the true picture of the energy consumption and what it means in comparison to the other benchmarked regions. Calculating the energy consumption per tourist per day is also useful as it allows us to compare the energy consumption with consumption of tourists in other regions. It also helps us to benchmark against the existing, historical and future energy performance.

 **0.105** EUI (GJ/Visitor)\*





## 5.2 Site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (GJ/m<sup>2</sup>)

Commonly Energy Use Intensity or EUI is an expression of building's energy use as a function of its area, however it can also be expressed as a function of other characteristics of the building. It is calculated by dividing the total energy usage of a building in one year by the gross total area of the building. The energy is usually measured in in kBTU or GJ and the area in square feet or square meter.

 **0.017** EUI (GJ/Sq-ft)\*

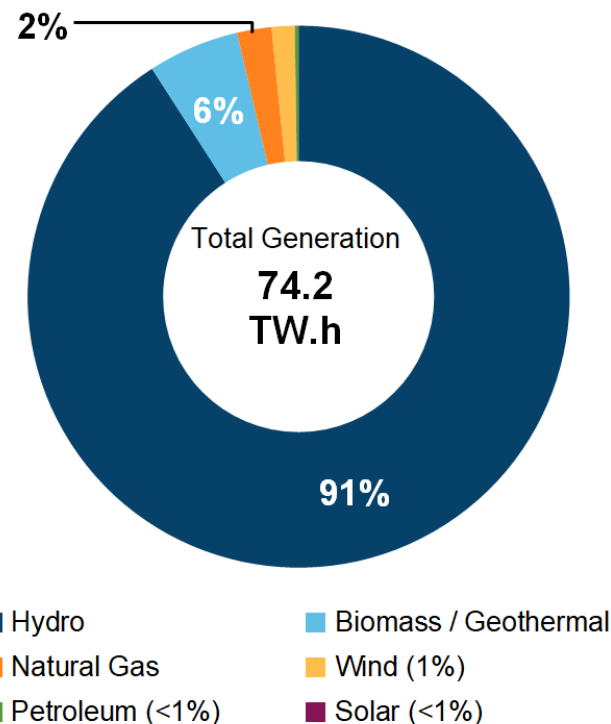
## 5.3 Number of tourism businesses using renewable energy sources

91% of electricity in B.C. is produced from renewable [hydroelectric sources](#). B.C. is home to over 15 955 MW of hydroelectric capacity, most of which is located on the Columbia River in southeastern B.C. and the Peace River in northeastern B.C.

Biomass, which relies mostly on waste from B.C.'s extensive forestry industry, is used to generate about 5% of B.C.'s electricity.

Wind accounts for about 4% of B.C.'s electricity generation capacity. With more than 700 MW of installed wind capacity, B.C. ranks 4th in Canada.

Other sources of power include natural gas, petroleum (used in off-grid communities), and solar.



## 5.4 Number of tourism businesses that have implemented energy conservation policies and practices

We had 73 Biosphere Committed Companies in 2021.



Certified  
Gold  
Destination  
  
BDT 005/2017 RTI



**73** Biosphere Committed Companies



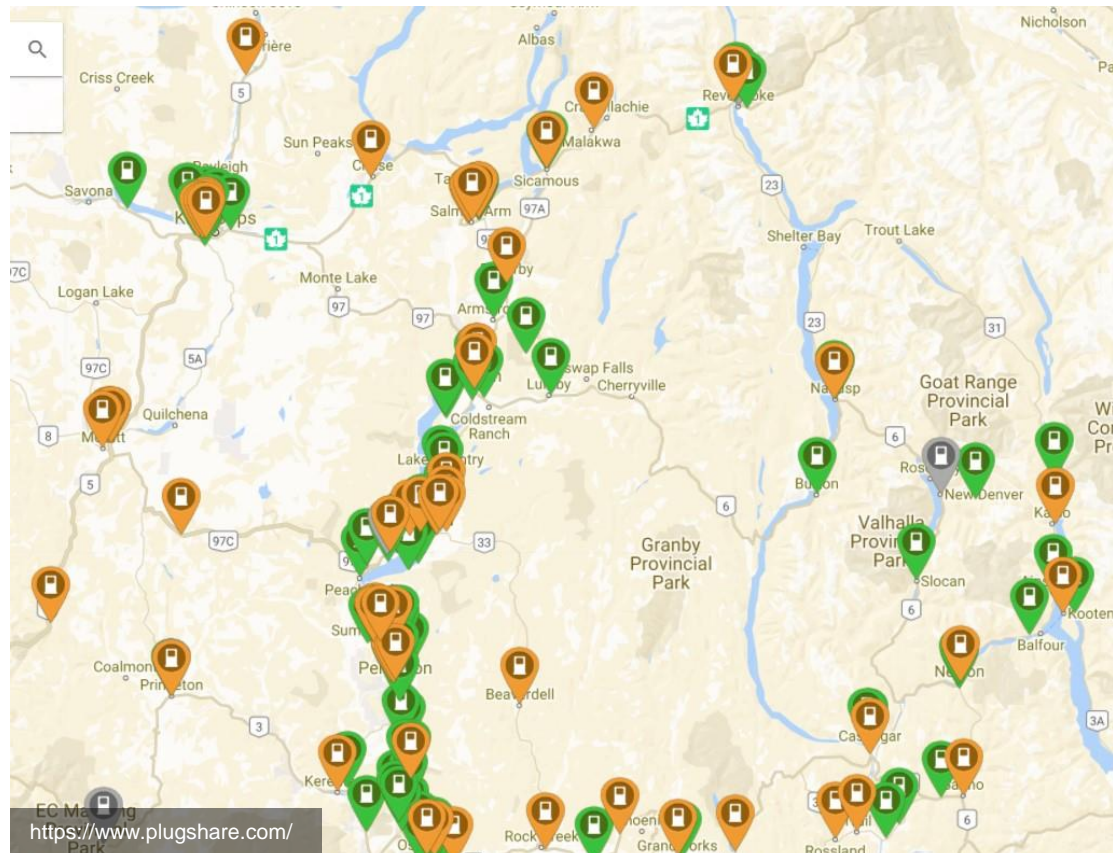
**34** companies engaged in Eco Efficiency Program



**32** companies participating in Energy Assessments

# 5.5 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

As of Feb 14, 2022 the Thompson Okanagan Tourism region had 214 publicly accessible charging stations. These include destination chargers at hotels and wineries, municipal chargers, Universities and 26 “pay for use” charging networks.



