


NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM

# 2023

## YEAR IN REVIEW

SPECTACULAR  
**NORTHWEST**   
**TERRITORIES**









# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

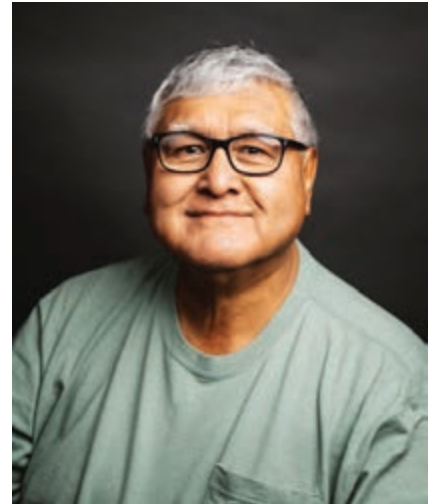
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Every year, the tourism industry in the NWT seems to face a wide range of challenges; while some are constant and inherent to the industry, some are new and unprecedented. It's a good thing we are a strong bunch.

The past winter looked generally successful for many businesses who reported being busy and getting bookings throughout most of the winter, spring, and summer seasons.

This was the first year after three years, that NWT Tourism reinstated membership fees; I am happy to share we currently have 181 registered members, slightly down from 201 last year but up from the 153 before the pandemic. Our members are present in all 5 regions across the territory, and one day, we hope to have members in all 33 communities. Our members operate in many different sectors, which really shows the wide variety of experiences and amenities for our visitors to enjoy in the NWT.

Although labour shortages have always been a challenge for the industry, recently, it has become a true crisis. Our organization has been working with the GNWT, as well as many different organizations and other levels of government, to share useful information and tools in hopes of helping our members get the staff they need to



**“Although it has been a tough time for our industry, we have a lot to look forward to. We are strong and resilient; we have what the world wants: beautiful wide open spaces, breathtaking landscapes, spectacular skies, and warm and kind people to visit with... something here will change you.”**

operate their businesses. There is now a new very helpful page on the members website, the [Links to Resources page](#), please be sure to check it out, as it is a very handy tool for your business. NWT Tourism works hard to keep our members updated with any information or training opportunities taking place that may be helpful for you.

Increasing air access to and within the North was identified as one of our resolutions at last year's AGM. We have been working with our partners in the aviation industry to increase the frequency and capacity of flights to and within the North. NWT Tourism has continued to work with Canadian North on a special tour operator program; the program has been renewed for 2024 and Canadian North is currently accepting [applications](#). It's exciting to see Air Canada's new direct route connecting Yellowknife to Toronto that started in December; this new route makes the North easier to access for visitors from the Eastern part of the Country, as well as our international visitors from overseas.

We are thankful for the support and collaboration we have been getting from our partners in the aviation industry and hope to be able to keep the conversations going to make air access to and within the North even better.

The unprecedented wildfire situation, and evacuation of a large portion of our population over this past summer has been extremely tough on most of our businesses, even those that were not directly affected by the fires or evacuations, as road closures and smoke from the fires impacted many across the North. It was a tough summer, and we are thankful to our partners at the GNWT-ITI for putting some supports in place to assist the tourism businesses, and to our staff who worked quickly after returning back to Yellowknife to get the word out that we are open for business, and invited travellers to come visit. I think it is important to mention the outpour of support we have received from other territories and provinces, and really from around the world, has been heartwarming.

Many of us attended our AGM & Conference this past November. The event was a great opportunity for our industry to come together, build relationships and learn about new opportunities and tools for our businesses to thrive. Thank you to all those who were able to join us!

Although it has been a tough time for our industry, we have a lot to look forward to. We are strong and resilient; we have what the world wants: beautiful wide open spaces, breathtaking landscapes, spectacular skies, and warm and kind people to visit with... come visit, something here will change you.

Quyanaq,



**Gerry Kisoun**  
*Chair of the Board of Directors,  
NWT Tourism*



# MARKETING OVERVIEW

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The Spectacular NWT is always the perfect destination to market, but particularly at this point in time. The wide open spaces, spectacular natural wonders, and the Northern way of life are attractive in the fast-changing world. People seek experiences to learn, be challenged, escape the city, and disconnect; this provides an opportunity like never before.

Northwest Territories Tourism markets the NWT with the help of our partners. We have leveraged partnerships with national partners such as Destination Canada to put the world's best Aurora on the map in the USA. We are leveraging partners such as Expedia to get better data, understand our audiences, and the effects of our marketing efforts. Also, and perhaps most importantly, we are working as closely as ever with media and trade partners from around the globe to spread the word that the NWT is back and ready for business. 2023 was a very challenging year, but the team worked hard and, with new flight connections, is looking forward to an even better 2024 for marketing the NWT.

This year, Condé Nast Traveler selected Northwest Territories to be part of one of the top destinations in the Caribbean and North America to visit in 2024. Condé Nast Traveler is a world-renowned luxury travel magazine featuring content about the best travel experiences in the world. The list of best places to go is now in its eleventh year. Candidates were chosen through Condé Nast Traveler's global network of editors. This esteemed list is eagerly devoured by readers annually.



Following are some of the marketing projects we have completed in the last year and the beginning of partnerships for 2024.

DOGSLEDDING ENTRÉE DESTINATION / NWTT



## CONSUMER DIRECT MARKETING →

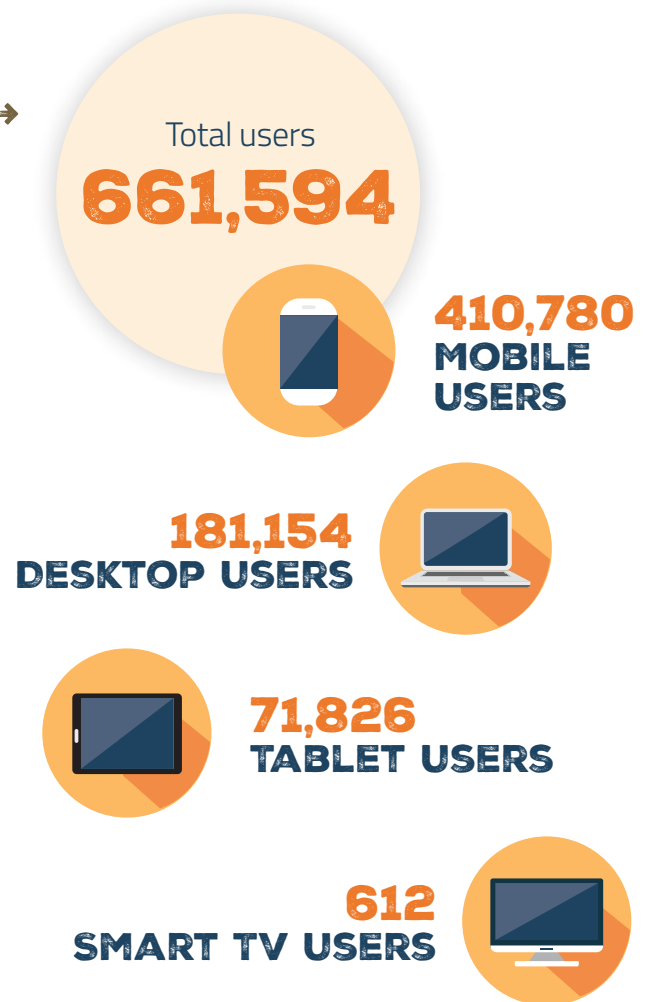
Consumer-direct marketing includes strategies and tools such as general advertising, the NWT travel guides, the NWT Tourism website, social media marketing, consumer shows, and special events. Consumer-direct marketing has continued, albeit with some changes with less widespread messaging to general audiences and rather a focus on specific target audience segments. This tactic has seen better engagement with audiences who will consider a trip to the NWT. Moving forward, NWT Tourism will keep working with carefully selected media channels. Digital search continues to be an essential strategy in marketing, and updates to the backend of the website will see package and operator listings as a focus in the new year and aim to drive more traffic further down the marketing funnel.

