



2026 Tourism Summit Program

The Northern BC Tourism Summit brings together leaders, businesses, and community builders to explore how remarkable destinations are intentionally created. Through inspiring discussions and sharing practical ideas, delegates will discover how destination development, entrepreneurship, marketing, and stewardship initiatives strengthen communities, support thriving businesses, and create a thriving tourism economy.



October 20 – 22, 2026

Coast Prince George Hotel



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Tues Oct 20



6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Welcome Reception – Two Rivers Gallery

Reconnect with familiar faces and build new relationships as we gather at Two Rivers Gallery for this kickoff networking event. Enjoy locally sourced, Indigenous-inspired culinary offerings that highlight the flavours of the region.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS

PRINCE GEORGE



PRINCE RUPERT



JUNCTION_



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Weds Oct 21



8:00 am

Registration Opens – Coast Lobby Light Refreshments & Drinks

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Summit Welcome – Simon Ratcliffe, MC

Indigenous welcome from Elder Darlene McIntosh, Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and Prince George City welcome from Mayor Simon Yu.

8:45 am – 10:00 am

Northern BC Tourism Association Annual Update & AGM with Clint Fraser

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

10:00am – 10:30am

Working Together for a Resilient and Competitive Tourism Industry with Amber Papou

Amber 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. She'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aging infrastructure, lack of funding for marketing and tourism emergency management, BC's tenuous investment climate, outdated agri-tourism regulations, and more.



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Weds Oct 21



10:30 am – 11:00 am

Morning Break

11:00 am – 11:30 am

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport with Executive Director, Amber Mattock

11:30 am – 11:45 am

Tourism Industry Showcase

Hear directly from northern BC communities and tourism operators about the initiatives, partnerships, and innovative work they have undertaken to drive tourism forward across the region.

11:45 am – 12:45 pm

The Case for Human Creativity with Conner Galway

The conversation about AI in tourism has been dominated by what we're afraid of: slop content, soulless brands, creative jobs disappearing. Conner Galway makes the opposite argument. AI is best at exactly the work humans are worst at: the repetitive, administrative, low-joy tasks that eat the week and drain the reason you got into this business in the first place. Drawing on 15+ years working with more than 1,000 tourism organizations across North America, Conner will share real examples of operators using AI to clear that work off their plates, and what they're doing with the time they get back.



NORTHERN
DEVELOPMENT



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Weds Oct 21



12:45 pm – 1:45 pm

Lunch

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm

Tourism Industry Showcase

Hear directly from northern BC communities and tourism operators about the initiatives, partnerships, and innovative work they have undertaken to drive tourism forward across the region.

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Repatriation: Reclaiming Our Past, Protecting Our Future

Repatriation is about more than returning sacred objects. It is about returning knowledge, restoring relationships, reclaiming cultural authority, and reconnecting generations with the stories and teachings held within these belongings. This conversation will examine the significance of repatriation and cultural preservation through an Indigenous lens, exploring what is at stake when cultural belongings are separated from their communities and what becomes possible when they come home. The panel will explore the responsibility of tourism operators, museums, cultural institutions, governments, and destination organizations to support First Nation-led preservation, revitalization and repatriation, while ensuring that cultural heritage is not reduced to a commodity or visitor attraction.

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

Tourism Industry Showcase

Hear directly from northern BC communities and tourism operators about the initiatives, partnerships, and innovative work they have undertaken to drive tourism forward across the region.



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Weds Oct 21



3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Break

3:30 pm – 4:15 pm

Unlocking the Travel Trade: Connecting Local Operators to Global Markets

Engaging with the international travel trade is vital to expanding market reach and driving long-term prosperity for Northern BC operators. This session showcases how local tourism businesses can demystify the trade ecosystem and successfully connect with global travel networks. Hear key insights on why international visitors choose Canada, the essential foundations required to become trade-ready, and a firsthand account of a Northern BC operator's journey from a provincial accelerator program to a major trade marketplace.

4:15 pm – 4:30 pm

Tourism Industry Showcase

Hear directly from northern BC communities and tourism operators about the initiatives, partnerships, and innovative work they have undertaken to drive tourism forward across the region.

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Networking Event

Wrap up the first day of the Summit with an evening of networking at the Coast Prince George Hotel. Connect with fellow delegates, continue the day's conversations, and build new relationships in a relaxed setting.



FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City

PRINCE RUPERT



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Thurs Oct 22



7:30 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast

8:30 am – 9:15 am

Get AI-Ready for the Next Era of Travel Discovery with Iconics with Graeme Leathem

Travellers are no longer just searching with keywords – they're asking AI tools like ChatGPT and Google AI for personalized travel recommendations. The destinations that show up are often those with clear, consistent stories told across multiple trusted sources. In this session with Destination BC's marketing team, you'll learn how AI discovers and recommends destinations, why aligned destination messaging matters for BC, how Destination BC is harnessing the opportunity, and steps you can take to help us improve discoverability for all parts of BC.

9:15 am – 10:15 am

Stories Make Places: The Power of Interpretation to Create Remarkable Destinations and Experiences with Robin Anderson

Robin Anderson of AldrichPears Associates explores how interpretation transforms ordinary places into extraordinary destinations and unforgettable visitor experiences. Through compelling examples, discover how thoughtful planning, storytelling, and visitor-focused design can reveal the distinct character of a place, deepen visitor connections, and create experiences that inspire people to explore, stay longer, and share their stories with others. The session will also highlight the importance of strategic interpretation in advancing Northern BC's Thematic Framework and Regional Signage Plan, demonstrating how a shared storytelling approach can strengthen destination identity and support sustainable tourism development for years to come.



WIFI:
PASSWORD:

Thurs Oct 22



10:15 am – 10:45 am

Break

10:45 am – 11:00 am

Tourism Industry Showcase

Hear directly from northern BC communities and tourism operators about the initiatives, partnerships, and innovative work they have undertaken to drive tourism forward across the region.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

The Human Advantage: Making & Marketing A Place People Want To Share with Tom Herbst

Tom Herbst (former CMO of The North Face) will talk about the unlikely secret to building brands: creating real human connection on a personal scale. He will highlight examples from his own career and leading brands in culture, connecting them to Super Natural BC Iconics and values to show how northern BC can connect in a crowded and competitive world.

12:00 pm – 12:15 pm

Closing Remarks



PRINCE^{BC} GEORGE



WIFI:
PASSWORD: