

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



A summary report of the activities of the Tourism Golden Association  
January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022

Key Reporting areas include Operations, Marketing, Visitor Services and Financials

Submitted by: Joanne Sweeting, Executive Director



#GOLDENRULES  
#GOLDENBC

[tourismgolden.com](http://tourismgolden.com)

## Table of Contents

ANNUAL REPORT 2022.....	1
About Tourism Golden.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Destination Performance 2022.....	8
DMO Performance.....	12
Financial Summary.....	15
Marketing Summary.....	17
Research.....	22
Destination Management.....	23
Visitor Services.....	25

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## Directors, Officers, Committees & Staff

### Board of Directors from May 2022

#### Elected

*Representing Town of Golden Accommodators*

Jordan Egan, Basecamp Lodge Golden

Atma Sandher, Ponderosa Motor Inn

Treena Coney, Prestige Inn Golden

*Representing General Accommodators (all locations)*

Brandy Beliveau, Bellstar Hotels & Resort

*Representing Area A Accommodators*

John Lush, Lush Mountain Accommodations

Lucille Hayward, Moberly Lodge

Jo Best, Mount 7 Lodges

*Representing Tourism Operators*

Graeme Kreiner, Golden Golf Club

Ryan Johannesen, Glacier Raft Company

Toby Barrett, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

Tristan MacLaggan, Golden Skybridge

#### Officers

President Toby Barrett

Vice President John Lush

Treasurer Treena Coney

Secretary Lucille Hayward

#### Committees

##### Finance Committee

Treena Coney (Treasurer), Toby Barrett, Tristan MacLaggan

##### HR Committee

Jo Best, Treena Coney, Toby Barrett, Brandy Beliveau

##### Stakeholder Committee

Atma Sandher, John Lush, Toby Barrett, Treena Coney, Ryan Johannesen, Jordan Egan

##### Governance (Constitution and Bylaw) Committee

Atma Sandher, Toby Barrett, Lucille Hayward, Ryan Johannesen

##### Co-op Programs Committee

Atma Sandher, Brandy Beliveau, Jo Best, Lucille Hayward

#### Staff

Executive Director Joanne Sweeting

Marketing & Administration Abigail Dunford

Communications Manager Andy Brown

Social Media Coordinator Alison Morphy

*The board establishes the vision, mission, and objectives of the organisation and approves the annual marketing plan and budgets. It ensures fiscal responsibility and fulfilment of the organisation's mission.*

## About Tourism Golden

- ❑ A non-profit society incorporated in 2006 and mandated as the DMO and eligible entity until July 2027.
- ❑ The DMO area contains the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A, not including Yoho National Park.
- ❑ Representing tourism stakeholders (accommodations, activity operators and attractions).
- ❑ Primarily funded by the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) leveraged with grant and 'pay to play' stakeholder co-op advertising sales. Stakeholders supported a change from 2% to 3% MRDT in the program renewal in July 2022.
- ❑ Governed by a board of 11 directors representing accommodations and tourism operators.

### Mandate

Tourism Golden Association will lead, direct, and manage destination marketing activities and support tourism development initiatives on behalf of Golden and Kicking Horse Country by maintaining a collaborative and inclusive industry driven organization, and by providing opportunities for stakeholders to increase revenues. We will provide a consistent voice for Golden and Kicking Horse Country in the tourism marketplace.

### Tourism Vision

“We will inspire travellers who share our community’s values to stay longer and experience Golden, creating deep connections and lasting memories.”

### Tourism Mission

“Tourism Golden works collaboratively with its stakeholders and leverages its resources effectively to execute research-informed destination management strategies that responsibly grow Golden’s year-round visitor economy and contribute to the community’s economic sustainability and resident quality of life.”

### Values & Guiding Principles

As we progress towards our vision and fulfill our mission, Tourism Golden will make strategic, research informed decisions, and conduct itself in a manner that is:

- ❑ Respectful of our community, our stakeholders, our partners, and the environment
- ❑ Inclusive and Collaborative
- ❑ Transparent and Accountable

## Executive Summary

2022 was the first year of the new 5-year strategy and the MRDT program renewed at 3% began in July 2022.

Q3 of 2021 saw the lifting of international and border restrictions and a return of travel confidence, and as a result, 2022 saw a strong recovery and normalisation of visitation with key indicators returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Highlights of key performance indicators include:

- ✓ 1 million + overnight visits
- ✓ Overnight visits increased by 18%
- ✓ ADR increased by 19%
- ✓ Occupancy increased by 18%
- ✓ Occupancy outperformed BC average
- ✓ Length of stay 1.8 nights.
- ✓ MRDT revenues increased by 83% against 2021.

The increase of MRDT is unsurprising, given the implementation of the new rate in July. However, the anticipated increase of 50% against 2021 was exceeded by a further 33% against 2021 and 49% against 2019 reflecting a return to pre-pandemic overnight visitors, occupancy, and ADR.

Nevertheless, the destination recovery was impacted by the continuation of the multi-year Kicking Horse Canyon project which saw Highway 1 closed for multiple weeks at a time during the spring and fall.

The swift destination recovery exacerbated the ongoing critical issues of labour and housing shortages, both of which were also compounded by the highway construction project. As an employer of seasonal employees at the Golden

Visitor Centre, Tourism Golden also experienced the issues impacting industry and other local employers.

The 5-year strategic plan identifies three priorities:

- ❑ *Destination Marketing,*
- ❑ *Destination Recovery, and*
- ❑ *Destination Management.*

However, with destination recovery clearly underway we were able to move more quickly on identifying opportunities for tactical implementation of some elements of destination management as well as ramping up the strategies that guide and support destination marketing.

Some of the notable tactics were:

Destination Marketing:

- ❑ Collaboration with Destination BC on a PRIZM market segmentation project
- ❑ Launch of the Golden BC destination app.
- ❑ Destination asset creation for marketing and destination management projects.
- ❑ Website upgrade project launched.
- ❑ New Visual Asset stakeholder co-op program.
- ❑ New member social media co-op marketing program.