### Spectacular NWT Website

The website is a critical tool in measuring the performance of the marketing efforts of NWT Tourism. Website traffic is an objective measurement tool that provides instant feedback on marketing activities, particularly regarding digital advertising and social media. Consumer website marketing continues to focus on premium story content. NWT Tourism encourages potential visitors to the territory to engage with premium story content, learn more about the NWT, and keep the dream of a visit to the territory alive.

A major goal of the website is to move potential visitors further down the 'funnel' to operator pages and packages. NWTT's website focuses less on getting high numbers of (expensive) paid traffic to the site than higher numbers of high-quality 'organic' traffic. NWTT is pleased to see higher quarter-on-quarter growth from organic traffic. NWT Tourism also sees more engagement with the right content and the team is glad to see the work is paying off to get more people to package pages and operator listings.

The SpectacularNWT website has shown considerable growth as it continues to allow potential visitors to interact with the SpectacularNWT brand and learn about the diverse opportunities and experiences that are available in the Northwest Territories. Improving the website has been paramount for NWT Tourism this year. The main changes to the website were to help build a better user journey and ultimately connect people to NWT businesses, events, regions, and communities.



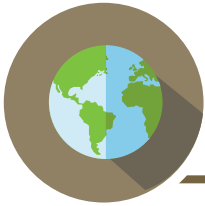
### Top cities by users

📍 Toronto	58,593	📍 Edmonton	21,220
📍 Calgary	27,835	📍 New York	16,682
📍 Vancouver	26,466	📍 Ottawa	11,967
📍 Montreal	22,073	📍 Yellowknife	10,329
		📍 Los Angeles	8,025



From Jan 1, 2023 to December 7th, 2023  
(Source: Google Analytics - GA4)






## TOP COUNTRIES

Country

Users










	Canada	443,007
	United States	164,305
	Germany	5,679
	United Kingdom	5,081
	China	3,887
	Australia	3,349
	Mexico	3,021
	India	2,441
	France	2,251

The tables above display the countries and regions with the highest number of users that visit our English speaking website. We also have other subsites and social media platforms to engage and interact with our non English speaking audiences

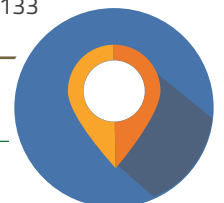
## TOP REGIONS

Region

Users

	Ontario	169,646
	British Columbia	82,946
	Alberta	81,948
	Quebec	71,223
	California	41,496
	New York	25,873
	Northwest Territories	13,835
	Texas	10,279
	New Jersey	10,133

From Jan 1, 2023 to December 7th, 2023  
(Source: Google Analytics - GA4)



## Partnerships

In the last year NWT Tourism put a lot of focus on partnerships. This enhanced the impact of marketing efforts by partnering with other DMOs, DC, ITAC, Expedia, and media outlets like Condé Nast. Such collaborations offer opportunities to reach a wider audience, share resources, and create more compelling marketing campaigns. Expedia Group's research emphasizes the importance of understanding traveler behaviour and connecting with actively searching travelers to create engaging campaigns that stand out (see an example below). Partnering with other Canadian DMOs and national partners can help our tour and activity providers benefit from increased bookings, especially in a climate where travelers seek authentic experiences. By leveraging these relationships, NWTT can effectively market all of our regions as part of Canadian Campaigns ultimately boosting awareness and travel bookings.

### Northern Lights Campaign

One of the main consumer campaigns, other than core domestic activities for paid media, was a Destination Canada partnership between all the Northern Lights partners (Yukon, Manitoba, and NWT). While this campaign's conversion (bookings) was unfortunately interrupted by the evacuation, it was rewarding to see NWT content in the campaign across five states (New York, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and California) and in Times Square with Canada (and the NWT specially) being promoted as an Aurora Destination.

Northern Lights Campaign billboard in New York.



DESTINATION CANADA







NWT Tourism platforms have  
**GAINED**  
**3,690**  
**FOLLOWERS**  
and counting across  
all platforms.

### Digital Advertising and Social Media

As in previous years, NWT Tourism has continued to carry out digital ad campaigns that focused on a wide variety of markets, in line with our “Always-On” strategy. Additionally to paid digital advertising, NWT Tourism has been highly active on social media to connect with potential visitors. As of December 2023, NWT Tourism platforms have gained 3,690 followers and counting across all platforms.

The purpose of digital advertising and social media is to keep the NWT top of mind for potential visitors and drive the traffic to the SpectacularNWT website.

### Notable Achievements



FOLLOWERS AS OF:  
January 9, 2023 80,495  
December 7, 2023 81,887  
**GREW BY 1,392**



FOLLOWERS AS OF:  
January 9, 2023 29,903  
December 7, 2023 30,848  
**GREW BY 945**



FOLLOWERS AS OF:  
January 9, 2023 2,030  
December 7, 2023 2,698  
**GREW BY 668**

# CONTENT MARKETING

The purpose of content marketing is to tell stories about the NWT as a destination. This year, NWT Tourism collaborated with our Agency of Record, Outcrop Communications, to increase story content on the SpectacularNWT website, and to rework and improve stories that were already featured on the website but were either outdated or not exhaustive, in an effort to generate interest and maintain awareness of the NWT as a travel destination. Calls to Action (CTAs) continue to be featured in every story content on the website; links are purposefully added to direct interested readers towards pages that are promoting related operators and packages.



Page	Pageviews	Avg. Engagement Time
<a href="#">Why The Aurora Is Awesome In Summer</a>	9,440	0:47
<a href="#">15 Strange And Dangerous Places Canada's Northwest Territories</a>	5,392	1:58
<a href="#">19 Reasons To See Great Slave Lake</a>	5,319	1:41
<a href="#">5 Mind-Blowing Wonders Of The Nahanni</a>	4,323	0:55
<a href="#">19 Things You Definitely Do *Not* Want To Do In Canada's Northwest Territories</a>	4,063	1:44
<a href="#">Follow The First-Ever Highway To The Arctic Ocean</a>	3,533	0:54



This chart includes GA4 metrics: views and avg. engagement time  
(Source: Google Analytics)

All Traffic	Users
<a href="#">Aurora</a>	134,147
<a href="#">Home</a>	73,462
<a href="#">Yellowknife</a>	36,660
<a href="#">Fishing</a>	34,377
<a href="#">Indigenous Experiences</a>	28,671

Total Users from Jan 1 - Dec 7, 2023 including all traffic sources  
(Source: Google Analytics)

Organic Search	Users
<a href="#">Yellowknife</a>	15,036
<a href="#">Home</a>	11,018
<a href="#">Why the Aurora is Awesome in Summer</a>	8,452
<a href="#">Aurora</a>	4,979
<a href="#">Maps</a>	4,824

Total Users from Jan 1 - December 7, 2023 for organic search  
(Source: Google Analytics)





## Video production

Video content this year included: 33 new videos, 15 TikToks, 33 Reels and 27 video ads. An updated commercial for Rogers Media was also produced in both a 30-second and 15-second version.

