

Hornby Island Spring/Fall Destination Assessment



Helliwell Provincial Park, Hornby Island

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Project Background and Objectives

The Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC) wishes to assess Hornby Island's brand, web presence and visitor infrastructure in relation to opportunities to grow visitation and associated revenues in the spring (May 1 to July 15th) and fall (September 1 to October 15th) seasons. Suzanne Denbak, Principal of Cadence Strategies (www.cadencestrategies.com) was selected through a competitive Request for Proposal process to assist HICEEC in this endeavour. Suzanne has more than 20 years experience in destination development and marketing including the development of shoulder season visitation.

The project is intended to review the community's efforts to date, prioritize best possible target markets for spring and fall visitation and to provide recommendations and priorities for implementation. The recommendations below are practical and realistic and driven by market research. Importantly, they are also designed to respect the community's vision and contribute to its achievement.

The project work plan was structured with nine steps leading to the development of implementation recommendations that include resource estimates, timelines and measures of success:

Step One – Review existing information including the Community Vision, the Official Community Plan, current branding and positioning as expressed in current marketing initiatives

Step Two – Conduct stakeholder interviews to benefit from local experience and market intelligence and to solicit ideas and opportunities for consideration in the development of Hornby Island's shoulder season market positioning and messaging to potential target markets. Hold a workshop to solicit additional stakeholder input.

Step Three – Review five comparable destinations that are successfully securing shoulder season visitation to understand lessons transferable to Hornby Island.

Step Four – Review relevant market research to identify highest opportunity spring/fall target markets and to further define the elements of market positioning and key messages to motivate shoulder season travel to Hornby Island.

Step Five – Recommend web presence enhancements and social media engagement opportunities including content, imagery, navigations, search engine optimization, online reputation management, email database development and partnership opportunities.

Step Six - Conduct visitor infrastructure readiness assessment in and make recommendations regarding infrastructure enhancements that may be required in order to appropriately service incremental visitation in the spring and fall (e.g. hours of operation, number of businesses open, service levels, other infrastructure necessary for spring/fall activities, inclement weather protection, access by ferry, etc.).

Step Seven – Prepare draft findings and recommendations and receive further input.

Step Eight – Define next steps for implementation including an estimate of resources required and recommended timeline. Recommend measures of success to be monitored regularly.

Step Nine – Prepare final report incorporating all information and input received.

The report that follows is the culmination of this work plan and the distillation of market research, transferable lessons from other destinations and local knowledge. The leadership of Daniel Arbour, Catherine Gray and Karen Ross and the entire Board of Directors of HICEEC is acknowledged and greatly appreciated. As well, many residents and business operators contributed their time and ideas through telephone interviews, participation in the workshop and review of draft findings. We would like acknowledge and thank all who contributed:

HICEEC Board/Staff:

John Heinegg, Chair
Catherine Gray, Vice-Chair
Gary Manzer, Treasurer
Katherine Ronan, Secretary
Helen Grond, At-Large
Daniel Arbour, Administrator
Karen Ross, Community Economic Development Facilitator

Interviewees/Workshop Attendees/Site Visits:

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Suzie Bishop
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Jan Gibson
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Verna Kimmerly
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Carol Legate

The Community Context for Tourism Growth

The community on Hornby Island has clearly and eloquently expressed their vision of the “ideal Hornby Island in the year 2020”. The Vision Statement Summary expresses the overarching perspective:

“Hornby Islander’s have envisioned a future based on our community strengths and our desire to remain a diverse, sustainable and viable community. Central to this vision are the values that we share as a community – creating a balance with the natural world, working together cooperatively and peacefully, taking personal and collective responsibility for the well-being of the community, and celebrating the special spirit and energy of this unique island and its people.”

The vision continues to address key areas such as Living Sustainably, Strengthening Community etc. While the entire document offers important context, of particular relevance to this project is the vision for the economy:

“Building a Thriving Economy”

“Hornby Island will diversify its economy by building on the strengths within the community such as our vibrant arts scene, sustainable agriculture practices, diverse healing arts and our capacity to live in harmony with nature. Tourism is a valued part of our economy, and to be more sustainable it will become more integrated into the values and lifestyles that Islanders cherish.”

Economy

In the year 2020, Hornby Island’s economy reflects and helps sustain the unique nature of Hornby’s people and natural environment. We recognize that a healthy community is what creates a healthy economy and vice versa. Our thriving and diverse economy is comprised of small-scale, locally and/or communally-owned businesses, services and value-added industries as well as low-impact tourism.

Many community groups are working to create and finance the infrastructure necessary for the prosperity and common good of all. Local taxes are retained in the community to support local initiatives. The community encourages activities that promote local and individual self-sufficiency, and barter and trade are integral parts of the economy. We re-circulate resources and currency within the community and patronize local businesses and services.

There are plenty of skill-building and educational opportunities, co-operative and support mechanisms to assist the creation and success of small businesses. Employment opportunities and apprenticeships for youth are widely available. Everyone is able to support themselves doing what they love. We also value the contribution of volunteer and unpaid labour to our community.

The arts, agriculture, education, high tech, health care, trades and small-scale production are the major sources of income. Additionally, we are successfully marketing our products and services off-island. Our connections to the broader economic structures are based in just and fair trade practices and do not contribute to the exploitation of people or the planet.

Tourism

In 2020 tourism is only one part of Hornby Island's diverse and thriving economy. Tourism is now actively planned and managed by the community for the benefit of residents, visitors and the island itself. We foster low-impact, "intentional" tourism and have a manageable, comfortable number of visitors each year.

We prefer the concept of a "visitor" rather than a "tourist". A visitor is someone who comes to the island in the same manner in which they would visit a friend – respectfully and lovingly – and we welcome them accordingly. We have found ways to inform visitors and summer residents about the lifestyles, values and ecology of the island so that tourism is a positive experience for both year round residents and visitors.

The ideal visitor would:

- *Come here because they appreciate and share our interests and values*
- *Walk, bike or use public transportation*
- *Purchase local goods, food and services*
- *Walk lightly on the land (including water use and disposal)*
- *Contribute time and energy for the benefit of the community and participate in the community*

We have incorporated some of the ideas from the "Slow Cities" movement such as preserving and celebrating our traditions and lifestyles and then encouraging our visitors to participate in them. We work at what we love and people come and learn about what we have to offer. Visitor accommodation is accessible for people of all income levels. The community feels energized and stimulated by visitors to the island and welcomes the excitement and fun provided by interaction with new people and new ideas. Visitors leave the Island feeling revitalized in body, mind and spirit.

Community support is essential to the success of implementation efforts. Accordingly, this community vision for Hornby Island in 2020 has been referenced throughout the project and the associated recommendations for growth in May/June and September/October visitation levels are intended to support achievement of this vision. Additional background documentation reviewed included:

- Official Community Plan
- HICEEC 2014 Strategic Plan
- 2012 Tourism BC Community Tourism Foundations Plan – Hornby/Denman
- 2006 Study by Malaspina University College – Gem of the Gulf: Community based tourism on Hornby Island, British Columbia

Current Branding/Positioning

Hornby Island's current branding and positioning in the marketplace was reviewed to identify and understand current messaging and opportunities to leverage strengths and/or reposition spring/fall visitor experiences on Hornby Island.

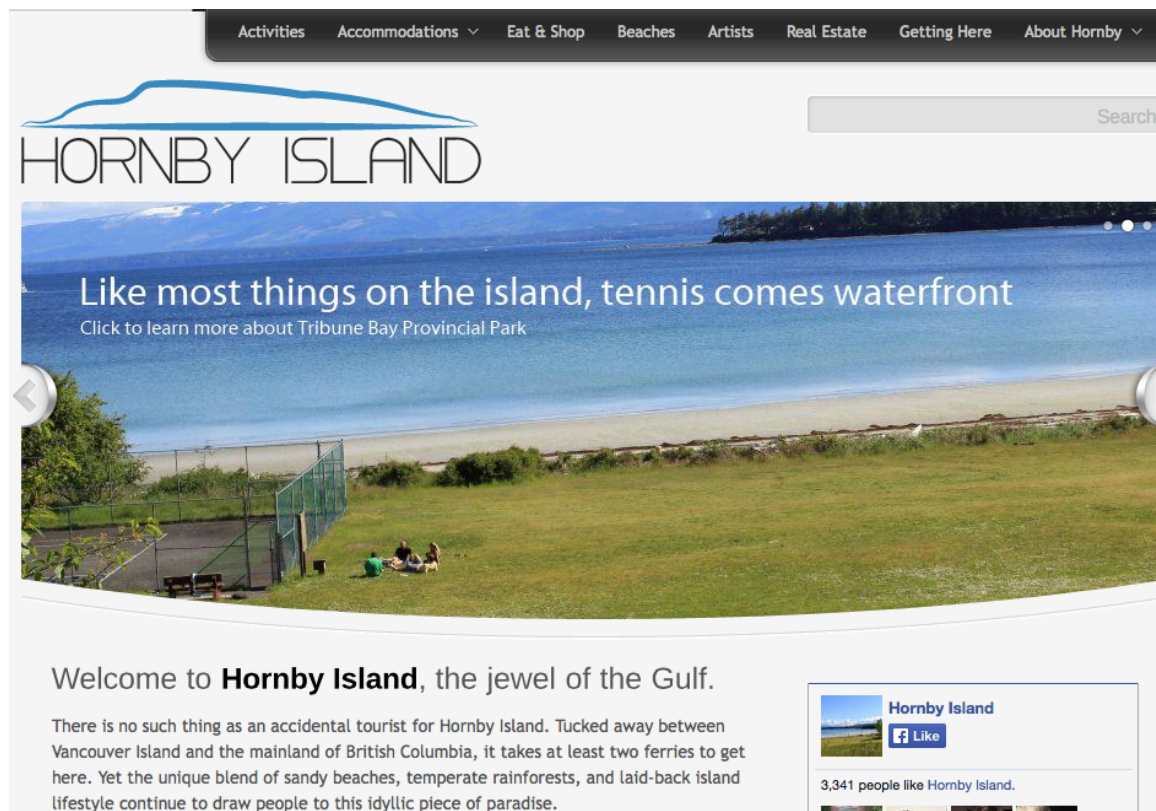
Website Review

Top 10 Placement - Organic Search

A website review was conducted of the top 10 sites in an organic Google search for 'Hornby Island'. The HICEEC website www.realhornby.com placed 17th (2nd page results) and was also reviewed.

1. www.hornbyisland.com
2. www.hellobc.com/hornby-island
3. www.bcferries.com/schedules/northern
4. www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornby_Island
5. www.hornbyisland.net
6. www.hornbyislanddiving.com
7. www.hornbyislandfestival.bc.ca
8. www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/canada/british-columbia/hornby-island
9. www.hornbyeagles.com
10. www.hornby-blues.bc.ca

www.hornbyisland.com



This website is operated privately by Jake Berman:

- Placed #1 in organic Google search
- Logo is simple and clean, depicting topography of Hornby Island but does not convey any sense of the Hornby Island experience (unlike the HICEEC logo which

does convey its values of sustainability, light footprint etc. through its selection of colour and graphic expression of nature)

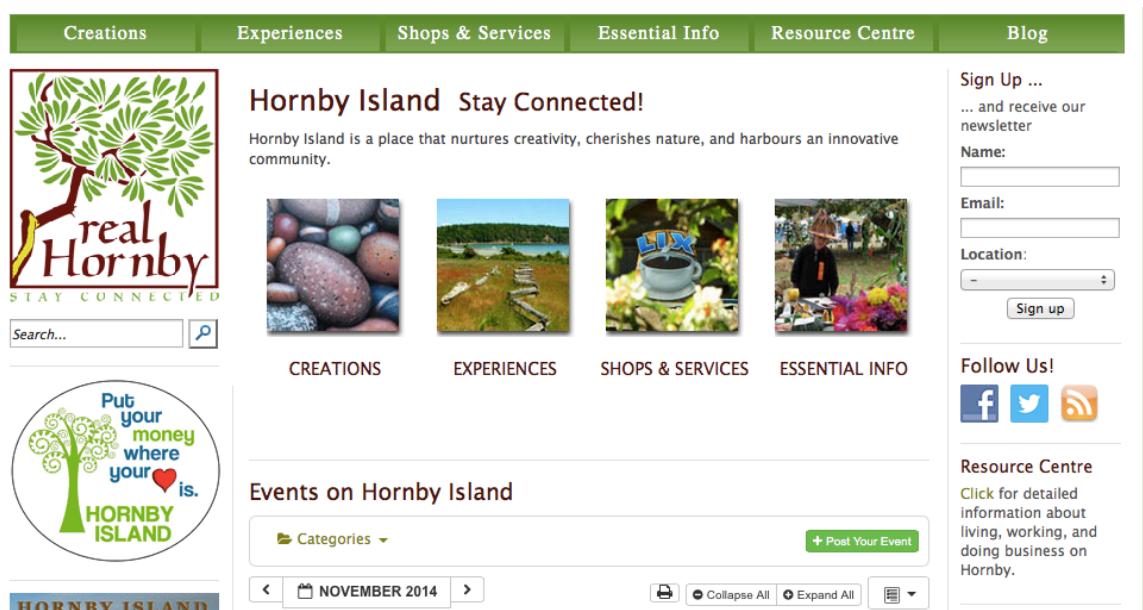
- Home page positions Hornby Island as the 'jewel of the Gulf' and offers the following description:

"There is no such thing as an accidental tourist for Hornby Island. Tucked away between Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia, it takes at least two ferries to get here. Yet the unique blend of sandy beaches, temperate rainforests, and laid-back island lifestyle continue to draw people to this idyllic piece of paradise."

While factual, this statement could be enhanced to become more compelling and motivating for visitors and truly lure them to Hornby by expressing what they can experience here and nowhere else. It could also directly reference the shoulder season experiences.