## 6. Water Management

6.1 Water consumption - total volume and litres per tourist per day

6.2 Water Use Intensity (all water sources) - (m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>)

6.3 Number of tourism businesses that have implemented water conservation policies and practices

6.4 Number of days per year with water supply shortages

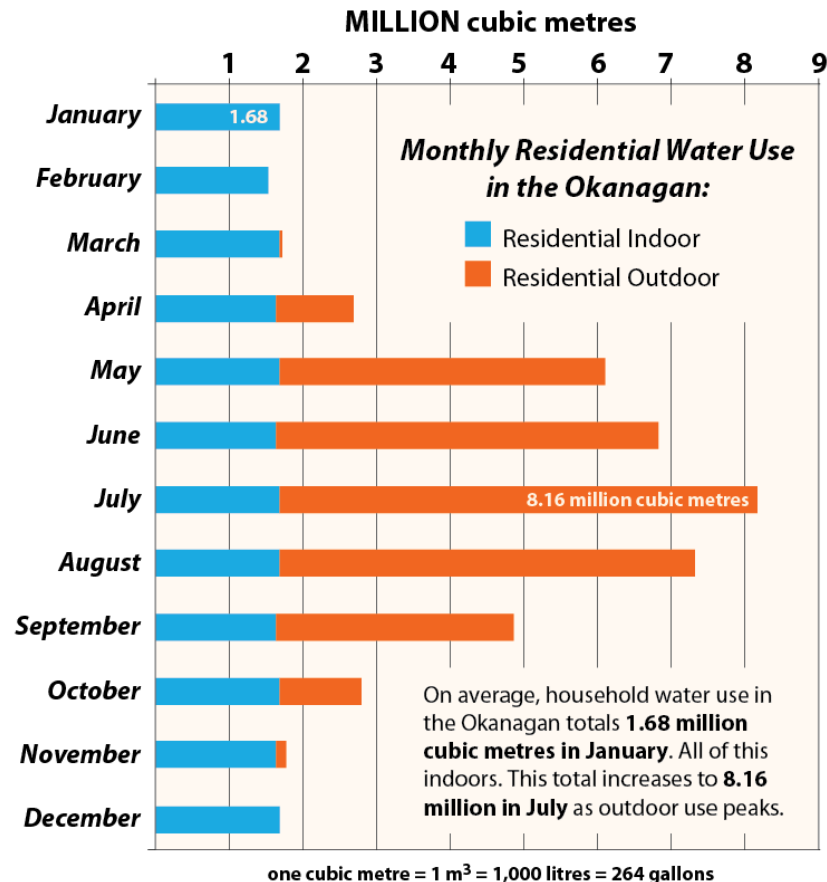
Water management is an important issue area for the Thompson Okanagan as the region is predominantly semi-arid and often experiences drought-like conditions during the summer months. With a large agricultural and wine industry, multiple golf courses and sizeable urban areas, water consumption can become an issue without education and regulations in place.

Water consumption is monitored through the Regional Districts and water service providers. Between 2015 and 2018, the Okanagan Basin Water Board undertook an important and enormous project to find out where our Okanagan water is being used and determined that the average Okanagan household uses 1,032 litres of water each day. This is one of the highest rates of water use than anywhere in Canada.

# 6.1 Residential Water Use

The figure of 1,032 L/day is an annual average for all Okanagan households. The average family uses 391 litres indoors/day, and 641 litres outdoors per day (mostly in summer). As this chart shows, residential outdoor water use spikes in April when we turn on the taps for our lawns and gardens, and continues into October. Yet, the Okanagan has the lowest per person water availability in Canada.

As many water suppliers and municipal governments increase water rates to upgrade water infrastructure, reducing outdoor water consumption is the best way for residents to support the sustainability of valley water supplies.



## 6.2 Water Use Intensity (WUI) (all water sources) - (m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>)

Commonly, Water Use Intensity or WUI is an expression of building's water usage as a function of its area. WUI can also be expressed as a function of other characteristics of the building. It is calculated by dividing the water consumed by a building in one year by the gross floor area of the building.