The [YouTube](#) channel has been a great new hub for video content, with new video developed and added each Quarter of 2023. The Trailer for the Channel has received great feedback, with the [updated version](#) just uploaded to the platform. A video highlighting the Dempster Highway was produced and uploaded to YouTube.



FOLLOWERS AS OF:

January 9, 2023

6,505

December 7, 2023

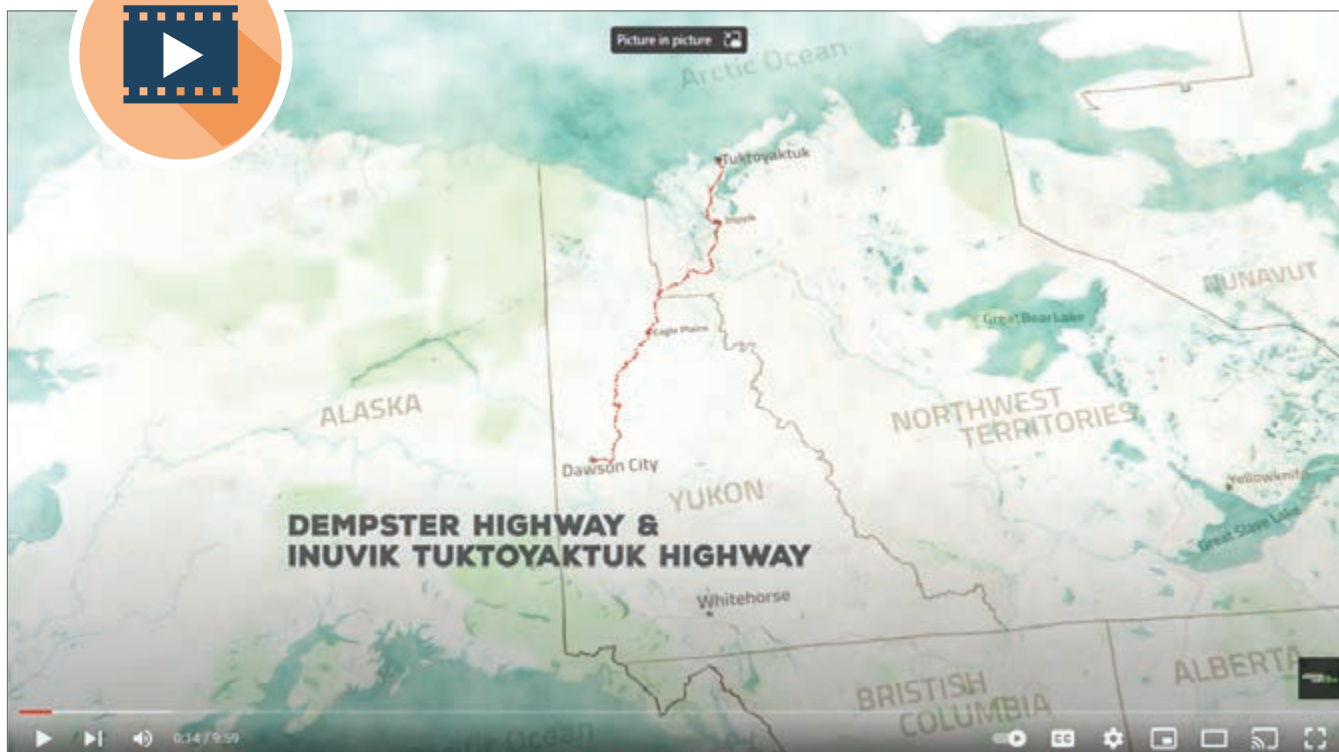
7,096

**GREW BY**  
**583**



### YouTube Stats

- 649.8K views
- 463.6K impressions
- Average view duration: 2:02
- 21.6K watch time (hours)



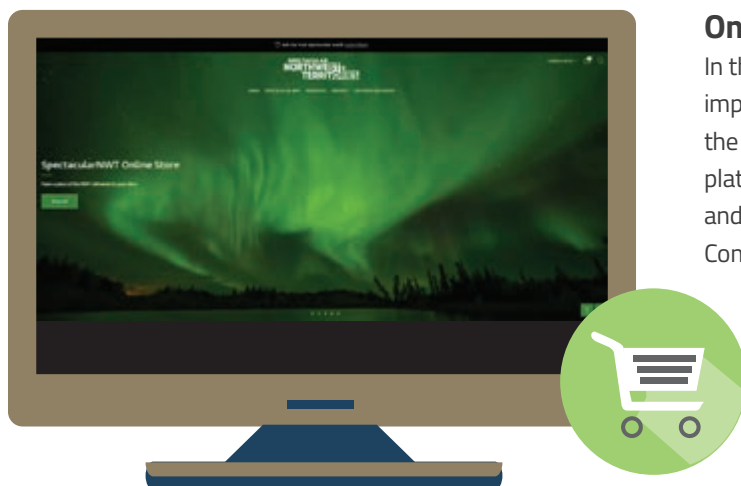
## Call Centre and Info@ Inbox

The NWT Tourism call centre, based at the NWTT office in Yellowknife, is a service-focused option for potential visitors actively considering the destination and seeking more information. The call centre receives phone calls with general inquiries or from people and organizations interested in connecting to the NWT, whether it's media, film, or even someone writing a book. The [info@spectacularnwt.com](mailto:info@spectacularnwt.com) email inbox is monitored regularly; email inquiries received mostly regard general information and Aurora. During the wildfire season in the territory, NWT Tourism received several phone and email inquiries on road conditions as well as travel advisories and alerts.

## Spectacular Guide

What was previously the NWT Explorers' guide was .....→ developed into a handbook to be distributed digitally as well as in physical copies that could be interesting, informative, and easily accessible in both formats.

The Spectacular guide was reimagined as a document that would not need to be reworked and revisited annually, but rather a flexible document to be promoted and distributed in response to any unexpected and sudden changes regarding non-resident tourism. The Spectacular guide is being distributed to Visitor Centers across the NWT and is available for order on the SpectacularNWT website and the link can be accessed through the monthly e-newsletter, website, and other potential distribution methods. The guide also has responsive links to stories, videos, and packages built directly into the document.



## Online Store

In the past year, NWT Tourism has made some significant improvements to its [webstore](#). The online store showcases all the SpectacularNWT branded products, ranging from licence plates to toques, buffs, water bottles, t-shirts, sweaters, and more. Most of the orders were shipped within Canada. Compared to 2022, sales are up by 13% so far in 2023.



## Consumer Show Programming

This year we were able to support five consumer shows.

### The Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show (Toronto, ON)

took place between February 24th and 26th. There was a total of 6 booths, including NWT Tourism.

NWTT had over 500 people visit our booth during the three days of the Consumer Show. Most people seemed to be interested in visiting during the summer, and driving the Dempster Highway was of particular interest. Others were interested in passing through Alberta for a drive and were planning on camping and making stops along the way. The demographic NWTT identified was retirees and young families with pets. A few potential visitors asked about dog friendly restaurants in Yellowknife, and hikes that can be enjoyed around the area. Having Air North's flight from Toronto to Yellowknife is a significant advantage to the Toronto market; Air North's direct flights bring a powerful incentive for more travel from Toronto to Yellowknife. Younger demographics (25-35) were interested in the flights. Considering that people are keen on driving in the NWT upon their arrival, instead of limiting their stay to Yellowknife and vicinities, access to rental vehicles is a concern.

