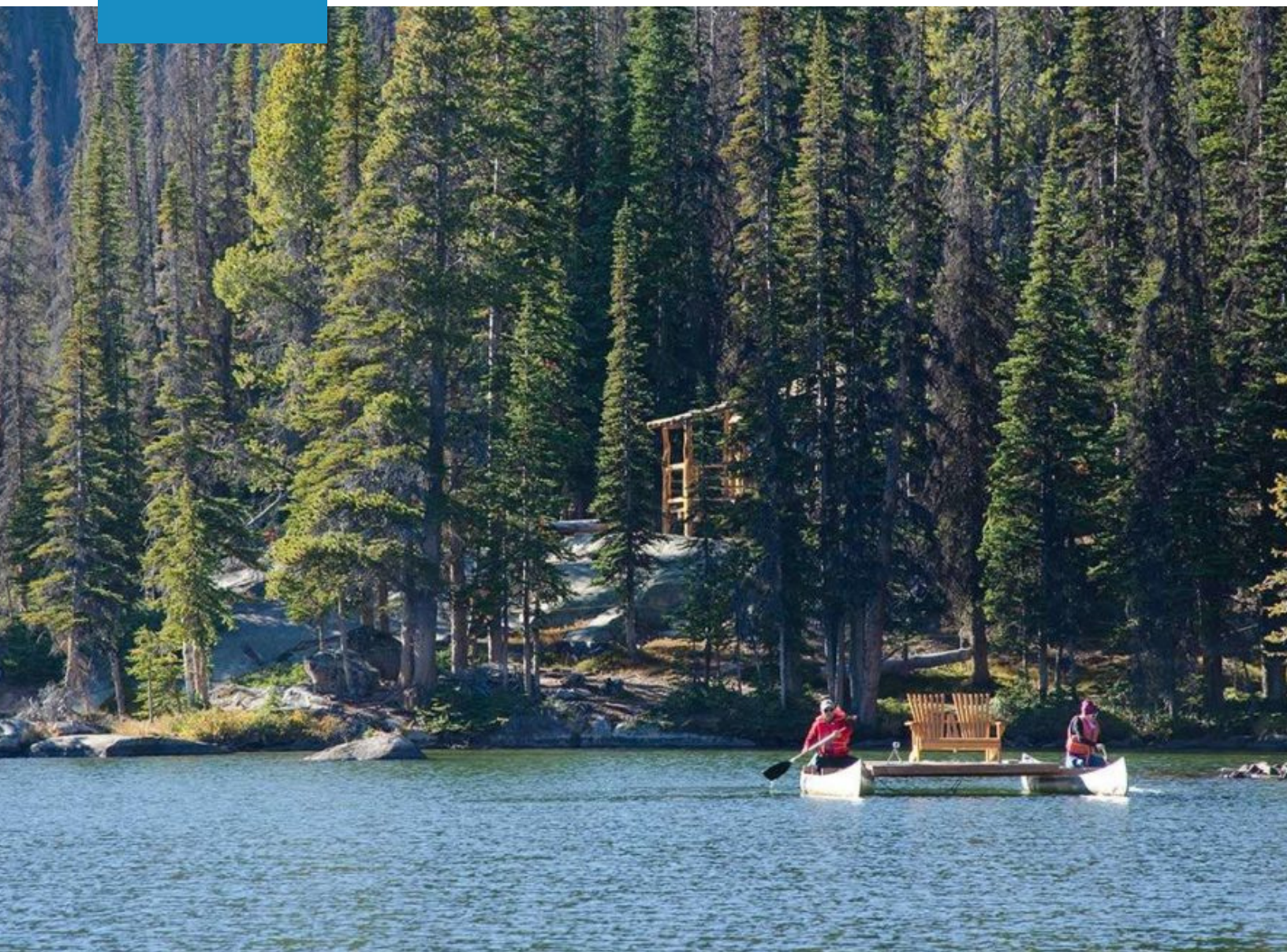


Carlyslle
& Co.

2021/2022 MARKETING STRATEGY

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2021 | MARCH

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The [Similkameen Valley Planning Society](#) (SVPS) strategic plan outlines the direction for resource allocation for destination marketing, industry support, and planning for 2021 and up to April 1, 2022.