**18.21** litre/sq-mt\*

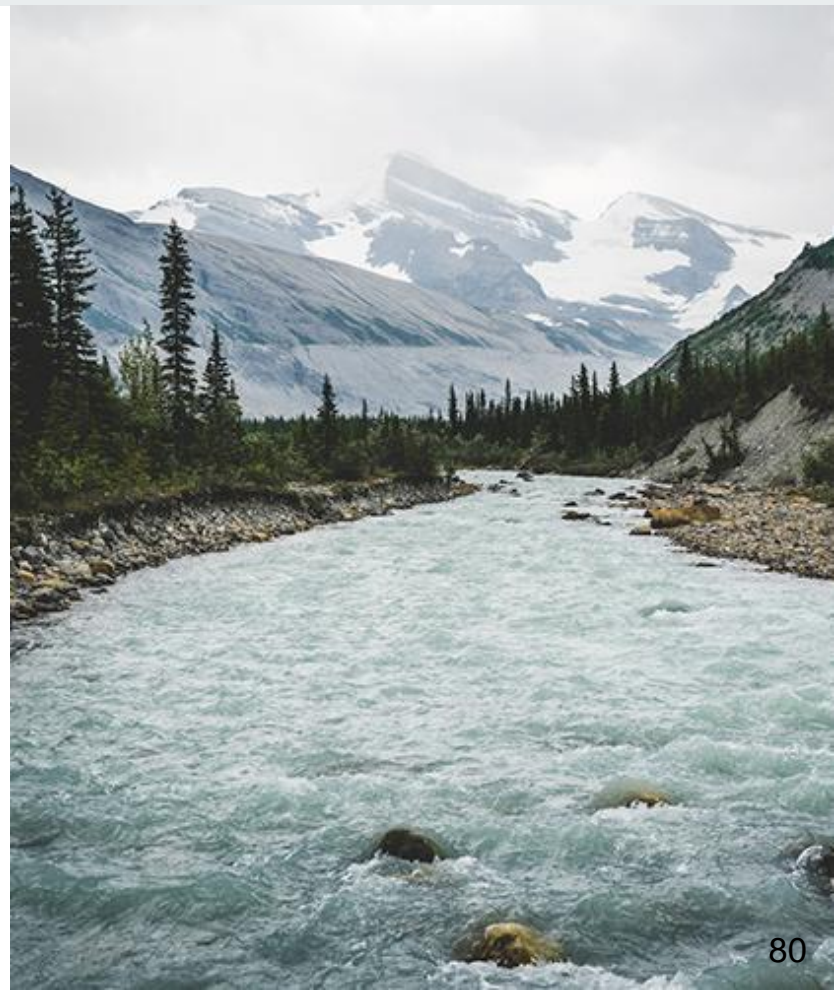


## 6.3 Number of tourism businesses that have implemented water conservation policies and practices

As part of the Biosphere Committed Companies program, and in partnership with Green Step, **36** Biosphere Committed companies had water audits completed between November 2020 and December 2021.



**36** Water Audits completed






## 6.3.1 Number of Wineries and Vineyards that have Sustainable water use practices

Agriculture is the sector that has the highest water usage for the region. Any sustainable water use practices in this sector would have the most impact.

Sustainable Winegrowing BC is an ongoing program of the BCWGC, managing sustainability certification as well as providing educational resources and training to help vineyards and wineries establish sustainable practices. The Sustainability Standards are the foundation for practice and the certification program.

Specifically, certification requirements for water use ensures that efficiency is maximized within the wineries' facilities.



5 Wineries Certified in 2021

4 Vineyards Certified in 2021

# 6.4 Number of days per year with water supply shortages

Our Region has a large number of water utilities in our region - 20 in just the Thompson Okanagan. (Kelowna, Penticton and Greater Vernon). Water restrictions are a seasonal issue as we have large demands in the summer for agriculture as well as for homes and businesses. Water supply is obtained mostly from our snowpack, which the Province measures. The Province also provides monthly drought levels as shown below.

Drought Level	Impacts	General Response Measures
0 (Green)	There is sufficient water to meet socio-economic and ecosystem needs	Preparedness
1 (Yellow)	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>rare</b>	Conservation
2 (Peach)	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>unlikely</b>	Conservation Local water restrictions where appropriate
3 (Orange)	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>possible</b>	Conservation Local water restrictions likely
4 (Red)	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>likely</b>	Conservation and local water restrictions Regulatory action possible
5 (Maroon)	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>almost certain</b>	Conservation and local water restrictions Regulatory action likely Possible emergency response

2021 DROUGHT LEVELS AT A GLANCE

Drought Levels:	0	1	2	3	4	5																
BASINS	26-May	09-Jun	23-Jun	07-Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul	04-Aug	11-Aug	18-Aug	20-Aug	25-Aug	01-Sep	08-Sep	15-Sep	17-Sep	22-Sep	29-Sep	06-Oct	20-Oct	28-Oct	01-Nov
North Thompson	0	0	0	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	0	0	0
South Thompson	1	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	1
-Salmon River	1	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3
Nicola	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	2
-Coldwater River	1	1	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	1
Okanagan	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2
Similkameen	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1

Source: <https://governmentofbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=838d533d8062411c820eef50b08f7ebc>



## VI. Inclusivity

- Indigenous Products, Experiences and Community Impact
- Universal Inclusivity



## 7. Indigenous Products, Experiences And Community Impact

7.1 Number of export-ready Indigenous tourism products and services

7.2 Number of tourism businesses owned/operated by Indigenous people/community

7.3 Tourism revenues generated for Indigenous communities through tourism related products and services

7.4 Number of Indigenous artisans in the region

7.5 Percentage of Indigenous youth employed in tourism related positions

7.6 Number of Indigenous participants in tourism-related training programs

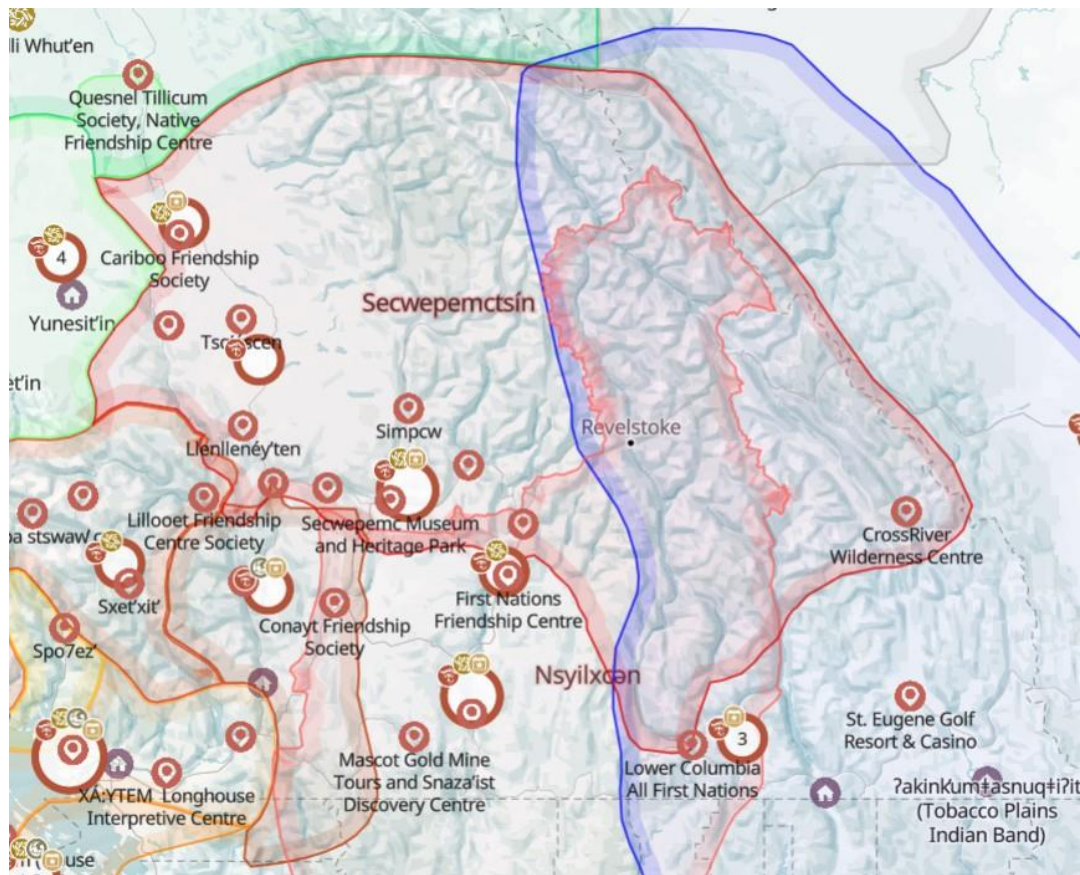
Over the next 3 years the Indigenous team is working towards moving Indigenous Tourism and Training forward and an increase in written partnership agreements, with organizations including but not limited to:

