



VANCOUVER ISLAND
NORTH

Vancouver Island North

2026 Strategic Marketing Plan

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GILAKAS'LA. Vancouver Island North is located on the traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw people, who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.



Section 1: Overview and Update to Five-year Strategic Business Plan

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Mission Statement

To increase the benefits of tourism to the Vancouver Island North region.

Vision

Vancouver Island North is recognized as a world-class tourism destination.

Vancouver Island North Tourism Initiative

The Vancouver Island North Tourism (VINT) initiative, established by the Regional District of Mount Waddington, is dedicated to promoting the region as a must-visit destination and advancing its tourism industry. Financial support for the project comes from four key Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Designated Recipients: the District of Port Hardy, the Town of Port McNeill, the Village of Alert Bay and the Regional District of Mount Waddington, including its Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, and the Village of Port Alice. The success of this initiative will drive positive outcomes for local businesses and communities by fostering tourism growth.

Through efforts to boost awareness, appeal and visitation, while also encouraging longer stays and higher visitor spending, VINT aims to elevate tourism revenues across the region. For nearly a decade, the project has brought together municipalities, Indigenous groups and tourism stakeholders to collectively position the North Island as a prime destination. This collaborative approach has maximized the impact of marketing programs by pooling resources for a broader reach.

VINT maintains a community-centered, regional approach that complements the broader initiatives of Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism BC, and 4TVI. The region's marketing efforts will align with the BC brand strategy, incorporating insights from local research, surveys and future opportunities to ensure continued success.

Strategic Direction

The North Island's economy has historically relied heavily on long-haul travelers, with local businesses benefiting significantly from this market. However, during the pandemic, the region experienced a shift towards more domestic, short-haul visitors, particularly from British Columbia and Alberta. In 2025, retaining and expanding these short-haul markets while re-engaging

international travelers will be a strategic priority. Additionally, concerns about inflation, rising fuel prices, and ferry service reliability will remain relevant challenges to address.

VINT will focus on building a sustainable, year-round tourism economy by enhancing off-peak visitation and promoting the region's unique cultural and natural assets. Key to this strategy is advancing sustainability initiatives, with a focus on educating visitors about responsible travel and protecting sensitive ecosystems. By strengthening partnerships with local Indigenous communities, the region will further elevate its cultural tourism offerings, positioning Vancouver Island North as a leader in authentic Indigenous tourism experiences. These efforts will help balance the seasonal peaks, protect the environment and enrich the cultural experience for travelers.

Expanding digital marketing efforts will be critical in driving visitation from both short-haul domestic travelers and long-haul international visitors. Leveraging data-driven insights and digital tools, Vancouver Island North Tourism will target key markets to extend visitor stays and increase their overall spending.

A significant focus will be placed on product development and market readiness, ensuring that local operators are equipped to meet the demands of a changing tourism market. By fostering collaboration between businesses, local governments, and tourism organizations, Vancouver Island North will not only grow its tourism revenues but also create a more resilient and inclusive tourism industry that benefits local communities. This holistic approach to tourism will ensure that Vancouver Island North remains a sought-after destination while supporting the long-term well-being of its people and natural environment.

Brand Strategy

As we transition into 2026, Vancouver Island North's brand strategy continues to evolve to strengthen the region's identity as British Columbia's wild and restorative frontier — a place where adventure and tranquility coexist. The brand will build on the foundation of authentic, rugged, and culturally immersive experiences while integrating stronger themes of wellness, sustainability, and connection.

The essence of the brand remains rooted in the mystical, raw beauty of the North Island, its deep Indigenous cultural connections, and its invitation to explore the edge of the wild. In 2026, key messaging will focus on rejuvenation, reflection, and responsible exploration — positioning the region as the ideal destination for travelers seeking transformation through nature and community.

To differentiate Vancouver Island North from other regions on the Island, the brand will continue to celebrate:

- Small-town hospitality and genuine community connections

- Uncrowded, slower-paced travel experiences
- Eco-conscious and regenerative tourism practices
- Cultural storytelling that honours Indigenous heritage and knowledge

Through storytelling and visuals, VINT will highlight moments that inspire awe, mindfulness, and stewardship, encouraging visitors to not just visit, but to Live the Wild Pledge — taking active responsibility for the places and people they encounter.

In 2026, VINT will amplify its presence through content-driven and partnership-based marketing, deepening collaboration with Destination BC, 4VI, and Indigenous Tourism BC. The focus will be on digital-first campaigns, enhanced video storytelling, influencer partnerships, and refreshed print and on-site materials that reinforce “wild-hearted travel done responsibly.”

The brand will continue to evolve with inclusivity at its core — welcoming diverse travelers to experience the North Island in ways that are respectful, restorative, and meaningful. Ultimately, the 2026 brand vision is to ensure that every journey to the North Island leaves visitors renewed — and the destination preserved.

Anticipated Challenges

CHALLENGE	STRATEGIC RESPONSE
Seasonal Tourism Dependency	Develop and promote year-round travel experiences focused on wellness, storm watching, arts, culture, and soft adventure. Leverage #LiveTheWildPledge and “Know Before You Go” campaigns to inspire off-season visitation.
Transportation Access & Affordability	Advocate for improved ferry and air access, collaborate with transportation partners, and promote multi-day itineraries to highlight accessible routes and reduce perceived barriers.
Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship	Expand partnerships with Ocean Legacy, 4TVI, and Indigenous Tourism BC to advance regenerative tourism. Grow #TakeTheWildPledge to encourage low-impact travel and community engagement.
Competitive Destination Landscape	Differentiate the brand through authentic storytelling, Indigenous cultural connections, and remote wilderness experiences. Reinforce identity as BC’s wild and restorative frontier.
Economic Pressures on Travelers	Collaborate with operators to develop value-based travel offers and extended-stay promotions.

	Highlight meaningful, authentic, and affordable adventure experiences
Visitor Experience & Infrastructure	Work with municipalities and operators to address accommodation, dining, and workforce gaps. Deliver training and readiness programs to enhance service quality and visitor satisfaction.
Limited Marketing Resources	Optimize limited funds through data-driven digital campaigns, earned media, and shared marketing partnerships with Destination BC, 4TVI, and ITBC.
Evolving Traveler Preferences	Tailor campaigns to emerging trends in wellness, eco-conscious travel, and cultural immersion. Support local businesses in product development that aligns with these interests.
Stakeholder Collaboration & Alignment	Strengthen communication and alignment through shared marketing initiatives, capacity-building workshops, and regional collaboration forums.
Rapidly Changing Digital Environment	Invest in video storytelling, influencer partnerships, SEO optimization, and analytics-based marketing to stay agile and relevant across evolving platforms.

KEY LEARNINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

2025 Marketing Efforts

The 2025 strategy focuses on promoting sustainable travel and extending the visitation season across multiple channels:

- **Content & Social Media:**
 - Content development continued in the form of images and videos, with a local creator. After a comprehensive audit of our asset database, a gaps list was developed and executed throughout spring, summer and fall. Blog posts were developed for the website highlighting local businesses and seasonal experiences. Organic social media continued using a mix of owned assets and UGC, with continued growth in followers and engagement,
- **Television:**
 - An awareness campaign video for the "Live the Wild Pledge Beach Clean Up Initiative", was in-market at the end of April via online channels, a National Geographic (NG) Media Buy, and CTV spots.
 - An 8-week NG Media Buy began in June for Phase 2 of the Live the Pledge, along with CTV Vancouver spots.