Destination Management:

- ❑ Responsible Travel asset development.
- ❑ Transportation study leading to,
- ❑ Launch of winter shuttle services partnership.
- ❑ Resident engagement campaign and sentiment survey.
- ❑ Advocacy on labour shortages.
- ❑ Advocacy on housing shortages.
- ❑ MRDT member support programs including free advertising and Check-in Canada listing.

- ❑ Q4 Destination job board website development.
- ❑ Q4 Development of an online destination learning and rewards programs for front-line employees.

The planning and budgeting for 2022 took place in fall 2021 with the uncertainties of the pandemic recovery and the MRDT renewal and mid-year transition to 3%. Accordingly, the 2022 plan and budget was somewhat flexible. As the first year recognising a distinct priority for Destination Management, the plan identified the development of a comprehensive destination management strategy. However, it quickly became clear that the budgeted amount would not support the development of a robust strategy, and this was pushed to 2023, and the funds were re-allocated to producing a transport strategy.

As a Resort Municipality, Golden benefits from RMI funding and under the 2022 – 2025 Resort Development Strategy we received funds from the Town of Golden to launch the research and development of some additional destination management projects that address issues raised in the 2021 stakeholder survey and the initial resident surveys in 2022, notably the launch of the airport and in-destination shuttle services in December 2022, the development of the workingolden.ca job portal and online destination training and rewards programs which launched in early 2023.

As mentioned, we were financially conservative, and as is typical, did not receive high season MRDT until Q3, leading to a strong cash position at the

end of the fiscal and great start to 2023 tactical activity.

We recognize these factors that make our success possible:

1. The *MRDT program* which provides reliable multi-year funding for tourism marketing and projects.
2. The focus of Tourism Golden staff and board on *strategic planning informed by research and data*.
3. Tourism Golden stakeholders who invest and innovate in products and experiences, engage with us in collectively promoting Golden and support our efforts in content creation and media relations.
4. The Town of Golden and CSRD Area A who support our position and efforts as the eligible entity and lead organisation for tourism.
5. Destination BC and Destination Canada who provided consistent leadership, research, and support and who continue to *innovate in tourism marketing and industry programs*, opportunities and partnerships as well as delivering successful provincial marketing campaigns.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's *Festival, Fairs and Events Program* which provides funding for events.
7. The *RMI program* which provides project funding via contribution agreements with the Town of Golden.
8. TIABC and the BCHA whose collaboration and tireless advocacy for the industry as well as efficient communication and meaningful insights were extremely valuable.

## Strategic Objectives and Measure of Success

The 5-year strategic plan is the guiding document for the 2022 annual marketing plan and tactical activity. Tourism Golden’s five-year strategy is designed to deliver measurable results in the pursuit of seven core objectives across four themes:



The methodology for measuring progress against each of these objectives is as follows:

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1.0	Increase overall value of tourism economy	Value of tourism input/output model baseline established in 2019	Value of tourism economy in 2025 equivalent or better than 2019
2.0	Increase average length of stay at all times of year	Accommodation reporting	Average length of stay increases year over year
3.0	Increase shoulder season occupancy and rate (April/May and October/ November)	Use MRDT collected in these months as a proxy for performance	MRDT collected in shoulder seasons increases year over year
4.0	Connect more visitors to destination experiences through multiple channels	Visitor Intercept Survey Visitor Centre Stats Mobile engagements	Increasing engagements with visitors in destination
5.0	Educate visitors to experience a safe and sustainable vacation	Visitor Intercept Surveys	Visitor awareness and understanding levels
6.0	Deliver enhanced stakeholder programs and supports	Stakeholder survey	Top Box ratings
7.0	Residents of Golden understand the value of tourism and support the local tourism industry	Periodic resident survey	Maintain support for tourism industry
8.0	Balance resident values with visitor demand and business needs	Periodic resident survey	Resident sentiment index

## Destination Performance 2022

Destination performance reflects on-going marketing activity and industry support.