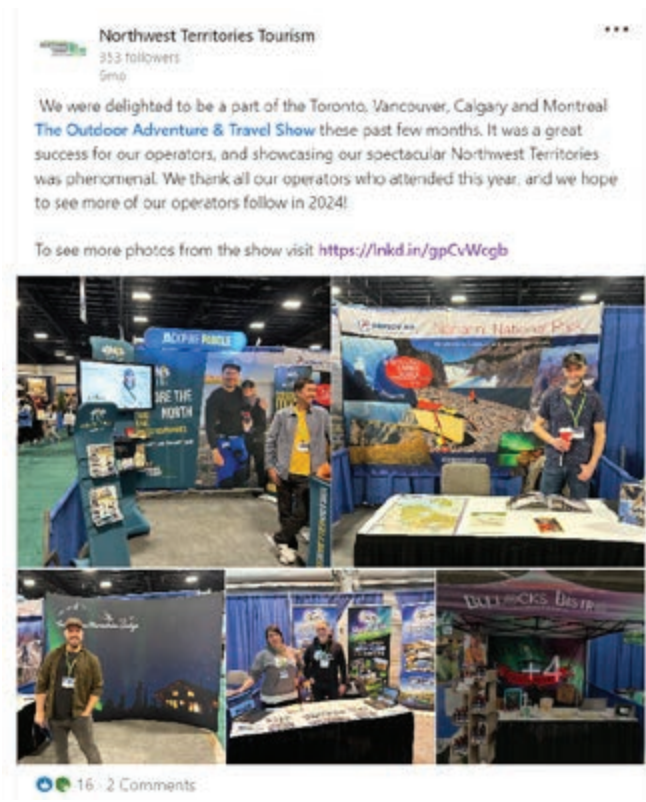
### The Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show (Vancouver, BC)

took place between March 4th and 5th. There was a total of 7 booths, including NWT Tourism.

NWTT had over 250 people visit our booth over the two days of the Consumer Show. There is a considerable Japanese, Hong Kong, Chinese, and Taiwanese presence in Vancouver, and the airlines usually offer direct flights to these destinations out of YVR. Overall, there was a significant spotlight on BC communities and tour operators. There was also an extensive section for biking, especially considering that mountain biking is a very prominent activity in British Columbia. The market at the Vancouver Consumer Show was summer and fall travel; visitors appeared to be more interested in Aurora viewing from August to the end of September. Road trips were also in high demand, especially from retired demographics (55-70) and young families (30-45).

### The Toronto Sportsman Show (Toronto, ON)

took place between March 16th and 19th. Although NWTT did not attend this show, there were 2 booths.



### The Calgary Outdoor Adventure Show (Calgary, AB)

took place between March 18th and 19th. There were 6 booths, including NWT Tourism.

NWTT had just under 150 people visit our booth over the two days of the Adventure Show. Calgary has remarkable knowledge of the NWT. Either they lived in territory at some point, knew of a family member that lived there, had driven up to Yellowknife themselves or are planning on doing so; NWT Tourism received several inquiries about camping and hiking. Potential visitors were curious about bugs in the summer, road conditions, places to stop, and local camping spots. Although locals can sometimes view the Aurora from Calgary, there is still a wish to come to the NWT to experience Aurora viewing. Some people asked for more information on the Dempster Highway and were looking to embark on a drive. Inquiries about potential summer road trips on the Dempster Highway were the most popular at this show. The main demographics at the Calgary Outdoor Adventure Show were young families (28-35) to active pensioners (55-70).

### The Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show (Montreal, QC)

took place between March 25th and 26th. Although NWTT did not attend this show, there was one booth in attendance.



Hosting Destination Canada Media FAM which included Elizabeth Rhodes (Travel + Leisure) and Chloe Burge (freelance) who were hosted by Liz Sperandeo from DC and NWTT.

## MEDIA MARKETING

The media coverage provided by travel writers and broadcast journalists enables an extensive audience reach at a greatly reduced cost compared to paid advertising. This 'Earned Media' also provides a voice of authenticity with readers. Media promotions typically include hosting media FAMs, answering media enquiries and helping with fact checking and photo and video acquisition. Media coverage is monitored regularly.

### Media Shows and Media FAMs

NWT Tourism attended the GoMedia 2023 Conference, which took place in Saskatoon in September. This was Destination Canada's first year resuming the conference after the pandemic. NWT Tourism attended along with media from all our primary markets. NWT Tourism provided a presentation to all attendees and then held individual 15-minute appointments with selected media.

The table below summarizes all the Media FAMs that took place between January and December 2023.

Media FAM	Date
The Weekend Australia Newspaper	February 4 – 11, 2023
Air New Zealand InFlight Magazine	February 11 – 17, 2023
Travel and Leisure Magazine	February 10– 14, 2023
Japan Influencer trip	February 26 – March 1, 2023
Mexico Influencer trip	March 4 – 9, 2023
National Geographic Korea	March 18– 21, 2023
Conde Nast Traveler Magazine	March 31– April 7, 2023
Photo Shoot of Inuvik and Horton River - Colin Field	July 6 – July 22, 2023
Outdoor Canada Magazine- Patrick Walsh	July 6 – 16, 2023
Paddle Magazine - Virginia Marshall	August 16 – 24, 2023
Qantas Airline Film Shoot	October 4 – 7, 2023



## Media Coverage

It is important to note that media coverage can have a long lead time – a Media FAM can result in a publication from one to two years after the FAM has occurred. Mentions are a single print, online articles, or broadcast segment in one outlet. Impressions are the potential views of a single mention or a group of mentions. For online mentions the unique monthly visitor value of the website is counted as the impressions reach, for print it is the circulation value and for broadcast it is the audience reach of the station. For social posts, impressions are the total following of the poster. The full impression AVE value from January to October 2023 was of over **42 million dollars** (exact figure \$42,658,241).



### Canada's Newest National Park Is Only Accessible by Floatplane or Snowmobile

This wild, pristine corner of Canada's Northwest Territories is also considered sacred ground by the Indigenous people who are stewards of the land.

By David Trever | October 29, 2023



You either love the North or you don't. I love the North and always have. Since I was young I've been magnetized by it, compass-like. My inner needle points to where the roads end – and then beyond. I've paddled solo from my home, on the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota, 250 miles north to Rainy Lake. I've taken weeks-long canoe trips with my brother and my friends on the Berens and Bloodvein rivers, which flow from Ontario northwest into Lake Winnipeg. And I once spent an entire winter in northwestern Ontario's boreal forest trapping beavers and pine martens. So it was with massive excitement that I traveled last July as far north from Minnesota as Guadalajara is south: to Canada's newest national park, Thaidene Nëné, in the Northwest Territories.

Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve encompasses more than 5,400 square miles on the eastern side of Great Slave Lake, the deepest lake in North America. It is shockingly remote. The park is contained within the Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area, which is bordered on the northeast by the Thaidene Nëné Wildlife Conservation Area, both are part of an Indigenous Protected Area. What this means broadly is that all of that land – once threatened by diamond and uranium mining – is safe from development. What it means specifically is that the park and the lands around it are administered and managed by the Łutsël K'è Dene First Nation, the government of the Northwest Territories, Parks Canada, and other Indigenous governments including the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Deninu K'ue First Nation, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation.