- Content is good; extensive listing of activities, accommodations; photography and videography extensively employed
- Navigation is clean and simple but best serves those who are already planning to come to Hornby Island and are primarily searching for accommodation
- If a shoulder season emphasis was to be incorporated into this website, consideration could be given to the following enhancements:
 - Home page featuring spring/fall upcoming events, suggested itineraries to 'seed' travel interest in non-peak times
 - Theme based experiences or 'packages' that demonstrate reasons to travel off-peak e.g. autumn culinary experiences on Hornby; spring mountain biking on Hornby

www.realhornby.com



This website is operated by HICEEC and can best be described as offering visitors who already have a relationship with Hornby Island and are already visiting, more opportunities

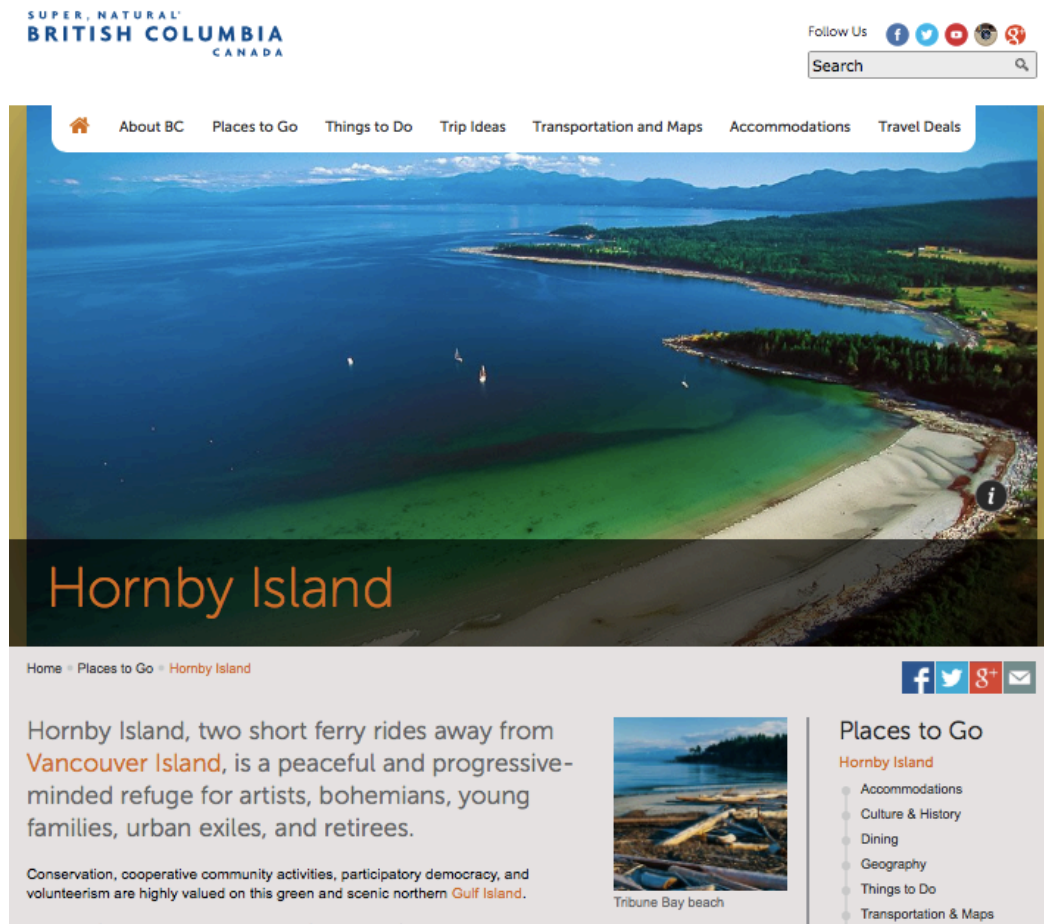
to connect with the community. It includes profiles of various residents and a calendar of upcoming events.

While the content currently would not effectively lure and motivate new visitors who are considering Hornby Island as one of several destination options, it could become an effective tool to engage existing high-season visitors that already love Hornby and motivate them to visit in the spring and fall. For this to happen, an investment would still be required in the following areas:

- Simplify the home page – reduce the level of detail, focus on the visitor and include compelling imagery and content that makes an emotional connection and ignites the reader's inner passion for Hornby and their best memories and experiences encouraging them to click through to the next level of information
- Provide compelling reasons to return – suggested itineraries, upcoming event packages and of course, stunning imagery of Hornby in the spring/fall
- Proactively grow the email database; Facebook following; Twitter audience; Instagram to provide broader outreach and then message in a style that sparks the idea of returning to Hornby

A strategic question arises as to whether both these primary websites are required to position Hornby Island as a destination for visitors or whether the best of both sites should be combined into one compelling site that serves to entice new visitors and to encourage those already passionate about Hornby Island, to return. Further discussion of this strategic direction is considered in the recommendations below (Strategy 7.0).

www.hellobc.com/hornby-island



The provincial destination marketing website operated by Destination BC positions Hornby Island as a summer beach destination but interestingly also focuses on how busy summer is – with ferry waits and the need to book accommodation well in advance. It even mentions that residents feel that Hornby is ‘being loved to death’. Spring and fall are mentioned as quiet times for residents but there is no messaging that this is actually an ideal time for visitors to also experience Hornby Island.

Once Hornby Island’s recommended spring/fall experiences are defined and developed along with an understanding of target markets and key messages, this should be reflected in updated content on www.hellobc.com/hornby-island. Destination BC has typically welcomed these updates and it will be important to meet with key staff members at both Destination BC (DBC) and the Tourism Association of Vancouver Island (TAVI) to share with them Hornby Island’s direction for spring/fall visitation and ensure that the correct messaging is reflected in regional and provincial marketing efforts.

On November 4, 2014 Destination BC is launching its new brand and partnership programs which reportedly will focus on ‘remarkable experiences’. Hornby Island is well positioned to leverage this provincial brand.

www.bcferries.com/schedules/northern

This website provides information regarding ferry schedules. There is no promotion of specific destinations. However, navigation does permit a link to www.bcferriesvacations.com where special promotions are featured. As well, packages are listed to a variety of destinations. There are currently no Hornby Island offerings on this website. Strengthening the relationship with BC Ferries Vacations to promote spring/fall experiences on Hornby Island should be pursued as part of the recommended marketing strategy.

www.hornbyisland.net

This website operated by Donna Tuele, resident realtor on Hornby Island, offers visitor information related to accommodations (B&B's, homes & cabins, camping & resorts). There are limited visuals and readers must click through to link with more detailed accommodation information and photography. There is some limited information about activities on Hornby Island. Local artists are profiled. The real estate section offers a link to www.hornbyislandrealestate.ca. Additional community information is provided related to schools, the Hornby Island Residents & Ratepayers' Association, and a water stewardship study.

www.hornbyislanddiving.com

This website operated by Hornby Island Diving offers information and booking details for those passionate about cold water diving. The lodge accommodates 20 guests and the dive boat has a capacity of 12 divers. There is limited potential to grow this niche market and diving is not considered a prime lever to expand spring/fall visitation on Hornby Island.

Basic information about Hornby Island is also provided on this website and mention is made that the lodge is also available for group retreats, family reunions and workshops. A telephone interview with co-owner/operator Amanda Zielinski confirms that this business already promotes off-peak season on Hornby as the best visibility for diving is in the winter months. The slowest dive time is April/May/June and this is the opportunity to utilize the facility for other events such as workshops, family reunions and corporate retreats (potentially as part of a larger Island-wide event).

www.hornbyfestival.bc.ca

This website promotes and provides information primarily for the highly successful Hornby festival (July 31 – August 9th, 2014). There are links for 'Hornby Island Community Information' to both www.hornbyisland.com and www.realhornby.com.

As of September 2, 2014 there was no information available regarding the off-season schedule. Under the events tab there is a message to 'stay tuned for upcoming off-season shows'. Visitors to the site have the opportunity to join the mailing list and are encouraged to follow the festival on Facebook. An interview with Dierdre Atkinson confirms that five concerts are planned for the off-season and that this was promoted to summer festival-goers using a brochure. There is also a web-based opportunity to market to summer festival-goers while they are enjoying the summer event in order to excite and encourage

them to come back for the off-season programs. As well, those specifically motivated to travel for arts events would benefit from additional timely information regarding upcoming performances.

www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/canada/british-columbia/hornby-island

This is the typical weather network forecast site.

www.hornbyeagles.com

The Hornby Eagles Project Group Society operates this site and offers information about the natural environment as well as the community on Hornby Island. It's greatest draw and likely the motivation for visiting the page is the webcam showcasing eagle nesting sites on the Island. There are links provided to www.realhornby.com and www.hornby.com.

www.hornby-blues.bc.ca

This website is operated by the Hornby Island Blues Society and features the May Blues Workshop that is held annually. It is positioned as 'one of Canada's premier Blues instructional camps':

"The Hornby Island Blues Society believes that music creates community, and Blues and Roots music energize the spirit and inspire attitude. In 2013 we continue our unique workshops where we invite a dozen or so of the finest Canadian Blues and Roots musicians around to share their knowledge and inspiration with those 70 students fortunate enough to have successfully registered for the camp. Our workshops cover a variety of instruments and blues playing styles and with our small class sizes, students get a hands-on instruction that is at the heart of all successful learning."

For those passionate about music and Blues in particular, this positioning is compelling and motivating. The website also provides information on accommodations available during May including links to year-round resorts, B&B's and to vacation rentals through www.hornbyisland.com.

Website Review - Summary Findings

This review of websites has informed the following observations related to Hornby Island's branding, web presence and opportunities to grow spring/fall visitation:

- There is currently no compelling branding or messaging to target audiences for Hornby Island for any time of year (not even peak summer season)
- While this may not be a significant lost opportunity for peak season when capacity is reached through word of mouth, repeat visitation and seasonal homeowners, there is an open opportunity to position Hornby Island as a destination of choice in the spring and fall in a clear and compelling manner
- While there may not be a current lost opportunity related to summer business, there is risk in not 'owning' a strong and compelling summer brand as well – while visitation is currently sufficient, proactive management of brand and promotion is always a wise destination strategy

- The fact that there is little current presence for spring/fall on Hornby is in some ways beneficial as there is no 'brand clutter' or previous perceptions that must be countered – the messaging can be defined and actively promoted with little 'legacy' to counter and to re-message
- The most compelling sub-branding of a specific sector is the profile of the Blues Society May Blues event which speaks directly to the passion of Blues/Roots musicians and aficionados
- Other specific businesses represent their own business well such as Hornby Island Diving and provide links to the two websites that are considered by most to be the 'destination' websites www.hornby.com and www.realhornby.com
- www.hornbyisland.com has the best 'outward facing' profile and while its focus is on accommodation for those who have already selected Hornby Island as their destination there is excellent content on activities including video clips and photography that can be the foundation for a more strategic 'lure' for visitors
- www.realhornby.com has more of an 'inward' presence attempting to connect with those that already have a passion for Hornby Island. It is a true reflection of the community but does little to position Hornby for those who are not yet committed to their vacation destination. The authenticity of this website is appealing but there is opportunity to simplify, unclutter and introduce more intuitive navigation for visitors if it is to become more of a promotional tool (rather than a community website)

Social Media Review

Instagram

There is an excellent selection of photographs of Hornby Island already being posted to Instagram. Instagram has been successfully used by several destinations now to leverage visitor-generated content and allow potential visitors to see the experience through the eyes of their fellow travellers. For an example of a very successful Instagram campaign, visit <http://www.origindesign.ca/instagram-powers-tourism-whistler's-whistlerunfiltered-campaign>.

Facebook

Facebook was reviewed on October 8, 2014. There is a small following for the Facebook page managed by Jake Berman in association with www.hornbyisland.com. Interestingly, the greatest following appears to be the group interested in the Hornby Island eagles and the webcam managed by the Hornby Eagle Group Projects Society. This page truly speaks to a shared passion and does not yet have the 'tainted' quality of many promotional destination Facebook sites where the sales oriented content often turns off interest.

	Likes	Visits	Last Post
Hornby Island	3,315 likes	13,179 visits	Sept 29 th
Real Hornby	311 likes		Oct 2 nd
Hornby Eagles	225,600 likes		2 hours ago

Twitter

Twitter was also reviewed on October 8, 2014 – the most active account is managed by HICEEC - @realhornby. The other active account is managed by Jake Berman in association with www.hornbyisland.com

	Tweets	Photos/videos	Followers	Last tweet
@hornbyisland	340	21	94	Sept 29 th
@realhornby	744		170	Oct 8 th
@hornbyislandbc	498	9	473	Dec 2012
@hornbyislandLP	144	3	364	Aug 2012

Stakeholder Interviews

In order to understand the opportunity to build spring and fall visitation to Hornby Island, a series of telephone interviews were conducted using an Interview Guide (Appendix A). The interviewees represented a range of tourism operators and key influencers on Hornby Island whose knowledge and ultimately whose support for implementation would be beneficial in formulating and executing project recommendations. As well, on September 15th, 2014 a ½ day workshop was held with stakeholders to share findings to date and brainstorm additional opportunities for consideration.

Several opportunities were consistently identified as having potential to build spring and fall visitation to Hornby Island:

Spring/Fall Priority Opportunities

Packaging and Promotion of Existing Experiences

The September site visit highlighted an immediate opportunity that was discussed by workshop participants to build Hornby Island visitation in the shoulder season. Many businesses do operate with limited hours during the May/June, September/October timeframe and there are workshops, seminars, concerts and other opportunities all over the Island at various times throughout the year. If this information was made readily available, it is possible to create an enjoyable itinerary tailored to a specific passion or a desire to sample a range of activities. However, it is unclear even to locals 'what is open when'. For a visitor that is considering a trip to Hornby Island during this period, the effort to understand the experiences available is too great – it is simply too difficult to purchase Hornby Island in the shoulder season and given the time/cost of travel, this uncertainty has become a significant deterrent. An immediate response to address this could include the following elements:

- Redesigned visitor-centric website that is easily navigated and provides information related to "What's On/What's Open" this week/this month on Hornby Island
- Suggested itineraries on the 'Home Page' featuring themed visits around a variety of passions (mountain biking and cycling, culinary experiences, art and learning, music on Hornby as well as a 'best of Hornby' samplers package)
- Suggested itineraries based upon time available – e.g. 3 days on Hornby? 7 days on Hornby, etc.
- Promotion of the redesigned website to all those currently engaged through social media and/or in the existing 'realhornby' database as well as new promotional

efforts directed to attracting new website visitors and to growing the e-mail database (categorized by area of interest and/or time of travel to permit tailored offerings)

Festivals and Events

Festivals and events were frequently identified by interviewees as having the potential to draw visitors to Hornby Island during the spring and fall. Indeed, the review of transferable lessons from other destinations discussed below has also identified festivals and events as an effective lure to secure initial visitation during an off-peak period. Festivals introduce visitors to a time of year that they might not have otherwise considered. Having experienced the destination during the festival, and, having enjoyed their stay, they are more likely to return at this time of year for the festival or for another visit in the shoulder season.

There are several existing events that offer a strong foundation around which to build a 'signature' event. One or two iconic events of the quality, scope and scale that will motivate travel offer greater potential economic returns than a series of frequent, small offerings. In particular, the Blues Festival in May was frequently identified as a strong event upon which to build. However, some caution was also expressed that Hornby Island does not need a huge influx of visitors on one or two occasions, but rather a constant, manageable stream. As well, volunteer burn-out is a limiting factor for the production of additional Hornby Island events.