**2 million  
visitors**

1,023,880 Overnight

897,190 Day trips

**1.8 nights**

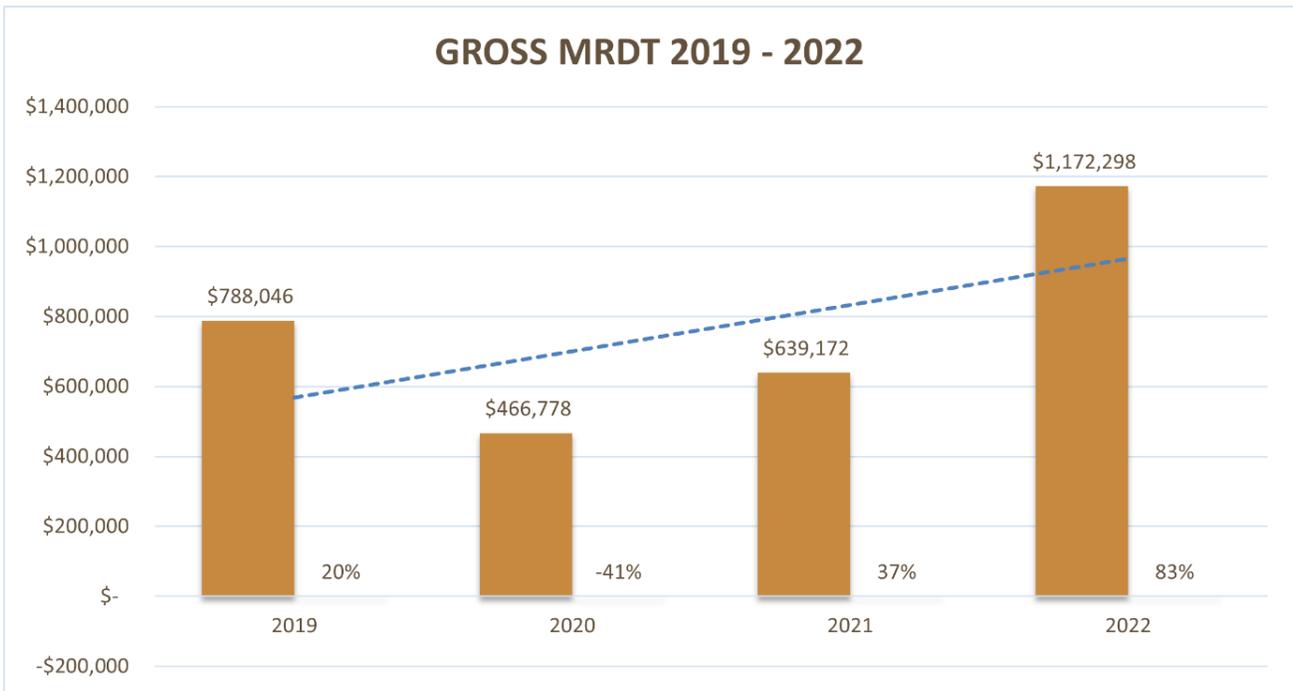
Average Length  
of stay

### 2022 DESTINATION PERFORMANCE - HIGHLIGHTS

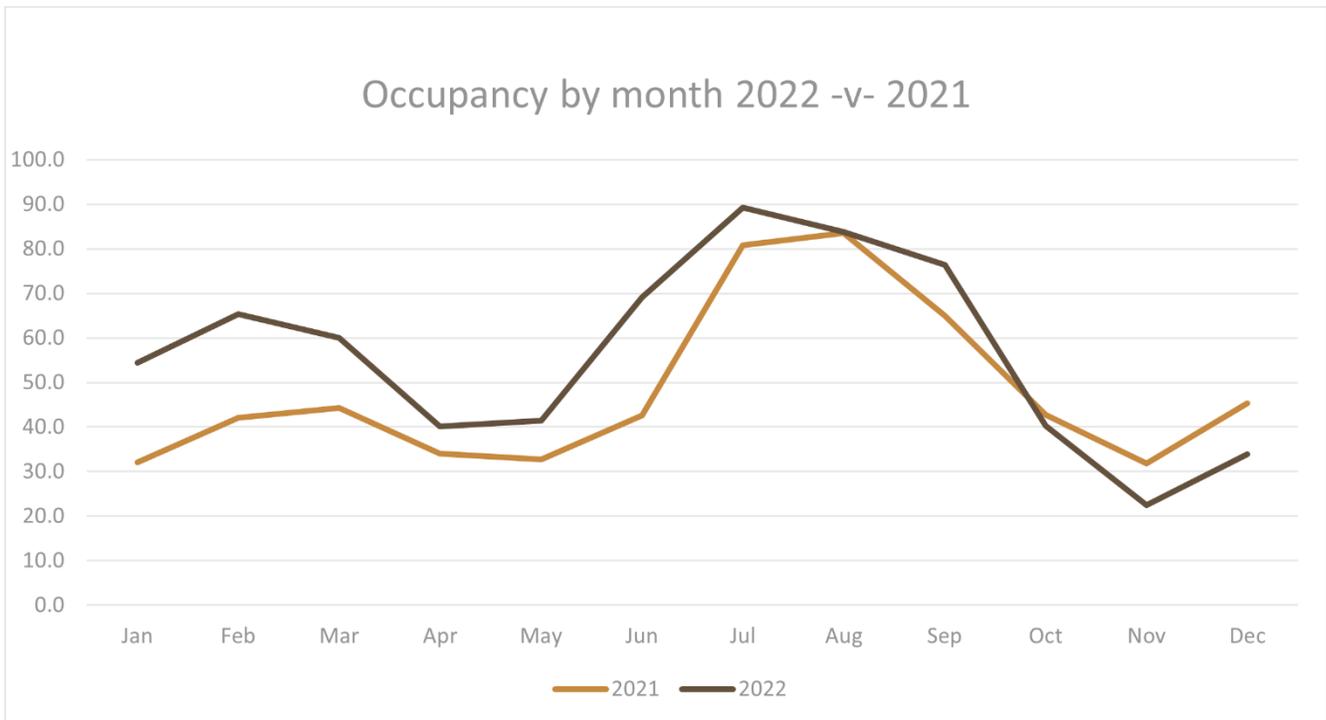
- ✓ 1 million + overnight visits
- ✓ Overnight visits increased by 18%
- ✓ ADR increased by 19%
- ✓ Occupancy increased by 18%
- ✓ Occupancy outperformed BC average
- ✓ Length of stay 1.8 nights

- Average length of stay is consistent with 2021 with both years data collected using Telus Insights but has decreased since 2019 when the 2019 intercept visitor study recorded 2.5 days as the average stay. Certainly, we need to ensure we continue to encourage multiple nights stays.

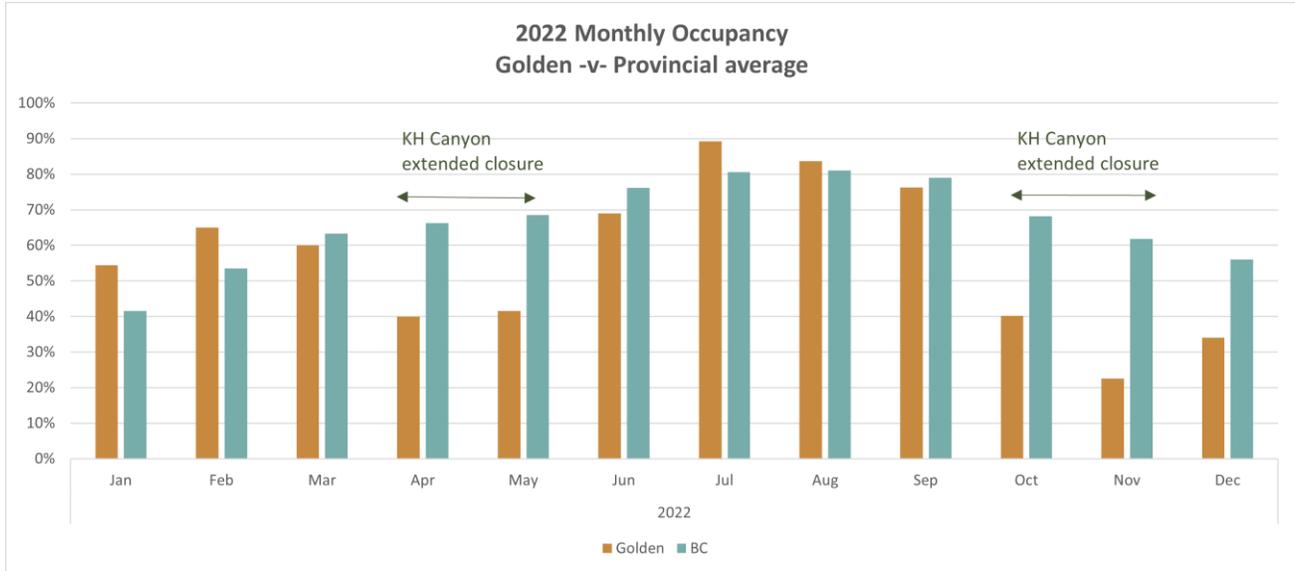
- MRDT revenues outperformed the anticipated 50% increase by a further 33% and demonstrate a return to 2019 gross accommodation revenues.