The full impression  
AVE value from  
January to October 2023  
was of over

**42 MILLION  
DOLLARS**



## Photo Library

NWT Tourism populates and maintains an online photo database for the use of travel trade and travel media who are promoting tourism to the NWT. The photo library can be found at [nwtphoto.ca](https://nwtphoto.ca). Individuals downloading photos include a mix of travel trade, travel media, and some industry partners. There are currently 28,800 approved visual assets in the CANTO Library.

NWT Tourism strives to acquire stunning digital assets to promote the territory as a travel destination. We use the tool Crowdriff to monitor the use of the [#spectacularnwt](#) hashtag. This allows us to keep track of posts so we can acquire photo and video assets from Northern creators in the NWT. We also get assets as part of the value in supporting media FAM trips across the territory. Here are some of the best images acquired this year:



MOUNTAIN RIVER CAMPING ROB STIMPSON / NWTT



WHATI FALLS KAILA WALTON / NWTT



YELLOWKNIFE DESTINATION CANADA ROADSHOW / NWTT



MOUNTAIN RIVER CANOEING  
ROB STIMPSON / NWTT



CARIBOU IN THE SAHTU NICKY LYNN RICHARDS / NWTT



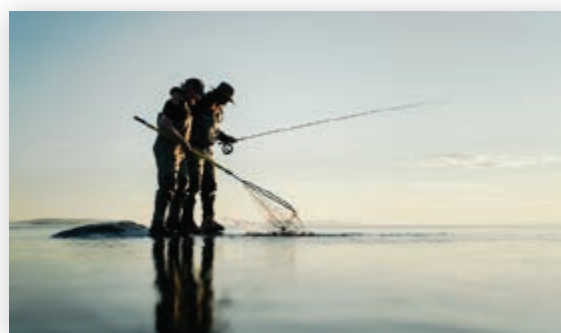
THAIDENE NENE HOOKE / NWTT



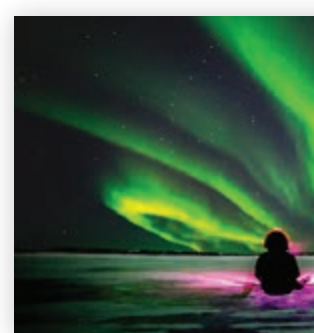
SOUTH SLAVE  
TASHINA WEAGLE / NWTT



HAY RIVER BEACH AARON TAMBOUR / NWTT



THAIDENE NENE HOOKE / NWTT



YELLOWKNIFE AURORA  
JAMES GALSINAO / NWTT





SNOW CASTLE LENORA BARRETT / NWTT



THAIDENE NENE HOOKE / NWTT



NORTH SLAVE VIRGINIA MARSHALL / NWTT

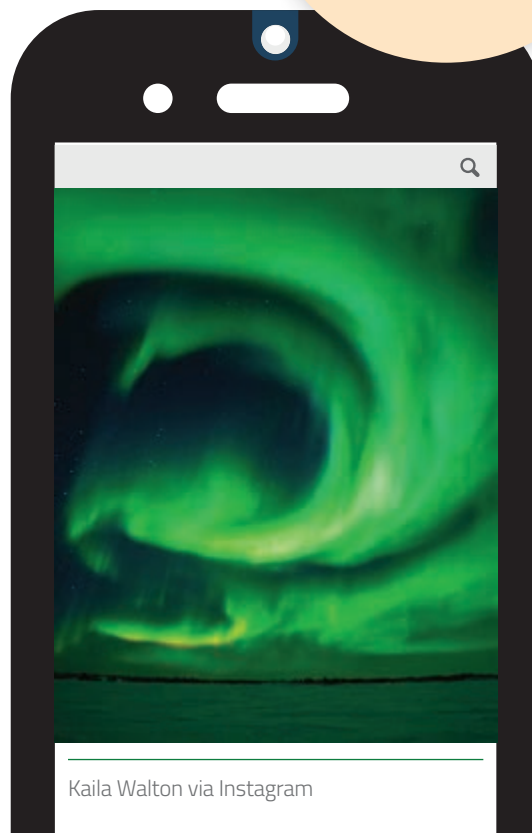


YELLOWKNIFE HOOKE / NWTT



PTARMIGAN IN THE SAHTU NICKY LYNN RICHARDS / NWTT

NWT Tourism  
has over  
**105,500**  
approved UGC assets  
in Crowdriff.



## Crowdriff

Crowdriff is an online platform that gathers the most relevant and engaging User Generated Content (UGC) into one place. Within Crowdriff, NWT Tourism can create image galleries for the SpectacularNWT website and social media channels and create public photo walls and public galleries. Crowdriff also provides an efficient way to request and manage rights and permissions from UGC. NWT Tourism has over 105,500 approved UGC assets in Crowdriff.



# BUSINESS AND EVENT TRAVEL

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## NWT CONFERENCE BUREAU

The [NWT Conference Bureau](#) website is a subsite of the main page SpectacularNWT. The Conference Bureau website is geared towards aiding planners in any stage of organizing an event in the NWT. From initial interest to site selection, to final bookings and marketing, the Conference Bureau website offers the resources to support planners.

## TRADE SHOWS

### **Destination Direct and Tete a Tete - February 6th to 7th, 2023 - Ottawa, Ontario**

Destination Direct is a two-day event packed with meetings, education, and social networking, aimed at connecting DMOs with association executives and conference planners; it is a valuable event for the NWT Conference Bureau to attend annually. The format of the week is an effective combination of quality one-on-one meetings, education on current industry trends, social networking opportunities with other DMOs and planners, and a high value trade show in Tete-a-Tete, which is Ottawa's premier trade show for association and not-for-profit leaders, meeting and event planners, and government Procurement Officers from across Canada.



Destination Direct and Tete a Tete.

## Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce Annual Tradeshow - May 14th to 15th, 2023 – Yellowknife, NWT

The NWT Conference Bureau and NWTT staff participated in the NWT Tourism booth at the annual Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce Trade Show. This tradeshow is a great opportunity to engage with residents and discuss the function of the NWT Conference Bureau and NWTT.

## Incentive Canada Summer Edition – August 13th to 16th, 2023 – St. Johns, Newfoundland

This event is an incentive travel focused opportunity for DMOs to connect with qualified and vetted incentive agencies. The three-day event provided several networking opportunities and up to 15 one-on-one appointments. The CMO found the direct meetings with incentive event planners especially valuable, delivering a catered presentation and having meaningful conversations with individuals already interested in the North. Planners were hosted by Destination St John in a unique format showcasing Canada as a place to bring Incentive Travel Groups.

NWTT's Business Events and Partnerships Specialist attending Destination Direct



Incentive Canada Summer Edition

## SPORTING EVENTS

### Polar Pond Hockey – Hay River – March 2023

NWT Tourism partnered with Polar Pond Hockey organizers to promote the event through radio, print and social media ads.

### Midnight Sun Golf Tournament – Yellowknife – June 2023

NWT Tourism provided input to event organizers in the initial stages of event planning.