In addition to growing participation and spectator opportunities for the Blues Festival, other potential events that were suggested to be considered are:

- Mountain biking/cycling event – a well-attended event was produced approximately 10 years ago by passionate volunteers. Hornby Island offers outstanding cycling experiences well into the shoulder seasons, if not the entire year and a festival will introduce cyclists to Hornby and build awareness of spring/fall opportunities to visit
- Culinary/arts event – Hornby Island has a critical mass of unique culinary offerings including local produce and meats as well as a distillery, several wineries and a mead producer
- Workshops on Hornby Island – a 'learning' event that includes a wide range of workshop opportunities (arts, music, wellness, etc.) within a defined window of time in the shoulder season
- Celtic event currently offered every two years could be leveraged and grown

Weddings

Hornby Island has already developed a level of market awareness as a location for a 'destination wedding'. Sea Breeze Lodge in particular has a busy wedding season in May, June and September. There is significant local spending by family and guests on accommodation, food/beverage, retail items (food, alcohol etc.). Given the Island-wide impact of wedding spending by guests and family, there is potential to more proactively position Hornby Island as an ideal wedding destination.

Seniors Market

Many interviewees also identified the seniors' market in particular on Vancouver Island as having strong potential for travel to Hornby Island in the May/June and September/October timeframe. There are many retirement communities, clubs and affinity groups that travel together in organized tours. As well, the Elderhostel movement was mentioned on several occasions (now known as the Road Scholar program). This 'active seniors' demographic has time and disposable income and are seeking new destinations and experiences where they are engaged in learning.

Accredited semesters/longer-stays

Several interviewees also identified longer-stay visitors who are seeking accredited semesters in different fields of study as having potential for Hornby Island and a partner educational institution. There was appeal in having visitors who stay for 4-6 months as part of the community. The nature of these educational programs would best follow Hornby Island's strengths in areas such as art, music, literature or sustainable communities.

Local Government

Another potential shoulder season opportunity leverages Hornby Island's leadership in the creation of a sustainable community. Hornby Island has led the way in many areas such as recycling, community facilities, local engagement, preservation of natural areas, water stewardship. Many communities in British Columbia and indeed throughout Canada are seeking new models for citizen engagement and for sustainable development and the opportunity exists to invite them to Hornby Island to engage in a specifically designed program that showcases this 'living classroom'.

Transferable Lessons from Other Destinations

The challenge of growing off-peak visitation is not unique to Hornby Island. Indeed, many destinations struggle with this challenge and have developed their own unique solutions. While their solutions cannot and should not be replicated and transplanted to Hornby Island, it is possible to consider their efforts and identify transferable lessons for consideration on Hornby Island.

Five such destinations in British Columbia were considered:

1. Whistler
2. Tofino
3. Cortes Island
4. Quadra Island
5. Squamish

A summary of transferable lessons from these destinations follows below. Detailed findings are included in Appendix A.

Summary Transferable Lessons from Comparable Destinations

Transferable lessons from the five destinations studied have been distilled and categorized as follows:

- Lessons in Community and Local Government Support
- Funding/Governance Lessons
- Market Positioning/Messaging Lessons
- Marketing/Promotion Lessons
- Shoulder Season Event Lessons

Lessons in Community and Local Government Support

- Successful destination development and promotion requires a supportive community environment – tools such as the Value of Tourism model available through Destination BC can be a valuable basis for communication with residents regarding the importance of supporting the visitor economy
- Local government can support tourism development by investing in visitor infrastructure (downtown revitalization/beautification, signage etc.) and can create a planning framework conducive to entrepreneurial investment that supports the visitor experience – supporting the development of attractions, accommodation and amenities
- Hornby Island does not currently have a Hollyhock equivalent, but such an anchor can be beneficial in building weather-independent shoulder season business. If this is of interest to Hornby Island, it could be incorporated into an existing business model e.g. Sea Breeze location or into a new location such as the proposed Thatch development or elsewhere. However, it is likely that exceptions to density and development rules managed by the Island Trust would be required along with the associated public process

Funding/Governance Lessons

- A sustainable and sufficient funding model must be identified and implemented to support long-term marketing investments led by a dedicated and paid staff person
- Hollyhock is an entrepreneurial business and this entrepreneurial drive has created year-round success. Hornby Island's pursuit of shoulder season business should consider how to engage similar entrepreneurial passion and expertise in some form

Market Positioning/Messaging Lessons

- Leverage your natural and cultural assets and look for an unfulfilled market need that matches your ability to offer an exceptional visitor experience that cannot be easily replicated by your competition i.e. Tofino has wide open beaches and wild winter storms in a relatively accessible location – high end amenities were built and this combination created an ideal location for cosy and/or romantic getaways. The experience has been effectively promoted for almost 20 years and now has significant awareness and recognition in target markets.

- Communicate to potential visitors what makes you special – the most, the best, the least – what do you ‘own’ in the marketplace and what can you readily defend?
- Clearly state that you are a year round destination (if in fact you have the services and amenities to support this claim)
- Be sure you have all elements of the visitor experience in place – if Tofino had only had the beaches and storms without the luxury accommodation, fine dining and spa, the target market’s needs would not be met
- Identify niche markets that you can serve better than your competition – Tofino had a surfing sub-culture that they took mainstream with professional marketing and promotion that included extensive media relations in travel magazines and through competitive events

Marketing/Promotion Lessons

- It may be possible to create a Hornby Island version of Hollyhock in a ‘virtual’ manner by effectively linking and packaging offers at a variety of existing operators (e.g. events, workshops, retreats, etc.) with accommodation and a convenient shuttle service around the Island. This ‘collective’ approach to creating a series of Hollyhock type opportunities for visitors to enjoy is in keeping with Hornby Island’s history and values
- Continued engagement with those passionate about Hornby Island can be an important element of promotion. Hollyhock has chosen to create their own platform for their community – this is effectively the intended role of www.realhornby.com. Cortes Island uses www.ourcortes.com as their destination lure website which is the current role led by www.hornbyisland.com. The design, content and navigation of the Cortes Island website www.ourcortes.com and www.hollyhock.ca are worth reviewing as upgrades to the Hornby Island sites are made
- Investments should be made in marketing assets that position the destination appropriately. These assets, if well executed, will have a long-life and can be strategically utilized in a variety of media
- Website investment is a constant priority and must be approached from the perspective of the visitor considering/planning a trip to the destination
- Help visitors understand the kind of experiences they can have – make it easy for them to envision themselves in your destination

Shoulder Season Event Lessons

- Events can be utilized to build shoulder season visitation, but remember the following specific lessons related to event production:
 - Leadership of community and business is required – Whistler’s efforts were led by organizations representing the entire resort and all community members
 - Sustainable funding to support multi-year investments in programming is needed
 - Success does not come overnight – it requires a consistent presence and messaging in the marketplace; it requires investment in quality programming; it requires continual renewal and reinvention to lure new visitors and attract repeat clientele
 - The events themselves do not make money – they must be viewed as marketing investments that lure visitors to the destination in off-peak times.

The economic benefits accrue, not to the organizers, but rather from the spin-off spending of visitors on accommodation, food/beverage, retail, transportation etc.

- Start small – deliver a high quality event and grow programming, scope, scale and duration of the event from there
- The infrastructure, services and amenities must all be ready and open to receive visitors – although the festival is the draw, the entire destination participates in and contributes to the visitor experience i.e. the festival cannot function successfully in isolation or distinct from the destination and its amenities
- Initial markets will likely be close-in regional markets until the event has grown to a scope, scale and duration that warrants longer-haul travel
- Hire professional event management and support with a volunteer base
- Target your audience clearly but provide them with a multi-dimensional experiences (activity, art, music) that crease a density of content that becomes memorable
- Have at least one ‘spectacular’ aspect e.g. Slopestyle competition – draws crowds, media attention, can go viral on social media; include officially sanctioned events and enough prize money to attract the leading athletes
- Consider partnership with an entrepreneur – the very organizations that are essential for leadership and financial investment are often somewhat ponderous and limited in their perspectives – an entrepreneur closely attached to the event’s theme can bring energy, ideas and creativity that eludes community organizations

Market Research

A review of market research relevant to Hornby Island was also undertaken to supplement the transferable lessons from other destinations, the stakeholder interviews/workshop and the review of Hornby Island’s current branding and positioning.

A visitor study was conducted in the summer months of 2006 by Richard Giele a Tourism Management student at Malaspina University College and supervised by Nicole Vaugeois, PhD. Highlights of the study include¹:

- Hornby attracts regional visitors – Vancouver Island (45%); elsewhere in BC (40%)
- Visitors are generally high income – 35% over \$100,000; 69% over \$60,000
- Visitors decide to come because of previous experience (50%) or word of mouth (38%)
- The main attractions are the beaches (77%) and the scenic beauty (74%)
- For most (87%) Hornby Island is their main destination
- 55% are repeat visitors
- Visitors generally stay 2-7 nights; 43% stay four to seven nights; 29% stay two to three nights

¹ Gem of the Gulf: Community based tourism on Hornby Island, British Columbia by Richard Giele, B TMgmt student Malaspina University-College and Nicole Vaugeois, PhD, Malaspina University-College, 2006

- 37% of visitors stay in campgrounds; 27% stay in rented houses; 21% stay with friends
- Most visitors participate in outdoor activities
- Over three quarters visit Tribune Bay, the beaches and local shops
- Over half visit Helliwell Park and the Farmers' Market
- About a third take in galleries, studios, wineries, events/concerts
- Two-thirds of visitors buy local food/wine; one-third buy crafts or clothing; 25% buy fine arts
- Visitors overall are extremely satisfied (74%) with their Hornby experience
- 91% say they are inclined to come again
- 33% would consider coming in the off-season

There is a variety of additional market research available regarding visitation to the Vancouver Island tourism region and while not specific to Hornby Island it can inform the context for Hornby Island's market positioning and messaging. Highlights of this research are summarized below with full reports available on Destination BC's website www.destinationbc.ca/research.

Vancouver Island Regional Profile, 2013

In 2010, overnight tourism in British Columbia generated 15.7 million person-visits and \$8.1 billion in related spending. Vancouver Island represents 22% of provincial overnight visitation and 19% of related spending.

Top markets for Vancouver Island are as follows:

		Share of Visitation	Share of Spending
1	British Columbia	63%	41%
2	Washington	6%	7%
3	Alberta	6%	11%
4	California	3%	4%
5	Ontario	2%	4%

Most people travelled in the Vancouver Island region during the peak summer months, particularly Other Canadian and US residents and Other international travellers. However, over one-quarter of US and Other international travellers visited during the spring months of April to June, particularly Other international travellers (31%). British Columbia residents were more likely to travel to the region during the winter months than other markets of origin.

Overnight travellers who spent one or more nights in Vancouver Island region took part in a number of outdoor activities during their trip, including visiting national or provincial parks, visiting a beach, hiking/backpacking, and boating. For non-British Columbians, cultural activities were equally participated in with many visiting a museum/art gallery, zoo or aquarium or a historic site during their trip. (Note: the activities listed below could have taken place anywhere on the trip, not just in Vancouver Island region).

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

Tourism BC In-Market Research Report, 2012

This study was conducted in-market with residents of British Columbia, Alberta and Washington State in late 2011 and early 2012. Highlights are as follows:

- Visitors to any BC region are looking for destinations which offer value for money, a place to relax and unwind and which serve as a good getaway from everyday life
- Most respondents had some level of familiarity with Vancouver Island destinations, particularly Victoria
- Key activities which motivated trips to Vancouver Island were sightseeing, nature, wildlife viewing and visiting friends or relatives
- Consequently, visitors to Vancouver Island are likely to participate in sightseeing, nature, wildlife viewing, shopping, visiting national or provincial parks and visiting friends or relatives on their trip
- Two-thirds (68%) of respondents are likely to visit Vancouver Island in the next two years, most likely for a 'getaway' (1-2 nights) or a 'mini-vacation' (3-5 nights) during the summer. Outdoor recreation activities, experiencing scenery and nature and to relax and unwind are key motivators for future trips to Vancouver Island
- The internet (on a computer as opposed to a mobile device) is heavily relied-upon for pre-trip planning, while information centres and online (at accommodations) are the most popular information sources during trips
- Cost/the perception of it being too expensive as well as preferring to visit a different or international location, are key reasons given by respondents who are unlikely to take a trip to Vancouver Island in the next two years
- Almost three-quarters (72%) of visitors to Vancouver Island have a positive overall impression of the region, which ranks it 1st out of the six British Columbia Tourism regions

Implications of Market Research

The visitor intercept study conducted on Hornby Island and the additional research available for the Vancouver Island tourism region offer the following insights to be considered in the market positioning, messaging and promotion of Hornby Island:

- 33% of summer visitors to Hornby Island would consider coming in the shoulder season – those that already visit Hornby in the summer are an excellent potential source of shoulder season visitation
- Most of Hornby Island's (2006) visitation were BC residents, many of whom are living on Vancouver Island already – the Comox Valley and Victoria/Saanich Peninsula represent close-in markets that could be targeted for getaways (1-2 nights) or mini-vacations (3-5 nights) in the shoulder season with suitable packaging and promotion of experiences available
- Visitors to any BC region are looking for destinations which offer value for money, a place to relax and unwind and which serve as a good getaway from everyday life – messaging should reflect upon the unique 'vibe' that is Hornby Island – immediately transformative – you are truly 'away'
- In general BC residents travelling to Vancouver Island wish to participate in outdoor activities such as visiting parks, beaches, camping, hiking and wildlife viewing – the wealth of outdoor activities available in the shoulder season should be included in messaging with specific leveraging of iconic scenery/settings (grasslands, limestone formations, wide sandy beaches). A strong internet presence is essential for reaching these travellers
- Other international travellers are travelling on Vancouver Island in the April/May/June timeframe and could be targeted for a shoulder season stay on Hornby Island. These Other international travellers primary trip activities also include visiting parks but they are also interested in cultural activities such as visiting art galleries. A strong internet presence will be essential to rise above the 'noise' while these travellers are considering their destination choices
- Word of mouth continues to be an important influence – social media can play an important role in promotion wherein travellers share stories and inform each other. There is a caution however – the destination must live up to its promises for visitor experiences so that the conversations on social media are positive.

Target Markets/Market Positioning/Key Message Elements

The culmination of information gained from the web site review, social media review, Hornby Island stakeholder interviews, September 15th workshop, external market research and transferable lessons from comparable destinations, gives rise to the following recommended target markets, market positioning and elements of messaging.

