

2025 Tourism Summit Program

Courtyard by Marriott, Prince George



Wednesday, October 15, 2025

4:00 pm to 5:30 pm - Registration Opens - Courtyard Lobby

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, Canada Games Plaza

Reconnect with familiar faces and build new relationships as we gather at Canada Games Plaza and Nanguz'an Market for this kickoff networking event. Enjoy locally sourced, Indigenous-inspired culinary offerings that highlight the flavours of the region, and take advantage of free skating in the plaza.



Thursday, October 16, 2025

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8:00 am - Registration Opens

8:30 am - 8:45 am - Summit Welcome - Simon Ratcliffe, MC

Indigenous Welcome from Elder Darlene McIntosh, Lheidli T'enneh First Nation
City Welcome from Mayor Simon Yu, City of Prince George

8:45 am - 10:00 am

Northern BC Tourism Association Annual Update and AGM with Clint Fraser

Hear the latest on trade, media, destination development, industry development, marketing, and content generation initiatives from Northern BC Tourism.



10:00 am - 10:30 am

Working Together for a Resilient and Competitive Tourism Industry with Walt Judas

Walt will discuss the most pressing issues facing BC's visitor economy this year and how TIABC is working with tourism industry stakeholders and all levels of government to find solutions and leverage opportunities. He'll address concerns around land use planning and tenure security, aging infrastructure, lack of funding for marketing and tourism emergency management, BC's tenuous investment climate, outdated agri-tourism regulations, and more. Walt will also be looking to engage Summit delegates in a conversation about advocacy priorities for tourism operators in the north.

TOURISM INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION OF



10:30am - 11am - Morning Break

11:00 am - 11:30 am

Opportunities, Advances and Challenges in the Accommodations Sector of BC with Paul Hawes

BC's accommodation sector faces both opportunities and growing pressures. Paul will address key advocacy priorities, including workforce shortages, immigration barriers, rising costs, tariffs, and protecting the MRDT. He'll examine how these challenges affect destination competitiveness and outline strategies to strengthen the province's position. The session will also highlight practical solutions that support hotels and destination marketing organizations, offering a focused look at the sector's realities and paths forward.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
HOTEL ASSOCIATION



Thursday, October 16, 2025 (con't)

11:30 am - 11:45 am

Community Bragging Session

This is the first bragging session where you will hear from a couple of Northern BC communities on the great work they are doing to advance the tourism sector.

11:45 am - 12:45 pm

From Prince George to Hollywood and Back with Grace Dove

Grace Dove grew up in Prince George and although she loved every minute of it, she dreamed of working as an actress in Hollywood. In this keynote, Grace will share stories about what makes Prince George special and her journey to Hollywood as well as her experience as a contestant on the reality show *Amazing Race Canada*.

**PRINCE
GEORGE**



12:45pm - 1:45pm - Networking Lunch

1:45 pm - 2:00 pm

Community Bragging Session

This second “bragging session” features two Northern BC communities showcasing the innovative work they’re doing to advance tourism in the region.

2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

From Assistants to Agents: How Evolving AI Systems Will Unlock Tourism’s Next Frontier with Peter Pilarski

From simple AI assistants to intelligent AI agents, the tourism industry is rapidly evolving. Unlike basic chatbots, AI agents handle complex tasks, anticipate needs, and make decisions—reshaping how tourism businesses operate and engage with guests. This keynote demystifies that shift and offers a practical roadmap for using today’s AI tools and preparing for the next wave of intelligent agents. The focus is not on “what is AI,” but on how to apply a systems-thinking approach to unlock new business outcomes and gain a competitive edge in the future of tourism.



2:45 pm - 3:00 pm

Community Bragging Session

In this third bragging session, hear directly from Northern BC communities as they highlight the initiatives driving tourism growth in their areas.

3:00 pm - 3:30 pm - Afternoon Break

3:30 pm - 4:15 pm

Fueling Local Economies, Strengthening Community Pride & Creating Prosperity with Gracen Chungath

In 2024, tourism generated \$130 billion, supporting 1 in 10 Canadian jobs and over 265,000 businesses. This session showcases Destination Canada’s Destination Development initiative, offering research, tools, and investments to help communities grow tourism. Delegates will also explore the Tourism Destination Development Toolkits, with practical guidance for rural, remote, and northern communities, emphasizing Indigenous tourism, youth, and regenerative models.

CANADA 



Thursday, October 16, 2025 (con't)

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm

Community Bragging Session

This fourth “bragging session” features Northern BC communities showcasing the innovative work they’re doing to advance tourism in the region.

4:30 pm - 5:15 pm

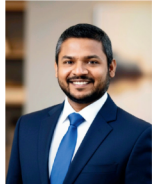
Sustaining Northern BC: Local Stewardship, Global Impact with Carmen Herman, Zawad Abedin, Michelle Miller and Heather Bohn

Sustainability in tourism is vital to protecting the land, strengthening communities, and ensuring long-term prosperity. This panel showcases how Northern BC is leading in regenerative practices through Indigenous leadership, environmental programs, and operator action. Hear practical examples of stewardship, invasive species prevention, and sustainable business efforts that balance people, planet, and prosperity—offering tools and inspiration to build a stronger visitor economy.

5:15 pm - 6:15 pm - Mix & Mingle Networking Reception

Take this opportunity to reconnect with old colleagues and make new connections to discuss the learnings of the day

TERRACE BC



Friday, October 17, 2025

7:30am - 8:30am - Breakfast

8:30 am - 9:15 am

Unlocking the Power of the Iconics: The Great Wilderness and The Infinite Coast with Maya Lange

Over the past 18 months, The Great Wilderness has showcased Northern BC’s landscapes, inspiring visitors to explore deeper and stay longer. Joined by the new Infinite Coast under the refreshed Super, Natural BC brand, these iconic destination brands offer opportunities to amplify the region’s story. This session covers The Great Wilderness’s performance, the vision for Infinite Coast, and practical tools to activate these brands, turning awareness into bookings and visits into lasting impact.



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®



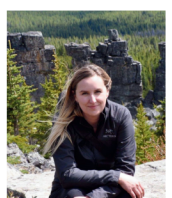
9:15 am - 10:15 am

Driving the Visitor Economy Through Outdoor Recreation with Louise Pedersen, Jessie Olsen, and Rocky Nenka

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Outdoor Recreation
Council of BC



Friday, October 17, 2025 (con't)

10:15 am - 10:45 am - Morning Break

10:45 am - 11:00 am

Community Bragging Session

The final bragging session offers inspiring examples from Northern BC communities that are making notable strides in strengthening their tourism sector.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

How Story is Everything with Yann Martel

Yann Martel will talk about the importance of stories in our lives and how they can shape how we are, how we see the world, and how we explore it.



12:00 pm - 12:15 pm - Summit Wrap-Up

We acknowledge that we are hosting this 2025 Northern BC Tourism Summit on the unceded and traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. We honour the enduring presence of their esteemed Elders and ancestors and express our gratitude and respect for welcoming us to their lands in the spirit of peace, sharing, co-existence and friendship.

Thank you to our amazing supporters



Central Mountain Air