### 2023 Canadian Senior Table Tennis Championships – Scheduled for September 2023

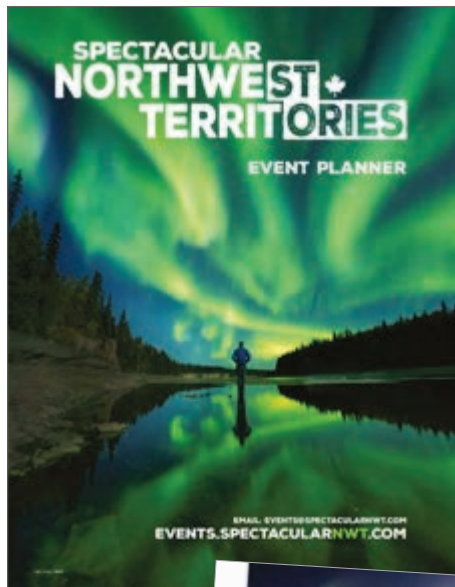
The NWT Conference Bureau provided input to the head organizer of the 2023 Canadian Senior Table Tennis Championships. Over the course of several meetings, the NWT Conference Bureau discussed fundraising and sponsorship strategy including providing contacts and document templates, discussed logistics planning, and pledged to provide signage and branded gifts for the event. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled due to wildfire evacuations; it was scheduled to take place in Hay River in September 2023. Table Tennis NWT will re-submit their bid to host the event in 2024 and will continue to collaborate with the NWT Conference Bureau as the RFP process proceeds.



## BUSINESS AND EVENT TRAVEL PROJECTS

### Events Planner

NWTT finalized edits to the former Conference Bureau Planner and recently re-named Events Planner; this document serves as marketing material and a detailed directory for planners looking to learn more about the territory. With pages dedicated to the communities of Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith, this is a valuable resource for anyone working in the Events and Conference space across the territory.



### Show Your Badge Program

Many Canadian and international cities offer a 'Show Your Badge Program' for inbound business event delegates. These programs offer event delegates specific discounts on goods, services, and experiences from local businesses while they are in the region for their designated event. NWTT and the NWT Conference Bureau launched the [NWT Show Your Badge Program](#) this year by sending a direct email communication to NWTT Members inviting them to join. The Conference Bureau developed guidelines, a webpage, and a program logo for the launch and has started a member database. As membership grows in the coming months, the next steps will be to distribute letters and decals to participating businesses and roll out the program to inbound conferences. This program will provide an opportunity for participating members to promote their businesses to guaranteed visitors before they arrive. A successful Badge Program will help promote the NWT as a destination for conferences and business events, therefore helping to attract future MICE bookings, not to mention encouraging local spend and economic dispersion in communities during events.



## INTERNATIONAL MARKETS PROMOTIONS

NWT Tourism works with the travel trade through established networks in both domestic and international markets.

NWT Tourism works closely with international travel trade companies with offices in Canada and employs the services of General Sales Agents (GSAs) in key international markets: Japan, China, Germany, Australia, Mexico, South Korea, and United Kingdom. NWT Tourism's GSAs act as an extension of our team in their respective markets to ensure awareness is high and that long-standing relationships with key accounts are being developed.

### Australia

This year, NWTT's Australia General Sales Agent visited Yellowknife with the goal to grow product and destination knowledge and connect with operators. The Australian market activity continued to focus on the World's Best Aurora with the NWT as an add-on to Western Canada itineraries in British Columbia and Alberta. NWT Tourism partnered with Destination Canada for their Qantas consumer campaign seeing videos filmed in the territories to then be distributed to Qantas frequent flyers. Our in-market representative managed trade partnerships with emphasis on winter Aurora, seeing success with the ski tour operators as well as consumer direct awareness following Northwest Territories participation in the Snow Travel Expos. Entrée Destinations itineraries were also showcased at the annual Virtuoso on Tour event held over two days in Sydney, which saw hundreds of agents attend and meet with our in-market rep to learn about selling Aurora in the Northwest Territories. This focus will continue into 2024 as Northwest Territories Tourism looks to endorse Entrée Destinations itineraries covering both seasons, including the summer with Nahanni National Park-Virginia Falls viewing, Bison Sanctuary-Bison viewing and a lodge stay at Frontier Lodge on Great Slave Lake in Thaidene Nene National Park. And the Winter season including a lodge stay, Aurora activity and dog sledding around the Pingos.

### Mexico

NWTT's Mexico GSA visited Yellowknife to grow destination and product knowledge and connect with local operators. A Trade and Influencer FAM took place from March 3rd to 9th, 2023; it was organized by Dream Destinations and hosted two influencers: Pammalier, who produced 103 stories and 7 publications on Instagram, and Pao Zurita, who produced 106 stories and seven publications on Instagram, five video reels and one publication on Facebook, and five videos on Tik Tok. The announcement of new Air Canada direct Monterrey – Toronto flight was also issued this year.

### Japan

NWT Tourism's GSA collaborated with 5 key accounts (JTB, HIS, Global Youth Bureau, Fellow Travel and Alpine Travel) to create new programs and support their program sales in Japan. The GSA was also very busy attending several consumer events to expand sales for our key partners. The NHK Special Program "Great Nature – Aurora in Yellowknife" media promotion was very well received in Japan, so much so that the TV program played a total of 4 times between March and April.

### Germany & UK

In cooperation with America Unlimited, a cross media NWT campaign with the Inside Society Magazine was launched on March 23, 2023 and inserted into the Handelsblatt, one of Germany's largest daily newspapers for business and finance. As part of our cooperation with Kanu Magazine - the following articles were published: March & October 2023 Keele River & South Nahanni River. In the third season of Arte's series "Canada's National Parks" Inuvik National Park with its base in Inuvik was featured during one episode of 45 minutes. NWTT participated in the destination booth shared with other DMOs at the joint Canada stand organized by Denkzauber at CMT Stuttgart (January 14 – 22, 2023). During the course of the show, 265,000 consumers were reached. 450 NWT brochures as well as 200 itinerary suggestions were distributed. There was high demand for travel counselling, or the launch of the new Air Canada connection between Toronto and Yellowknife. NWT Tourism's GSA prepared a press release to the trade press in the German-speaking markets and the UK as well as included the news in our trade newsletters. One German-speaking and 2 UK tour operators immediately picked up the package.

## South Korea

In partnership with Destination Canada, NWT Tourism hosted Yuna Kim in Yellowknife in March 2023; Yuna is a two-time Olympic medalist and honorary ambassador appointed by the Embassy of Canada in Seoul to celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and South Korea. Her personal travel stories have been featured in National Geographic Traveler's May 2023 issue and also in Canada's 60 Travel Ideas booklet as special insert to National Geographic Traveler's May 2023 issue. Yellowknife, Yuna Kim's Aurora viewing and other experiences, were featured in the videos Destination Canada produced which were distributed and amplified with paid media activities.

Aurora viewing, unique cultural experiences, diverse outdoor activities and people in the NWT have been featured in National Geographic's July 2023 issue in a 4-page article.

A trade Aurora campaign was carried out in partnership with Destination Canada to promote Aurora viewing and authentic northern Canada's cultural experiences during the winter season targeting High Value Guests and honeymooners.

NWT Tourism's GSA generated and distributed storytelling of NWT on the NAVER blog platform, the most dominant search engine and blog platform provider in South Korea.

## Chinese Speaking Markets

The Destination Canada x Air Canada Hong Kong Top Agent FAM took place in Yellowknife from March 23rd to 27th, 2023. Later in the year, a partnership between Air Canada Taiwan and NWT Tourism was carried out to promote Aurora to a Taiwanese audience. From December 2022 to March 2023 there was a co-promotion partnership with Sungiven Foods, which has 9 locations in Metro Vancouver and shoppers were incredibly engaged to win a trip to the NWT.



## TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS

Rendez-vous Canada 2023 took place in Quebec City from May 28th to June 2nd. As Canada's signature tourism marketplace where international travel trade connect with the country's leading tourism industry partners, RVC is an incredibly valuable tradeshow to connect with existing partners and develop new connections. NWT Tourism conducted 62 12-minute scheduled appointments over the course of three days. These appointments were with trade partners from all over North America, as well as our key target markets including Mexico, Australia, South Korea, Japan, China, Germany, as well as the UK and France which are secondary markets. NWT Tourism's GSAs from Japan, China, and Germany also attended and had full meeting schedules.

## TRAVEL TRADE FAM TOURS

A Trade FAM tour from South Korea will take place at the end of the year; 2 participants from Chalet Travel will visit the territory in December to experience various NWT suppliers. NWT Tourism also hosted two Trade FAMs from Japan: key partners from HIS in March and representatives for Global Youth Travel in August. Both these FAMs served to create new programs which will be in market in Japan for 2024.

NWT Tourism also hosted the Evergreen FAM tour from February 28th to March 6th, 2023. Although Evergreen is North American based, it sells packages in the Mexico market and also works with several of NWTT's key in-market partners.

We also hosted a Hong Kong FAM tour from March 23rd to 27th, 2023 in partnership with Destination Canada and Air Canada. Five high-value trade partners from Hong Kong visited the NWT to gather updated product knowledge and itinerary planning suggestions.

## REGION-SPECIFIC MARKETING

The purpose of the regional marketing activities is to engage in outward-facing marketing activities that attract visitors to the NWT and to the regions by using regional content. The primary tool to guide spending and implementation of regional marketing activities are the regional marketing plans. There are five plans prepared annually by NWTT in partnership with each of the regions, which ensures the unique perspectives, and the in-depth content knowledge of the regions are captured. With the help of our Agency of Record, Outcrop Communications, NWT Tourism added five 'What to Do' stories to the SpectacularNWT site. Each story highlights the must-dos and must-sees in each region and features breathtaking images from a wide variety of locations and communities.

HORTON RIVER COLIN FIELD / NWTT



### Western Arctic

An advertorial was purchased in the Inuvik & Western Arctic accommodation and service guide for 2023. NWTT supported a FAM in the Western Arctic by 'Sea Women Expeditions', a company specializing in Arctic expeditions for women. NWTT supported a video/image acquisition shoot on the Horton River and in the Town of Inuvik. These new video and image assets will be placed in Canto, our digital asset management platform and then used in content development on SpectacularNWT.com and a variety of media platforms to market the region, paddling, and the community of Inuvik. ["What to do in the Western Arctic Region"](#) highlights the Dempster Highway, Fort McPherson Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Aklavik, the drive to Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Uluhaktok.

NORTH SLAVE VIRGINIA MARSHALL / NWTT



### North Slave

Several operators participated in a Co-op radio campaign with True North FM which ran from January to March 2023. NWTT supported the Snow King Festival and staff enjoyed a guided tour of the event, gathering great information on the technical challenges and history of the festival. A media buy with Fly Fusion Magazine included a full page ad promoting remote lodges, NWT lakes and summer Aurora. The media buy also included web banner, newsletter ad and social media posts. As part of a multi year campaign to increase awareness of lodges in the Northwest Territories, NWTT ran a targeted social media campaign promoting North Slave Lodges. Lodges, and the packages they offer, were promoted via media ads on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, targeting users based in Canada and the United States, which have shown an interest in fishing or outdoor activities.





DEHCHO CONNOR FURNEAUX / NWT



SAHTU CONNOR FURNEAUX / NWT



KASBA LAKE LODGE BAXTER REDFERN / NWT

## Dehcho

UpHere magazine's Jan/Feb 2023 Travel Edition featured a full-page ad for the Dehcho Connection Driving Route. NWT Tourism acquired images from Connor Furneaux's photoshoot in the Dehcho and Sahtu regions. ["What to do in the Dehcho Region"](#) highlights the Mackenzie River, Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson, Nahanni National Park Reserve, Wrigley, Jean Marie River, and Sambaa K'e.

## Sahtu

NWTT worked with the Sahtu Regional Tourism Officer (RTO) and a local videographer to produce a video that features local community champions welcoming prospective visitors to their communities. NWT Tourism continued to work with the RTO on updates to the Sahtu Guide. New content will be added including waterfalls, Aurora, and new images from local photographers. A media FAM into the region by Outdoor Canada Hunting and Fishing Magazine will result in an editorial feature to appear in the Nov/Dec 2023 issue of the magazine. A video ["Paddling in the Sahtu"](#) was produced and uploaded to NWTT's YouTube channel. ["What to do in the Sahtu Region"](#) highlights Great Bear Lake, Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, the CANOL Heritage Trail, Norman Wells, Tulita, and access to Deline. A video ["2023 Paddling Film Festival World Tour - Our Partners"](#) was produced to highlight the 2023 18th Annual Paddling Film Festival and was also uploaded to YouTube.

## South Slave

NWT Tourism partnered with Polar Pond Hockey organizers to promote the event through radio, print and social media ads. NWTT visited the 60th Parallel Visitor Centre and continues to liaise with the Region on an ITI initiative to update it. An editorial appeared in the June issue of Canada Travel & Lifestyle magazine promoting the South Slave Region. The article highlighted several communities, 'What not to Miss', Wood Buffalo National Park and the Thebacha & Dark Sky Festival. A media buy with Canada Travel magazine included an editorial piece and billboard ad in the Greater Toronto Area.









# INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

NWT Tourism continues to work on relevant advocacy issues at the territorial, provincial, and national level. Advocacy work is carried out thanks to the partnership with several different organizations, some of which include the GNWT, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the Provincial and Territorial Industry Associations (PTTIA). Below are some of the advocacy activities carried out by NWT Tourism over the last year.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 2014 NWT Tourism has been offering annual scholarships of \$1,500 to NWT students pursuing post-secondary studies in hospitality and tourism. This is the ninth year that NWT Tourism has offered scholarships. This is the first year we are including pilot and aircraft mechanical engineer training as criteria for our scholarships. Also, this is the third year we have partnered with Rio Tinto in awarding the Rio Tinto Indigenous Student Tourism Scholarship.



The recipient of the Rio Tinto Indigenous Student Scholarship was Naokah Bailes, she is starting her third year as a student of Nature-Based Tourism Management at the University of Northern British Columbia. Naokah is First Nations, born and raised in the NWT with a passion for tourism.

One recipient of the NWT Tourism Scholarship was Sommer Wiley, a Sahtu beneficiary who graduated high school in June 2023 and has been accepted to attend flight school at Adventure Aviation in Grande Prairie (AB). Sommer's work with Canoe North and North Wright Airways during the hunting and tourism season has been an inspiration to pursue a career as a bush pilot.

Another recipient of the NWT Tourism Scholarship was Vikas Yadav, who is currently working as a final-year apprentice Aircraft Maintenance Engineer for Northwestern Air Lease in Fort Smith, NWT and is also pursuing academics for aircraft maintenance journeyman at Red River College in Portage La Prairie, MB.