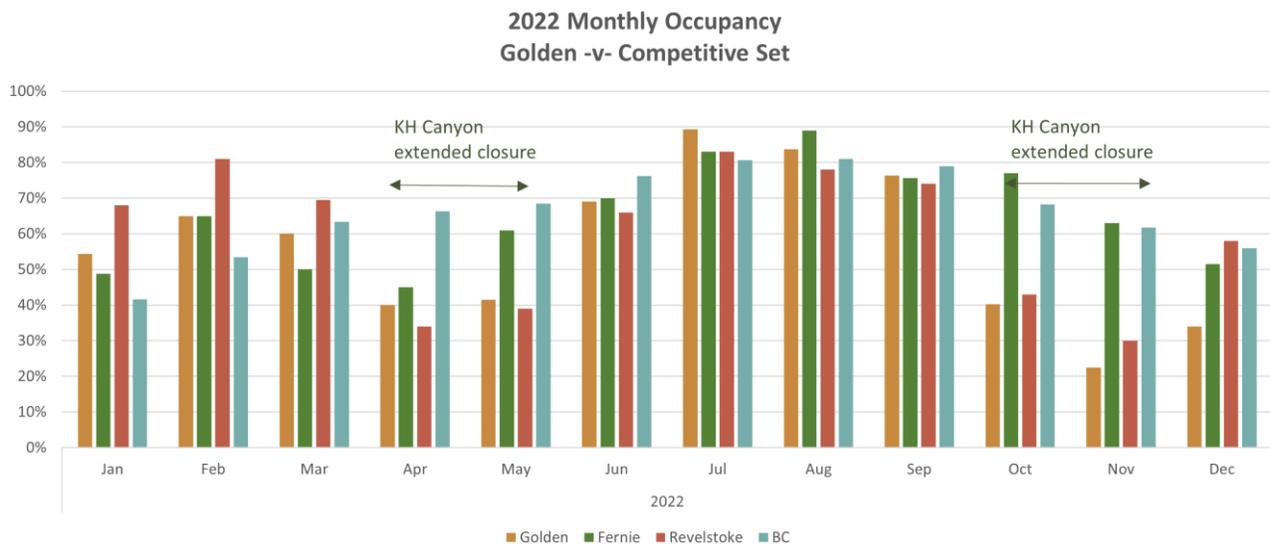
- 2022 occupancy increased against 2021 in shoulder months, except during the fall highway 1 extended closure.



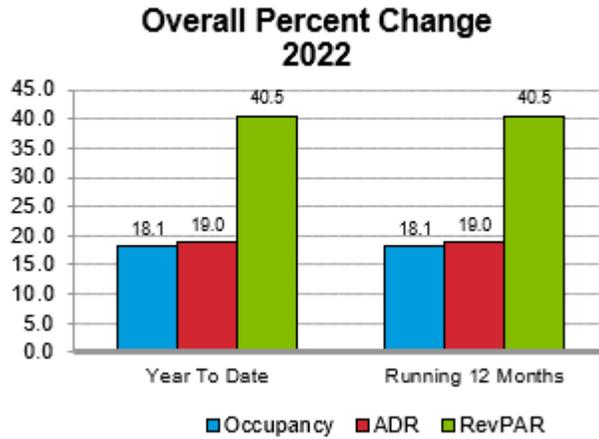
- ❑ Golden accommodations outperformed provincial occupancy except during the extended closures of the Kicking Horse Canyon in spring and fall.



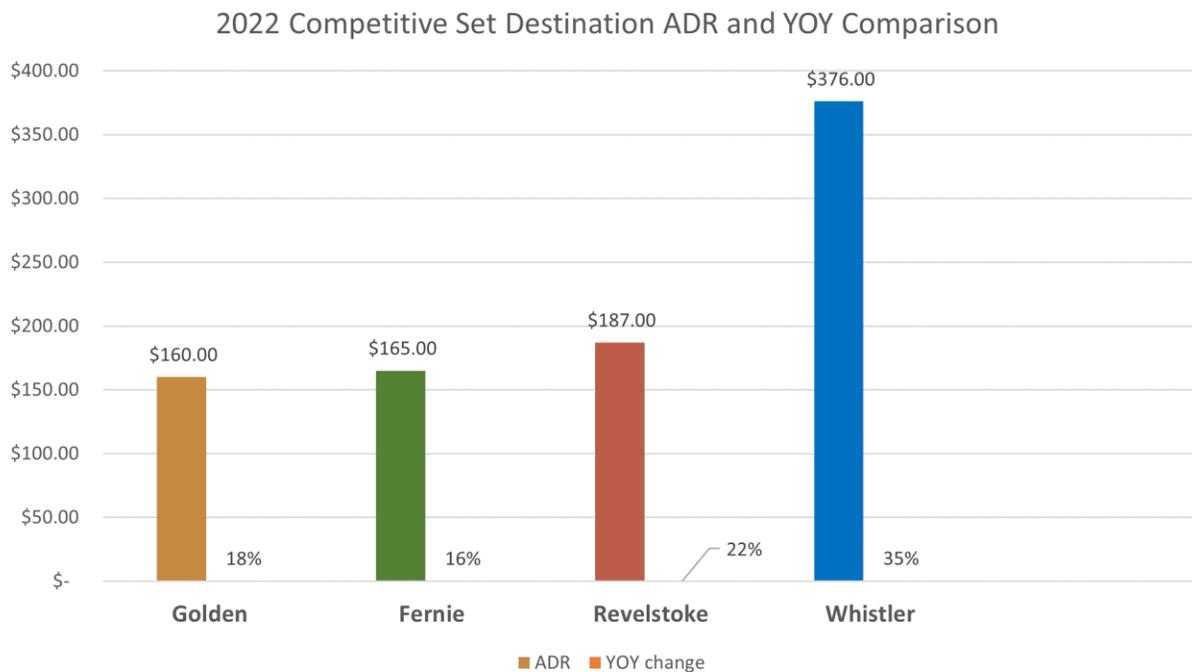
- ❑ Golden accommodations occupancy outperformed Fernie except during highway closures.
- ❑ Golden occupancy outperforms Revelstoke in summer months, likely due to the lower ADR but Revelstoke has higher winter occupancy, perhaps due to proximity to the Lower Mainland and better air and ground service access.