- A fall television spot will be purchased to encourage shoulder season visitation and raise awareness for 2026 travel.
- **Paid Digital Media:**
 - Paid Search remains "Always On," capturing high-intent travelers searching for wildlife, remote adventures, and Indigenous cultural experiences.
 - Paid Social pushes are scheduled for Winter Offerings (Jan/Feb), Spring Push (Mar), Live the Wild Pledge (May), and a Shoulder Season Push (Oct).
 - Digital Display/Native campaigns will run throughout the year, including Bell Media InStream/YouTube/Pause Ads and sponsored content with Glacier/Vancouver Is Awesome and Times Colonist.
- **Paid Traditional Media:**
 - Outdoor (OOH): A Coast Billboard digital campaign promoting #LiveThePledge in the Nanaimo area was run in May/June and again in September/October.
 - Print Ads: Placements in Explore Magazine, Go Camping BC, and Pacific Coastal Magazine (Spring/Fall).
 - Partnerships: Collaborations with the BC Ale Trail, Ahoy BC, Paddle BC, Fishing BC, and Grizzly Bear Viewing (timing TBC).
 - Events: Promotional posters and a contest were used at three Outdoor & Adventure Shows in Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary during February and March 2025. The Events & Experiences Fund was launched and 4 grants were issued to local Event organizers to promote the events outside of the region to increase participation and visitation to the North Island.

Key Learnings

Results from the first half of 2025 highlighted the following efficiencies and engagement points:

- **Digital Engagement is Cost-Effective:** Paid Social Media campaigns were highly efficient, achieving a Cost Per Link Click (CPC) of \$0.26 in Winter and \$0.21 in Spring. Google Display Ads also showed low-cost conversion acquisition at \$0.26 per conversion.
- **Video Drives Completion, Not Clicks:** The digital portion of the Live the Pledge video campaign saw a high Video Completion Rate of 93.74% but a low immediate action rate, indicated by a Click Through Rate (CTR) of only 0.23%.
- **Print QR Code Scan Rate is Low:** Engagement with QR codes in physical print guides was negligible, with the Vancouver Island Visitors Guide recording only 1 scan and Go Camping BC recording only 15 scans as of September 2025.
- **In-Person Events Drive High Digital Conversions:** Promotional posters used at the three Outdoor & Adventure Shows resulted in a combined 791 scans in February and March 2025, confirming that physical collateral is highly effective when paired with in-person interaction. The high scan rates were also due to a giveaway, which we would like to do more of in 2026.

- **Sponsored Content Maintains Attention:** Sponsored articles with Vancouver is Awesome and Times Colonist achieved a high average user engagement time of over 2 minutes per page, demonstrating that native content effectively communicates detailed messaging.
- **Value of Digital and Social Media:** The focus on digital marketing and influencer collaborations significantly increased VINT's visibility. Successful posts and campaigns led to broader engagement, particularly through reels and collaborative content with influencers and partners.
- **Importance of Shoulder Season Marketing:** Efforts to promote off-peak travel, such as winter getaways and spring campaigns, highlighted the potential to increase visitation during non-summer months. However, expanding shoulder season travel remains a challenge, requiring sustained marketing efforts and strategic targeting.
- **Regenerative Tourism Resonates with Visitors:** The #LiveTheWildPledge program and other regenerative tourism initiatives gained significant traction among visitors, demonstrating that eco-conscious and regenerative travel resonates deeply with the audience. This highlights the growing desire for tourism that not only minimizes environmental impact but actively contributes to the restoration and enhancement of natural and cultural ecosystems. As we expand the #LiveTheWildPledge for 2026, there will be additional opportunities to promote regenerative practices, ensuring that visitors leave a positive, lasting impact on the region.
- **Collaboration Drives Success:** Collaborations with local businesses, Indigenous communities and tourism organizations were critical in driving effective marketing. These partnerships enhanced content quality and distribution, leading to broader reach and better visitor experiences.
- **High Demand for Visitor Resources:** The continued popularity of VINT's print materials, such as the Visitor Guide and Recreation Map, reinforced the importance of providing accessible resources. These guides were essential in helping visitors navigate and plan their trips.
- **Event Promotion Enhances Regional Identity:** Supporting local events through social media and collaborations with local stakeholders helped build community engagement and raised the region's profile as a destination for unique cultural and outdoor experiences.

OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. **Increase Shoulder Season and Off-Peak Visitation:** Extend tourism beyond the peak summer season by promoting travel in the spring and fall. This includes targeting shoulder seasons with focused marketing efforts that emphasize wildlife experiences, cultural tourism and outdoor adventures that thrive in off-peak months.
2. **Enhance Awareness of Indigenous Cultural Experiences:** Amplify VINT's offerings related to Indigenous culture, ensuring this remains a core part of the region's identity.
3. **Promote Sustainable and Responsible Tourism:** Build on the success of the #LiveTheWildPledge initiative by continuing to promote environmental stewardship and responsible tourism practices.
4. **Increase Visitor Spending and Length of Stay:** Encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more during their trips, thereby increasing the economic benefits to the region.
5. **Differentiate VINT from Competing Destinations:** Position VINT as a distinctive destination on Vancouver Island, known for its rugged beauty, cultural richness, and sustainable tourism offerings.
6. **Manage Consumer Expectations:** Set clear and realistic expectations for visitors regarding the region's limited service options, remote locations, and transportation challenges, ensuring positive visitor experiences and satisfaction.

Strategies

- **Expand Digital Marketing Efforts:** Continue expanding VINT's digital presence, increasing reach through social media, influencer campaigns, and data-driven content marketing.
- **Leverage Data for Strategic Decision-Making:** Use data and insights from campaigns, visitor behavior, and tourism surveys to refine marketing strategies and make informed decisions.
- **Enhance Visitor Resources and Experience:** Continue updating and distributing high-demand resources such as visitor guides, maps, and digital tools to help visitors navigate and enjoy the region.
- **Strengthen Collaboration with Local Stakeholders:** Foster stronger partnerships with local businesses, event organizers, and regional tourism organizations to create a cohesive marketing strategy. Partner with local accommodations and tour operators to create shoulder season packages, promoting discounted rates or bundled experiences that encourage visitation during quieter months. Additionally, look at options for eco-friendly travel packages that focus on sustainable accommodations, guided tours and low-impact outdoor activities.
- **Transparent Communication:** Ensure that all marketing materials, websites, and social media platforms clearly communicate the realities of traveling in Vancouver Island North,

such as the limited number of restaurants, accommodations, and the potential for transportation delays (e.g., ferry schedules, remote road access).

- **Seasonal Content:** Develop targeted content that focus on spring and fall, highlighting experiences like storm watching, wildlife viewing and cultural festivals that are unique to these seasons. Produce and distribute blogs, videos and social media content that highlights the benefits of visiting VINT in the shoulder season, including fewer crowds, serene landscapes and unique wildlife opportunities.
- **Partnerships with Indigenous Communities and ITBC:** Collaborate with local Indigenous groups to co-create authentic tourism experiences. Highlight these in marketing materials and ensure they are integral to the VINT identity. Work with Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) to co-market Indigenous-led experiences and tours, leveraging their platform and networks for greater reach.
- **Expand the #LiveTheWildPledge and Sustainability Education:** Promote the pledge through all marketing channels, encouraging visitors to commit to responsible tourism by taking actions like reducing waste, following wildlife guidelines, and supporting local conservation efforts. Include sustainability tips and responsible travel guidelines in visitor guides, social media posts, and website content, ensuring that eco-conscious messaging is embedded in all communications.
- **Leverage Data-Driven Insights:** Use audience segmentation tools like MobileScapes to identify key demographics and tailor campaigns to their preferences, helping VINT stand out in a competitive landscape. Focus on niche markets such as adventure travelers, cultural tourists, eco-tourists, and wellness seekers, positioning VINT as the go-to destination for those seeking an off-the-beaten-path experience.

