



City of Courtenay MRDT
Experience Comox Valley | May 8, 2024



Welcome - Thank you - Gilakas'la - ʔimot

Experience Comox Valley is grateful to live, work and play on the traditional and unceded territories of the K'ómoks First Nation



Overview

- **Vision:** The Comox Valley is recognized as the premier, year-round Vancouver Island destination for outdoor, culinary, and cultural activities.
- **Mission:** Implement fiscally prudent destination marketing initiatives that are informed and tested through stakeholder engagement that are objectively focused on increasing overnight stays in the Comox Valley that drive economic benefit to business owners and residents.
- Funding sources
 - Destination BC, MRDT, local government contribution, federal grants





Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Established in 2022
- 11 members from various sectors
 - Plus CVRD liaison & 4VI staff representatives
- Advise, review and recommend annual marketing and Destination Plan & budgets
- Work collaboratively and represent the best interests of tourism stakeholders in the Comox Valley



Strategic Objectives



1. Increase revenue from visitation
 - Generate leads for businesses
2. Manage growth and benefit through seasonal and geographical dispersion
 - Build and position destination drivers
 - Invest in market research
3. Increase competitiveness of Comox Valley as a desired destination
 - Improve the visitor experience
 - Increase collaboration with & amongst stakeholders
4. Support sustainable tourism initiatives and activities
 - Amplify messaging from local tourism businesses who are actively pursuing objectives that increase positive impacts and decrease negative impacts of tourism for humans, the economy and/or the environment
 - Advance Vancouver Island's Biosphere program locally and commit to advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as a DMO and destination



Target Audiences

- Geographic
 - Victoria & Lower Mainland
 - Calgary & Edmonton
 - Washington State
- Age
 - 35+
 - Families
- EQ Type
 - Authentic experiencers
 - Rejuvenators
 - Cultural explorers
- Interests
 - Outdoor & marine adventure enthusiasts
 - Culinary experiences
 - Arts & culture





2023 Projects

Consumer Website Content

ExperienceComoxValley.ca

- Optimized for conversion to stakeholder websites
 - Free business listings
- New events calendar feature
 - Submit events for free
- 6 new blogs
- Unique visits: 64k (49k mobile)
- Origin: Canada, US, UK, Mexico, Germany



Explore Sauna Experiences In The Comox Valley



Sweating In Paradise: Exploring Sauna Experiences In The Comox Valley

Whether an historic Nordic wooden sauna, the Comox Valley is a natural paradise for its lush landscapes, pristine beaches, and outdoor adventures. However, lately, many wouldn't be counted as a hot date for those who enjoy an invigorating experience. In the Comox Valley, an outdoor spa is gaining momentum through the same experiences as the Comox Valley. Showcasing how these steamy sanctuaries have become an integral part of the local culture.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SAUNAS

Before we delve into the Comox Valley's sauna scene, let's briefly explore what saunas are all about. Originating from Finland, saunas are essentially heated rooms designed to promote relaxation and health through the use of dry or wet heat. They offer a unique wellness benefits, including improved circulation, detoxification, stress reduction, and enhanced skin health.

Add to the fact that a lot of bathing, and you're not just enjoying a relaxing experience in the lush surroundings of the valley, but you're also enjoying a healthy dose of steam and relaxation. So, you can't go wrong with the right place for your wellness session.

INDOOR SAUNAS: THE COMFORT OF A WARM BATH

Indoor saunas are a popular choice for those who prefer a more controlled environment. The Comox Valley's indoor sauna scene is diverse, ranging from traditional Finnish saunas to modern, high-tech facilities. These saunas offer a relaxing experience, allowing you to unwind and enjoy the view from the comfort of a warm bath.



LOCAL SAUNA SPOTS

While indoor saunas offer a controlled environment, the Comox Valley is also home to outdoor saunas. These saunas are often built in scenic locations, offering a unique experience. Whether you're looking for a quiet retreat or a social gathering spot, outdoor saunas offer a variety of options. So, you can find the perfect spot for your wellness session.

SMITH LAKE SAUNA

At Smith Lake, you'll find a traditional Finnish sauna built on a rocky outcrop. It's an excellent spot for those who enjoy a view of the lake and the surrounding forest. The sauna is open year-round, and the view is simply breathtaking. So, you can't go wrong with a visit to Smith Lake.

ISLAND SAUNA

For those who prefer a more secluded experience, the Island Sauna is a great choice. Located on a small island in the Comox Valley, this sauna offers a peaceful and relaxing environment. The view of the water and the surrounding forest is simply stunning. So, you can't go wrong with a visit to the Island Sauna.