- RevPAR increased significantly against 2021.



- Although Golden’s ADR was lower, the ADR increase is in line with comparable destinations.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Sources: Destination BC Tourism Industry Dashboard, Telus Insights and STR Destination Report.

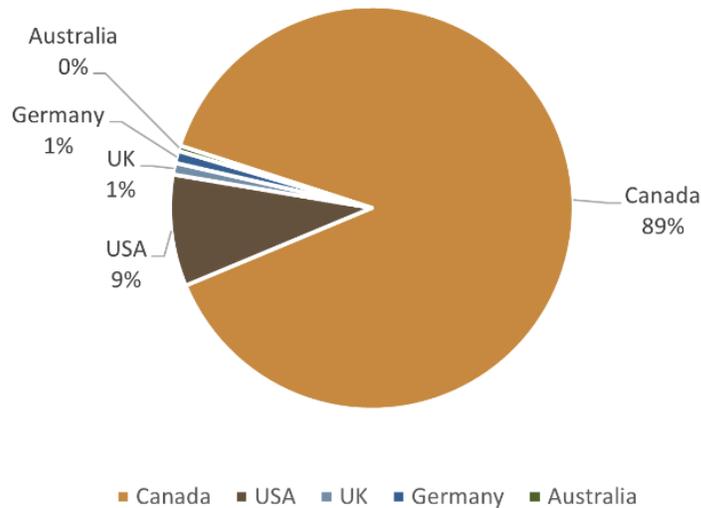
## 2022 DMO PERFORMANCE - HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 109.5 million digital advertising impressions
- ✓ Digital impressions increased by 140%
- ✓ 1.1 million social impressions
- ✓ Web visits increased by 33%
- ✓ Digital campaign web traffic up 92%

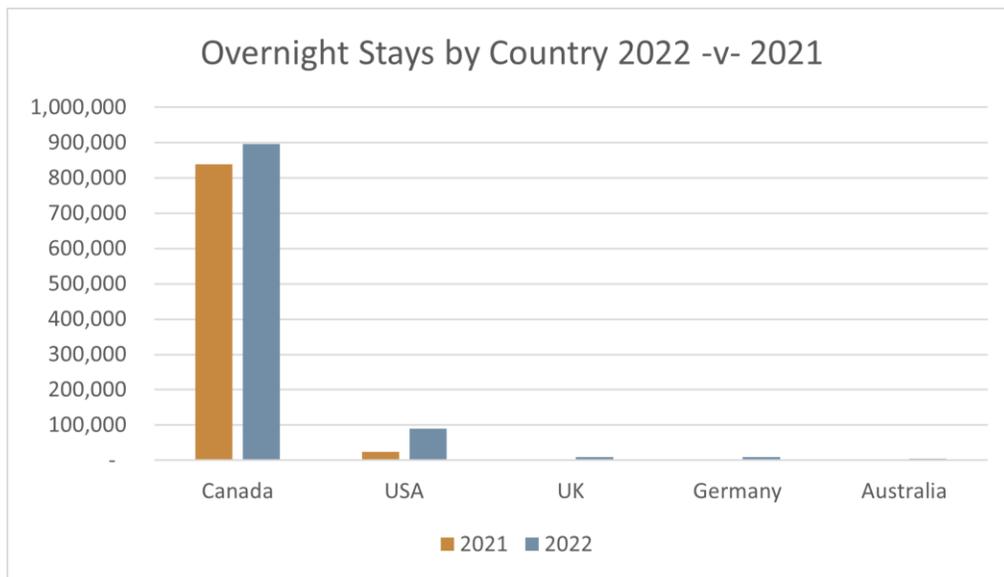


- Whilst the international markets were only just in recovery in 2022, particularly Australia, Nevertheless the geographic visitor demographic reflected the target markets identified in the marketing plan.