An ensuing creative process should be undertaken to further refine the brand identity and specifically develop overarching key messages for Hornby Island as well as for specific target audiences. The creative direction suggested below can serve to guide this process and is intended to capture the authenticity and 'realness' of Hornby that defies tag lines and slogans. It speaks to the desire of the community to welcome visitors who appreciate the rich nature and culture on the Island – those that wish to understand Hornby Island's story and contribute positively to it while adding to their own life story.

Target Market	Brand Attributes/ Positioning Considerations	Key Message Elements
All Market Segments	Rare and fragile ecosystems – x% of Hornby is easily accessed yet protected parkland with old growth Douglas Fir, Garry Oaks; Finest/widest white sand beaches in all the Gulf Islands; Intimate community that welcomes those who share its values of sustainable living;	There is a mystery and a magic to Hornby Island that cannot be captured in glib tag lines or slogans. All we can do is share our stories and invite you to create your own. Stories of Hornby <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. share the story of creating Helliwell Provincial Park while showcasing the types of experiences available to visitors in spring/fall e.g. Darren Berrecloth story showcasing mountain biking trails e.g. 60th anniversary of the Co-op showcasing unique retail, art What will your Hornby story be?
Loyal Hornby Island summer visitors	Everything you love is here and waiting for you – come again and see it in a new light (stunning spring/autumn photography of visitors experiencing Hornby e.g. rainy/foggy beachcombing; hiking through spring wildflowers; biking through golden grasslands in autumn or sunbeams through forest; birdwatching; reading by a fireplace; etc.	Come back to what you love – you are part of our story – stories of Hornby – what’s your next chapter? Suggested spring/fall itineraries
Close-in regional markets in the Comox Valley and Victoria/Saanich Capital region	Transformative and restorative nature, culture and community; Close to home – same signature photos as above Great value in spring/fall	So close, yet a world away - relax, renew and restore on Hornby Island – what will your Hornby story be? (feature specific itineraries)
Other International travellers travelling to	Old growth trees, soaring eagles, wide sandy beaches,	Surround yourself with tranquil and peaceful nature;

Vancouver Island in the May-June/September timeframe	artists, wineries - transformative and restorative nature and culture combine in this unique community in BC Great value in spring/fall	Immerse yourself in a passionate community that truly lives locally and thinks globally – join the story of Hornby Island
Passionate mountain bikers – BC/AB residents	Unique topography perfect for riders of all levels Uncrowded Low rainfall; smooth and fast trails More than 80 km of single track all well-maintained Bike from your door - never more than 10 minutes from a trail no matter where you are on the Island;	Those that know us, love us. Go smooth – go fast – join the story of Hornby Island
Active seniors groups – regional and international (e.g. Elderhostel programs like www.roadscholar.org)	Old growth trees, soaring eagles, wide sandy beaches, artists, wineries, first to recycle, communal ownership of public assets - transformative and restorative nature and culture combine in this unique community in British Columbia, Canada	BYOP – Bring Your Own Passion – nature, art, food and wine, living sustainably, building community – share your passion, learn and grow - join the story of Hornby Island
Destination weddings – BC residents	Stunning scenery – ocean views, wide sandy beaches, ancient Fir, rare grasslands Intimate venues perfect for families and small groups Activities for all guests to enjoy – hiking, biking, beachcombing, winery/distillery/meadery tours, art galleries	Your story – start it here on Hornby Island

Objectives/Measures of Success

The following overarching objective and associated measures of success provide direction for strategy development and implementation (note: each proposed strategy also has its own measure of success to monitor its contribution to the overarching goal):

Objective	Measure of Success
Growth in visitation and revenues in May/June, September/October	Reported ferry traffic volume; Value of tourism

	Accommodation sector occupancy/yield
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Strategies to Build Shoulder Season Visitation

In order to achieve the overarching objective identified above, it is necessary to invest in a series of shoulder season strategies. The following strategies are recommended and have been categorized as:

- Organizational Strategies
- Product Development/Visitor Infrastructure Strategies
- Marketing/Promotional Strategies

Organizational Strategies

Description	1. Establish a baseline for communicating the value of the tourism sector on Hornby Island and for monitoring and communicating marketing performance/ROI
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>1.1. Work with Destination BC to populate the Value of Tourism model for Hornby Island and use findings to build community understanding and support for the visitor economy throughout the year</p> <p>1.2. Establish measurement tools for each marketing and promotional activity included in the plan. Track and analyze the results; adjust strategies and tactics as appropriate; report to stakeholders. Examples of metrics required include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website analytics • Social media reach and engagement • Earned media • Size of email database
Rationale/Objectives	A credible and verifiable measure of the value of the visitor economy and the success of marketing initiatives related to spring/fall visitation will continue the process of building community support for HICEEC economic initiatives
Responsibility	HICEEC with support from DBC Research Services
Timing	Immediate with rollout in 2014/15
Budget	No incremental funds – baseline development and tracking of value of tourism and results of marketing programs to be undertaken by existing staff;
Measuring Success	Baseline established in 2014/15 – program results measured and communicated regularly

Description	2. Secure sustainable funding sources for investment in marketing and promotion initiatives targeted to building shoulder season visitation
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>2.1 Investigate additional potential sources of funds to support shoulder season marketing and promotion initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential cooperative marketing initiatives – i.e. offer leveraged buy-in marketing activities; • Monitor government and/or economic development programs (i.e, Island Coastal Economic Trust, Western Economic Development, etc.) to identify partnership or funding opportunities; • Look for specific funds and grants opportunities that match specific activities included in the plan; • Connect with Destination BC to investigate its new brand and associated funding programs in order to leverage resources • Begin discussions to explore a 2% MRDT type funding model for Hornby Island (would likely have to be voluntary model to incorporate all vacation rental units)
Rationale/Objectives	A sustainable source of funds is required to permit investment in marketing and promotional strategies.
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	Ongoing
Budget	No incremental funds – to be undertaken by existing staff and HICEEC Board members
Measuring Success	Marketing and sales budget of \$X in 2015; \$Y in 2016; \$Z in 2017

Product Development/Visitor Infrastructure Strategies

Description	3. Enhance business service and training levels; offer opportunities for businesses to improve industry and market knowledge; encourage earlier openings/longer hours of operation
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>3.1 Work with Destination BC to offer WorldHost training program to Hornby Island businesses that focuses on providing exceptional visitor experiences;</p> <p>3.2 Promote Tourism Business Essentials educational tools and on-line resources available through Destination BC at no charge to tourism operators.</p> <p>3.3 Design and conduct an ongoing visitor exit survey to assess visitor satisfaction levels and opportunities for improvement – share findings with operators and community at large</p> <p>3.4 As shoulder season business volumes increase, encourage operators to extend their hours and/or open for business sooner by providing information on the market opportunity and upcoming themed promotions</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Enhanced market knowledge and service/training levels will continue to improve the visitor experience. There is a potential level of ‘disdain’ for visitors particularly after Labour Day that must be managed.
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	Immediate
Budget	3.1 WorldHost delivery cost to be paid by participants. No incremental funds for 3.2 – to be undertaken by existing staff; 3.3 will require some funding to initially design the survey est. \$5,000 – DBC Research Services may be able to assist
Measuring Success	<p>Improved visitor experience during shoulder season (visitor exit survey reported results)</p> <p>Number of businesses accessing on-line resources.</p>

Description	4. Create an 'opt-in' program for stakeholders to include their planned event/workshop in upcoming themed promotions
Specific Initiatives/Actions	4.1 Communicate with stakeholders and share proposed experiences to be promoted in spring/fall so they can incorporate their planned events/workshops and timing can be coordinated so a critical mass of experiences is available to motivate travel
Rationale/Objectives	Many Hornby Island businesses, organizations undertake their planning independently and in relative isolation e.g. photography workshop at Hornby Island Diving may not be well known by other operators. Providing a platform for information sharing will improve communication and facilitate building a critical mass of visitor experiences in specific windows of the shoulder season that can be promoted in target markets
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	Immediate
Budget	To be undertaken by existing staff.
Measuring Success	Active communication and information sharing leading to coordination of events and creation of themed packages that in turn can be promoted in target markets

Marketing and Promotional Strategies

Description	5. Develop the Hornby Island brand hierarchy including the overarching 'Hornby' brand and confirm specific spring/fall positioning and messaging
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>5.1 Over the next 3-4 months continue to use the Real Hornby brand identity as needed for specific marketing initiatives</p> <p>5.2 Begin a process of revisiting the Hornby Island brand identity by engaging a qualified graphic designer to work with HICEEC Board/staff and the Hornby Island community to translate the brand attributes identified herein into a new identity and associated tag line. This process will refine and confirm proposed overarching positioning and key messages as well as those proposed for each targeted sub-segment and will ideally also include commissioning primary market research in order to test various options with visitor markets;</p> <p>5.3 Commission additional high-quality experiential photography/videography that captures compelling images for each sub-segment targeted;</p> <p>5.4 Meet with key marketing partners (Destination BC, TAVI etc.) to share target sub-segments, key messages and brand imagery to ensure sector is top of mind and appropriately represented in partner destination marketing efforts;</p> <p>5.5 Share visitor brand with Hornby Island businesses to ensure an understanding of brand positioning and how they can align their individual efforts; and</p> <p>5.6 Update any existing collateral and marketing materials to reflect refreshed brand and ensure consistent use across all channels (see website/collateral strategies below).</p>
Rationale/Objectives	<p>There currently is no clear brand statement for Hornby Island experiences in summer or in the shoulder season. While this is not yet a lost opportunity during the summer when businesses operate at full capacity and return visitors/word of mouth dominate, in the shoulder season Hornby Island has not clearly communicated its offer to the market. Other, potentially competitive destinations are becoming more sophisticated and proactive in their outreach to the market. The development of overarching brand positioning and messages (leveraging the key elements identified above) as well as specific messages to build shoulder season visitation from target markets is recommended. Primary market research will ensure that proposed messaging will resonate with targeted travellers. High quality experiential photography/videography will allow potential visitors to see</p>

	themselves 'in the activity' and motivate participation. Marketing partners knowledge and passion for Hornby Island can be reignited through strengthened relationships and first-hand experiences
Responsibility	DBC Research team (if available), HICEEC coordination of existing photography/contract with photographer; HICEEC staff
Timing	2014/2015 photography; meetings
Budget	\$5400 in partnership with DBC – CTO program and Denman Island for creation of an image bank
Measuring Success	Primary market research conducted Brand/positioning/messaging refined and confirmed Partner marketing support and promotion of Hornby Island – measure value of leveraged promotional investments

Description	6. Create a series of spring/fall experiences available on Hornby Island and promote to select target markets
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>6.1 Develop a comprehensive inventory of visitor experiences available in May, June and September (as well as other months) – see Product Development Strategy</p> <p>6.2. Create a series of themed packages leveraging experiences that are already available and/or open for business during May/June/September. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Wine on Hornby • Mountain Biking on Hornby • Wildlife on Hornby • Art on Hornby • Wellness on Hornby • Relaxation on Hornby • Learning on Hornby • Music on Hornby <p>6.3 Share themed packages with stakeholders and update inventory of experiences available with additional workshops, programs being offered – see Product Development Strategy 4.0</p> <p>6.4 Provide visitors to Hornby Island and front-line staff with an easy reference tool for What's On and What's Open via the website (see below), on the ferry trip, at their accommodation provider, key locations (Co-Op etc.)</p> <p>6.5 Meet with key marketing partners (Destination BC, TAVI etc.) to share shoulder season experiences – offer fam tours to DBC/TAVI staff as well as to front-line community members who will be interacting with visitors in order to make them Hornby Island ambassadors e.g. cashier at the Co-Op checkout should know that Middle Mountain Mead is open on weekends from 11-4; staff at Tribune Bay Campground should be able to advise guests of what is open and experiences available etc.</p> <p>6.6 Promote shoulder season themed itineraries and experiences to current database of Hornby visitors via e-marketing campaign, web presence, social media engagement (est. current size of database to be 900 – see strategy below to grow this e-database)</p> <p>6.7 Promote shoulder season experiences to regional drive market – editorial coverage in local newspapers; advertising campaign; possible radio contest – Win a Trip to Hornby Island</p>

Rationale/Objectives	There are more visitor experiences available on Hornby Island in spring and fall than the market (or even the community) understands. A comprehensive inventory of experiences available at various times of year will support all strategies directed towards making it easy for visitors to understand and select Hornby Island in the spring and fall. The creation of themed itineraries will help potential visitors see themselves on Hornby Island and allow them to self-select their areas of interest
Responsibility	HICEEC staff
Timing	Immediate
Budget	\$3,000 available through DBC – CTO program in partnership with Denman Island + staff time
Measuring Success	Growth in ferry traffic – May, June, September Growth in reported business levels - occupancy

Description	7. Create a preeminent website and portal for Hornby Island experiences that showcases Hornby Island's positioning, unique selling proposition and key messages in a user friendly, easily navigated format
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>7.1 Create one effective and easily navigated visitor website that incorporates the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and simple home page that offers a clear and compelling reason to visit Hornby Island derived from branding/positioning/messaging elements proposed above – can be updated for each season • Suggested themed itineraries positioned prominently that speak to target markets motivators • Very clean and simple Event Calendar that allows visitors to input their anticipated travel dates as well as a 'What' On/What's Open' This Week on Hornby Island for last-minute getaways • Stunning photography and videography – possibly showcase best photo posted to Instagram that week and the story behind it – link to all posted photos in a Blog section • Hornby Island map available for download • Click through from Home Page to: • Things to Do (Hiking on Hornby, Biking on Hornby, Beachcombing on Hornby, Food/Drink on Hornby, Wildlife Viewing, Birdwatching, • Places to Stay – accommodation listings • Special places – Helliwell Provincial Park, Mount Geoffrey, Big Tribune Bay Beach, Little Tribune Bay Beach, Fords Cove, Community Centre, Free Store etc. • Food and Drink • Art, Music and Culture • Festivals and Events • Blog • Plan Your Trip – include logistics of ferry travel and repeat themed itineraries from Home Page <p>Note: This website investment can be accomplished from either existing base (www.hornbyisland.com or www.realthornby.com) as both these sites have elements of what is necessary for a comprehensive, user-friendly web presence. Ideally, resources available for investment in Hornby Island's web presence can be pooled and leveraged rather than split so as to have more overall market impact. As well, community ownership and control of this web presence through the designated Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) or HICEEC in this case is typically considered preferable as these organizations are best able to represent</p>

	<p>the entire spectrum of visitor experiences and while the business model is considered, the maximization of revenue opportunities from the website will only be one factor in design, content development. www.hornbyisland.com currently receives approx.. \$14,000 in listing fees – a one time buyout of this website url can be negotiated possibly in conjunction with some continuing contracted services related to management of accommodation listings, management of social media presence/daily postings. Alternatively, if mutually acceptable terms cannot be negotiated, a competitive site established can be established that would also be able to generate accommodation listing revenues.</p> <p>7.2 Revisit website content (keeping in mind key words/links etc. that will drive high organic search engine placement on key search terms like Vancouver Island getaway, best wedding destination, BC mountain biking etc). Navigation and imagery should reflect sub-segment travel motivators</p> <p>7.3 Ensure website is mobile device friendly;</p> <p>7.4 Work to ensure all Hornby Island individual business websites link to redesigned website to build traffic and referrals;</p> <p>7.5 Include links to stakeholder websites and track/report referrals as one indicator of value;</p> <p>7.6 Utilize Google Analytics to understand website statistics e.g. referral source, unique visits, length of stay; pages visited; page visit duration etc. Continually reinvest in website in response to user trends.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	A strong web presence that is user friendly and easy to navigate to relevant information for the traveller will support all sub-segments and responds to market research regarding growing use of the internet for travel planning.
Responsibility	HICEEC contract with website designer;
Timing	2015 major redesign with annual improvements thereafter
Budget	\$TBD
Measuring Success	Number of unique visits; number of referrals to stakeholder websites;

Description	8. Actively participate in on-line marketing and social media engagement to build awareness, excitement and motivate visitation to Hornby Island in spring and fall
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Integrated Online Marketing Campaigns including:</p> <p>8.1 Continue to build an opt-in email database which records activities of interest and begin series of email campaigns with customized offers matching indicated interests;</p> <p>8.2 Consider a Hornby Island Instagram campaign – the stories behind some of the best photos posted are investigated and promoted on the website as well as social media (Facebook) – Stories of Hornby</p> <p>8.3 Introduce contests in regional markets such as Comox Valley and Victoria/Saanich area – “My Hornby Story” to create website ‘stickiness’ and build a database for future direct marketing efforts. (See Camping and RV BC “It’s my camping story blog contest” as an example - http://www.campingrvbc.com/contest/).</p> <p>8.4 Approach Hornby Island Eagle Projects Society to discuss opportunities to collaborate by showcasing vacation experiences to the large following</p> <p>Social Media/Trip Advisor:</p> <p>8.5 Build presence in social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram with frequently updated and relevant information that in particular appeals to target audiences;</p> <p>8.6 Ensure integration of social media tools on website;</p> <p>8.7 Maintain connections with Destination BC and other DMO social media feeds. See How to Engage with Destination BC’s Social Media Channels for more information; and</p> <p>8.8 Ensure Hornby Island stakeholders are on TripAdvisor and encourage them to actively ‘managing their online reputation’.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Integrated on-line marketing campaigns that include contests, email opt-ins etc. and participation in social media accesses certain target audiences markets and can create ‘viral’ excitement about Hornby Island in spring and fall. Hornby Island’s current presence on Trip Advisor is not strong and requires attention.
Responsibility	HICEEC staff and/or contract with on-line marketing/social media coordinator

Timing	2014 and ongoing
Budget	\$TBD
Measuring Success	Size of email database for future direct marketing; contest participation rates; Facebook 'Like'; Facebook reach; Trip Advisor reviews/ratings; Instagrams posts;

Description	9. Develop a mobile device friendly application for Hornby Island
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>9.1 Design mobile friendly App for Hornby Island that showcases What's On/What's Open; trail maps for hiking/biking etc.</p> <p>9.2 Launch and monitor usage; reference in all marketing/promotional programs to build awareness.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	More and more travellers arrive in their selected destination and search 'what to do' on their mobile devices; an App that promotes Hornby Island experiences and includes useful information such as What's On/What's Open, trail maps etc. can highlight opportunities to participate in experiences that might not otherwise be considered.
Responsibility	HICEEC contract with App developer
Timing	2016
Budget	\$TBD
Measuring Success	No. of app downloads; usage levels

Description	10. Secure media coverage to build awareness in all target markets related to Hornby Island spring/fall experiences highlighting key messages, positioning and unique selling proposition
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>10.1 Engage services of a public relations specialist to reach out to key publications in order to secure media visits and editorial coverage.</p> <p>Targeted publications for active seniors should include amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARP • Senior Living Magazine • Boom! • www.roadscholar.org - Elderhostel • Daily/weekly newspapers <p>Targeted websites/publications for mountain bikers should include among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.mountainbike.com - Bicycling Magazine • www.mbaction.com - Mountain Bike Action Magazine • www.bikemag.com - Bike Magazine • www.dirtragemag.com - Mountain Bike Magazine • www.imbikemag.com - IMB • www.enduro-mtb.com - Enduro Mountainbike Magazine • www.singletrackworld.com - Singletrack Magazine • www.pinkbike.com • www.bikepirate.com (already has some excellent Hornby Island content) <p>Targeted publications for couples getaways should include among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times Colonist • Vancouver Sun • The Province • Calgary Herald • Westworld • British Columbia Magazine • Campbell River Mirror • Comox Valley Record <p>Targeted publications for weddings should include among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.brides.com - Brides Magazine • www.todaysbride.ca - Today's Bride Magazine • www.huffingtonpost.ca • www.weddingwire.com

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wedding editions of daily newspapers <p>10.2. Investigate and identify influential blogs, forums and key influencers (e.g. wedding planners) and secure coverage relevant to sub-sectors being targeted;</p> <p>10.3 Develop tools to engage in and maximize media opportunities – i.e. develop unique story ideas, itineraries, image bank, etc.; and</p> <p>10.4 Work with DBC, TAVI on media opportunities. Share story ideas, itineraries, imagery regularly, so that these organizations can include Hornby Island in their media outreach tactics.</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Travellers are influenced by word of mouth and personal experience. Editorial coverage provides a proxy for this word of mouth and builds awareness in target markets.
Responsibility	HICEEC contract with public relations specialist
Timing	2015 and annually thereafter
Budget	Leverage media relations efforts of DBC and TAVI; storylines and journalist visit coordination through existing staff; secure hosting/photography from stakeholders; PR specialist contract \$TBD;
Measuring Success	Advertising equivalency of media coverage; number of journalists/key publications hosted; growth in visitation and revenues vs. baseline.

Description	11. Create marketing partnerships with other organizations in order to leverage resources and market penetration
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>Destination BC:</p> <p>11.1 www.hellobc.com –work with Destination BC’s Travel Information Management team to ensure Hornby Island shoulder season content is featured. Ensure that trip ideas for couples, active seniors include Hornby Island</p> <p>11.2 Work with Consumer Marketing team to develop content ideas for a series of Hornby Island related eDMs to be sent out to those consumers in Destination BC’s database that indicated getaways, hiking, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, beachcombing, culinary as a primary interest;</p> <p>11.3 Engage with Destination BC’s social media channels - http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Consumer-and-Industry/Social-Media.aspx;</p> <p>11.4 Share story ideas with Destination BC’s Travel Media Team; and</p> <p>11.5 Share trip ideas to be added to Destination BC’s North America Travel Trade’s quarterly e-newsletter distributed to 2,000+ travel agents and tourism operators.</p> <p>Tourism Association of Vancouver Island (TAVI)</p> <p>11.6 Educate TAVI staff on the Hornby Island brand and experience and undertaken joint annual planning to strategize on highest return marketing and promotional opportunities.</p> <p>Other Partners:</p> <p>11.7 Airlines – Air Canada, WestJet, Pacific Coastal – approach to include screening of Hornby Island vignettes; inclusion in in-flight magazines;</p> <p>11.8 BC Ocean Boating Tourism Association – discuss opportunities to collaboratively market boating/Hornby Island experiences;</p> <p>11.9 Mountain Biking BC – join this sector association and secure additional Hornby Island profile on www.mountainbikingbc.ca (Annual partner fee of \$1500)</p> <p>11.10 www.campingrvbc.com; www.gocampingbc.com ; www.camping.bc.ca –enhance content related to Hornby Island experiences available in combination with a camping/rv vacation in BC;</p>

	11.11 www.bcferriesvacations.com - promote Hornby Island getaways in spring and fall
Rationale/Objectives	Leveraging resources with other organizations for mutual benefit is necessary with limited funds for marketing and promotion.
Responsibility	HICEEC and partner organizations listed
Timing	2014 and ongoing
Budget	Implementation by existing staff; membership in Mountain Biking BC \$1,500/year
Measuring Success	Growth in value of tourism vs. baseline; number of referrals from partner websites; number of leveraged marketing programs; value of leveraging.

Description	12. Establish/build tour operator relationships in targeted US and international markets
Specific Initiatives/Actions	12.1 Work with Destination BC and identify tour operators that sell longer-stay getaways to international clientele;
Rationale/Objectives	A proportion of destination travelers still rely on information and booking through specialty tour operators who have the ability to influence itinerary inclusions.
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	No incremental funds – implemented by existing staff in partnership with DBC
Measuring Success	Stakeholder reported bookings through tour operators.

Description	13. Work with stakeholders to nominate Hornby Island venues for the BC Wedding Awards – Best Wedding Ceremony Location
Specific Initiatives/Actions	13.1 Nominate Hornby Island venues for award and submit stunning photography
Rationale/Objectives	Third party awards offer credibility and influence planning for destination weddings in BC
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	No incremental funds – implemented by existing staff
Measuring Success	Win category or place as a finalist

Description	14. Launch a spring mountain biking/concert event on Hornby Island
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>14.1 Poll HIMBA/community to find 5-6 committed volunteers interesting in organizing a spring mountain biking event</p> <p>14.2 Hire an event organizer to coordinate all planning and execution working with Steering Committee</p> <p>14.3 Secure funding from various sources (sponsorship, grants etc.)</p> <p>14.4 Plan and execute – reference transferable lessons from other shoulder season events; Big Pig event in Burns Lake is an example of a successful small-town biking event that has gained significant attention and participation – www.burnslaketrails.ca</p>
Rationale/Objectives	Mountain biking on Hornby Island is world-class and available 12 months of the year; this segment is looking for new destinations and an event will encourage first-time trial leading to repeat visitation
Responsibility	HICEEC in partnership with HIMBA
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	\$5,000
Measuring Success	Business volumes during event

Description	15. Design Hornby Island map and visitor guide to replace current Hornby/Denman map
Specific Initiatives/Actions	<p>15.1 Review business model for production of current map and if financially feasible, create a standalone Hornby Island map/guide that is reflective of the Hornby brand (FSC certified paper; vegetable inks etc.)</p> <p>15.2 Include driving map as well as trailheads etc. Detailed trail map can still be sold as a fund raiser for HIMBA; design guide as a 'keepsake' piece to take home and showcase spring/fall experiences on Hornby Island</p>
Rationale/Objectives	The current map/brochure is not reflective of Hornby Island's brand and community values; visitors to Hornby Island are longer stay and specifically motivated to visit Hornby Island – there appears to be very little overlap with Denman Island visitors; one primary piece of collateral that will see wide distribution during peak summer season can be used as a platform for showcasing reasons to come to Hornby Island in the spring/fall
Responsibility	HICEEC
Timing	2015 and ongoing
Budget	Breakeven business model – advertising revenues offset production costs
Measuring Success	Growth in shoulder season visitation levels

Funding

Resources to support implementation of priority strategies identified in the implementation plan below will be secured from the following sources:

- HICEEC
- Destination BC
- Island Coastal Economic Trust or other governmental/economic development agencies

In addition to these sources, consideration should be given to developing a Hornby Island version of the 2% Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). The current legislative framework for the MRDT is not suitable given the high proportion of vacation rentals/B&B's on Hornby Island but an equivalent, voluntary levy on the visitor's accommodation cost could be developed with the specific intention of investing the funds generated in growth of shoulder season business volume.

Implementation Plan

The following chart recommends strategies and activities to be undertaken in each of following three calendar years and can be used to allocate HICEEC resources once these recommendations have been reviewed:

Strategy	Year 1 (2015)	Year 2 (2016)	Year 3 (2017)
1. Establish a baseline for communicating the value of the tourism sector on Hornby Island and for monitoring and communicating marketing performance/ROI			
2. Secure sustainable funding sources for investment in marketing and promotion initiatives targeted to building shoulder season visitation			
3. Enhance business service and training levels; offer opportunities for businesses to improve industry and market knowledge; encourage earlier openings/longer hours of operation			
4. Create an 'opt-in' program for stakeholders to include their planned event/workshop in upcoming themed promotions			
5. Develop the Hornby Island brand hierarchy including the overarching 'Hornby' brand and confirm specific spring/fall positioning and messaging			
6. Create a series of spring/fall experiences available on Hornby Island and promote to select target markets			
7. Create a preeminent website and portal for Hornby Island experiences in B.C. that showcases Hornby Island's positioning, unique selling proposition and key messages in a user friendly, easily navigated format			
8. Actively participate in on-line marketing and social			

media engagement to build awareness, excitement and motivate visitation to Hornby Island in spring and fall			
9. Develop a mobile device friendly application for Hornby Island			
10. Secure media coverage to build awareness in all target markets Hornby Island spring/fall experiences highlighting key messages, positioning and unique selling proposition			
11. Create marketing partnerships with other organizations in order to leverage resources and market penetration			
12. Establish/build tour operator relationships in targeted US and international markets			
13. Work with stakeholders to nominate Hornby Island venues for the BC Wedding Awards – Best Wedding Ceremony Location			
14. Launch a spring mountain biking/concert event on Hornby Island			
15. Design Hornby Island map and visitor guide to replace current Hornby/Denman map			

Appendix A – Transferable Lessons from other Destinations

Whistler, British Columbia

Whistler, British Columbia is a world-renowned and award winning resort approximately 2 hours from Vancouver International Airport. Unlike many destinations in British Columbia, its high season has always been winter – from Christmas to the end of March. During this period each year, the resort sees significant visitation and most importantly, its longest staying and highest yielding guests. While summer season historically saw reasonable volume of visitation, much of this was regional drive traffic that would stay for the day or, at best, one night and consequently contributed much less spending to the economic base.

In the late 1990's a strategic decision was made by key players in the resort to extend peak season in order to more effectively utilize the infrastructure in place. Three key organizations led this initiative – Whistler/Blackcomb Resort (newly merged into one entity); the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW - local government) and the Whistler Resort Association (WRA subsequently renamed Tourism Whistler). Collectively, these three organizations represented all individual and business interests in the resort: Whistler/Blackcomb was and remains the Resort's largest business operator and employer; the RMOW through its Mayor and Council represents all Whistler residents and business owners and the WRA had approximately 5,000 members – all owners of property on 'resort lands' – a legislated designation that mandated membership in the WRA and enabled the WRA to charge fees to be used for the marketing and promotion of the resort. The legislation also permitted non-payment of WRA fees to be registered against title so that owners would be obligated to pay outstanding dues upon sale of their property if they had not kept their account current.