- Indigenous Focused Tourism Organizations (eg. Shop First Nations/GloBox)
- Indigenous communities, (eg. Bonaparte/Tk'emlups/)
- Indigenous Support Groups (eg. Okanagan Training Development Council and The Bladerunners Program)
- Economic Development Departments (eg. Westbank FN Economic Development)
- Indigenous Associations (eg. Okanagan Nation Alliance)
- Indigenous Aligned Education Partners eg. (UBC, UVIC, UBCO)
- other aligned support groups (eg. Rotary Centre for the Arts).

# 7.1 Number of export-ready Indigenous tourism products and services

Thompson Okanagan Region - Indigenous Businesses  
by category

- 14 Retail
- 8 Food and Beverage
- 18 Activity/Attractions
- 21 Cultural (Museum, Gallery, Festivals, etc)
- 16 Accommodations
- 8 Tour Product (Wildlife Viewing, Tour Guide)



## 7.2 Number of tourism businesses owned/operated by Indigenous people/communities



**33** Indigenous communities within the region



**85** Indigenous-owned tourism businesses in the region

Source: [https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/content/uploads/2021/06/REPORT-2020-21-ITBC-Labour-Market-Research-Report-2021-02-11\\_FNL.pdf](https://www.indigenousbc.com/corporate/content/uploads/2021/06/REPORT-2020-21-ITBC-Labour-Market-Research-Report-2021-02-11_FNL.pdf)



Pit house at the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre  
Credit: Destination BC/Andrew Strain

## 7.3 Tourism revenues generated for Indigenous communities through tourism related products and services

Like most tourism sectors, Indigenous tourism depends to a large extent on the momentum of market forces beyond its control to deliver consumers to its destinations. While interest in Indigenous tourism remains strong at the international level, limited interest, and participation in Indigenous tourism activities at the domestic level remains challenging.

Support to the industry came from domestic tourism participation in outdoor activities like camping, golfing, and fishing which offset losses from other international markets indoor experiences, such as meetings, other museums, and attractions

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the market potential was higher for Indigenous tourism from international markets. Due to international border closures, it is unclear when Canada's international tourism demand will return to pre pandemic levels – predictions forecast from 2023 to 2025. Therefore, in the interim, Indigenous tourism businesses must refocus to domestic markets.



## 7.4 Number of Indigenous artisans in the region

An increase in the number of Indigenous cultural offerings is supported by Indigenous people, tourism operators and the non-Indigenous tourism community.

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association is working with the Secwépemc, Nlaka'pamux and Sylix Nations artisans to fill the trailer with handmade Indigenous artwork.

### [IArT: Indigenous Artisan Trails Mobile Gallery](#)

The IArT Mobile Gallery is a collaboration between TOTA and Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC), funded in part by the Western Economic Development Fund, the Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust and the Rural Dividend Fund.





## 7.4 Number of Indigenous artisans in the region

[The Indigenous Globox](#) is a specially curated gift box featuring authentically local First Nations products and experiences from the Nlaka'pamux, Syilx, and Secwepemc peoples.

Developed by Glohaven Community Hub, Shop First Nations (SFN), and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), gift boxes showcase the creations of local Indigenous artisans, crafters, and experience providers in the Thompson Okanagan region



## 7.5 Percentage of Indigenous youth employed in tourism related positions

TOTA has developed partnerships with key organizations such as Okanagan College and the University of Victoria, to create valuable and industry-driven training programs. These programs focus on creating market-ready businesses and community economic development through Entrepreneurship training, as well as traditional employment with Tourism and Hospitality skills training.

The outcomes of the training programs will involve a significant number (over 25%) of Indigenous participants with the desire to engage in mentorship and work placement, resulting in employment in the Tourism sector.