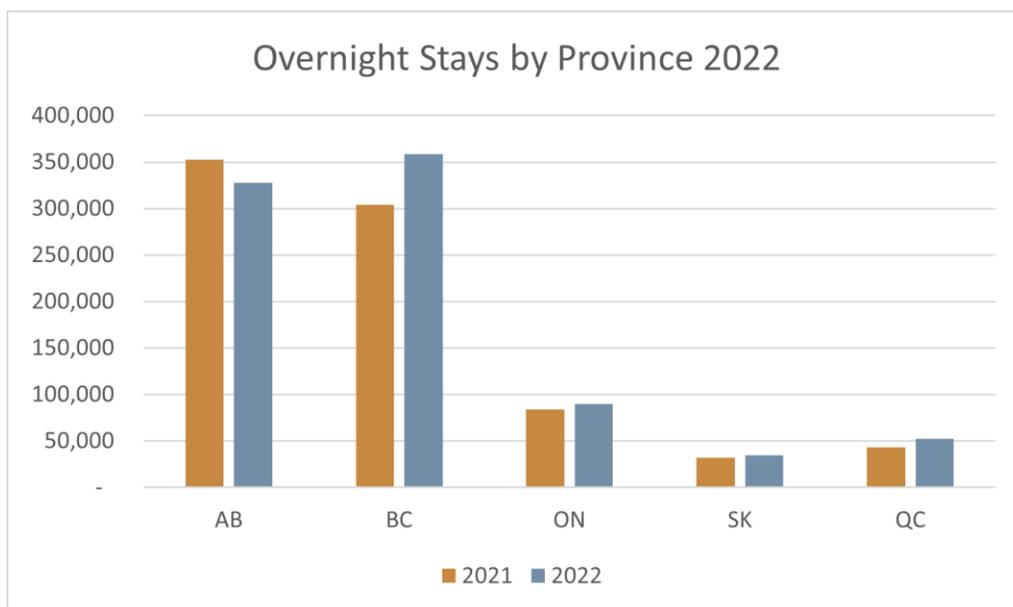
### Overnight Stays by Country- 2022



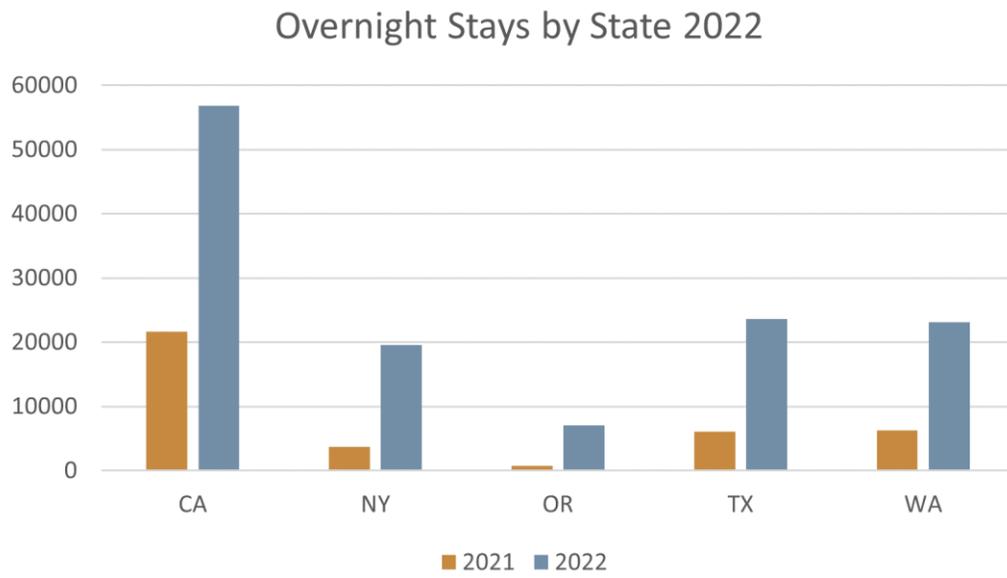
- ❑ Overnight stays from Canada increased by 7% against 2021 and USA and UK increased by 263% and 735% respectively.



- ❑ Alberta decreased 7% against 2021 but since AB is the largest market for Golden, it is natural to expect a dilution once international borders opened, and travel confidence returned.
- ❑ However, it is exceptionally rewarding to see the strong growth BC +18%), as well as continued growth in visitation from Ontario (+7%), and Quebec (+22%) which reflects the increased awareness of Golden as a destination in those markets that results from the shift in marketing funds to those areas during the pandemic.



- Target US markets saw consistent growth with California performing exceptionally well.



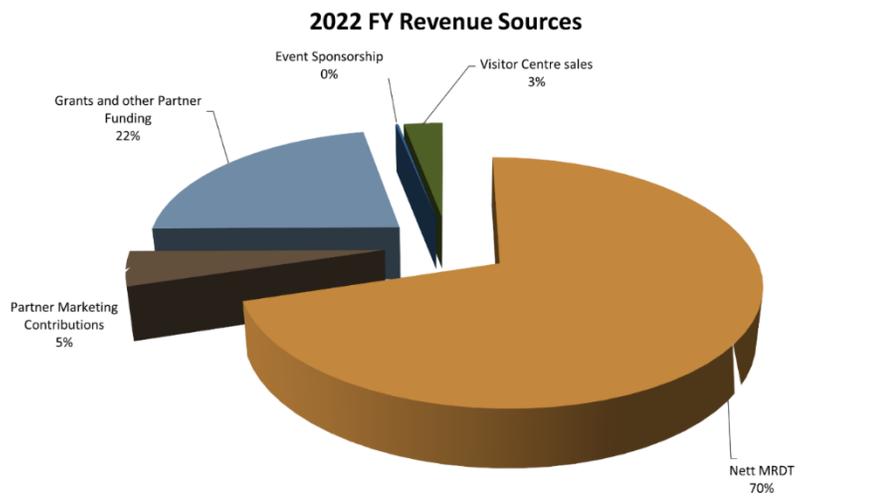
## Financial Summary

Since its inception, Tourism Golden has been committed to being available to all our stakeholder businesses and has operated a successful ‘pay-to-play’ model resulting in most stakeholder businesses participating in co-op advertising activities.

The 2022 fiscal started with a healthy carry-forward and we continued operating with fiscal caution given the uncertainties of post-pandemic recovery and cautiously estimated MRDT.

Overall revenue increased by 72% against 2021. A primary source of revenue for Tourism Golden is the Municipal and Regional District tax (MRDT), however in 2022 we were able to leverage grant, partner and RMI funding for destination management projects that began in 2022.

- ❑ 70% of revenue came from MRDT.
- ❑ 5% of revenue was provided by DMO-led co-op advertising and marketing sales including the website, Travel Planner, and hiking and biking maps as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> party print publications.
- ❑ 3% of revenue was generated from sales at the visitor centre, primarily from the sale of Parks passes.
- ❑ 22% of revenues in 2022 came from grants and other partner funding including:
  - DBC programs including the leading the Golden Triangle consortium in the Open Pool Co-Op Marketing program.
  - Resort Development Strategy initiatives managed on behalf of the Town of Golden, including events hosting, research, transport services and online destination learning programs.
  - Grants for summer students and the DBC Visitor Services Network Indigenous Learning grant.



2022 FY REVENUE	%	AMOUNTS
CORE MRDT (nett of Admin fees)	51%	\$ 810,833
OAP MRDT	19%	\$ 311,057
DMO-LED INITIATIVES	25%	\$ 397,775
GRANTS	2%	\$ 28,238
VISITOR CENTRE SALES	3%	\$ 46,821
OTHER	0%	\$ 2,668
		<b>\$ 1,597,392</b>

The organisation recognises that staff are its most valuable assets, and in anticipation of the increase in budget, along with a recognition that existing and new staff responsibilities have grown exponentially, a new full-time position was created in May 2022 and a review to benchmark of all FTE salaries against industry average was undertaken and implemented in August 2022.