TARGET MARKETS

Primary Audience

Free Spirits and Adventure Seekers

Seeking exhilarating outdoor adventures and off-the-beaten-path travel experiences. They are drawn to rugged natural landscapes, wildlife encounters and activities like hiking, kayaking and camping. This group values spontaneity and adventure, often choosing destinations that offer a sense of freedom and exploration in remote, untouched environments.

- Geography:
 - British Columbia (Greater Vancouver, Victoria)
 - Alberta (Calgary and Edmonton)
 - Ontario (Toronto)
 - Washington State
 - European markets (Germany and the UK)
- Demographics:
 - Adults aged 25–45

- Mixed income levels (\$60,000–\$120,000), with many seeking value-driven, adventure-based travel
- Typically traveling without children, often solo travelers, couples or small groups of friends
- Behaviour:
 - Spontaneous planners who appreciate flexible itineraries and destination content that highlights adventure, wildlife, and raw natural beauty
 - Respond well to visual storytelling and marketing that emphasizes freedom, personal exploration, and “bucket list” outdoor experiences
 - Drawn to digital content showcasing real-life adventure stories, including videos and social media influencers experiencing North Island’s wild, remote areas
 - Value experiences like wildlife watching, backcountry hikes, kayaking trips, and remote camping spots over conventional luxury

Cultural Explorers and Nature Enthusiasts

Seeking immersive cultural experiences that connect them with Indigenous heritage, local traditions and environmental conservation. This group is interested in learning about Indigenous culture, attending cultural events and exploring remote, ecologically diverse regions.

- Geography:
 - British Columbia (Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Island)
 - Alberta (Calgary and Edmonton)
 - Ontario (Toronto)
 - United States (California, Washington State)
- Demographics:
 - Adults aged 35–65, typically well-educated and culturally curious
 - Middle to higher income levels (\$75,000+)
 - Often families, couples, or older adults traveling with a focus on cultural enrichment and learning opportunities
- Behaviour:
 - Plan trips meticulously and appreciate in-depth, educational content about destinations, including the history and culture of the area
 - Respond to marketing that highlights Indigenous culture, arts, heritage sites and nature conservation efforts
 - Drawn to educational and culturally enriching experiences, such as guided cultural tours, interpretive programs, Indigenous-led tourism activities and wildlife conservation projects
 - Appreciate eco-friendly and sustainable travel options, often seeking accommodations and activities that align with environmental and cultural preservation

In Alignment with Destination Canada’s new Traveller Segmentation Program VINT will also focus marketing efforts on the following:

Outdoor Explorers-

Daring explorers who crave the thrill of unknown landscapes and overcoming challenges. Adventure travel allows this group to grow, learn new skills, and establish personal traditions. They often seek adrenaline through physical activities, engaging with locals, and ensuring a positive impact. They embrace both short getaways and longer holidays, relishing in nature-related experiences.

Why they travel

- To feel a sense of adventure
- To explore and discover new things and places
- To push limits and challenge themselves

Their ideal destination is:

- Adventurous and Unexplored
- Fun
- Unique and Authentic

Top Activities are:

- Nature experiences
- Water Sports
- Winter Sports

Audience Insights

	Why they’re coming	Unique regional appeal
Nature and Wildlife Lovers	Looking to experience some of the best wildlife viewing in British Columbia, including whales, bears and other marine life.	Vancouver Island North is renowned for its wildlife, with whale watching tours, bear viewing and birding opportunities. The region is a gateway to prime wildlife spots, such as Telegraph Cove and the Great Bear Rainforest. Visitors can enjoy encounters with nature in an ecologically diverse region.
Adventure Enthusiasts	Seeking thrilling, off-the-beaten-path outdoor experiences, including hiking, kayaking and wildlife encounters.	The remote wilderness of Vancouver Island North offers naturally thriving landscapes, challenging hiking trails and opportunities for kayaking, camping and wildlife watching. Adventurers can explore locations like

		Cape Scott, Raft Cove and Broughton Archipelago for rugged experiences.
Cultural Explorers	Interested in immersing themselves in Indigenous culture, local history, and community-driven experiences.	Vancouver Island North is home to rich Indigenous cultures, including the Kwakwaka'wakw people. Visitors can experience authentic Indigenous-led tours, visit cultural centers like U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay and participate in community events that celebrate the area's heritage.
Eco-Conscious Travelers	Seeking eco-friendly travel options and experiences that align with their values of sustainability and responsible tourism	VINT's commitment to sustainability is showcased through initiatives like the #LiveTheWildPledge, which promotes responsible tourism. The region's protected areas, conservation efforts and educational programs about preserving natural habitats make it a perfect destination for travelers who prioritize environmental responsibility. Visitors can participate in eco-friendly tours, beach cleanups and wildlife conservation programs.
Family and Multi-Generational Travelers	Looking for family-friendly outdoor activities and experiences that appeal to multiple age groups, from young children to seniors.	Vancouver Island North provides a wide range of soft adventure experiences perfect for families and multi-generational groups. Visitors can enjoy accessible hikes, scenic wildlife tours and safe kayaking spots. Coastal towns like Port Hardy and Telegraph Cove offer accommodations and activities that cater to families, providing both adventure and relaxation in a safe, natural setting.
Photographers and Nature Artists	Searching for inspiration in the region's dramatic coastal landscapes, wildlife and natural beauty.	The raw, unspoiled beauty of Vancouver Island North offers endless opportunities for photography and art. From the towering forests and rugged coastlines to the vibrant marine life,

		<p>the region is a paradise for photographers and nature artists looking for unique, unspoiled landscapes to capture. Remote areas like God’s Pocket and Cape Scott offer stunning, panoramic views.</p>
<p>Wellness and Rejuvenation Seekers</p>	<p>Seeking peace, tranquility and an escape from urban stress in a pristine natural environment.</p>	<p>Vancouver Island North is the perfect destination for those looking to reconnect with nature and recharge. The region offers secluded lodges, wellness retreats and quiet, remote beaches ideal for meditation, yoga and personal reflection.</p>

Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

MARKETING | CONSUMER FOCUSED ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Vancouver Island North will build on the past two years of large investments into its visual and written content, aligning with the focus on promoting sustainable tourism, showcasing the region's rugged natural beauty and highlighting Indigenous culture. This year's asset development will prioritize the creation of diverse, authentic content that represents the region's unique appeal, including remote adventure experiences, eco-friendly travel options and cultural immersion. Emphasis will be placed on content that highlights wildlife, outdoor activities and Indigenous cultural tourism. The assets will support year-round marketing efforts, particularly in promoting off-peak travel and responsible tourism practices.

Tactics

Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture images that highlight the North Island's key attractions, including rugged landscapes, wildlife, Indigenous culture, wellness retreats, storm watching, and adventure activities during both peak and off-peak seasons.
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create dynamic video content, including short form reels, vertical stories, and summer pledge PSA's.
Written Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop engaging written content, such as blogs, articles, itineraries (wellness weekends, quiet coastal escapes, arts and culture trails) Wild Pledge initiatives, and Indigenous-led experience spotlights.