THE OAK FRUIT SAUNA HOUSE

The Oak Fruit Sauna House is a unique and modern sauna experience. Located in a beautiful setting, this sauna offers a relaxing and rejuvenating experience. The view of the surrounding forest and the sound of the water are simply perfect. So, you can't go wrong with a visit to the Oak Fruit Sauna House.

NORDIC SAUNA

Nordic Saunas offer a traditional and authentic sauna experience. Located in a beautiful setting, these saunas offer a relaxing and rejuvenating experience. The view of the surrounding forest and the sound of the water are simply perfect. So, you can't go wrong with a visit to a Nordic Sauna.



Annual Events In The Comox Valley

Align your trip with one of these premier events for the ultimate experience!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out these upcoming events in the region:



Calendar Dates

Start Date:

End Date:

Upcoming Events

Check out these upcoming events in the region:

Flower Festival - Celebrate the arrival of spring with a day of flower viewing and photography.

Comox Valley Exhibition - Explore the history and culture of the Comox Valley.

Outdoor Days - Enjoy a day of outdoor activities and adventures.

ICCA - International Comox Valley Conference.

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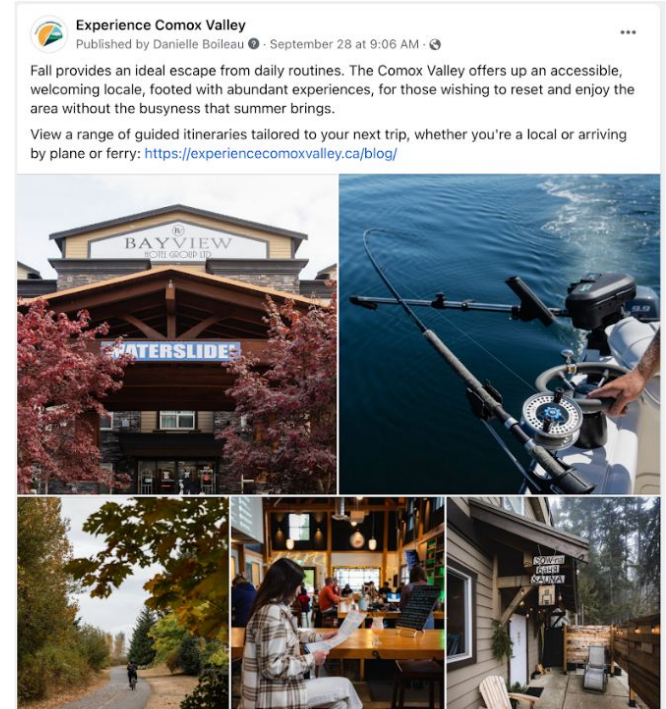
Visual Assets

- Worked with 6 local photographers
- 150+ new images
- B-roll clips
- New themed videos & commercials



Social Media Organic

- User generated content
 - Real visitors & locals sharing their stories & experiences
- Daily posts of new content & responding to questions/comments about this destination
 - Facebook: @experiencecomoxvalley
 - Instagram: @tourismcomoxvalley
- Amplify stakeholder content & events
- Building an engaged audience
- Facebook
 - 7% increase in followers
 - 1.6M reach
- Instagram
 - 24% increase in followers
 - 1M reach



BC Arts Instagram takeover

- 48 hours (Nov 1 & 2)
- 12 Local museums, art studios & galleries



2023 Print Advertising

- 2023 Comox Valley Vacation Guide
 - 55,000 distribution
 - Full content, new brand alignment
- BC's Guide to Arts & Culture
 - 75,000 distribution, 2-page spread
- Go Vancouver Island magazine
 - 100,000 distribution, full page ad
- Vancouver Island Visitor Guide
 - 50,000 distribution, full page ad
- Canada Travel & Lifestyle Magazine
 - Full page ad, Ontario highway billboard
- SOAR Magazine
 - 40,850 distribution, 2 page ad
- Landmark Media Comox Valley Map
 - Cover page

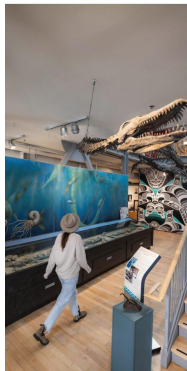


The Comox Valley has it all! Hike or bike in the fresh air of the alpins on Mount Washington. Challenge yourself for a round of golf (year-round!). For those aquatic folks, a day at the beach, or on the water paddling is the perfect place. Did we mention you can do this year round?