Situation Analysis

Online access to SVPS' marketing activities, research and key links for local operators can be found at [Industry Support](#). Due to safety precautions and travel restrictions, because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the role of SVPS in destination marketing is altered to respond to the timing of messaging as per the Provincial Health Officer (PHO). Destination Canada and Destination BC updates, guidance and requirements for marketing communications are monitored as we move through each stage of the pandemic. In addition to leveraged funding for marketing, Destination BC has made available additional one-time funds to assist destinations with their planning, industry support and additional marketing.

Similkameen Valley Planning Society have consistently leveraged the core funds of \$18,000 per year. For 2021 and up to April 1, 2022 with Destination BC additional support and the Crowsnest partnership project values will exceed \$132,000. SVPS is exploring the adoption of the [Municipal Regional District Tax](#) (MRDT), which is a voluntary tax of up to 3% on fixed room accommodation sales, where the funds are directed back to the local collection area for incremental marketing and industry support activities.

Market Positioning

By positioning Similkameen Valley as a safe, rural outdoor destination with strengths in agri-tourism and recreational experiences, families and couples alike will discover and re-discover the rugged, rustic, and real Similkameen, while our loyal visitors will continue to return again and again. Our strengths build on the nature-based experiences created through the pioneering spirit of the local providers and their values that shape those experiences through stewardship of the land in a sustainable way.

Marketing Strategy

The focus of the marketing strategy is to provide relevant travel information by experience themes in a factual way that supports the customer journey. Specifically, to create awareness of Similkameen Valley as a travel destination (dream phase), to assist in trip planning (plan phase), generate referrals for businesses (operators to close the sale), and provide access to information while visiting (digital and print media/ visitor guide and maps) and to encourage positive word-of-mouth (share).

The BC market continues to be the primary source for visitors to the region and our focus will continue with this market.



Source: Destination BC

The digital strategy for Similkameen Valley includes website marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing and programmatic digital advertising.

Content marketing, social media and digital advertising will support the BC domestic marketing strategy focusing on seasonal storytelling by experience themes highlighting local business stories. New for 2021 will be the introduction of a Blog series with social media and digital advertising campaigns to support marketing communications. Organic search continues to be the number source for the website visits therefore, search engine optimization will also be a key strategy.

Research

SVPS invested in visitor and market research for the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen area creating a baseline from 2019. We target our audiences directly through location data sources by market segments.

Measurement

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are directly related to the activities of SVPS.

- Increase in website traffic from the BC market.
- Increase from referrals to operators through the website.
- Increase in positive word of mouth through social media reach and engagement.
- Leveraging of core funding.
- Ability to secure partnerships.
- Engagement with Stakeholders via the online resource centre.

Note: Quantifiable KPIs will be finalized in consideration of the timing to activate paid promotion due to the marketing restrictions by the Provincial Health Officer orders.

Introduction

Plan Purpose

The [Similkameen Valley Planning Society](#) (SVPS) strategic plan outlines the direction for resource allocation as it relates to the core funding provided by Similkameen Valley Planning Society (SVPS) with additional funds through partnerships and Destination BC to April 1, 2022. The funds are intended for destination marketing, industry support, and planning. The intention of the strategy is maintaining the baseline of marketing activity, while investing the incremental funds in legacy projects that will enhance destination marketing.

Background

SVPS facilitates tourism development as part of its overall economic and community development mandate. SVPS leads the destination marketing organization (DMO) role for Similkameen Valley. They are a non-profit society registered in the Province of BC. Membership is comprised of both municipal governments (Princeton and Keremeos), the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District areas B, G and H, and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band. SVPS is funded by members and project-specific grants.

Similkameen Valley's model is a "stakeholder model" where all tourism related businesses and organizations are represented on the official [travel website](#).

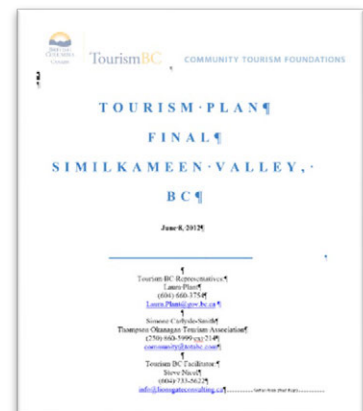
The communities of Similkameen Valley embarked on a tourism initiative in 2012 to work collectively to develop their first tourism plan. The plan included goals for increased visitation, product development, destination marketing and an integrated brand suite. The Plan was created through the Tourism BC Community Tourism Foundations program. Since that time, SVPS has committed \$18,000 per year in core funding for destination marketing and has leveraged these funds annually through partnerships and Destination BC to \$55,000 in support of the plan implementation.