During the 15-year period from 1998 to 2013, strategic investments were made in three signature events:

1. The World Ski and Snowboard Festival (April)
2. Crankworx (July/August)
3. Cornucopia (November)

Today, there are a wealth of other events in Whistler such as The Whistler Film Festival (early December), Wanderlust (July/August), IronMan Canada, Gran Fondo from Vancouver and seemingly endless concerts and street performances. However, the most important lessons can be learned from these three core signature events.

World Ski and Snowboard Festival (WSSF)

Prior to the launch of the WSSF, visitation to Whistler dropped off significantly at the end of each March. There was an occasional 'blip' in April related to Easter timing. Snow conditions remained exceptional and an entire village and mountain infrastructure stood virtually empty. While the locals loved having their favorite runs to themselves, businesses suffered, staff were laid off and the economic base was reliant on three months of business to generate profit to fund twelve months of overhead.

The WSSF was conceived by a local entrepreneur, Doug Perry. Doug approached Whistler/Blackcomb and the WRA and a three-way equity partnership was formed. The festival began in 1996 and is now 10 days of full programming. An economic impact assessment conducted in 2006 determined that the 10-day event contributed \$37.7 million in spending to the economy of British Columbia; \$15.7 million in spending directly in Whistler. The core of the programming although themed to skiing and snowboarding and targeting a younger demographic of passionate riders was and remains quite broad and encompassing:

- Racing/technical events
- 'Big Air' events
- Music events
- Arts events
- Industry events

The following background was extracted from the website www.wssf.com :

- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival (WSSF) is the largest annual winter sports and music festival in North America.
- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival initially grew out of the World Technical Skiing Championships, which took place on Blackcomb Mountain in 1994.
- The first World Ski and Snowboard Festival as we know it was held in 1996 and it incorporated 22 sports events and competitions, including the World Technical Skiing Championships, the World Masters Alpine Open, the Westbeach Snowboard Classic, the Air Canada Whistler Cup, the Couloir Extreme Race, the World Ski Instructors Festival, Industry Week, and the Lifty Olympics.
- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival was founded by Doug Perry.
- Today, the World Ski and Snowboard Festival is 10 days and nights of non-stop sports, art, and music.
- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival motto is: Party in April, Sleep in May.
- The average age of WSSF attendees is 37 with 54% being male. *Based on findings by an Attendee Survey conducted by Tourism Whistler in 2012.
- The origins of the Pro Photographer Showdown can be traced back to 1997 when legendary snowboard photographer Eric Berger and writer Jack Turner decided to put on a slideshow. They had just returned from a Transworld Snowboarding magazine assignment to cover an epic snowboarding adventure into post-revolution Iran and thought the Festival would be a great place to tell their story. Berger and Turner set up a home projector in a tiny Whistler bar, unrolled a simple screen and ended up packing the venue. The Pro Photographer showdown made its official debut on the WSSF schedule the following year.
- In 1998, the Sonic Summit Concert Series during WSSF featured the then little-known band, Nickelback.
- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival now hosts the largest annual free Outdoor Concert Series in Canada.
- In 2004, the WSSF Outdoor Concert Series was headlined by the Black-Eye Peas and their performance included a surprise cameo from Justin Timberlake.
- Olympic boardercross course builder, Jeff Ihaski built his first boardercross track 12 years ago at the World Ski and Snowboard Festival.
- An Economic Impact Assessment conducted during the 2006 event found that the WSSF generated \$37.7 million in economic activity for the province of British

Columbia, with visitor spending and operational expenditure injecting more than \$15.7 million into the Whistler economy. Over 28,000 hotel room nights were sold during the Festival, with 86% being directly driven by WSSF.

- Former KISS frontman Gene Simmons launched his Dussault product line at the 2008 Fashion EXPOSED fashion show.
- Former Pro Photographer Showdown winner, Blake Jorgenson, opened his gallery in the Westin Whistler Resort & Spa at the 2008 World Ski and Snowboard Festival and now hosts anniversary parties there each year.
- In 2008, Playground Builders became an official charity of the World Ski and Snowboard Festival. Playground Builders is a Whistler-based non-profit organization that facilitates the construction of children's playgrounds in war-torn countries. Playground Builders has been nominated for a YMCA International Peacemaker Award and over the past three years, WSSF has helped contribute over \$28,000 to the charity. For more information, visit: www.playgroundbuilders.org
- Pro skier Mark Abma launched his environmental advocacy group, 1 Step, at the 2009 Festival.
- In 2009, WSSF brought the first ever Silent Disco to Whistler, BC. The event remains on the WSSF schedule to this day.
- Canadian Olympian Roz Groenewoud first competed at the World Ski and Snowboard Festival WSI events in 2009 when she was 15 years old. Star-struck to be competing in the half-pipe finals alongside her icons Sarah Burke, Marie Martinod and Jen Hudak, Roz later won the Women's Big Air event that year and marks that as the most memorable sporting achievement of her career. In 2014, Roz represented Canada in the Women's Ski Halfpipe in Sochi, Russia.
- Miranda Furtado (MTV Canada Host) kick-started her television hosting career by winning the role of video host for the Dose.ca Daily Highlights videos in the 2009 Face of the Festival contest.
- In 2011, the Association of Freeskiing Professionals came on board as the host of the World Skiing Invitational (WSI) and helped the WSSF ski events progress to platinum status on the AFP World Tour ranking system, along with X Games and Dew Tour.
- Monster Energy's The Shred Show became a 5-star TTR event with their Big Hip competition in 2012.
- In 2013, the World Ski and Snowboard Festival gave out a total prize purse of \$125,000.
- \$40,000 of that went to the winners of the film and photo events.
- In 2013, legendary hip-hop artist, Nas headlined the Outdoor Concert Series Main Stage on Saturday, April 13 and played a free show to over 20,000 people following the WSI Big Air.
- In 2013 the World Ski and Snowboard Festival received a \$135,000 investment from the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), through the Whistler Festivals, Events & Animation (FE&A) Program. The funds were intended specifically to augment the free 2013 Outdoor Concert Series which included award-winning artists such as The Arkells, Swollen Members, and K-OS.
- Over 50 musical acts played at two outdoor stages and 9 different indoor venues in 2013, offering more than 100 hours of free music to festival-goers.
- The Olympus 72 Hour Filmmaker Showdown saw more than 40 entries in 2013.
- On average, the World Ski and Snowboard Festival sees over 300 volunteers log more than 3000 hours every spring.

- The official charities of the World Ski and Snowboard Festival are Playground Builders, Zero Ceiling, and the Howe Sound Women's Centre.
- A number of Olympians have competed at various WSSF ski and snowboard events, including: Gus Kenworthy, Sage Kotsenburg, Mike Riddle, Justin Dorey, Maxence Parrot, Henrik Harlaut, Spencer O'Brien, Sebastien Toutant, Yuki Tsubota, Roz Groenewoud, and Alex Beaulieu-Marchand.
- The average temperature in Whistler Village during the World Ski and Snowboard Festival in April is 11oC.
- The World Ski and Snowboard Festival has been rated one of the top Snow Festivals from media all over the world including, The Toronto Sun, The Brisbane Times and the UK Telegraph.

Each year to keep the energy and excitement levels high, programming changed, prize money grew, bigger 'names' were secured for concerts. The 'gems' were retained such as the Big Air events that drew record crowds and the Pro Photographer and Film Maker's Showdowns that to this day sells out almost immediately upon ticket release.

The event was heavily subsidized in the early years both directly with cash and with in-kind support. Whistler/Blackcomb provided the mountain, their staff, their snowmaking and all manner of on-site support. The RMOW provided the Village venues, RCMP services, Village maintenance. Tourism Whistler and Whistler/Blackcomb both invested in significant marketing campaigns.

Today, visitation during the 10-day festival sells an estimated 28,000 hotel rooms and the WSSF is estimated to contribute \$15.7 to the Whistler economy (2006 Economic Impact Study). Detailed information regarding the 2014 festival program can be found at www.wssf.com

Transferable Lessons – World Ski and Snowboard Festival, Whistler:

- Leadership of community and business is required – Whistler's efforts were led by organizations representing the entire resort and all community members
- Sustainable funding to support multi-year investments in programming is needed
- Success does not come overnight – it requires a consistent presence and messaging in the marketplace; it requires investment in quality programming; it requires continual renewal and reinvention to lure new visitors and attract repeat clientele
- The events themselves do not make money – they must be viewed as marketing investments that lure visitors to the destination in off-peak times. The economic benefits accrue, not to the organizers, but rather from the spin-off spending of visitors on accommodation, food/beverage, retail, transportation etc.
- Start small – deliver a high quality event and grow programming, scope, scale and duration of the event from there
- The infrastructure, services and amenities must all be ready and open to receive visitors – although the festival is the draw, the entire destination participates in and contributes to the visitor experience i.e. the festival cannot function successfully in isolation or distinct from the destination and its amenities
- Initial markets will likely be close-in regional markets until the event has grown to a scope, scale and duration that warrants longer-haul travel

- Consider partnership with an entrepreneur – the very organizations that are essential for leadership and financial investment are often somewhat ponderous and limited in their perspectives – an entrepreneur closely attached to the event's theme can bring energy, ideas and creativity that eludes community organizations
- Hire professional event management and support with a volunteer base
- Renew and refresh festival content each year giving visitors reasons to return
- Target your audience clearly but provide them with a multi-dimensional experiences (activity, art, music) that create a density of content that becomes memorable
- Have at least one 'spectacular' aspect e.g. Big Air – draws crowds, media attention, can go viral on social media; include officially sanctioned events and enough prize money to attract the leading athletes

Crankworx

Whistler's summer mountain biking festival began around 2000/2001. Initially conceived by a local entrepreneur who approached Whistler/Blackcomb, the RMOW and Tourism Whistler, the financial investment was considered too significant to proceed. However, market research clearly indicated that mountain biking was emerging as a significant motivator to travel and that contrary to popular belief, mountain bikers were relatively affluent and would spend on accommodation, restaurants, retail in addition to their significant investment in equipment and gear.

Whistler/Blackcomb in particular was seeking opportunities to secure returns from their existing mountain infrastructure and Tourism Whistler was mandated to find new markets that would produce overnight (rather than day) visitation in the summer.

By 2002, a small event was produced by the three resort partners. Over the intervening years, the event has grown to 10 days drawing 30,000 people to the signature slopestyle competition. It remains funded by Whistler/Blackcomb, Tourism Whistler and the RMOW. In 2010, it was estimated that Crankworx generated \$22.9 million in net economic activity in British Columbia; \$11.3 million in Whistler itself (Pique Newsmagazine, August 21, 2014 edition).

Whistler Blackcomb has made significant investment in its mountain bike park infrastructure and together with Tourism Whistler, provides that marketing and promotion investment to promote the festival. The RMOW provides the Village venues and support services. A professional event organizer is hired to lead execution of the festival.

Learning from the success of the WSSF, Crankworx offers a combination of biking races/events, arts and music. In addition to the spectacular 'big air' events that draw large crowds of spectators, there is a weekend concert series and filmmakers/photographers events. As summer is prime time for family vacations, unlike WSSF which remains focused on a younger demographic of passionate skiers and snowboarders, Crankworx with funding from the RMOW has broadened its programming to include 10 days of family and child-friendly participation in Kidsworx and Familyworx:

Kidsworx Fat Tire Crit

Friday, August 8, 2014
3:30–5:30pm
Whistler Olympic Plaza

The next generation of criterium speedsters will take to the cobble-stoned streets of Whistler Village for the Kidsworx Fat Tire Crit on Friday, August 8. This event is open to emerging athletes, ages seven to 15, with three race categories available (7–9, 10–12 and 13–15). Competitors will race along the same tactical and technical course as their older counterparts, but with adapted course lengths for each category.

***NEW:** Two new age categories have been added to this event: 1) 4 years and under run bikes, 2) 6 years and under pedal bikes. These two new categories will allow little rippers the chance do one lap around the Village Crit course in a fun participatory format. Registration is free and takes place on site from 3:00–4:00pm. Event begins at 4:15pm.

Schedule:

3:30–4:15pm: Training
4:30–4:40pm: Racing - 7–9 years
4:45–5:00pm: Racing - 10–12 years
5:05–5:20pm: Racing - 13–15 years

Awards:

7:30pm

Categories:

7–9: Mixed boys/girls
10–12: Mixed boys/girls
13–15: Mixed boys/girls

Registration fee: \$5 (tax included)
Kids 2–6: FREE

Familyworx Run Bike Fun Races
Saturday, August 9 – 9:00am–12:00pm
Sunday, August 17 – 10:00am–1:00pm
Four Seasons Resort

Calling all budding and seasoned run bikers - the Familyworx Run Bike Fun Races will be a great chance to get Crankworx's youngest athletes together for a fun race and a taste of the two-wheeled action. Lots of fun features, including rollers and pylons, await to challenge young riders or those looking to try out a run bike for the first time. For more advanced run bike racers, challenges will be added to the course to increase the level of difficulty, ensuring fun for kids of all ages. Without pedals or training wheels, run bikes encourage kids to use their motor skills to power themselves forward while maintaining balance. This free all-ages event will take place on the back patio of the Four Seasons Resort, with lots of other fun activities on offer, including bike limbo.

There will be draw prizes including one GIANT run bike to be won on each race day! Spare GIANT run bikes will also be available for those without their own.

Registration is on site at the Four Seasons Resort from 9:00am–12:00pm
This event is free.

Familyworx Photo Scavenger Hunt
Saturday, August 9 - Four Seasons Resort
Thursday, August 14 - Fairmont Chateau Whistler
1:00–5:00pm

Bike-minded families will be on the hunt during the first weekend of Crankworx, cameras in tow - the Familyworx Photo Scavenger Hunt will challenge teams to scour the village for clues and take photos at specific locations, with a special focus on popular biking areas and Crankworx hotspots. All the action starts and ends on the Four Seasons back patio on Saturday, August 9, and at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler on Thursday, August 14. Families can start any time, but must complete their hunt and submit the photographic proof of their adventure by 5pm
This event is free.

Familyworx Pump Track Sessions
Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler
Friday, August 8th - 11:00am–2:00pm
Saturday, August 9th - 10:00am–4:00pm
Sunday, August 10th - 11:00am–5:00pm
Monday, August 11th - 4:00–6:00pm
Tuesday, August 12th - 1:00–7:00pm
Thursday, August 14th - 9:00am–12:00pm
Friday, August 15th - 4:30–6:30pm
Saturday, August 16th - 10:00am–4:00pm
Sunday, August 17th - 2:00–5:00pm

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to session the Crankworx Pump Track during this all ages event. During the times listed above, the expertly designed and meticulously crafted pump track will be open to the public for a free all-ages pump track jam. Volunteer coaches will also be on site to help participants learn the art of pumping over this rhythmic circuit of rollers, berms and jumps. Other activities will be available on site to keep the whole family entertained.