Scan the QR Code for more great activities in the Comox Valley!



2023 Examples



The Comox Valley is Vancouver Island's true winter destination. Where else can you ski one of North America's deepest snow bases at Mount Washington Alpine Resort, challenge yourself on a year round golf course, and go for a paddle or beach walk all in one day?



Winter in the Comox Valley offers all the outdoor fun one would expect, while also delivering on the coastal climate, stunning ocean views, ample opportunity to sit back and relax at a local spa, unique and downtown shopping areas, local brews and farm to table culinary experiences.

With convenient flight connections from Vancouver and seasonal direct flights to Comox Valley Airport your next island vacation is just a quick flight away.

plan your visit at experiencecomoxvalley.ca





Broadcast Marketing


- CTV Community Spotlights
 - Outdoor adventure in Comox
 - Arts & culture in Courtenay
 - Culinary experience in Cumberland
- Promotional videos on CTV and Global (Duration: 15 sec & 30 sec)
- Live broadcast, streaming, pre-roll
- Geo-targeted to Calgary, Edmonton, and Metro Vancouver
- Results:
 - Live impressions adults 18+: 2.5M
 - Ad impressions: over 220k (44k in BC, 176k in AB)
 - Click Through Rate: average 0.25% (0.20% in BC, 0.27% in AB)



Promotional Campaigns


- Partner campaigns:
 - Island Taste Trail
 - Calgary & Edmonton contesting
- DBC consortiums
 - BC Ale Trail, Ride Island, Ahoy BC, Golf VI, BC Farmers' Market
- ECV's seasonal digital campaigns
 - Warm up to Winter - 392k reach
 - Spring in Comox Valley - 355k reach
 - Tumble into Fall - 224k reach
- 'Always on' digital/search ads
 - 303k impressions, 32k clicks, 10.8% CTR



 **Experience Comox Valley**
Sponsored · 🌐

From ales to trails, celebrate the best of spring with a visit to the Comox Valley. 🌸

...See more




experiencecomoxvalley.ca
Visit The Comox Valley
Spring Into Relaxation

Learn more




experience
comox valley

Experience Comox Valley respectfully acknowledges that the land we gather on is on the traditional territory of the K'omoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

 **Calgary Herald with Experience Comox Valley.**
Sponsored · 🌐

The Comox Valley is ready to welcome you with countless outdoor adventures, cultural experiences and charming culinary hotspots.



CALGARYHERALD.COM

Explore the late autumn wonders of British Columbia's Comox Valley

Learn more



explore shorelines
and coastal forests





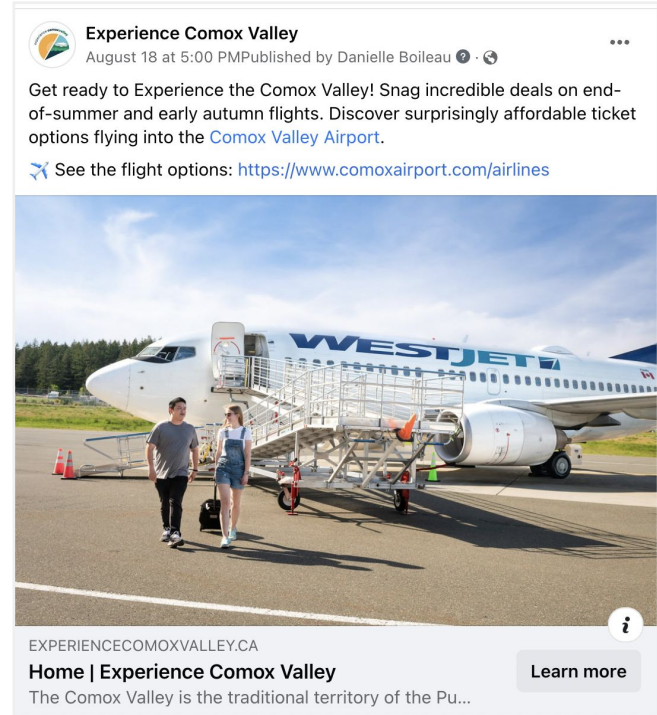
Fall Campaign

- Digital ads
 - Social Media
 - Display
 - Google
- Sponsored articles
 - Calgary Herald “[Explore the late autumn wonders of BC’s Comox Valley](#)”
 - St. Albert Gazette “[Discover the wonders of Comox Valley, a hidden gem in British Columbia](#)”
- Tik Tok influencer
 - Vancouver is Awesome
- BC Arts Instagram takeover
 - 48 hours of ECV content
- Island Taste Trail
- BC Ale Trail Passport