## 7.6 Number of Indigenous participants in tourism-related training programs

In 2021, department goals were to serve both urban and rural Indigenous individuals and organizations within the Thompson Okanagan region by offering a recurring series of online and in-person workshops, including:

- “Successful” Grant Writing for Your Tourism/Hospitality Organization
- Your “Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy” Matters in Tourism/Hospitality
- “Storytelling” for Tourism Success

Economic Development was continued with a focus on Personal Skills

Development via Certification and Training programs including:

- Community-Based Agriculture Tourism
- Indigenous Community Forestry Tourism Packaging
- Domestic Tourism Skills Training Certificate
- Online Workshops



**45+** Indigenous participants in tourism related training programs

THOMPSON  
OKANAGAN

BUILDING  
RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH 33  
INDIGENOUS  
COMMUNITIES

## 8. Universal Access & Inclusion

8.1 Number of hotels with wheelchair accessible guest rooms

8.2 Number of public buildings (visitor centers, museums, art galleries) with wheelchair accessible washrooms

8.3 Number of tour/transport companies with wheelchair accessible vehicles

8.4 Number of companies offering adaptive outdoor recreation experiences with trained guides

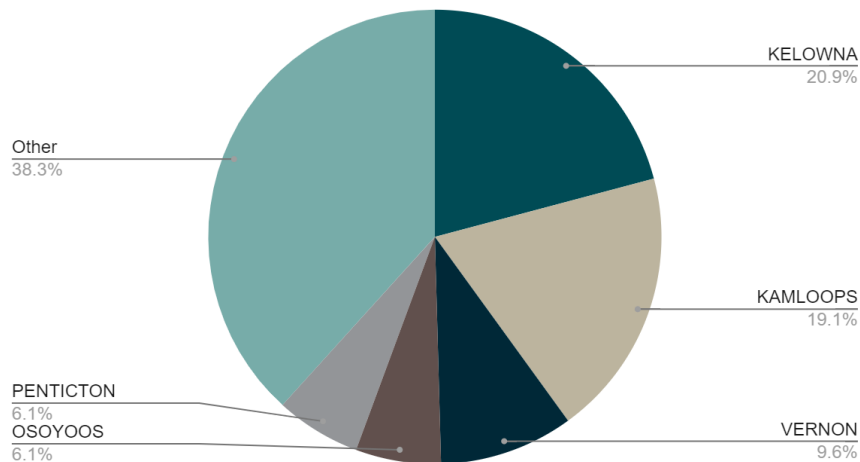
The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association has a formal partnership with Spinal Cord Injury BC and their Access BC program, to co-fund an Access & Inclusion Liaison position. The Access & Inclusions Liaison is responsible for the continued education and awareness about Universal, Accessible and Inclusive training and resource programs, working very closely with Access BC's Team Lead in developing initiatives that support the tourism industry in our region and throughout the province of BC.

TOTA's Access & Inclusion Liaison works closely with tourism stakeholders in our region and the community DMO's, to provide consultations and support regarding access and inclusion within the built environment and the services, products and experiences that they have to offer.

## 8.1 Accessible Hotel Properties

As of February 2021, TOTA has identified **114 hotel properties** throughout the region with wheelchair accessible guest rooms. Not surprisingly, the communities still leading the way in this area of accessibility are the major urban centres of Kelowna, Kamloops and Vernon

Accessible Hotels 2021



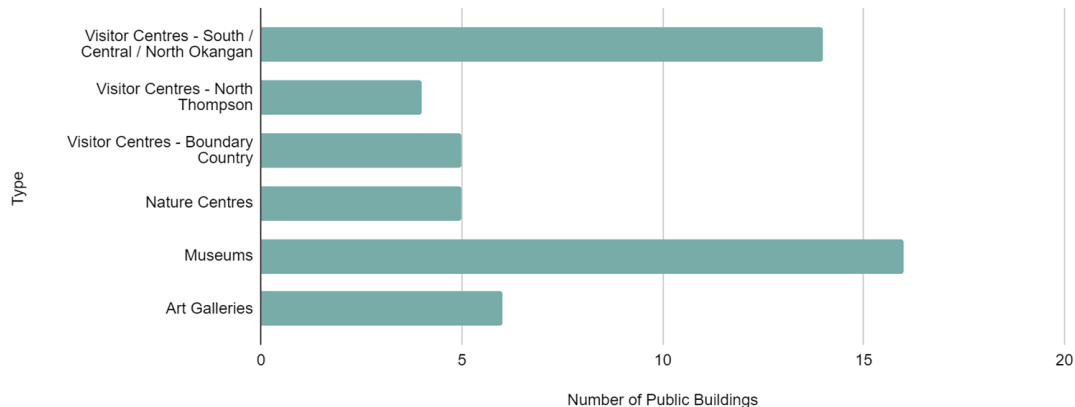
Osoyoos Desert Centre  
Credit: Destination BC/Hubert Kang

## 8.2 Accessible Visitor Centres, Museums, Galleries & Nature Centres

Visitor and nature centres throughout our region, all offer different levels of accessibility, and we work closely to support their continued improvement. Several of the regions visitor centres also include an art gallery and museum experience.

All government buildings in British Columbia must comply with the BC building codes accessibility guidelines.

Public Buildings with Accessible Washrooms





## 8.3 Accessible Tour & Transport Companies

4 Accessible Tour Operators & Shuttle Services

2 Accessible Vehicle Rental Services

8 Accessible Taxi Services



Credit: CheersOkanaganTours

## 8.4 Adaptive Outdoor Recreation Experiences

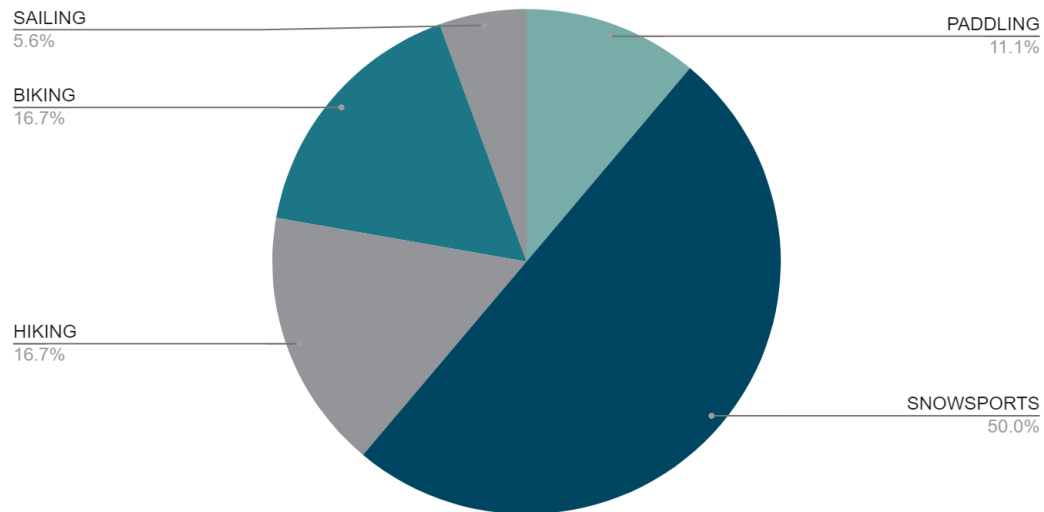


Trans Canada Trail, Chute Lake Lodge  
Credit: Destination BC/Hubert Kang

The TOTA region is very fortunate to have many adaptive sport and outdoor recreational activities to enjoy.