Implementation Plan

Capture and produce visual and written content to populate digital channels, visitor resources, and promotional campaigns that resonate with the target audiences.	
Quantifiable Objective	Showcase the region's unique appeal, promote sustainable tourism and responsible travel and foster emotional connections to support marketing and engagement goals.
Rationale	High-quality assets are essential for communicating the region's appeal across various platforms. Consumers respond to compelling visuals and

	<p>authentic storytelling, which will drive visitation, particularly in shoulder seasons and increase awareness of the region’s cultural and ecological importance. By developing new content, VINT can keep its messaging fresh and relevant, targeting specific market segments effectively.</p>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with local photographers and content creators that focus on our target audiences to fill gaps in our image and video libraries in alignment with our 2026 goals. ● Utilize influencer partnerships to generate authentic content from their travel experiences in the region. ● Engage with community stakeholders for authentic representation in content. ● Integrate new assets into marketing channels and distribute to partners. ● Upload appropriate content to the BC Content hub
Potential Partnerships	<p>Local photographers and videographers, Influencers and travel writers, Environmental NGOs, cultural organizations, local businesses/tourism operators, Indigenous communities, Indigenous Tourism BC, content creators, Destination BC Brand Team.</p>
Resources	<p>Photographers, videographers, content writers, Indigenous communities, DEIA and sustainability consultants.</p>
Sources of Funding	<p>MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars, local business contributions, grants.</p>
Timeframe	<p>Ongoing, with adjustments based on seasonal tourism trends and stakeholder feedback.</p>
Budget	<p>Photography: \$5,000 Video: \$5,000 Written Content: \$5,000 Total: \$15,000</p>
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tracking the number of visits to specific web pages that feature the new content provides direct insight into the effectiveness of the marketing materials in attracting interest. ● Social media platforms are a primary channel for digital marketing and a critical area where new content is likely to be consumed and shared. Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and

	<p>video views provide immediate feedback on the content's appeal and reach.</p>
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MARKETING | MEDIA, ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

Vancouver Island North will expand its media and advertising efforts across multiple channels, aligning with a strategic focus on increasing shoulder season visitation, promoting sustainable tourism, and raising awareness of the region’s unique Indigenous culture and rugged natural landscapes. The media plan will employ a mix of print, TV, email marketing, paid search, paid social, out-of-home (OOH), display and third-party advertising to reach a broad and diverse audience while driving engagement and conversions.

Tactics

<p>OOH</p>	<p>Out of Home is an efficient placement to drive awareness of VINT. Due to the remote nature of VINT, large format OOH placements will be placed in greater Vancouver, Victoria and Highway 1 as travelers make their way up the island towards the community. The OOH placements will capture a mass audience, driving top of mind awareness with large visual formats. OOH is scheduled to run in promotion of both the spring and fall shoulder seasons.</p>
<p>Paid Social Media</p>	<p>Leveraging platforms like Facebook and Instagram to run targeted ads that promote VINT’s experiences and encourage visitors to take action on the Wild Pledge. Social media is an important advertising channel for travel brands as it is a top channel for travel inspiration and research.</p> <p>Paid social campaigns will be optimized toward conversion goals, aiming to deliver high-quality traffic and drive engagement through compelling calls-to-action and interactive content that enhances brand awareness and drives the user either towards booking, or learning more about the Wild Pledge.</p>
<p>Paid Search/SEM</p>	<p>Along with social media, search is another top channel for inspiration and research in the travel customer journey. Keyword targeted ads on search engines help to get VINT in front of potential visitors at significant moments in their research and planning.</p> <p>Paid search will help capture high-intent traffic, focusing on keywords related to travel and tourism and related destinations, experiences, and attractions. Campaigns will be optimized toward a conversion objective, aiming to drive high-quality traffic and engagement with the website.</p> <p>Cross-network digital campaigns are an AI-driven campaign channel that uses high-value signals from your website and other advertising properties</p>

	<p>to target and reach your audiences across ad networks and placements (including search, video, native & display) at the right time in the right place.</p> <p>Cross-network campaigns will be used to complement paid search and paid social campaigns by extending the campaign reach across a broader set of media placements and audiences.</p>
Print (Newspaper/ Magazine)	Place ads in travel and lifestyle magazines targeting adventure seekers and nature lovers. Highlight VINT’s outdoor activities and remote beauty, with a focus on off-peak seasons and cultural experiences. Update existing brochures and visitor materials.
Television	Develop and air short, high-impact TV commercials on regional and national networks promoting key attractions like wildlife watching, Indigenous tourism and adventure activities. Leverage storytelling and breathtaking visuals to showcase the region’s unique appeal.
Email Marketing	Develop seasonal email marketing campaigns targeting past visitors, subscribers and prospective travelers. Highlight special offers, seasonal promotions, itineraries and blog content that showcase the region’s off-peak travel opportunities, sustainable tourism efforts and cultural experiences.

Implementation Plan

Deploy a multi-channel media and advertising strategy to maximize exposure and engagement, targeting key audiences across digital and OOH tactics. Continue annual print publications and email marketing tactics, and run a TV spot to promote shoulder season visitation.	
Quantifiable Objective	To increase awareness and drive visitation by delivering targeted, compelling messages that resonate with key audiences. Ultimately, the media will aim to enhance the VINT brand, attract high-value, intentful visitors and support the long-term growth and sustainability of the local tourism industry.
Rationale	<p>A multi-channel approach ensures VINT reaches a broad yet engaged audience, promoting both the region’s appeal and the Wild Pledge across varying demographics and platforms. Each channel is chosen for its ability to reinforce the brand, inspire shoulder-season visitation, and promote sustainable tourism initiatives.</p> <p>Performance digital channels are planned using a combined budget. Each tactic will receive a starting budget allocation, but budgets for these channels should be flexible to allow for ongoing budget optimization</p>

	between channels based on observed performance throughout the campaign period.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine the visual identity and value proposition of the North Island as a destination. • Coordinate with media outlets to secure annual contracts for the OOH placements. This will be done early in the year to ensure cost-effectiveness and secure prime advertising spots. • Ensure the contracted marketing agency has access to all social and Google accounts for campaign setup, management and optimization. • Develop an overarching campaign concept that can be adapted to seasonal content, as well as the Wild Pledge, ensuring the promotion of the shoulder seasons is easily customized and aligns with the proposed media buys.
Potential Partnerships	Regional TV stations, print publications and online publications to showcase the area’s diverse offerings. Collaborate with local businesses, cultural organizations and event promoters to ensure content is reflective of the North Island’s diverse offerings and upcoming events.
Resources	Long-term agreements with a media planner and outlets, creative agencies/designers for content development and a dedicated marketing team to manage campaigns.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars, supplemented by partnerships and possibly local business contributions.
Timeframe	Annual media planning and booking, with campaign/creative updates occurring at the transition of each shoulder season (spring, fall/winter).
Budget	OOH/Digital/Display/Native: \$47,000 Paid Search (SEM): \$30,000 Paid Social Media: \$30,000 Print: \$14,000 Television: \$8,200 Email Marketing: \$1,800 Total: \$131,000

Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Monitor the cost-effectiveness of annual media bookings compared to previous season-by-season bookings, assessing spending against reach and engagement metrics.● Evaluate the impact of seasonal content changes through metrics such as click-through rates, conversion rates, and social media engagement specific to seasonal promotions.● Track year-long brand visibility across all channels, measuring fluctuations and impacts based on seasonal content adjustments.● Gather continuous feedback from stakeholders and visitors to refine and adapt content for future seasonal updates, ensuring the messaging remains dynamic and responsive to market trends and visitor feedback.
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MARKETING | WEBSITE

VancouverIslandNorth.ca will continue to undergo enhancements in 2026 to enhance user experience, improve navigation, and ensure alignment with 2026 marketing goals. While the site is functioning well, updates will focus on refining content for key target audiences, improving mobile optimization and integrating more interactive elements such as itineraries and user-generated content (UGC) to drive engagement and conversion. Improving the map functionality on the website will be a key activity for 2026 as we shift away from the traditional VINT trail app we have used in the past. Integration of AI tools to strengthen our website’s visibility across both AI driven and traditional platforms, enhancing discoverability and reinforcing the site’s credibility and authority.