Alberta Marketing Contest Campaign

- In partnership with Comox Valley Airport
- Win a Trip to the Comox Valley
 - Pair of return airfare tickets, 2 nights stay, Lost Faucet Sauna experience, dining gift cards
 - 2 winners - Calgary & Edmonton
- Promoted via social media and digital display ad in Calgary International Airport
- Contest landing page views = 5,704
 - Edmonton = 2,276
 - Calgary = 1,372
 - Total = 3,648




The image shows a Facebook post from the page 'Experience Comox Valley'. The post is dated August 18 at 5:00 PM and was published by Danielle Boileau. The text of the post promotes end-of-summer and early autumn flights to the Comox Valley, mentioning 'incredible deals' and 'surprisingly affordable ticket options'. A link is provided for flight options: <https://www.comoxairport.com/airlines>. Below the text is a photograph of a WestJet airplane on a tarmac with its boarding stairs extended. Two people, a man and a woman, are walking towards the camera. The man is wearing a grey t-shirt and dark pants, and the woman is wearing a blue jumpsuit. The background shows a clear blue sky and some greenery. At the bottom of the post, there is a navigation bar with the website 'EXPERIENCECOMOXVALLEY.CA', the page name 'Home | Experience Comox Valley', and a 'Learn more' button. The text 'The Comox Valley is the traditional territory of the Pu...' is partially visible below the navigation bar.

Experience Comox Valley
August 18 at 5:00 PM Published by Danielle Boileau

Get ready to Experience the Comox Valley! Snag incredible deals on end-of-summer and early autumn flights. Discover surprisingly affordable ticket options flying into the [Comox Valley Airport](#).

✈ See the flight options: <https://www.comoxairport.com/airlines>



EXPERIENCECOMOXVALLEY.CA
Home | Experience Comox Valley
The Comox Valley is the traditional territory of the Pu... [Learn more](#)

Market Research

- Visitor Intercept Surveys
 - Comox Valley Airport and VIU surveys
 - Understand travel motivations, visitor behaviour, and satisfaction
- 2023 findings:
 - Majority of visitors here for pleasure and/or visiting friends and family (73%)
 - Top activities included beach, hiking, shopping, marine activities, wineries, breweries, festivals
 - Overall net promoter score of 60-71
 - Positives: beautiful, friendly people, plenty to do, good restaurants, clean environment
 - Negatives: traffic, limited marina space, limited taxi service, limited restaurant/retail hours of operation, homelessness & public drug use issues



Travel Trade & Media

- Travel media familiarization trips
 - German National Radio
 - Seattle Magazine
 - The Weather Network
 - Vancouver is Awesome
- Explore VI travel trade show
 - 19 operators/online travel agencies
 - 35 VI stakeholders
- Branded display banners, tent, table cloth
- Promo swag



Events & Experiences

Fund - 2023 Pilot

- Support the creation and/or enhancement of new events and experiences
- Up to \$7,500 in funding
- 6 successful applications in Fall 2023 (\$37k total)
 - Rotary Club Strathcona Sunrise for Comox Valley Ribfest
 - Coal Hills BMX Association for BMX Canada Nationals Race Event (VI Nationals)
 - Steam Donkey Racing Club for Frontrunners Fit Chiropractic Dodge City X
 - Cumberland Culture & Arts Society for Woodstove Music & Arts Festival
 - ROAM Media Inc for Stokefest Winter Festival
 - 40 Knots Winery for Christmas Bucket List Market



Visitor Information Services



- Visitor Centre
 - Open 5 days a week, Tuesday to Saturday, 9:30am-4:30pm in Winter, Spring & Fall
 - Open 7 days a week in Summer
- Mobile Visitor Information Kiosks
 - Comox Marina (new building)
 - Downtown Courtenay (6th street library)
 - Cumberland (Dunsmuir courtyard)
- Advertising opportunities for tourism stakeholders
- Consignment gift shop of local goods
 - 50+ local artisans
- Community Outreach
 - NIC, local high schools, engagement workshops, Chamber business after business



Visitor Centre Statistics

Comox Valley visitors over the last 3 years

	2023	2022	2021
January - March	2,032	1,944	585
April - June	3,206	2,899	943
July - September	6,507	4,692	6,888
Summer Mobile Kiosks	2,398	2,017	1,940
October - December	1,823	1,689	1,631
Total	15,966	13,241	11,987