Tourism Plan 2012

Vision

The vision set forth by stakeholder consultation in 2012 was as follows:

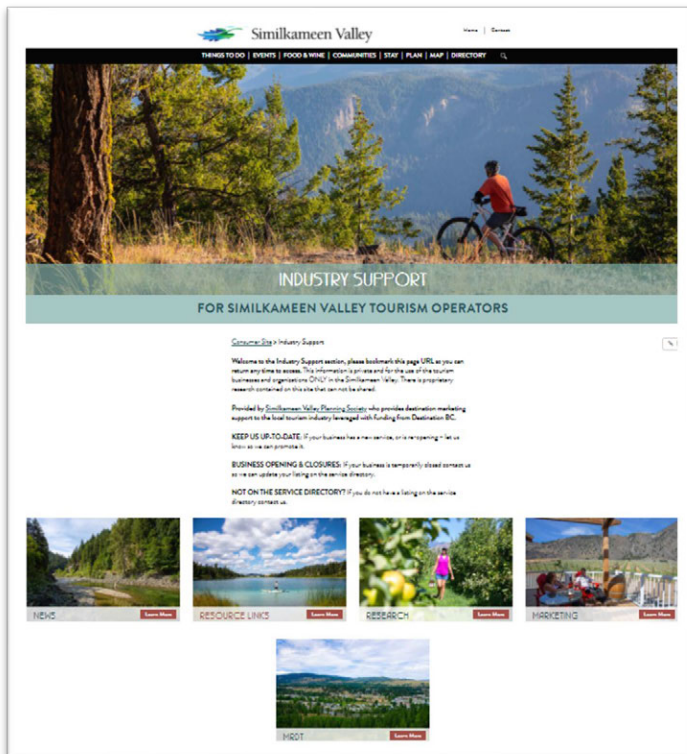
- Tourism in Similkameen Valley is spearheaded by a cohesive, Valley-wide planning effort, with the participation of an active business and community network.
- Participation in cooperative marketing programs has expanded and contributed to the Valley's destination appeal.
- Coordinated highway and off-road signage and greater access to our unifying feature, Similkameen River, is complemented by a greater selection of market-ready, sustainable tourism products.
- First Nations have become more involved in the industry and helped attract new marketing and investment opportunities.
- Winter and event/festival opportunities have also expanded, and the Valley has more accommodation capacity, including a destination hotel.



Key Accomplishments

Key marketing and industry support accomplishments SVPS has achieved and surpassed since the initial 2012 tourism plan include:

- Destination brand is rugged, rustic, real
- Banners and entrance signage
- Video and still imagery assets
- Official travel website similkameenvally.com
- Inventory of tourism businesses (maintained on Similkameen Valley's website Service Directory)
- Social media channels Facebook and Instagram
- Digital marketing campaigns
- Marketing partnership Crowsnest Highway
- Official Travel Experiences Guide (in partnership with Black Press)
- Maps for visitor centres and local businesses
- Visitor research to understand our local area visitors from within BC and Alberta to the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) area. Refer to the map in Appendix A
- Market Research to explore new markets to attract to the Valley



Industry support included:

- Networking events
- Google My Business Training workshop
- Tourism industry newsletters to inform local businesses of the activities of SVPS and to provide information and links to resources
- Online access to resources and SVPS marketing activities Industry Support
-

Tourism Management System

The tourism management system in Canada consists of governments and organizations who support tourism operators. The role of Similkameen Valley Planning Society, for the purpose of this strategy, is destination marketing for the domestic market, (primarily BC) and to provide tourism-related information to the local industry. Refer to the **key links** page of the new online [Industry Resource](#) section of [Similkameenvalley.com](#) for government and organizational resources.

The destination marketing system we operate is highlighted below for the context of this strategy.