Tactics

Content Refinement	Update content to reflect 2026 marketing priorities, such as promoting shoulder season travel, Indigenous cultural experiences, Health & Wellness getaways, and sustainable tourism practices. Ensure all pages align with brand messaging and provide clear information for target audiences. Expand and highlight Know Before You Go landing page (add current transportation notes, safety service levels, etiquette, wildlife guidelines)
Ongoing Itinerary Development	Add curated, seasonal itineraries that guide visitors through multi-day experiences in the region, with a focus on off-peak travel. These itineraries will highlight cultural, adventure, wellness and eco-friendly options.
Interactive Maps	Improve and expand the interactive maps to include more detailed hiking trails, wildlife viewing spots, and transportation options. Enhance usability to help visitors easily plan their trips.
Live the Pledge Expansion	Expand the #TakeTheWildPledge campaign to build on the success of the #livethewildpledge Ocean Legacy partnership. We will look to build additional ways for visitors to easily Live the Wild Pledge
Tourism job board	A regional tourism job board not only supports your local industry partners but also strengthens workforce development, retention, and community visibility

Implementation Plan

The website will undergo incremental updates throughout 2026 to align with marketing goals and improve user engagement, focusing on optimizing content, enhancing user experience and boosting SEO performance.

Quantifiable Objective	Increase average time on site by enhancing content quality and interactivity, grow the number of referrals to stakeholder websites, enhance user engagement metrics, including sessions, unique visitors and page views and boost conversions through strategically placed calls-to-action and referral links.
Rationale	Website enhancements aim to integrate several strategic goals to optimize its effectiveness as a promotional tool.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a content audit to ensure alignment with the 2026 marketing strategy. Update key pages to highlight off-peak travel, Indigenous experiences and sustainable tourism. • Develop and add seasonal and thematic itineraries for adventure, cultural, wellness, and eco-friendly experiences. Include links to accommodations, activities and local businesses. • Work with marketing and design teams to ensure that high-priority products are featured prominently on the website. • Optimize website architecture for speed, responsiveness and search engine visibility. • Leverage Google Analytics to monitor user behavior and adjust strategies accordingly. • Integrate AI tools for recommendations, analytics & optimization and potential for AI powered translation and itinerary building.
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism operators, cultural groups, and event organizers. Tech firms for web development and interactive tools integration.
Resources	Creative and web development agency, marketing and content creation teams, technology tools for itinerary building and interactive mapping.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, plus updates for seasonality.
Budget	\$10,000
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track enhancements made to the website (new features, content updates). • Monitor the implementation of interactive tools like the itinerary builder and events calendar. • Analyze improvements in user engagement metrics (time on site, page views).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate increases in referrals to local businesses and stakeholder websites. • Review user feedback and conduct surveys to gauge satisfaction with the new features and content.
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MARKETING | SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT (ORGANIC)

Vancouver Island North will leverage organic social media to engage with key audiences, promote the region’s unique experiences and drive awareness around the strategic goals of promoting off-peak travel, Indigenous culture and sustainability. The 2026 plan will focus on building authentic connections with followers through storytelling, user-generated content and highlighting local partnerships and success stories from the #LiveTheWildPledge campaign. Organic social media will play a key role in amplifying the region’s brand and engaging potential travelers without relying on paid ads and will focus on:

- Showcasing practices within the North Island celebrating local conservation efforts and encouraging visitors to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors while exploring the region.
- Highlighting the region’s distinctive outdoor adventures, culinary delights and rich cultural experiences, reinforcing the off-the-beaten-path nature of a North Island vacation
- Strengthening ties with local businesses, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders, we will create and share content that reflects the North Island

Tactics

Content Strategy/ Calendar Development	Creation of and maintenance of a detailed content calendar that outlines all planned social media activities for the year. The content calendar serves as a tool to ensure consistency, timely posting and alignment with overall goals and seasonal themes. It also helps coordinate campaigns, track performance and streamlines collaboration among team members and stakeholders.
Social Media Management	Involves the management of all social media channels associated with the region. It encompasses planning, posting, monitoring and interacting with users to maintain an active and engaging online presence. Regular activities include scheduling posts, responding to comments and analyzing engagement data to optimize strategies and increase the overall visibility.
Amplify Stakeholder Content and Events	Focuses on using social media platforms to promote and amplify content from stakeholders, such as cultural events and community activities. By sharing and highlighting diverse offerings from partners, this aims to create

	a cohesive community presence on social media. Promote local events, especially those partially funded through our Events and Experiences Fund.
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Implementation Plan

<p>Implement a comprehensive social media strategy for Vancouver Island North that leverages user-generated content, regular engagement practices, content strategy development and amplification of stakeholder content to enhance online presence and visitor engagement. Perform a high-level analysis and brief audit of VINT’s social channels that will be used to inform the social strategy. This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewing existing social content and approach on various profiles. ○ Reviewing post frequency, engagement, and performance. ○ Analysis of each community’s target audience (primary and secondary). ○ A brief conversation with each community’s current social team to assess strengths, opportunities, capacity, and resources. ○ Requests for internal documents. 	
<p>Quantifiable Objective</p>	<p>Significantly enhance overall social media engagement, notably increase content reach, and improve click-through rates across all platforms.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>Using a strategic blend of planned content, user-generated content and regular interaction, this approach ensures that the social media presence is both engaging and aligned with the goals of promoting the region. This approach fosters a vibrant community, drives engagement and communicates the unique aspects of the region.</p>
<p>Action Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a content audit to determine what types of content have been most effective. Identify key themes, messages, and campaigns that align with the North Island’s marketing goals. ● Create a content calendar that strategically plans posts around key themes such as sustainability, local culture and off-peak travel. Ensure a balanced mix of UGC, stakeholder content and original content. Review and adjust the content calendar monthly to incorporate feedback and emerging trends. ● Work closely with stakeholders to co-create content that highlights their offerings while reflecting VINT’s brand strategy. Provide guidelines and support to ensure that content is visually appealing and brand-aligned. ● Purchase and implement the Crowdriff platform to manage and utilize user-generated content efficiently. Actively engage with users who create high-quality content by featuring their work on

	<p>social media channels and encouraging continued contributions. Build relationships with key content creators to foster ongoing collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly collaborate with local businesses and cultural events to promote and share their content, enhancing community engagement and support.
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism businesses, cultural organizations and community event planners, influencers and content creators within the region.
Resources	Crowdriff software for content curations, social media management tools, dedicated social media team or agency.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, with specific content updates and strategy reviews scheduled quarterly.
Budget	Organic Social Media: \$24,000 Discovery & Social Strategy: \$8,000 Total: \$32,000
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the utilization, frequency, and quality of user-generated content, as well as the diversity and relevance of all social media posts according to the strategic content calendar. • Assess user interaction through engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares, and evaluate the overall growth in followers and reach to determine visibility. • Regularly review click-through rates to gauge the effectiveness of promotional content and conduct surveys to collect feedback, ensuring content remains relevant and satisfies audience expectations.