We have access to **14** adaptive adventure service providers and equipment.

Number of Adaptive Experience Providers





# Sustainable Tourism Access & Inclusion Mapping Project

A partnership project between  
**TOTA, SCI BC's AccessBC program & AccessNow.**

AccessNow is a consumer facing application that provides accessible information about services, products within built environments.

TOTA's and SCI BC's team of expert users, collect data & pictures of accessible features at key tourism experiences and populate the AccessNow app.

This app plays a key role as a market segment economic driver and provides consumers with the key priority information they require, relieving the stress and anxiety associated with travel for people who have accessible requirements.

**Pinpointing and connecting people  
to inclusive and welcoming experiences for ALL!**



Accessible



Partially Accessible



Not Accessible



accessnow.com

Vanessa Vineyard ←

1090 BC-3, Cawston, BC V0X 1C3, Canada

+1 250-499-8811

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

Accessible Parking, Accessible Washroom, Service Animal Friendly, Spacious

[Add Review](#)  Report A Problem

Reviews

AITeam2

Rated Accessible, 5 months ago

Accessible Parking, Accessible Washroom, Service Animal Friendly, Spacious

Paved parking lot - small designated accessible parking stall beside main entrance. Paved level access to main entrance door. No door thresholds throughout. Tastings at barrel/table tops - at a good height for seated or standing. Very spacious - concrete floors throughout. Accessible washroom with automatic push plate in and out - grab bars, higher height toilet and wheel under sink vanity. Access to washroom door may be a little tight depending on size of wheelchair.

# 9. Climate Change & Extreme Weather Events

9.1 Proportion of tourism businesses/infrastructure located in vulnerable zones

9.2 Number of extreme weather events (wildfires, floods, landslides and drought)

9.3 Value of annual damage due to extreme weather events (CAD)

9.4 Percentage of road closures due to extreme weather events

9.5 Transport-related GHG emissions for domestic visitors (by origin)

9.6 Transport-related GHG emissions for international visitors (by origin)

Climate change continues to have a significant impact on the Thompson Okanagan region. Extreme weather events in 2021, primarily floods and wildfires, have had tremendous economic and environmental consequences and pose an ongoing threat to the region’s communities and tourism infrastructure.

TOTA’s relationships with Emergency Management BC, BC Wildfire Service, Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and Environment and Climate Change Canada provide crucial data for this issue area.

The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, which became law on June 29, 2021, enshrines in legislation Canada’s commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The Act ensures transparency and accountability as the government works to deliver on its targets.

B.C. is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 16% below 2007 levels by 2025, 40% by 2030, 60% by 2040 and 80% by 2050. BC’s CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 puts B.C. on the path to net zero emissions by 2050.

TOTA is a signatory to Glasgow Declares: We declare our shared commitment to unite all stakeholders in transforming tourism to deliver effective climate action.

## 9.1 Proportion of tourism businesses/infrastructure located in vulnerable zones

The arrival of “atmospheric rivers” in November of 2021 resulted in catastrophic damage to the highway system of British Columbia cutting off the metropolitan centre of Vancouver and its International shipping ports from the rest of the province. The Insurance Bureau of Canada said insured damage from November’s heavy rain, flooding and landslides in the southwest part of the province totals 515-million dollars. When the highways became impassable it resulted in shipping disruptions impacting the Central Okanagan. This highlighted how all tourism business and infrastructure have the potential to be located in a vulnerable zone.



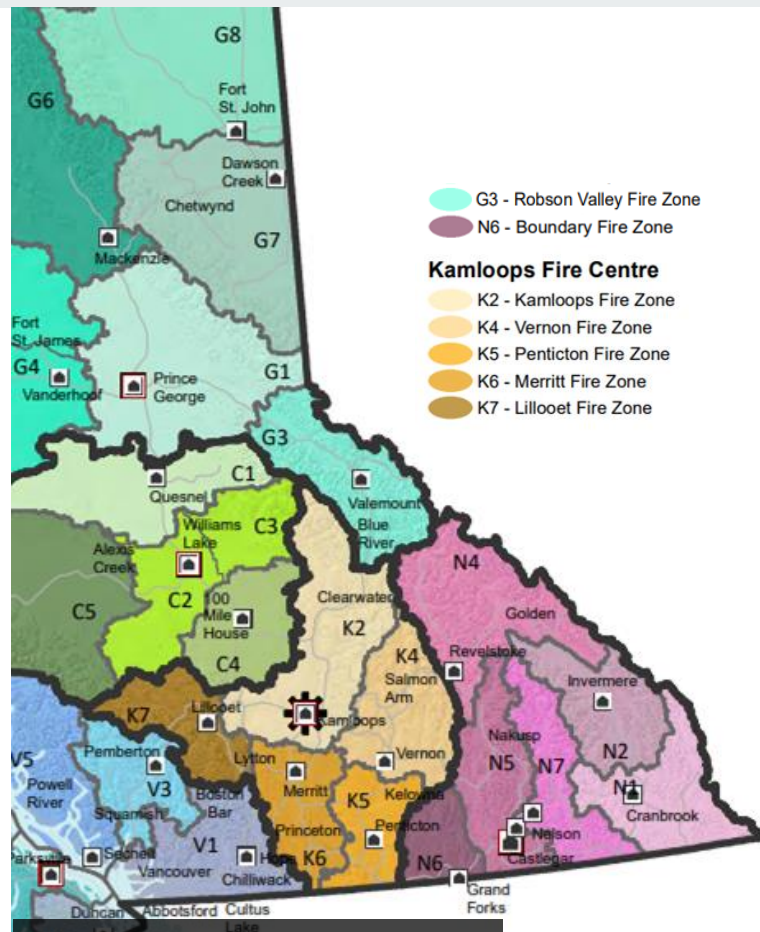
A boat speeds along a flooded highway 1 in Abbotsford, B.C., Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward

# 9.2 Regional Wildfires & Flood Events

The main fire centre for the Thompson Okanagan region is the Kamloops Fire Centre (Kamloops, Vernon, Penticton, and Merritt Fire Zones) , with small sections of the region in the Southeast Fire Centre: Boundary Fire Zone and Prince George Fire Centre: Robson Valley Fire Zone.