## WORKFORCE

The [Member website](#) now features a "[Links to Resources](#)" page which includes links to funding programs from the Government of the Northwest Territories, CanNor, BDIC, Tourism HR Canada, the Metis/Dene Development Fund (MDDF), and Futurpreneur, links to Training of Workforce and Education Programs offered by CanNor, Tourism HR Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and EnpreNorth, and finally links to Resources, Handbooks and Development Tools made available by Tourism HR Canada, TIAC, Destination Canada, and ITAC. Several of these programs offer funding and/or resources to attract and retain workforce. During this year, NWTT has sent out several member communications to share programs and resources made available to the sector by several organizations to tackle issues related to labour shortage. NWT Tourism continues to work with GNWT, the Federal government and many other partners to try to assist tourism businesses with recruitment and retention of workers to jobs in the tourism industry and will continue this work in 2024.

## AIR ACCESS

As of December 2023, Air Canada has introduced non-stop, year-round service from Toronto to Yellowknife. This new service, which operates three times a week, provides increased connections between eastern Canada and the NWT.

The flight's schedule is set up to align with connections for international travellers to Yellowknife via Toronto; furthermore, thanks to the interline partnership with Canadian North, visitors are able to connect to their destinations in the NWT beyond Yellowknife.



As of December 2023, there are four airlines offering direct flights into Yellowknife Airport:

- » **Air Canada** – from Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver
- » **Air North** – from Whitehorse, Toronto, and Ottawa (Toronto and Ottawa are seasonal flights)
- » **Canadian North** – from Edmonton
- » **WestJet** – from Edmonton and Calgary

NWT Tourism has been collaborating with Canadian North to develop a special tour operator program. Through this program, first launched in January 2023, Canadian North is offering special pricing for tour operators with a valid GNWT tour operator license in the Northwest Territories; the program offers a streamlined process to make travel arrangements to destinations within the Northwest Territories, that will also include an online booking option. The program has been renewed for 2024 and Canadian North is currently accepting applications.

When the Canadian North schedule was changed into one of the communities this summer, we were able to work with them to reinstate some of the flights in order to accommodate over 80% of our visitors into that community. We agreed to continue to work with Canadian North to communicate in order for them to have a better understanding of our industry's needs.

NWT Tourism has worked hard to open the lines of communications with airlines and has established regular check-ins with all airlines that service the NWT in order for them to keep us top of mind.

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

NWT Tourism also had the opportunity to meet with the newly elected MLAs this past November to highlight and discuss the value of tourism in the NWT. NWT Tourism will continue to keep the conversations open with all levels of government to address the issues and concerns of our membership.

## TOURISM AND DISRUPTION

The Northwest Territories along with many parts of the country had an unprecedented summer. As many northerners evacuated their homes, we saw an outpour of support for residents. From caring for each other, to the kindness shown by our provincial and territorial neighbours, as well as the love of friends and family from around the world, thank you...

We're grateful for all of the emergency personnel and volunteers who worked tirelessly to protect and support our communities.

During the evacuation we worked with the GNWT, departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Emergency Measures Operations to assist in evacuation plans for visitors that were located in remote locations with tourism businesses.

Several businesses were affected by the evacuation orders that were issued during the wildfire season across the NWT, and many operators had to cancel their bookings for a period of approximately three weeks. Moreover, the extensive media coverage may have also left an impression of the Territory as unsafe and restricted to travel, which did not benefit an already precarious situation. Nevertheless, we have seen our operators bounce back in unbelievable ways and they are now more than ever ready to welcome guests.

NWTT worked on a video [“Welcome Back to the Northwest Territories”](#) to share with operators, industry and trade partners, as well as other DMOs in an effort to highlight that the majority of infrastructure in the territory had not been damaged by the wildfires and also to convey the message that businesses and tourism operators in the NWT are ready and eager to welcome guests.

NWT Tourism's CEO and CMO delivering a presentation on the value of tourism in the NWT to the newly elected MLAs – November 2023









# 2023 CONFERENCE & AGM

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This year the AGM & Conference took place in Yellowknife from November 6th to 8th at the Chateau Nova Hotel, and the dinner and celebration event was held at the Explorer Hotel. The event was well attended and successful; the post event survey results are in, and NWT Tourism received positive feedback on the venue, speakers, training, as well as the AGM & Conference format and delivery.

On the first day of the conference, NWT Tourism held its Annual General Meeting. There was engaged discussion from NWT Tourism members and Board of Directors. Six proposed resolutions were brought forward to the AGM and they were all passed:

1. Air Access to and within the NWT
2. Enhance tourism infrastructure services along the Dempster Highway
3. Transport Canada flight and duty time regulations
4. Importance of the workforce to the success of businesses in the tourism sector
5. Reducing the impact of land lease cost increases on outfitters with outpost cabins
6. Enforcement of Aurora tourism operator licenses

More information on the resolutions that were passed during NWT Tourism's 2023 AGM can be found [here](#).

Resolutions brought forward and passed at the AGM are what drive NWT Tourism's advocacy work for the upcoming year. Nevertheless, NWT's work is not only limited to the resolutions identified at the AGM.

The first day of the conference continued in the afternoon with welcoming remarks from NWT Tourism's CEO, ITI's Deputy Minister and the Northwest Territories Member of Parliament. NWT Tourism's Chief Marketing Officer delivered a marketing update on the activities carried out the past year. Updates followed from the GNWT's Tourism and Parks division, as well as Destination Canada, the Northern Air Transportation Association, and Edmonton International Airport. The day concluded with a welcome reception hosted at the Top Knight, which represented another opportunity for attendees to build connections and enter a draw courtesy of Edmonton International Airport.

The second day of the conference started with an opening prayer from the Dene Drummers, which was followed by keynote speaker Jasmin Bergeron's presentation on the WOW effect, which was particularly well received.

Presentations from the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), and the NWT Tourism team followed.

On the second day, NWT Tourism hosted 11 table topic sessions, each elaborating on a different topic relevant to tourism today and hosted by industry professionals. Attendees could choose which tables to participate in and engage with their table hosts.



Mr. Jasmin Bergeron delivering the keynote speech on the second day of the Conference



The Yellowknives Dene Drummers opening day two of the 2023 AGM & Conference



The NWTT Team delivering a presentation on the second day of the Conference





Representatives for Frontier Lodge – recipient of the Operator of the Year Award



Town of Inuvik representatives accepting the Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of Jackie Challis



Representatives from Cabin Radio – recipient of the Service of Excellence Award

On the third day of the conference, NWT Tourism hosted an Industry Training session sponsored by the GNWT's Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Training was presented by Darcie Guarderas and Jai Mukerji with [Tansi Tourism Solutions](#). The training was well received, engaging, and followed by a very active Q&A session.

In the late afternoon, attendees participated in one of three community experiences; they could choose between a beading workshop led by Yata Beads, a visit to the Nature's North Wildlife Gallery with co-owner Greg Robertson, or a Wild Tea and Wellness Product making workshop with Amy Maund of Laughing Lichen. All events were well-attended. The day ended with the dinner and celebration event at the Explorer Hotel, which included dinner, delivery of Industry Awards, an auction, and a live band.

Several gift certificates were given away throughout the whole conference from sponsors, and the live auction held during the dinner and celebration event raised over \$12,000 towards NWT Tourism's Scholarships Fund.

NWT Tourism is beyond grateful for the support we have received from our conference sponsors; thank you to the NWTT staff, our speakers, and partners. The 2023 AGM & Conference had a very successful turnout and represented a valuable opportunity to build relationships and learn more about the industry.



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