MARKETING | CONSUMER EVENTS AND SHOWS

Vancouver Island North will engage potential travelers through key consumer events and outdoor shows across Canada, promoting the region as a premier destination for adventure, eco-tourism and cultural experiences.

This will focus on leveraging high-attendance outdoor shows in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary to connect directly with targeted audiences while providing stakeholders the opportunity to showcase their services through a cooperative sponsorship model.

Tactics

Outdoor Shows – Stakeholder Coop	<p>VINT will sponsor exhibit space for eligible stakeholders at the following outdoor shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Adventure Show, Toronto: February 20-22, 2026. • Outdoor Adventure Show, Vancouver: February 28-March 1, 2026. • Outdoor Adventure Show, Calgary: March 21-22, 2026.
Establish Partnerships	<p>Collaborate with local businesses and Indigenous communities to co-present at events. Building on the success of the 2025 Outdoor and Adventure Shows, we will once again showcase a diverse selection of Vancouver Island North experiences. For the Calgary Show we are partnering with other Vancouver Island DMO’s to showcase the Island on a greater scale.</p>
Create Booth Experience	<p>Create a visually engaging and interactive booth experience that highlights Vancouver Island North’s key attractions, including adventure tourism, wildlife, and Indigenous culture. Booths will include high-quality visuals, videos, and itineraries to capture interest.</p>
Pre and Post Event Communication	<p>Leverage social media, email newsletters and partner networks to promote the North Island’s presence at the event ahead of time. Collect contact information from booth visitors and follow up with personalized emails or special offers.</p>

Implementation Plan

Vancouver Island North will sponsor and exhibit at key outdoor shows, in collaboration with eligible stakeholders, to promote the region’s offerings. The events will drive direct engagement with adventure travelers and position VINT as a premier destination for outdoor and cultural tourism.

Quantifiable Objective	Sponsor exhibit space for stakeholders across the three outdoor shows. Increase brand awareness and amplify consumer messaging to put the North Island top of mind, reaching new consumers to generate sales leads and driving conversions for specific activities and passion areas.
Rationale	Consumer events and outdoor shows provide an excellent opportunity to engage directly with VINT's target audiences. These shows attract high foot traffic, allowing for face-to-face interaction with potential visitors while offering stakeholders the opportunity to promote their businesses and generate bookings. 2025 provided excellent opportunities for meaningful and engaging conversations with our target audiences at each of these locations.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and invite eligible VINT stakeholders to participate in the sponsored outdoor shows. Ensure they meet the evaluation criteria and provide a "buy now" offer and prize contribution. ● Secure exhibit space at selected shows. ● Support in creating visually appealing and interactive booth displays that reflect the North Island's brand value. ● Collect marketing materials that highlight the North Island's unique offerings. ● Collaborate with local businesses, Indigenous communities and cultural organizations to determine interest. ● Promote participation in upcoming shows. ● Train booth staff with key messages and talking points. ● Offer booth shared booth space as well as travel and accommodations to the Whale Interpretive Centre (non-profit) to attend the show ● Reach out to a non-profit (whale interpretive centre for example) to offer booth space, mileage and hotel to attend the Vancouver Show)
Potential Partnerships	Stakeholders.
Resources	Dedicated booth team, printers, designers, event coordinator/planner.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing.
Budget	\$40,000
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance at brand aligned consumer shows. ● Number of consumer interactions. ● Newsletter sign-ups added.

MARKETING | COLLATERAL PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Vancouver Island North will update its existing brochures and visitor materials while introducing fresh, creative printed materials designed to engage new audiences, promote off-peak travel, and align with key marketing goals around adventure, culture and sustainability.

Tactics

Existing Material Updates	Review and refresh existing materials with updated information, new imagery and content that aligns with the 2026 marketing goals.
Art Tour Brochure	Produce the next version of a 2 year publication of the VINT Self-guided Art Tour, including additional opportunities, events and experiences in this version.
Vancouver Island Recreation Map	Re-print and distribution of this 2 year publication.
VINT Explorer Guide	Work with Black Press Media to provide content, imagery and distribution of the Vancouver Island North Explorer Guide. Distribution is generally to visitor centres across Vancouver Island, the lower mainland and select other locations.
Seasonal Flatsheets	Produce seasonal flatsheets for front-line staff to share with visitors. Given the frequent turnover, typically younger age, and limited tourism training among staff in locations such as gas stations, coffee shops, and convenience stores, these resources are essential. They help prevent the common response of “ <i>there’s nothing to do here</i> ” by equipping staff with quick, accurate suggestions. These flatsheets provide an easy win for front-line workers—something simple to hand out when visitors ask for a local’s perspective on what to see and do in the area.

Implementation Plan

Develop fresh printed materials designed to engage new audiences, align with marketing goals, and reflect the unique appeal of Vancouver Island North. Update existing materials to ensure consistency with the latest brand and marketing messaging.

Quantifiable Objective	Increase the distribution reach of printed materials and track engagement through QR code scans leading to website visits.
Rationale	Fresh, innovative print materials will enhance the visitor experience by providing tangible resources that promote adventure, cultural immersion and sustainable travel practices. These materials will serve as both a planning tool and a keepsake, increasing visitor engagement and encouraging exploration across the region.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with businesses, stakeholders and the visitor information centre to identify which print pieces may provide the most value. • Design and produce the pieces as identified. Collaborate with printers and publications where possible. • Distribute materials through Visitor Centres, BC Ferries, airports, local accommodations and other stakeholders. • Incorporate QR codes to bridge the gap between print and digital, directing users to further relevant online resources.
Potential Partnerships	Local community groups and cultural organizations, tourism operators, Visitor Centres.
Resources	Templates and content from previous guides, digital assets from the brand update and website, stakeholder input.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Produced in early 2026 with ongoing distribution.
Budget	\$14,580
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the number and location of distributed print materials, such as vacation guides, maps, itineraries and cultural guides. • Measure how visitors use the print collateral and gather their feedback on its usefulness and appeal. • Use analytics tools to monitor scans of QR codes, tracking subsequent actions such as website visits, page views, or specific conversions like newsletter sign-ups or contact form submissions.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MARKETS | TRAVEL TRADE AND TRAVEL MEDIA RELATIONS

Vancouver Island North will strengthen relationships with travel trade professionals and media outlets to increase destination awareness and drive visitation. The focus will be on cultivating relationships with travel agents, tour operators and media influencers who can promote Vancouver Island North as a prime destination for adventure, eco-tourism and Indigenous cultural experiences.

Tactics

Media and Trade Familiarization Trips	Host extended FAM tour for the ExploreVI event. Approximately 10 RTO's will attend a 2 day FAM tour on the North Island following the ExploreVI event in Comox in late April/early May 2026.
Information and Experience Updates	Provide ongoing updates to contacts at 4TVI before attending trade shows including Rendezvous, IMM and more.
Tradeshow and Media Show Participation	Participate in regional travel trade shows to promote the VINT brand to a broad audience of travel professionals and media.