Categories
7–9 years: mixed
10–12 years: mixed
13–15 years: mixed

Additional detail on programming can be found at www.crankworx.com . The event is positioned as follows on the website:

“Born in Whistler BC, Crankworx is a 10-day multi-disciplinary mountain bike festival celebrating epic endurance, supreme flow, monster air and vertical-dropping riding.

Over the past decade, the Crankworx dirt stadium has been home to hundreds of game-changing moments in freeride mountain biking’s history, and has launched the careers of countless professional athletes.

This year, August 8-17, the downhill, slopestyle and enduro legends of the world return to Whistler to battle for freeride glory. Nowhere else will you see competitors of this caliber gathered in one place. Combined with a weekend Concert Series, the GoPro Dirt Diaries, the Deep Summer Photo Challenge, Kidsworx and Familyworx, exhibitions, demos and clinics, parties and après, Crankworx Whistler truly encapsulates the best of summer on the West Coast."

Transferable Lessons – Crankworx, Whistler

- Leadership of community and business is required – Whistler's efforts were led by organizations representing the entire resort and all community members
- Sustainable funding to support multi-year investments in programming is needed
- Success does not come overnight – it requires a consistent presence and messaging in the marketplace; it requires investment in quality programming; it requires continual renewal and reinvention to lure new visitors and attract repeat clientele
- The events themselves do not make money – they must be viewed as marketing investments that lure visitors to the destination in off-peak times. The economic benefits accrue, not to the organizers, but rather from the spin-off spending of visitors on accommodation, food/beverage, retail, transportation etc.
- Start small – deliver a high quality event and grow programming, scope, scale and duration of the event from there
- The infrastructure, services and amenities must all be ready and open to receive visitors – although the festival is the draw, the entire destination participates in and contributes to the visitor experience i.e. the festival cannot function successfully in isolation or distinct from the destination and its amenities
- Initial markets will likely be close-in regional markets until the event has grown to a scope, scale and duration that warrants longer-haul travel
- Hire professional event management and support with a volunteer base
- Target your audience clearly but provide them with a multi-dimensional experiences (activity, art, music) that crease a density of content that becomes memorable
- Have at least one 'spectacular' aspect e.g. Slopestyle competition – draws crowds, media attention, can go viral on social media; include officially sanctioned events and enough prize money to attract the leading athletes

Cornucopia, Whistler's Food and Wine Festival

In the late 1990's November in Whistler was considered one of the slowest months. The mountains had not yet opened for skiing and riding, the weather was typically cold and wet and the idea of visiting Whistler at that time of year was preposterous for most. Cornucopia was conceived by Tourism Whistler as a weather-independent event that would grow to signature status bringing visitation and spending to the early November time frame. It started small in the late 1990's and after several years successfully began to draw the Lower Mainland market for Friday night/Saturday night stays. The signature tasting event 'Crush' was sold-out on the Friday night and most restaurants participated in winemaker's dinners on Saturday night. Saturday workshops on wine pairings (wine/cheese, wine/fast food etc.)

were offered and a Sunday morning champagne brunch rounded out the weekend before heading back to Vancouver.

However, in order to truly impact visitation the event had to add quality content and programming and lengthen stays. It began by adding a 'locals' tasting evening on Thursday night for those who didn't want the Friday night crowds and a trade tasting program for industry on Wednesday. For several years, Cornucopia was themed – initially it featured BC wines, but then in order to revitalize programming began to add new themes such as California wines or wines of Spain.

Today Cornucopia is an 11-day event funded by Tourism Whistler and executed through a professional event organizer. Unlike the WSSF and Crankworx, it has not incorporated arts and music into the programming but rather has broadened the culinary experience – in addition to wines from around the world, craft beers, distilled spirits, sherry and liquors are featured in a variety of programs. A culinary competition occurs and there is a variety of tasting events as well as winemaker's dinners. The only programming that is outside of this culinary core is yoga and meditation every morning, designed to nourish your soul so you are then ready to indulge the body for the rest of the day.

The website for the event is www.whistlercarnucopia.com. The event is positioned on the website as follows:

"The annual event features a sumptuous variety of hands-on seminars, fascinating winery dinners, gala tasting events and sizzling after-parties. Cornucopia offers something for both the experienced gourmet and those seeking to better appreciate the epicurean delights of wine and food.

True to its name, Cornucopia presented by Blue Shore Financial is the fall festival for the indulgent and the connoisseur. Ideally located in the majestic resort town of Whistler, B.C., Cornucopia food + drink festival, features local and regional restaurants, chefs, producers, breweries, distilleries and wineries, emerging as the West Coast's premier resort-based epicurean extravaganza. Cornucopia offers a truly sensory experience with winery dinners, interactive seminars, gala tastings and electric after-parties, this high-end 11 day showcase fulfills its mission to put Whistler on the map as the must-experience food and drink party.

Seize the opportunity to learn from industry professionals, participate in demonstrations, sip, sample and savour some of the offerings of B.C. and beyond while basking in the beauty that is Whistler and the Sea to Sky."

Transferable Lessons – Cornucopia, Whistler

- Leadership of community and business is required – while Tourism Whistler organized and continues to fund Cornucopia, there is extensive involvement of many food/beverage venues
- Sustainable funding to support multi-year investments in programming is needed. While Cornucopia is not a three-way venture that includes the RMOW and Whistler/Blackcomb, it still benefits from the consistent funding available through Tourism Whistler and its mandated membership fee structure

- Success does not come overnight – it requires a consistent presence and messaging in the marketplace; it requires investment in quality programming; it requires continual renewal and reinvention to lure new visitors and attract repeat clientele
- The events themselves do not make money – they must be viewed as marketing investments that lure visitors to the destination in off-peak times. The economic benefits accrue, not to the organizers, but rather from the spin-off spending of visitors on accommodation, food/beverage, retail, transportation etc.
- Start small – deliver a high quality event and grow programming, scope, scale and duration of the event from there
- The infrastructure, services and amenities must all be ready and open to receive visitors – although the festival is the draw, the entire destination participates in and contributes to the visitor experience i.e. the festival cannot function successfully in isolation or distinct from the destination and its amenities
- Initial markets will likely be close-in regional markets until the event has grown to a scope, scale and duration that warrants longer-haul travel
- Hire professional event management and support with a volunteer base
- Target your audience clearly but provide them with a multi-dimensional experiences that crease a density of content that becomes memorable
- Have at least one ‘spectacular’ aspect e.g. Crush gala wine tasting

Tofino, British Columbia

Tofino’s primary season is summer much like Hornby Island. It is best known as a beach town with a unique and interesting vibe. Charles McDiarmid, owner of the the Wickinninnish Inn saw beyond the historical base of summer business and recognized an unfulfilled market need for restorative getaways that were not tied to summer sunshine or school breaks but rather would be motivated by the juxtaposition of luxury amenities (accommodations, dining, spa) and spectacular nature. A growing market of urbanites particularly in Victoria and Vancouver, were affluent but time starved leading stressful lives and needing a respite. The opportunity to getaway to Tofino, enjoy luxury accommodations, dining and marvel at the crashing waves from the comfort of an ocean-view room grew in appeal with concentrated promotional efforts. Tofino storm-watching season quickly gained awareness and visitation. Since the pioneering efforts of Charles McDiarmid at the Wickinninnish Inn, several other lodges of similar quality have also pursued this market including Long Beach Lodge, Black Rock Resort and several others.

Rather than establishing a series of festivals to promote off-season visitation (although Tofino and Ucluelet also have invested in festivals such as the Clayoquot Oyster Festival in November and the Pacific Rim Whale Festival in March), Tofino’s success in defining a new winter market for storm-watching was based on identifying a market need and creating an infrastructure of facilities, services and amenities to service it, as well as the prime summer season.

Today, Tofino storm-watching is positioned as follows:

www.tourismtofino.com

“Our Tofino winter is green, lush, lively and so magnificently stormy.

With temperatures hovering above the freezing mark, snow is a rarity here. Tofino is the home of winter storm watching.

Storm watching is more than a season; it's a thing to do, and a state of mind. It's a time when windsculpted shoreside trees yield once again to howling gales. Rainfall performs its duty in this temperate rainforest, taking breaks for joyful sunbursts. Massive driftwood logs seem as light as matchsticks as they are shuffled up and down the beach by a powerful tide. Puddle jumping is an all-ages sport. A daytrip to Hot Springs Cove at this time of year is an arrestingly beautiful and often solitary experience.

Storm watching is eagerly standing where the beach meets the forest, suited in full raingear, as you watch the giant surf roll in at what seems like slow motion. Storm watching is inside, with just the two of you or the whole bunch of you, warmly ensconced in blankets by the fireside, telling stories and eating some Tofino-crafted comfort food. Our chefs know how to warm a stormy night with local flavour.

As Tofino's streets glisten with rain, walk briskly to your chosen inside destination, an art gallery, maybe a restaurant a friend recommended. As you enter, feel the warm embrace of this rugged coast in storm season, where lights and friendly faces shine brightly amid the wild natural elements. This is your winter to storm watch in Tofino."

www.wickinn.com

"We were built for this...

*Gale force winds, giant swells and lashing waves - just another winter's day on Vancouver Island's rugged West Coast. Experience the spectacular fury of a West Coast winter storm up close a la carte or as part of our **Storm Watcher's package**. Whether you bundle up and join the seabirds dancing in the wind or watch it all from the comfort of your fireplace-warmed suite, winter storm watching is an awe-inspiring experience that invigorates the soul.*

Typically the most reliable time period to enjoy the, "Storm Watching" experience in the Tofino or Pacific Rim areas is from November 1st through the end of February although it is not unusual to have an early storm or two arriving in late October and even a late storm arriving in early March.

*Storm watching at the Wickaninnish Inn was named a **Canadian Signature Experience** by the Canadian Tourism Commission in 2011. **Remote Passages** in Tofino was also named a Signature Experience for their marine adventure excursions - a wonderful way to get out and explore Clayoquot Sound!*

Design

Making the Wickaninnish Inn a memorable Storm Watching destination began long before the Inn was even built. The McDiarmid family would visit the Inn's eventual site from their nearby Cabin at the height of a storm to see where the waves broke, how high they came up onto the rocks and into the forest and where the most spectacular views of the crashing waves could be seen. These memories and a whole host of other Storm Watching ideas were then incorporated

into the design of the Inn so from the ground up the Wickaninnish was planned to be the best storm watching destination on the coast of North America from Mexico to Alaska.

Storm Watching Amenities

Full rain gear is provided in each and every guest room and rubber boots sized to fit are also available so guests can enjoy their own walk on the beach or through the rainforest in comfort and style without taking up precious luggage space. Additionally there is a gum boot and rain gear drying unit as one arrives into the Driftwood Café: guests can hang up whatever is wet, turn on the boot dryer and enjoy a specialty coffee, hot tea or soothing hot cocoa by a crackling wood fire while everything is drying and be ready to brave the elements again within 15 minutes. The Lookout Library offers a range of rainy day activities, such as games, Stave Puzzles, and a selection of periodicals to enjoy, with an expansive view of the waves rolling onto Chesterman Beach.

For many guests the ultimate yin to the yang of storm watching is time spent in Ancient Cedars Spa located right on the Inn's Ocean Level. In particular the Cedar Sanctuary (a free standing double treatment room) offers clear unobstructed ocean views and unrivaled spa treatments as close to nature's edge as mother nature and the legal setbacks allow.

In the Guestroom

Finally, guestrooms and public spaces all feature ocean or beach views throughout the Inn so a variety of storm views are available throughout the Inn. After a solid beach walk, relaxing spa treatment and maybe a wonderful lunch in The Pointe Restaurant or Driftwood Café perhaps a retreat to your guestroom might be in order. Turn your comfortable arm chair towards the window and with the fireplace beside you gaze out your rain streaked window to enjoy mother nature's performance down the beach or on the rocks below with your balcony door cracked open enough to hear the wind whistling by as the trees bend to mother nature's will.

Tofino has also built its off-peak visitation by promoting to a specific niche market – surfers. The best surfing occurs exactly when Tofino was seeking additional visitation and while surfers have been coming to Tofino for decades, it was only in the last 15-20 years that significant investment in marketing and promotion has occurred. This growth in visitation has fueled the market economy and several surf shops now offer equipment rentals and lessons.

Surfing in Tofino is positioned on www.tourismtofino.com as follows:

"It's no wonder that Tofino is Canada's surf capital.

The waves keep rolling in along miles of sandy beaches - 35km of surf-able beach break to be exact, leaving plenty of room for all boarders, from absolute beginners to seasoned longboarders.

The water is a cool, yet fairly constant 10°C/50°F, making surfing a year-round activity in Tofino, with some of the best rides being caught during the winter when the surf is definitely

up with a strong, fairly consistent swell. A wetsuit is essential, along with recommended booties, gloves and a hood if you want to spend quality time in the water.

Surfing in Tofino truly flourished by 1971, when the newly-paved Highway 4 to Vancouver Island's west coast attracted many newcomers. Most of them were drawn to the dramatic beaches and wilderness, and some to the lively beach-dwelling subculture that emerged here in the late 60s. Some of these travelers had surfed before, and began to test the waters here. In the summer of 1968, a small surf school operated on Long Beach and by the mid-70s Tofino was becoming known as a place where small groups of people were surfing regularly during the spring and summer months. Today, some of the owners of Tofino's surf schools are the offspring of these early surf explorers.

Get started with Tofino surf schools, offering lessons and surf camps, where certified and friendly instructors share their knowledge of proper surfing technique, ocean safety, and surf etiquette. Visit our surf shops for surf gear rentals. They're also the best place for advice on current conditions and where to ride the next (or your first) epic wave during your stay.

In October, Tofitians welcome the best women in surf to the annual Queen of the Peak. This is the only all-female surf contest in Canada, with proceeds supporting local charitable endeavours. It's an exciting time to be in Tofino, with a week's worth of educational, and entertaining activities to watch and experience."