With increased revenue, tactical implementation increased accordingly. It should be noted that Administration reduced as this line item included the 5-year strategy development cost in 2021 which was not present in 2022. Total expenses increased by 54% against 2021, broken out as follows:

- ❑ Marketing +53%
- ❑ Destination Management – NEW
- ❑ Visitor Services +30%
- ❑ Administration -15%
- ❑ FTE salaries +26%

2022 FY EXPENSES	%	AMOUNTS
MARKETING	63%	\$ 882,836
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	6%	\$ 83,968
VISITOR SERVICES	10%	\$ 142,079
ADMINISTRATION	3%	\$ 42,720
FTE SALARIES	17%	\$ 243,163
		<b>\$ 1,394,766</b>



Financial statements produced by Cox & Co. and approved by the Tourism Golden Finance Committee and Board of Directors are available on request.

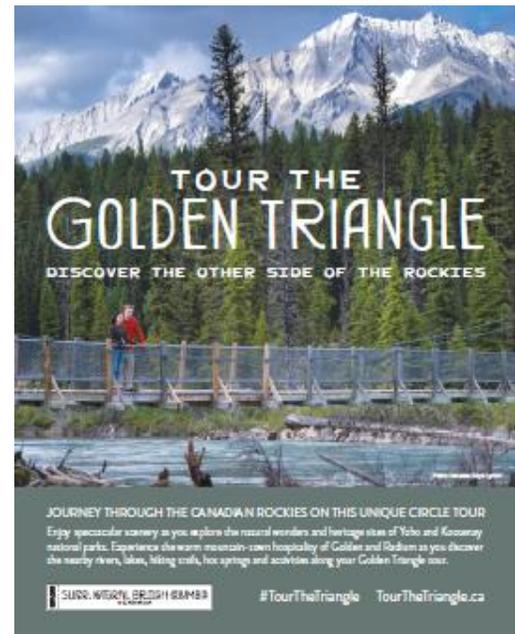
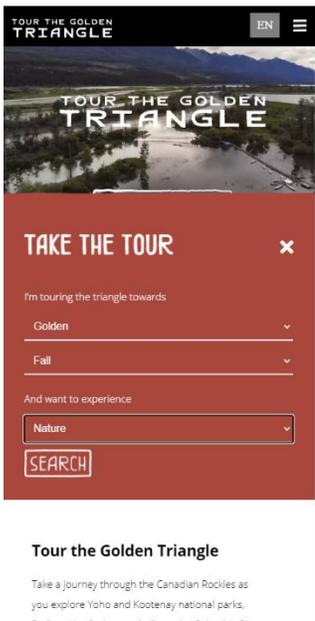
## Marketing Summary

The 2022-2027 Strategic Plan and the 2022 Marketing Plan identify the marketing objectives, target markets, marketing strategies and budgeted spend.

As previously mentioned, the marketing spends increased by 57%, specifically a 50% increase in digital marketing spend resulted in an increase of 92% in web traffic generated by digital campaigns.

Through the DBC Co-op Marketing program we participated with CDMOs and activity associations on the following:

- Golden Triangle (Hwy 93/95/1 road trip/tour)
- BC Bird Trail (Columbia Valley Bird Trail partnership)
- Kootenay Dirt (mountain biking)
- Kootenay XC (Nordic ski)
- Sled Kootenay (snowmobiling)
- Fishing BC
- Get in BC (Hwy 1 road trip AB border to the Shuswap)
- BC Ale Trail



## Advertising

### Highlights

- ❑ Target audiences broadened to include international markets, including a German language campaign.
- ❑ Work Where You Play campaign to support the attraction of seasonal workers.
- ❑ Social media video adverts including accommodation-specific and [Work Where You Play](#) campaigns. Video campaigns garner much higher engagement than static or carousel campaigns.
- ❑ Print advertisements in 30 titles, usually supported by additional distribution through newsletter or social media.
- ❑ Elevator video campaigns in Vancouver & Toronto.
- ❑ Calgary Morning Live TV campaigns.



✓ 30 print advertisements:

- ✓ Canada
- ✓ Pacific NW US
- ✓ UK
- ✓ Australia



✓ Elevator video campaigns VAN & TOR

✓ 2 regional TV campaigns



Media Relations

✓ 51 total features & mentions.

✓ 30 features directly resulting from TG activity.

✓ 12 features supporting KRT & DBC activity.





## Marketing Collateral

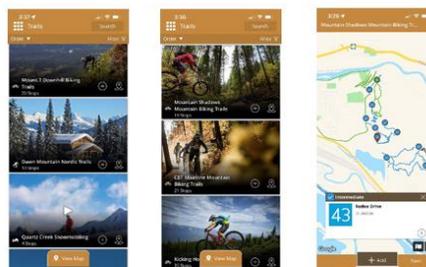
Publishing and distributing our stable of print pieces with a return to typical print runs:

- ❑ Golden Travel Planner – 65,000 copies
- ❑ Golden Hiking Trail Map – 20,000 copies
- ❑ Golden Biking Trail Map – 12,500 copies
- ❑ Outdoor Discovery Map - 10,000 copies



In August 2022, we were pleased to launch the new Golden BC destination app and website widget. Working with the developer, we customised GPS trail information. The app provides the ability to engage directly with app users with push notifications, a useful tool for promoting local events or even emergency information. The 'challenges' functionality enables us to drive traffic to local businesses or locations.

- ✓ Custom GPS trail maps
- ✓ Mountain Bike
- ✓ Snowmobile
- ✓ Nordic Ski
- ✓ Multi-media content
- ✓ Push notifications
- ✓ Tours & Itineraries
- ✓ Challenges
- ✓ Trip planning



Web development projects were initiated for a major upgrade to [www.tourismgolden.com](http://www.tourismgolden.com), as well as the development of websites for the [www.goldenshuttle.ca](http://www.goldenshuttle.ca) and [www.workinggolden.ca](http://www.workinggolden.ca), all of which come to fruition in 2023.