The Kamloops Fire Centre coordinates wildfire response across south central B.C.; from Blue River in the north to the U.S. border in the south and from Bridge River in the west to Monashee Mountains in the east.

The terrain within this area is extremely diverse - ranging from glaciers in the north to open range and semi-arid desert in the Southern Okanagan; from steep dry canyons in the Lytton and Lillooet area to the interior rainforest of Salmon Arm – and supports a variety of vegetation including ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, jack or lodgepole pine, spruce, balsam and sagebrush.



## 9.2 Regional Wildfires & Flood Events



	Total Wildfires	Total Hectares Burned	High Streamflow Advisories, Flood Watches & Flood Warnings
2019	198	4,154	N/A
2020	185	2,525	28
2021	452	497,492	62

Source: Emergency Management BC, 2021.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/about-bcws/wildfire-history/wildfire-season-summary#stats>

<http://bcrcfc.env.gov.bc.ca/warnings/index.htm>



## VII. Interconnectivity

- Data Sources
- Data Structure
- Partnerships
- Publishing Results



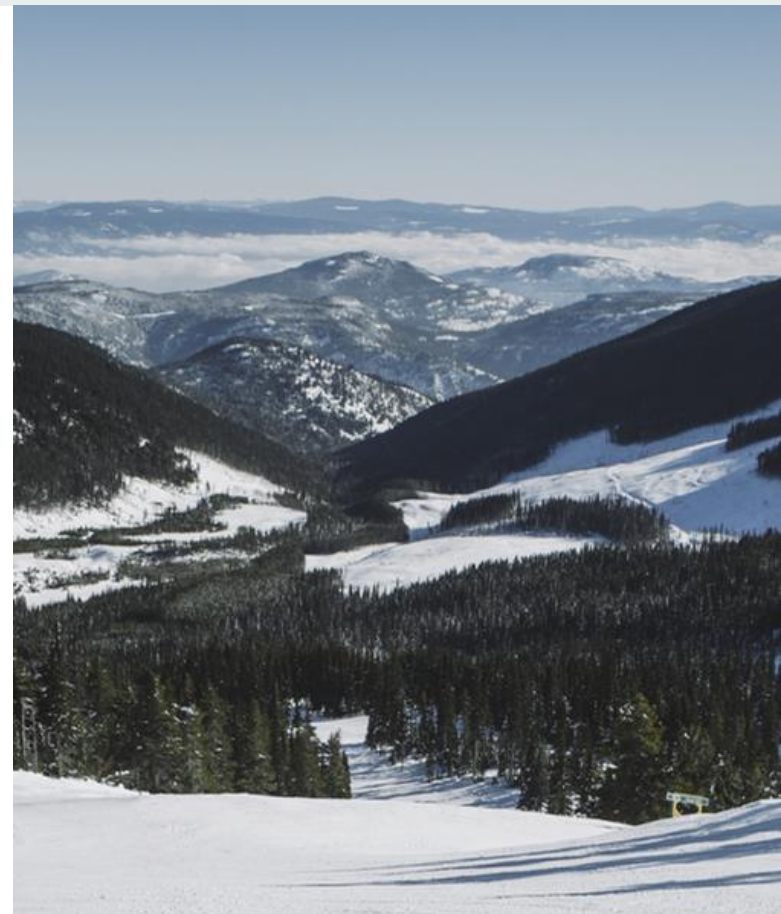
# Data Sources

## Visitation and Hotel Occupancy:

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association leverages regional, provincial, federal and private partnerships to provide a comprehensive account of tourism activities, trends and indicators, supplemented by data analysis.

Environics Analytics is the primary provider of Canadian visitation and market segmentation data through mobile data sources and proprietary market segmentation systems. TOTÅ is also a research partner of Destination Canada and receives international and domestic visitor spending data through its DOMO Visitor Intelligence Platform.

TOTÅ obtains hotel performance data via its partnership with the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat and the BC Hotel Association, to report weekly and monthly on its hotel occupancy, average daily rate, and revenue per available room statistics.



# Data Sources

The launch of the Eco-Efficiency Program for Biosphere Committed Entities, in partnership with GreenStep Solutions, as well as TOTA's data sharing relationship with the BC Hotel Association represent new sources of energy, water and solid waste data. This continues to expand as additional businesses participate in the program.

As part of the Biosphere Commitment Program TOTA has added the Biosphere Sustainable Lifestyle sustainable management platform for committed companies to track and upload evidence of their work towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



# BIOSPHERE



# Partnerships

TOTA has placed a strong emphasis on the need for strategic partnerships, recognizing that an integrated approach enhances the overall level of progress and mutual benefit. This philosophy remains core to effective monitoring of the INSTO issue areas and indicators.

As a Sustainable Tourism Observatory, TOTA has expanded its partnerships to enhance our ability to measure the regional impacts of tourism. These partnerships, which include a cross section of governmental, non-governmental and private entities, help to provide the required data sets for analysis and benchmarking.

Newly established partnerships in 2021 include:

- Synergy - Decade of Action program
- BC Tourism Resiliency Network (BCTRS)
- Glohaven
- Thompson Nicola Conservation Collaborative



Spotted Lake, South Okanagan  
Credit: Destination BC/Andrew Strain

# Publishing Results

TOTA primarily publishes the results of its monitoring and research through industry communications in its online News Centre, as well as through Research Roundups and the new Friday Fast Facts weekly publication.