COMOX VALLEY
MAP
Cumberland • Hornby Island • Denman Island

46

find your way to
experience
comox valley

experiencecomoxvalley.ca

Beaufort Cycles
CUMBERLAND, BC

landmark
maps



2023 Financial



Revenues (MRDT and Non MRDT)	Budget \$	Actual \$	Variance
Starting Carry Forward (All Net Assets Restricted and Unrestricted)	\$ 260,000	\$ 935,896	
General MRDT (net of admin fees)	\$ 300,000	\$417,520.71	\$ 117,520.71
MRDT from online accommodation platforms (OAP)	\$ 200,000	\$280,807.15	\$ 80,807.15
Local government contribution	\$ 387,164	\$338,887.00	-\$ 48,277.00
Stakeholder contributions (i.e. membership dues)	\$ -	\$0	\$ -
Co-op funds received (e.g. CTO; DMO-led projects)	\$ 203,472	\$154,362.06	-\$ 49,109.94
Grants - Federal	\$ 30,000	\$35,110.00	\$ 5,110.00
Grants - Provincial	\$ 21,726	\$20,226.00	-\$ 1,500.00
Grants/Fee for Service - Municipal	\$ -	\$0	\$ -
Retail Sales	\$ 15,250	\$22,490.38	\$ 7,240.38
Interest			
Other (please describe)			
Total Revenues	\$ 1,157,612	\$ 1,269,403.30	\$ 111,791.30



2023 Financial

- Marketing
 - \$ 459,254.74
- Destination Management
 - \$ 69,501.09
- Visitor Service
 - \$ 535,744.95
- Ending carry-forward
 - \$ 185,765.89 MRDT
 - \$ 955,032.63 OAP

Expenses MRDT and Non-MRDT)	Budget \$	Actual \$	Variance
Marketing			
Marketing staff – wage and benefits	\$166,625	\$ 166,625.00	\$ -
Media advertising and production	\$137,038	\$ 115,030.60	-\$ 22,007.40
Website - hosting, development, maintenance	\$8,087	\$ 9,217.18	\$ 1,130.18
Social media	\$23,650	\$ 28,001.67	\$ 4,351.67
Consumer shows and events	\$0	\$ -	\$ -
Collateral production and distribution	\$21,000	\$ 20,382.13	-\$ 617.87
Travel media relations	\$11,500	\$ 11,210.34	-\$ 289.66
Travel trade	\$0	\$ -	\$ -
Consumer focused asset development (imagery, written content, Other (please describe) Partnership Marketing; AhoyBC, BC Ale Trail, Golf VI, Ride Island, Comox Valley Airport	\$63,750	\$ 47,900.10	-\$ 15,849.90
	\$70,050	\$ 60,887.72	-\$ 9,162.28
Subtotal	\$ 501,700.00	\$ 459,254.74	-\$ 42,445.26
Destination & Product Experience Management			
Destination and Product Experience Management Staff – wage and Industry development and training	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	3,000	\$ 10,632.33	\$ 7,632.33
Product experience enhancement and training	10,000	\$ -	-\$ 10,000.00
Research and evaluation	26,250	\$ 22,974.71	-\$ 3,275.29
Other (please describe) Destination Development - Event & Experience Fund	75,000	\$ 35,894.05	-\$ 39,105.95
Other (please describe) Contingency fund	50,000	\$ -	-\$ 50,000.00
Subtotal	\$ 164,250.00	\$ 69,501.09	-\$ 94,748.91
Visitor Services			
Visitor Services - wage and benefits	184,500	\$ 175,141.00	-\$ 9,359.00
Visitor Services operating expenses	29,998	\$ 21,716.95	-\$ 8,281.05
Other (please describe) Visitor Centre Administration & Building Costs	337,164	\$ 338,887.00	\$ 1,723.00
Subtotal	\$ 551,662.00	\$ 535,744.95	-\$ 15,917.05
Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 1,217,612	\$ 1,064,500.78	-\$ 153,111.22
Total Revenue Less Total Expenses (Surplus or Deficit)	-\$ 60,000	\$ 204,902.52	\$ 264,902.52
Ending Carry Forward (Restricted and Unrestricted)	\$ 200,000	\$ 1,140,798.52	





2024 Upcoming

- Inclusive marketing content collection
 - Accessibility guide
 - 2SLGBTQIA+
- Dedicated presence in Alberta market and partnership with CV Airport
- Reimagined Fall campaign
- Flexible Winter campaign
- New volunteer program for Visitor Information Servicing
- More visitor education messaging (e.g. emergency management, wildfires)
- 2024 Events & Experiences Fund





Questions?