Destination Marketing for Canada



[Destination Canada's](#) mission is to influence supply and build demand for the benefit of locals, communities and visitors through leading research, alignment with public and private sectors, and marketing Canada nationally and abroad. The Destination Canada programs and services are monitored for alignment and updates on COVID-19 tourism impacts, resources, research, and key messaging.

Destination Management, Marketing and Funding for BC



[Destination British Columbia's mandate](#) is to support and promote the business of tourism throughout the province. As a destination marketing organization, Destination British Columbia (DBC) is structured to develop and deliver programs and services that attract and retain BC visitors. Destination marketing showcases nature, motivates travellers to visit and explore British Columbia now, and to be come destination advocates.

Destination management brings stakeholders together to provide them with the tools to work collaboratively to transform destinations attractions, activities and services into a cohesive and compelling travel experience or destination. Funding sources include the [Tourism Events Program](#), [Co-op Marketing Program](#) (for communities and sectors) and [Municipal Regional District Tax](#) (MRDT).

Destination BC conducted a series of corridor [destination development](#) strategic plans for the Province of BC. The [Highway 3 Corridor Strategy](#) included Similkameen Valley and Highway 3A, 3B and 43. A local destination development strategy would benefit Similkameen Valley for goal setting and future planning. Similkameen Valley is represented on the consumer website [Hello BC](#).

The Destination BC programs and services are monitored for alignment and updates on COVID-19 tourism impacts, resources, research, and key messaging. Similkameen Valley has been active in the cooperative marketing program for years, leveraging marketing activities.

BC Sector Organizations

Various [sector organizations](#) support both product/experience development and marketing. In May 2020 Destination BC announced the funding allocation to the BC sectors which included Backcountry Lodges, BC Ale Trail, BC Bird Trails, BC Farmers Market, Camping & RV, Fishing BC, Gardens, Golf, Guest Ranches, Guide Outfitters, Mountain Bike, Ocean Boating, Ski (Alpine, Cat, Nordic), Snowmobile and [Wine](#).

Similkameen is represented on many of the sector websites via the local operators, but at present no formal strategy exists to work with the sector groups. Budget and capacity are the constraints.

Destination Management – Regional



The [Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association](#) (TOTA) is one of five regional destination management organizations in BC that form the [BC Regional Tourism Secretariat](#) (BCRTS). Operators can access 1:1 support for COVID-19 resources direct through the [Tourism Resiliency Program](#). TOTA provides destination development, marketing, industry and experience development, and research services. Similkameen Valley is represented on the following consumer websites. [Thompson Okanagan](#) | [BC Rail Trails](#) | [Route 97](#)

TOTA programs and services are monitored for alignment and updates on COVID-19 impacts, stakeholder support programs and research.

SVPS – Brand, Destination Marketing, and Industry Resources/Communications



SVPS leads the destination marketing organization (DMO) role for Similkameen Valley. Key activities are brand awareness, website, and digital marketing, print materials for visitor services and industry communications for resources.

SVPS outsources the tourism management services to [Simone Carlyle-Smith, Inc.](#) who has worked with SVPS since 2012 and as of December 2020, provides services directly to SVPS. Contact support@similkameenvalley.com

Similkameen Valley Visitor Services



The [Chamber of Commerce in Keremeos](#) is contracted to operate the [Keremeos Visitor Centre](#), the [Town of Princeton](#) manages the [Princeton Visitor Centre](#), both participate in the Destination BC [Visitor Services Network](#) Program, which provides financial support, a common brand and framework for visitor services. Both Manning Park Resort and the Hedley Museum support visitor enquiries.

The Visitor Centres are the main-call-to-action on Similkameen Valley website through the [Contact Us](#) page. SVPS provides the official travel guide and maps to the Visitor Centres.

Similkameen Valley Sector Organization



[Similkameen Independent Winegrowers](#) (SIW) is a membership- based organization that works to develop the local wine /cidery industry and create awareness of the valley as a wine region. SVPS and SIW collaborate on projects where possible.

Crowsnest Tourism Alliance (Highway 3)



New for 2021, both SVPS and SIW have committed to the newly formed [Crowsnest Tourism Alliance](#) (CTI) to promote the Highway 3 corridor from Manning Park to Christina Lake in collaboration with Destination Osoyoos and Boundary Country/Regional District Kootenay Boundary (RDKB). SVPS is leading the website and digital campaign for the group.