TOTA's CEO has presented about the Tourism Resiliency Program and its successes at several international, provincial, and regional virtual events.

TOTA contributes to monthly BC Regional Tourism Secretariat reports to the provincial government to outline the economic impact of COVID-19 on the region.

In 2022 and beyond, the Tourism Impact Portal will be the central hub for TOTA to publish its monitoring results.





# Lessons Learned & Next Steps

**TOTA**

THOMPSON OKANAGAN  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

# Successes

Finishing up our second full year as an INSTO member, TOTA has continued to make strides towards actionable initiatives for better data collection and comprehensive baselines for our chosen indicators. Once again our progress can be summarized as 'slower than anticipated' due to our industry/stakeholder needs around Covid recovery.

That being said, we were able to move the needle on several key initiatives. We continued to deliver our Tourism Resiliency Program, which has allowed us to form stronger relationships with our industry leading to more avenues of data collection and sharing. We fulfilled objectives for data collection to populate our Impact Portal (online data platform), with our phase 1 launch approaching in Q1 2022-2023.

Furthermore, TOTA continues to add programming that allows for data collection on key indicators. Most notably, Energy, Water and Waste Data, Health and safety measures, accessibility data and Indigenous business and training progress



# Lessons Learned

Key lessons from Year 2 continue to be similar to our first full year in the program, recognizing 9 issue areas and 47 indicators are considerably more manageable in the short term, hence the decrease from the original 14 issue areas and 181 indicators.

We continue to further develop our internal capacity building and partnerships to develop a more complete understanding of the chosen indicators. In particular, these issue areas include sewage, waste management and carrying capacity. TOTA will continue to work with the municipalities and Regional Districts as well as regional utility providers like BC Hydro and FortisBC to better define key indicators and gather data. Including in year two is a renewed partnership with Spinal Cord Injury which has allowed us to expand our Accessibility assessments across the region as well as a multi-faceted Indigenous Training program

Further work is still required to develop a methodology to calculate the carbon footprint of various visitor segments and align this with marketing to ensure that the region is attracting the optimal visitor mix with the lowest carbon footprint.

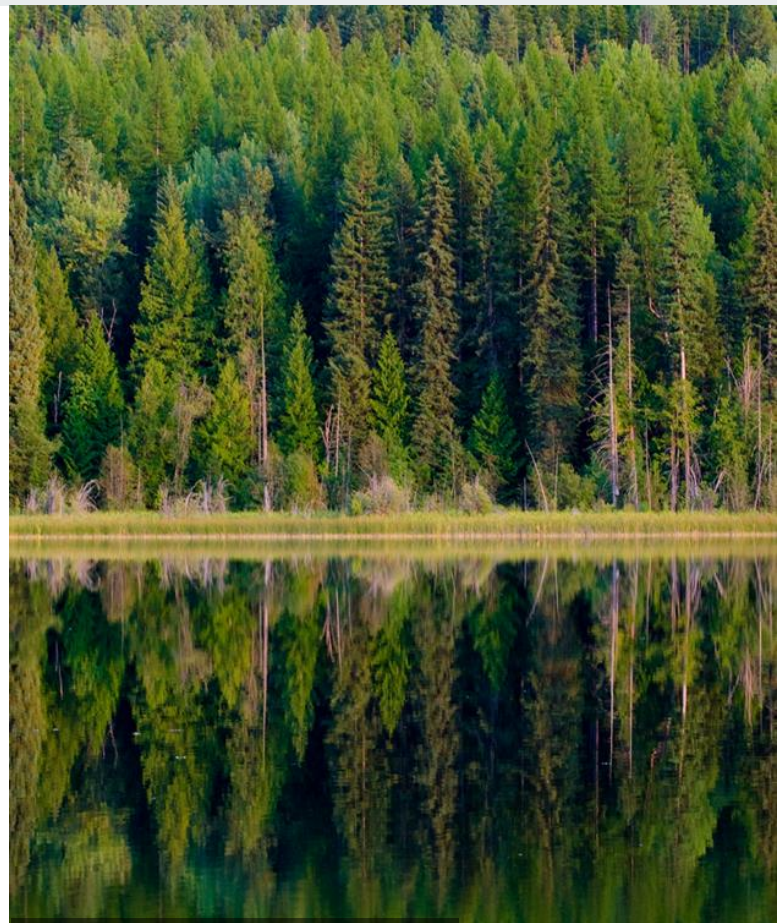


Cove Lakeside Resort, Okanagan Lake  
Credit: Destination BC / @vancouverfoodie

# Focus For Year 3

TOTTA has identified several activities to focus its efforts for Year 3:

- Continue to define data standards for indicators where information is readily available
- Launch Phase 1 of the online component of Tourism Impact Portal
- Hire an in-house data specialist to develop the Tourism Impact Portal into further phases of operation
- Establish a Data Platform Advisory Group to guide the ongoing development of the platform and ensure relevance for stakeholders
- Enhance monitoring of Indigenous tourism operators and market-ready experiences as well as universal inclusion and accessibility
- Continue to increase number of Biosphere Committed companies to expand sample size for energy and water data
- Increase support for Biosphere Committed companies to measure and report their activities in the Biosphere Sustainable Lifestyle platform
- Continue to develop partnerships in the region to move forward on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



# Conclusion

Similar to year one, as tourism continues to face significant economic impacts of COVID-19 and the ever-increasing threat of climate, it is imperative that TOTA continues to enhance its monitoring efforts and strengthen evidence-based decision making to ensure that the Thompson Okanagan region continues to thrive. Regular monitoring and insights on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of tourism on destination communities are more important than ever to ensure sustainable tourism development.

As the region moves toward tourism recovery and future growth, the Thompson Okanagan Sustainable Tourism Observatory will continue to be guided by our Regional Pledge and the understanding that we must always consider the long-term implications of our actions and act as responsible stewards of the destination.

