



As National Tourism Week kicks off, British Columbians are Urged to Stay Local & Support Local Tourism Businesses

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Kimberley, BC - National Tourism Week (May 23-30) traditionally signals the kick-off of tourist season, and the CEO of Kootenay Rockies Tourism is encouraging people in the region to celebrate the occasion by staying local and supporting local tourism businesses.

Kathy Cooper says we need to be respectful of existing health orders and travel restrictions, and one way of doing so is exploring tourism opportunities that exist in our own back yard, whether they be in the form of adventure tourism attractions, restaurants, campgrounds or arts and culture activities.

“Many people may not be aware of the vast opportunities that exist at the local level,” says Cooper, “so I would encourage individuals and families to stay safe and celebrate National Tourism Week by supporting local businesses who need our help more than ever.”

As one of five regional tourism associations that function under the umbrella of the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, Kootenay Rockies Tourism continues to place a high priority on assisting businesses adapt and respond to the pandemic. Through the BC Tourism Resiliency Network, the region has supported 88 operators who have registered with the program. As a result, those providers have access to experts in health and safety, human resources, finance and strategic planning, and digital marketing services - who provide advice and assistance. On a provincial basis, the total number of contacts between the Resiliency Network and businesses, among the five regions over the past 14 months totals more than 38,000.

As much as support for operators getting through today is a priority, the region is also working to ensure a post-COVID tourism economy that is as strong as possible.

Through the Targeted Regional Tourism Initiative, ten new destination and tourism infrastructure developments are underway in the region with support from the Province. Initiatives include developing electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the region at key attractions and visitor sites, improving and sustaining access to the Elk River for commercial and recreation users, and developing municipal campgrounds along the scenic Slocan Valley.

Kootenay Rockies Tourism is also one of four regional destination management organizations that recently signed a letter of commitment to pursue the Biosphere certification, which aligns with 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations in areas that include climate change, environment,

social, economy and culture. Certification will elevate sustainability as a cornerstone of future planning and will communicate to travellers that the region adheres to and is committed to ideals that parallel their own.

Until measures intended to protect us all are relaxed, Cooper says all British Columbians can play their part by following the advice of public health officials. She is also encouraging people to support an initiative by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and sign a [pledge](#) to travel domestically when it is safe to do so, in support of businesses in this country that will need help in rebuilding the country's tourism economy.

For information about the BC Tourism Resiliency Network and associated resources, visit:
<http://tourismresiliency.ca>

About Kootenay Rockies Tourism:

As one of five not-for-profit destination management organizations within the province, Kootenay Rockies Tourism's role is to lead, unite, amplify and advocate. KRT's innovative programs and strategic investments contribute to a successful and sustainable regional visitor economy in both the near and long-term. Governed by an independent volunteer board of directors, the association represents over 850 tourism stakeholders throughout the region in the southeastern corner of BC, including the regional districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, Columbia Shuswap Areas A & B and Kootenay Boundary Areas A & B. Kootenay Rockies Tourism gratefully acknowledges funding from the Province of B.C. through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport.

About the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat:

The BC Regional Tourism Secretariat (BCRTS) is a collaboration between five regional destination management organizations (Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism, Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association, Northern British Columbia Tourism Association, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, and Tourism Vancouver Island) representing more than 8,000 tourism businesses and organizations. The BCRTS is leading a ground-up approach so local voices and knowledge shape programs and compliment local and regional tourism strategies. This focus is also reflected in destination development to help tourism operators offer the most desirable and sustainable tourism experience for visitors.

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Media contact:

Kathy Cooper
CEO, Kootenay Rockies Tourism
kathy@kootenayrockies.com
1-250-427-4838