Transferable lessons - Tofino:

- Leverage your natural and cultural assets and look for an unfulfilled market need that matches your ability to offer an exceptional visitor experience that cannot be easily replicated by your competition i.e. Tofino has wide open beaches and wild winter storms in a relatively accessible location – high end amenities were built and this combination created an ideal location for cosy and/or romantic getaways. The experience has been effectively promoted for almost 20 years and now has significant awareness and recognition in target markets.
- Be sure you have all elements of the visitor experience in place – if Tofino had only had the beaches and storms without the luxury accommodation, fine dining and spa, the target market's needs would not be met
- Identify niche markets that you can serve better than your competition – Tofino had a surfing sub-culture that they took mainstream with professional marketing and promotion that included extensive media relations in travel magazines and through competitive events

Cortes Island, British Columbia

Cortes Island positions itself as a idyllic Gulf Island community with beautiful nature and a passionate community committed to sustainable living and learning. A variety of websites provide information on Cortes Island including:

www.cortesisland.com - offers good information for those already coming to Cortes Island including clearly posted hours for grocery stores, easy to read event calendar, tide information, and a special section on the home page for short notices and workshops. For those travellers that are considering Cortes Island as one of several options, there is little 'lure' value to this website.

www.discoveryislands.ca - provides more general information for travellers related to the region, Campbell River, Cortes Island, Quadra Island, Mainland Inlets and Outer Islands but the content is quite 'thin' and is not compelling. A map/brochure can be downloaded in PDF format.

www.ourcortes.com - operated by the Cortes Island Business and Tourism Association and does the best job of promoting Cortes Island as a destination using compelling language and photography (although quality of photography could improve) – uses a very clean navigation: Our Community; Our Land; Our Cortes. Also provides information in a visitor friendly manner e.g. Short Hikes; ½ Day Hikes

However, none of these websites effectively positions Cortes Island for shoulder season visitation. Rather, Cortes Island has been successful on a year-round basis directly as a result of the efforts of one business – Hollyhock. Hollyhock positions itself as “Canada’s Lifelong Learning Centre”. It offers year round programming categorized as:

- Well Being
- Wisdom & Teaching
- Arts & Culture
- Social Innovation

A review of October programs reveals a wide range of offerings including:

- Makers’ Retreat – five days of creativity
- Master Artists’ Seminar with Robert Bateman
- Mushrooms
- Cultivating Awareness
- Memory & Myth (writers’ program)
- Orphan Wisdom School

As well, the homepage clearly features a 40% off special on rooms and food packages from October 8-21st. Long-term rentals for October to April are promoted, likely as a way to build occupancy during this lower visitation window.

Of interest is the manner in which Hollyhock segments its information on activities. These themes could be considered areas of interest that motivate travel and include:

- Read, Write, Create, Explore
- Restorative Getaways
- Yoga
- Cuisine
- Garden
- Bodywork

In order to build awareness of their offerings, Hollyhock has a presence in Vancouver and offers satellite programs in the city. As well, the website promotes a link to

www.hollyhocklife.org which appears to be a platform for the Hollyhock ‘community’ of past presenters, attendees and loyal followers to share articles, recipes, music and photos. This is an intriguing strategy as it creates a branded social media channel owned and controlled by Hollyhock rather than by an external platform such as Facebook.

Visitors to Cortes Island enjoy a number of community festivals including the following as listed on www.ourcortes.com :

- May – Seafood Festival (1 day)
- June – Creative Spaces Tour (Studios and Gardens) – 1 day
- July – Cortes Island Day
- August – Sandcastle Day
- September – Gorge-ous Bike Fest

A review of the programming for these events indicates that they are small-scale community offerings that visitors may participate in if they happen to be on the island at the time. However, none of these events would motivate travel to Cortes Island. Much like Hornby Island, the motivators for visitation are the beaches, the parks, the boating and kayaking opportunities. The primary draw for shoulder season business is the anchor attraction at Hollyhock.

Transferable Lessons – Cortes Island:

- Hollyhock is an entrepreneurial business and this entrepreneurial drive has created year-round success. Hornby Island’s pursuit of shoulder season business should how to engage similar entrepreneurial passion and expertise in some form
- Hornby Island does not currently have a Hollyhock equivalent, but such an anchor can be beneficial in building weather-independent shoulder season business. If this is of interest to Hornby Island, it could be incorporated into an existing business model e.g. Sea Breeze location or into a new location such as the proposed Thatch development or elsewhere. However, it is likely that exceptions to density and development rules managed by the Island Trust would be required along with the associated public process
- Alternatively, it may be possible to create a Hornby Island version of Hollyhock in a ‘virtual’ manner by effectively linking and packaging offers at a variety of existing operators (e.g. events, workshops, retreats, etc.) with accommodation and a convenient shuttle service around the Island. This ‘collective’ approach to creating a series of Hollyhock type opportunities for visitors to enjoy is in keeping with Hornby Island’s history and values
- Continued engagement with those passionate about Hornby Island can be an important element of promotion. Hollyhock has chosen to create their own platform for their community – this is effectively the intended role of www.realthornby.com. Cortes Island uses www.ourcortes.com as their destination lure website which is the current role led by www.hornbyisland.com. The design, content and navigation of the Cortes Island website www.ourcortes.com and www.hollyhock.ca are worth reviewing as upgrades to the Hornby Island sites are made

Squamish, British Columbia

Squamish is a destination located approximately 40 minutes north of Vancouver and 35 minutes south of Whistler along the Sea to Sky Highway (#99). It was heavily dependent upon extractive industries such as forestry for many years and as that industry declined, tourism was viewed as an opportunity to diversify its economic base and create a more sustainable mix of business.

Despite having a wealth of outdoor activities and adventures for visitors, Squamish's ability to develop a tourism economy at any time of year was challenged by several things:

- Lack of community understanding and support for the current and potential value of the tourism economy and its contribution to the quality of life, amenities available to residents
- Lack of adequate tourism infrastructure including an unattractive downtown core, sprawling highway development and a lack of quality accommodation and meeting space
- Living in the shadow of global giant Whistler Resort – well funded and professional marketing efforts focused on visitors transferring from Vancouver to Whistler with no stops along the way

Squamish's tourism journey has spanned many years but an intensity of focus occurred over the last 10 years and offers lessons that may be beneficial to Hornby Island. This journey included several critical milestones described below:

Strong Relationships/Leveraging

Squamish was faced with a very small budget for the development and promotion of tourism and they have always very effectively built relationships with the regional DMO, Vancouver Coast & Mountains and with Destination BC. They were one of the first communities to access the DBC Community Tourism Foundations program to develop a tourism plan and worked diligently to implement its recommendations.

Community Support for Tourism

Squamish's long history in forestry and extractive industries had created a strong antipathy to tourism in much of the long-term population. Tourism was seen as minimum wage jobs as compared to forestry where those who had not even completed high school had been able to secure jobs paying in excess of \$60,000 per year. There was a strong 'anti-Whistler' complex and a rejection of tourism that manifested in political and organizational agendas.

Over time, the dynamic of the Squamish community began to change. More young families were attracted to Squamish for the wealth of outdoor adventure, affordable real estate and the understanding of the tourism opportunity began to grow.

Tourism Squamish supported this education process by commissioning a Value of Tourism study in partnership with Tourism BC (now Destination BC). Over the course of approximately one year and countless meetings and discussions, accommodation operators agreed to provide confidential data regarding their occupancy and yield in order to populate the value of tourism model. The results were impressive and the ability to definitively quantify the value of the tourism economy served to further migrate citizen and political views.

Resources Dedicated to Tourism

Squamish understood that a dedicated focus was required to build the visitor economy and Tourism Squamish was established with a part-time Executive Director who was passionate about Squamish's outdoor adventure and motivated to build relationships, work with the community and deliver results.

Sustainable Funding Pursued

Tourism Squamish also understood that a sustainable stream of funding was essential to support long-term investments in marketing and promotion. Base funding in the early years was provided by the District of Squamish and the Squamish Sustainability Corporation as part of an economic development mandate. However, these funds were always at risk and could not be considered sustainable. The 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT) now known as the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) was pursued and again through extensive discussions and relationship building led by the Executive Director of Tourism Squamish ultimately the petition was signed by the majority of properties and the majority of rooms. Subsequently, additional accommodation supply has been built which has further increased this budget.

Investment in Foundational Marketing Assets

Tourism Squamish also realized that there was no clear statement in the marketplace regarding the Squamish experience and why visitors should choose to stay in Squamish rather than Vancouver or Whistler. Funding from the District of Squamish was leveraged with Tourism BC funding in 2004 and rather than spread the funds thinly over a number of initiatives the decision was made to invest in video/vignette series that positioned Squamish as a tourism destination. The Spirit of Squamish video series was created and continues to effectively leverage Squamish's unique selling proposition related to world-class outdoor adventure (mountain biking, rock climbing, wind surfing, hiking etc.) This series also incorporated a strong sense of community using Squamish residents themselves to share what makes Squamish such a special place.

These assets were then proactively distributed and utilized in a variety of media outreach efforts.

This investment in foundational marketing and messaging was recently updated with a brand enhancement project that delivered a new proposed identity and tag line for Squamish that can be viewed on www.squamish.ca.

Website Investments

A strong web presence has been a constant priority for Tourism Squamish and their presence www.tourismsquamish.com continues to evolve and improve. The home page positions Squamish as "a captivating spot to visit at anytime of year". The Spirit of Squamish video and vignettes are prominently positioned and a new interactive map has been introduced.

Visitor experiences are profiled in the 'Things to Do' section of the website and include:

- Hiking
- Rock Climbing
- Mountain Biking
- White Water Rafting
- Stand Up Paddleboarding

- Wind and Kit Surfing
- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Flight Seeing
- Horseback Riding
- Fishing
- Eagle Viewing
- Eagle Viewing Floats
- Snowmobiling
- Back Country Skiing
- Nordic Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Trials Riding
- Sightseeing
- Shopping
- Scuba Diving
- Team Building
- Health & Wellness

Attractions are profiled such as the new Sea to Sky Gondola, the Britannia Mining Museum, West Coast Railway Heritage Park and the Squamish Adventure Centre.

Areas to visit are also described such as Garibaldi Provincial Park, Alice Lake Provincial Park, Stawamus Chief Provincial Park, Shannon Falls, Squamish Spit and Estuary, Brackendale, Murrin Provincial Park, Britannia Beach etc.

A complete trail map is not available however, select maps are provided and the list of trails includes a video clip of many to provide a sense of the nature of the trail and terrain.

The 'Plan your Trip' section includes suggested itineraries for time of year/length of stay.

Overall, the website offers many concepts and ideas that can be replicated by other destinations. Indeed, Squamish is now benefiting from its proximity to Whistler and appears to be closely monitoring the Whistler campaigns that prove effective and putting a 'Squamish twist' to the same strategy. For example, the Whistler Unfiltered campaign that solicited photo images of a Whistler vacation to be posted to Instagram (#whistlerunfiltered) was highly successful and Squamish is now using #exploresquamish to the same end.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Over the course of the last ten years, there have been significant improvements to the visitor experience in Squamish as well that have required community support and resources. Land planning and development policies, while still requiring due process, are now supportive of appropriate tourism development and as a consequence the visitor experience has improved and no longer rests solely on exceptional outdoor adventure. These improvements have included:

- Downtown revitalization and beautification
- Sea to Sky Gondola project

- Britannia Mining Museum renovations
- New quality accommodation offerings e.g. Coast Hotel
- New meeting/conference venues – Quest University, CN Conference Centre at the West Coast Railway Heritage Centre
- Highway #99 improvements (necessitated by the 2010 Olympics)

These visitor enhancements continue with a planned waterfront redevelopment now underway.

Transferable Lessons - Squamish:

While not focused specifically on shoulder-season visitation, the Squamish model offers a number of lessons that can be considered on Hornby Island:

- Successful destination development and promotion requires a supportive community environment – tools such as the Value of Tourism model available through Destination BC can be a valuable basis for communication with residents regarding the importance of supporting the visitor economy
- Local government can support tourism development by investing in visitor infrastructure (downtown revitalization/beautification, signage etc.) and can create a planning framework conducive to entrepreneurial investment that supports the visitor experience – supporting the development of attractions, accommodation and amenities
- A sustainable and sufficient funding model must be identified and implemented to support long-term marketing investments that are led by a dedicated and paid staff person
- Investments should be made in marketing assets that position the destination appropriately. These assets, if well executed, will have a long-life and can be strategically utilized in a variety of media
- Website investment is a constant priority and must be approached from the perspective of the visitor considering/planning a trip to the destination

Gabriola Island, British Columbia

www.gabriolaisland.org

Gabriola positions itself on its destination website as follows:

“Blessed with one of the best climates in Canada, diverse beaches, nature parks, stunning ocean views and incredible sunsets, Gabriola is home to 4,200 residents which almost doubles in summer.

Our regular commuter ferry service means easy access to and from Nanaimo. But even with the city so close, Gabriola has maintained its laid-back, Gulf Island lifestyle set in a blend of forested and rural landscapes.

We hope you will come to unwind, do some beach combing, play on the water, visit the many local galleries and shops, hike, bike, take in some of the Gabriola culture and make some perfect memories with friends and family.

Enjoy! You're on island time now."

An events calendar and 'This Week on Gabriola' is located on the home page although it is necessary to scroll down to view it. A three-day event was recently held over the Thanksgiving weekend (October 11-13th) where the studios of 60 artists were open. A special map was produced and distinctive flags erected to assist with visitor wayfinding. Events are positioned as a way of becoming part of the Gabriola community:

"Whatever the reason, and wherever the venue, when the community of Gabriola gets together it's always a celebration of the lifestyle, the environment and most of all, the people who live here."

A review of the events calendar indicates that most events are held in July and August (other than the Thanksgiving studio tour noted above). Gabriola's event roster includes:

- Summer Breeze Arts Tour (July)
- 10K Brickyard Beast (August)
- Concert on the Green (August)
- Salmon BBQ (August)
- Theatre Festival (August)

The 'Visiting' section of the website immediately positions Gabriola as a year round destination and attempts to 'own' its position in the marketplace by asserting:

"Did you know we have more public access points to more diverse beaches than any other BC island?"

This same section of the website offers 24 suggestions for visitors to Gabriola (Gabriola 101) such as:

*Dine on delicious food at a choice of restaurants
Rent a Scooter or bike and discover paths less travelled
Go to a live concert
Visit a garden nursery
Attend a theatre production
Kayak with seals and otters
Build a sandcastle
Spot eagles on a beachcombing expedition
Hike or bikeride our extensive network of trails
Swim and scuba dive
Keep an eye out for the wildlife*

Overall, the Gabriola Island website is simple, clean and easy to navigate with strong and clear messaging to visitors and should be reviewed in more depth as upgrades to the Hornby Island website are made.

Transferable Lessons – Gabriola Island:

- Communicate to potential visitors what makes you special – the most, the best, the least – what do you 'own' in the marketplace and what can you readily defend?

- Clearly state that you are a year round destination (if in fact you have the services and amenities to support this claim)
- Help visitors understand the kind of experiences they can have – make it easy for them to envision themselves in your destination
- Utilize events to build shoulder season visitation