Implementation Plan

Vancouver Island North will engage travel trade professionals and media through FAM trips, targeted outreach, and participation in industry events. This will result in increased coverage and sales of VINT experiences to domestic and international travelers.	
Quantifiable Objective	Enhance travel trade partnerships by expanding the number of travel trade-ready stakeholders in the region.
Rationale	By fostering relationships with travel trade and media, Vancouver Island North can significantly increase exposure, drive bookings through tour operators, and secure valuable media coverage. FAM trips, industry events and partnerships will help highlight the region's unique offerings and position it as a premier destination for adventure and cultural tourism.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key influencers and decision-makers in the travel trade and media sectors. Plan and execute itineraries that highlight signature experiences on the North Island.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curate an immersive FAM trip itinerary that showcases the best of Vancouver Island North, including outdoor adventure, wildlife encounters and Indigenous culture. Work with local operators to offer unique, hands-on experiences for trade and media guests. ● Compile and continuously update information packets, digital content, and promotional materials that can be easily distributed during trade shows, media events or electronically. ● Prepare engaging booth displays, interactive presentations and promotional giveaways that effectively communicate the allure of the North Island.
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism businesses and stakeholders, 4VI and Destination BC, media outlets and travel trade organizations.
Resources	Information and promotional materials about the North Island, staff and coordination support from 4VI and Destination BC, media and travel trade networks.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, activities scheduled as required based on opportunities and needs from Destination BC and 4VI.
Budget	\$2500
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Track the number and quality of interactions and partnerships developed with travel trade representatives and media personnel. ● Monitor the distribution and reception of promotional materials and information shared with partners. ● Assess the growth in the number of travel trade-ready stakeholders and the effectiveness of hosted trips in generating positive coverage.

MARKETING | PARTNERSHIP MARKETING

Vancouver Island North will engage in strategic partnership marketing to enhance its visibility and appeal as a destination. This approach involves collaborating with Destination BC consortiums to promote the region's unique experiences to niche markets.

Tactics

Destination BC Consortiums	Continue to collaborate with Destination BC consortiums to promote outdoor adventures and culinary experiences specific to the North island. These include AhoyBC, BC Ale Trail, BC Bird Trail, Fishing BC and Paddle BC, & Grizzly Bear Viewing.
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Implementation Plan

This strategic partnership marketing plan is designed to capitalize on existing networks and new opportunities, driving both awareness and visitation to the North Island through focused, collaborative marketing efforts.	
Quantifiable Objective	Expand partnership networks and increase collaborative promotional efforts.
Rationale	Increase reach for consumer messaging. These well-established consortiums have engaged audiences and expertise to market specific activities within a destination.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate available sector investment opportunities including tactics, reach, and therefore value for investment. ● Work closely with consortium organizations to amplify priority activity-based messaging. ● Actively participate in planning conversations with tourism sectors in order to maximize exposure for the the North Island.
Potential Partnerships	Destination BC, consortium organizations, tourism sectors and operators, local content creators.
Resources	Marketing team, partnership managers, budget for co-branded marketing initiatives.
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing

Budget	\$17,300
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Track the number of promotional initiatives executed with each consortium. ● Track established partnerships and the initiatives that result from them.

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Tactics

VINTAC Meetings	The Vancouver Island North Tourism Advisory Committee meets 5 times per year to provide guidance and to review and make recommendations to the Regional District of Mount Waddington \$250 (VINTAC refreshments and lunches)
Stakeholder Engagement	Vancouver Island North Tourism attends meetings with Tourism Port Hardy, Port McNeill Tourism Advisory Commission, as well as engages with smaller communities and local groups, and stakeholders as opportunities are presented. \$250 (miscellaneous lunches, events etc.)
Stakeholder E-Newsletter	Monthly newsletters sharing marketing opportunities, industry news, surveys, and upcoming events.
Season Launch	In May each year, we host a Season Launch event to kick off the tourism season. This event is not only to provide an overview of the upcoming tourism season including trends, research and marketing plans and is also used as a networking opportunity for our stakeholders. \$1000 (Meeting space, refreshments, activities)
RDMW Monthly Board Meetings	Each month, Vancouver Island North Tourism activities and updates are presented to the RDMW board of directors in a written report included with the board package. This report is also presented verbally at these meetings with opportunity for questions and comments from the board. Representation from each of the North Island communities and Electoral areas are present at these meetings. \$0
Industry Conferences	Attend industry conferences as needed on behalf of Vancouver Island North Tourism to learn about upcoming sustainable tourism initiatives and industry updates that we can share with our stakeholders and to use as a networking opportunity.
Workshops & Planning	Tourism Accelerator Program: (operator readiness, packaging, pricing, distribution). In partnership with 4VI and Junction consulting, VINT will offer up to 4 seats in this program. This program includes Program kickoff & Customization, Onboarding, Assessments, Coaching & support Implementation Plans and an Impact Assessment. (\$6360 3 slots at \$2120/business)

	<p>AI For Tourism Businesses (Efficiency, content, customer service, analytics) (Fall Workshop \$3000)</p> <p>Reels, Stories & Conversations Workshop: Create engaging tourism content (hands-on creator labs aligned to 2026 themes) Spring Workshop combined with Season Launch \$3000</p> <p>Regenerative Tourism Workshop: Regeneration isn't just a toolkit, it's a consciousness shift. Where sustainability asks us to reduce harm, regeneration asks us to restore and renew the living systems we're part of. That shift requires new mindsets (from "me" to "we"), new structures, and design methods that work with complexity, feedback loops, and place-based identity. Our workshop treats a destination as a living system and equips DMOs to redesign tourism so communities, cultures, and ecosystems co-evolve toward resilience. It's systems thinking, made practical. Moving from philosophy to prototypes and pathways that create net-positive outcomes. \$8000</p> <p>Resiliency Planning for Tourism Success - Tourism destinations around the world are facing rapidly changing climate and economic conditions, as well as shifting travel trends that are causing disruption to operations and reputations on a global scale. Traditional tourism strategies often fail to account for these complex, intersecting impacts. In Northern Vancouver Island, the need to build resilience is not only in the future, it is also urgent and grounded in recent events. \$38,250 (note, this price includes an indigenous consulting lens).</p>
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Implementation Plan

Quantifiable Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Stakeholders is what drives our work. Vancouver Island North is a large region consisting of many smaller communities. This work aims to bring all of these communities together for a regional approach to attracting visitors. Provide stakeholders with industry updates and opportunities. Additional workshops and Resiliency planning will provide a solid foundation for the future for the Vancouver Island North organization and our stakeholders and partners.
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating networking and engagement opportunities (virtual if necessary) is a way to connect tourism businesses and get stakeholders thinking about creative ways to collaborate. Attending industry conferences will allow information to be shared with local stakeholders with the intention of increasing

	opportunities to grow sustainable tourism businesses in the region
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing stakeholder engagement • Coordinate workshops and engagement opportunities.. • Facilitate meetings with VINTAC to review and discuss strategies and budgets. • Develop and distribute surveys and newsletters
Potential Partnerships	Stakeholders, Destination BC 4VI, Community Tourism Advisory Committees, Community councils, ITBC, Local Indigenous Communities & Leaders
Resources	Tourism Staff, 4VI, local partners
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$60,110.00
Performance Measures	Participation, number of meetings attended, number of stakeholder engagements, # of newsletters, newsletter engagement, attendance at Season Launch, # of workshops offered, attention at workshops