## Events

Encouraged by the Events Hosting Co-op Programs the principal annual events returned. Both Golden Ultra and Golden24 were sold-out events.



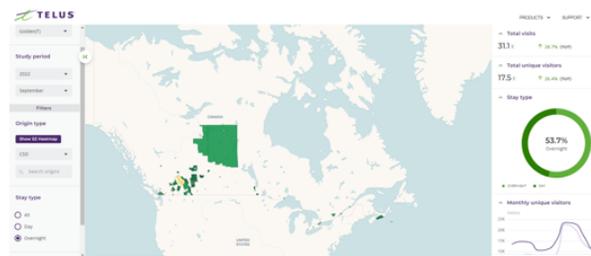
## Research

We are committed to informing and measuring our activity with research and proven data by regularly undertaking visitor and other data research.

Reports and summaries are shared with stakeholders on the website and all data is constantly reviewed and used to track destination performance such as visitor numbers, accommodation occupancies. Elements of the data gathered will help to inform the destination management strategy and we regularly communicate with the Town of Golden on the numbers of STRs within the town boundary and advocate for STR management and other issues.

A project in partnership with DBC using Mobilescapes data to determine primary market segments and identify lookalike audiences was published in spring 2022 and is being used to educate stakeholders and inform our own tactical marketing.

- ❑ Telus Insights ongoing
- ❑ AirDNA
- ❑ STR Destination
- ❑ PRIZM Market segmentation
- ❑ Resident Sentiment



Golden Visitor Segmentation Study  
PRIZM Analysis

Tourism Golden

DETAILED SEGMENT SUMMARY

Golden



## Destination Management

Although we had identified the need to create a destination management strategy, it became clear that the budgeted amount, and available staff time was not realistic. Accordingly, this large project was delayed to 2023 and the funds were allocated specifically to specific projects.

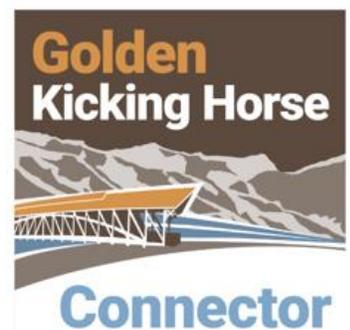
### “Connect Golden” Community Event

Held in June and December, the [Connect Golden](#) events were created in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and were aimed at seasonal workers and residents, as well as providing a B2B networking opportunity. The objective was to raise awareness of the abundant opportunities, activities, experiences, and businesses in Golden.

### Winter Shuttle Services

Using the original destination management strategy funds and funding from the DBC Destination Development program we initiated a transport services study for Golden. The study identified the service needs, potential funding, and operational partnerships. It was a catalyst to quickly move to form a multi-year funding partnership with Kicking Horse Development Corporation and RMI funds supporting in-destination and Calgary Airport shuttle services. Service began on Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, and continued to April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. A website [www.goldenshuttle.ca](http://www.goldenshuttle.ca) was created along with branding and marketing elements for each service.

- ✓ YYC – Golden-Kicking Horse
- ✓ In-destination



## Stakeholder Support Programs

The suite of co-op support programs was enhanced in 2022 with the addition of a pilot project for co-op social media advertising campaigns and the one-off 360 Immersion Digital Assets program.

### Social Media Co-op Marketing Program

- 50% matching funding for eligible expenses.
- 3 partners
- 2.4 million impressions

### Co-op Photo & Video Shoots Winter & Summer

- 50% co-op support for professional seasonal photo & video shoots
- 29 video & photo shoots
- 21 partners with new assets

### 360 Immersion Visual Assets Program

- Assistance with grant qualification
- \$500 subsidy
- 15 partners with high-res imagery and impactful 360 virtual tours with social media links

### Events Hosting Co-op Program

- 50% matching funding for eligible local hosting expenses
- 3 Events

### Subsidised advertising

### Check In Canada booking referral engine

### Shared industry research

### MRDT TG member support



We continued to support MRDT eligible members with the programs created during the pandemic offering free advertising in the Tourism Golden website and annual Travel Planner, as well as a free listing on Check In Canada.

## Visitor Services

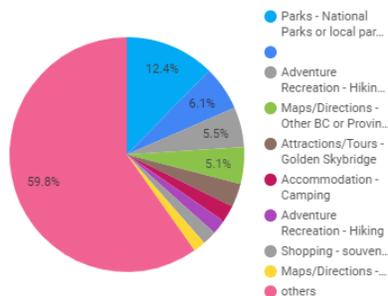
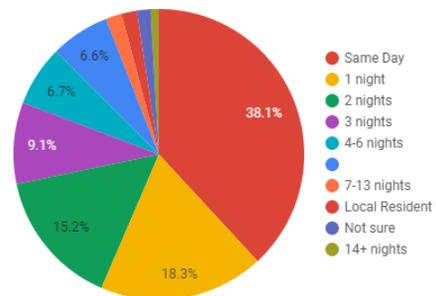
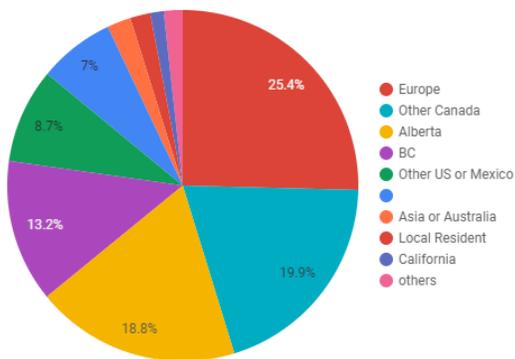
The recruitment of seasonal staff was difficult, and the Visitor Centre was under-staffed. We therefore focussed on operating the centre daily and were unable to undertake the planned off-site attendance at the farmers market, nor implement the volunteer ambassador program. We also had to move to opening 5 days a week as summer students returned to education after the September long weekend.

Nevertheless, attendance at the Visitor Centre rebounded with an increase of 70% in visitors and 61% in parties served.

Issues with washrooms continued throughout the season but we are happy to note that the RMI strategy 2024 provides for an upgrade to the washroom block.

8,380  
visitors

May 1, 2022 - Sep 30, 2022



-End-