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | PRODUCT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT

Tactics

Events & Experiences Fund	<p>VINT will build on the successful launch of the Events and Festivals Fund. This fund is dedicated to marketing and promotional support for local North Island Events (that meet a certain criteria).</p>
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Implementation Plan

Quantifiable Objective	<p>Grow out of region attendance for local events and festivals on the North Island. Increase the number of shoulder and off-season events in the region. Create new opportunities for shoulder and off-season visitation.</p>
Rationale	<p>Providing funding for promotion and marketing events will reduce the amount of work that (often inexperienced) volunteers are burdened with when planning events. The fund will allow for greater distribution of marketing to outside regions , therefore increasing the attendance at events, particularly in the shoulder seasons.</p>
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to promote the Events & Festivals Program for Vancouver Island North ● A consultation call with event organizers to understand the specific needs and align on goals. ● Post-consultation, provide an outline and requirements to ensure alignment on the marketing approach. ● Provide updates and performance reports to track the success of the campaigns.
Potential Partnerships	<p>Local Event planners, neighbouring communities including the District of Port Hardy, Village of Alert Bay, Town of Port McNeill and the Regional District of Mount Waddington Electoral Areas A, B, C, & D & Port Alice. Residents, local stakeholders and Indigenous communities, Community Futures</p>
Resources	<p>Tourism Staff, 4VI, contractors as necessary</p>

Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$50,000
Performance Measures	Number of Events applied for funding Number of Events promoted Event attendance

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | MARKET RESEARCH & VISITOR PERSONAS

Develop visitor personas using a strategic combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather a clear understanding of potential and current visitors to a destination. This process will leverage existing research and data and may require additional, more current research. These data points can be sourced from various channels such as direct surveys, social media analytics, web usage patterns and transactional data.

Implementation Plan

<p>Developing clear visitor personas is a crucial step in tailoring marketing strategies and enhancing the overall visitor experience. In alignment with Destination Canada’s Market Segmentation, VINT will add Outdoor Explorer to our target markets. Continue to utilize research including Data Appeal, Air DNA, and Mobilescapes to capture market data. Partner with VIU to analyze and implement current research.</p>	
<p>Quantifiable Objective</p>	<p>Utilize insights to understand visitor numbers, demographics, behavior, travel patterns, overall satisfaction and local sentiment towards tourism in the region.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>The focused collection and analysis of visitor and resident data support strategic objectives to precisely target the most relevant consumer segments.</p>
<p>Action Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a partnership with VIU to review and analyze the current data and data already collected from various sources such as Air Dna, Data Appeal, Environics, previous surveys, website analytics, social media interactions and customer feedback. Sort through this data to identify patterns and trends related to visitors. ● Based on the insights gained from the initial data analysis, determine what additional information is needed to develop a comprehensive picture of potential and existing visitors. Additional research might include segmentation research, focus groups or exit surveys. ● Execute the additional research needed to gather comprehensive visitor information. ● Develop detailed customer journey maps that outline all the touchpoints visitors have with your destination, from initial awareness and consideration through to the travel experience and post-visit engagement.

Potential Partnerships	Potential partnership with VIU marketing students, Research and survey contractors specialized in tourism and community engagement, local community groups and stakeholders including tourism businesses.
Resources	Professional services for data analysis and survey distribution, established relationships with local stakeholders to facilitate data gathering.
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing, with preliminary results reviewed annually and strategies adjusted accordingly.
Budget	\$20,000
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and quality of data collected on visitor demographics, motivations, and satisfaction. • Development of comprehensive visitor and resident profiles that inform marketing strategies and product development. • Identification of key target markets based on collected data, leading to more focused and effective marketing efforts.

VISITOR EDUCATION MARKETING

Continue to develop the #LiveTheWildPledge Initiative. In 2024 we launched the #LiveTheWildPledge Initiative promoting the removal of ocean debris from our remote but local beaches. Through partnership work with the Ocean Legacy Group and 4VI we established distribution centres for our reusable cloth bags and incentive cards and drop off centres for the debris collection. Through the ocean legacy partnership there are measures in place to track all debris removed through this program. We continued with this initiative in 2025 through our partnership with Ocean Legacy and funding through World Nomads. In 2026 we will build on additional visitor education pieces including updated Know as you Go information, Safety precautions, leave No Trace and continue to encourage visitors to #TakeTheWildPledge before visiting. To encourage participation in this program year round we will partner with local accommodation providers to provide storm watching packages, that include a tote bag, locally curated goods and discounted hotel stays.

Implementation Plan

<p>Continue partnership with Ocean Legacy to support the beach clean-up initiative through the #livethewildpledge campaign. Expand on this work to promote the program year round.</p>	
<p>Quantifiable Objective</p>	<p>By the end of 2026, increase visitor and resident participation in the #livethewildpledge program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% more pledges signed online compared to 2025 20% increase in ocean-debris collected through Ocean Legacy’s Tracking program Achieve 2-3 accommodation providers in offering storm-watching pledge packages.
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>Sustainable Tourism Leadership: Builds on 2024-2025 progress to position Vancouver Island North as a leading destination for regenerative tourism.</p> <p>Community & Visitor Engagement: Encourages year-round visitor participation while supporting local businesses during the off-season (storm-watching).</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Reduces ocean debris on sensitive beaches and supports Ocean Legacy’s measurable waste-removal targets.</p> <p>Brand Alignment: Strengthens VINT’s reputation as a responsible destination aligned with 4VI, Destination BC’s sustainability goals, and global travellers’ interest in eco-friendly practices.</p>
<p>Action Steps</p>	<p>Program Growth & Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure continued funding support (e.g., World Nomads, 4VI, MRDT allocations, profits from selling tote bags at partner locations). ● Expand distribution points for reusable cloth bags and incentive cards from just visitor centres to all be sold at key accommodation partners across VINT communities. ● Onboard at least 4 new accommodation partners to pilot the pledge-linked storm-watching packages. <p>Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update Know-Before-You-Go content (web, social, rack cards) to include Leave No Trace, beach-safety guidelines, and storm-watching best practices by June 2026. <p>Marketing & Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch a fall-winter campaign (Oct–Feb) promoting storm-watching packages with tote bags and locally curated goods.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social channels, partnerships and newsletters to drive #LiveTheWildPledge sign-ups (target: 500 new digital pledges in 2026). • Monitoring & Reporting • Work with Ocean Legacy Group to receive quarterly debris-collection reports. • Track pledge sign-ups, package redemptions, social media engagement (likes, shares, hashtag use), and bag distribution. • Present year-end report to VINTAC & partners with metrics, stories, and environmental impact results.
Potential Partnerships	Research and survey contractors specialized in tourism and community engagement, local community groups and stakeholders including tourism businesses.
Resources	Professional services for data analysis and survey distribution, established relationships with local stakeholders to facilitate data gathering.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, with preliminary results reviewed annually and strategies adjusted accordingly.
Budget	\$5,000
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and quality of data collected on visitor demographics, motivations, and satisfaction. • Development of comprehensive visitor and resident profiles that inform marketing strategies and product development. • Identification of key target markets based on collected data, leading to more focused and effective marketing efforts.