Current Situation

The COVID-19 global pandemic has changed the world as we know it. One year into the pandemic we are still seeing rising cases in some areas, but hope is on the horizon as the vaccine becomes more available world-wide. We monitor Destination Canada and Destination BC sources for updates, guidance, and requirements for marketing communications as we move through each stage of the pandemic.

Resources for the local tourism industry are posted on the new [Industry Support](#) private section of Similkameen Valley's website where links to COVID-19 supports can be accessed, as well as other key links to support the tourism industry. Other information includes the marketing activities of SVPS, consumer research and the Municipal Regional District Program (MRDT).

Due to pandemic safety precautions and travel restrictions, the role of SVPS in destination marketing is altered to respond to the timing of messaging as per the Provincial Health Officer (PHO). The timing and messaging are also influenced by Destination BC as per program funding requirements. The focus of effort is digital marketing for the BC market, which is the number market for visitors to Similkameen and domestic markets are expected to lead the recovery for travel.

In addition to leveraged funding for marketing, Destination BC has made available additional one-time funds to assist destinations with their planning, industry support and additional marketing. Timing for marketing needs to consider the capacity of the tourism industry, stages of the pandemic and resident sentiment.

SVPS has consistently leveraged core funds of \$18,000 per year. For 2021 and up to April 1, 2022 with Destination BC additional support and the Crowsnest partnership project values will exceed \$132,000.

Similkameen Valley Leveraged Revenue

2021 to April 1, 2022 Core Budget	
Similkameen Valley Planning Society	\$ 18,000
Destination BC Cooperative Funding	\$ 24,138
Total Cash Budget	\$ 42,138
Destination BC Additional Funds	
Destination BC Cooperative Funding	\$ 49,628
Similkameen Valley Planning Society	\$ 4,763
Total Cash Budget	\$ 54,392
2021 Crowsnest Partnership	
Similkameen Valley Planning Society	\$ 3,000
Other Partners	\$ 9,000
Destination BC Cooperative Funding	\$ 12,000
Total Cash Budget	\$ 24,000
Leverage with Black Press	
	\$ 12,000
Total Project Value to April 1, 2022	\$ 132,530

SVPS - Proposed Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT)

SVPS is exploring the adoption of the [Municipal Regional District Tax \(MRDT\)](#), which is a voluntary tax of up to 3% on fixed room accommodation sales where the funds are directed back to the local collection area for incremental marketing and industry support activities.

If the MRDT is successful in Similkameen Valley, SVPS would administer the funds as a strategic business unit of the society. This would ensure compliance for accounting and reporting to the local operators and funding sources for the management of the funds.

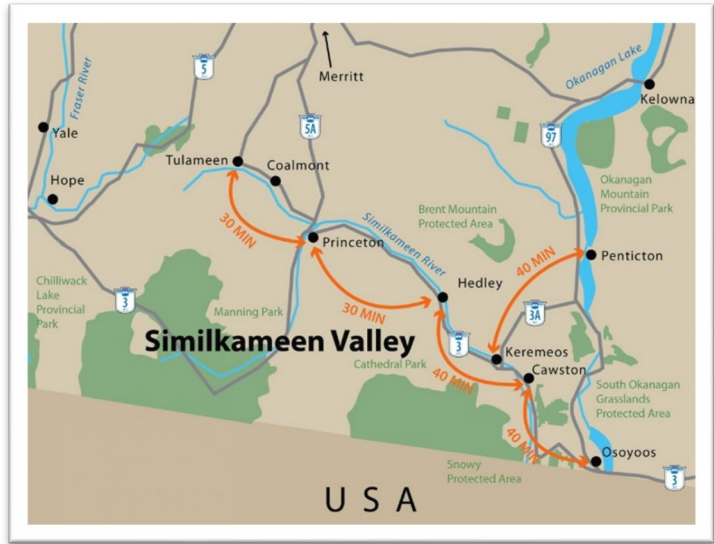
The tourism accommodators in the collection areas would contribute to and approve the plan for use of the funds through a five-year strategic plan and an annual one-year tactical plan, which must be submitted to Destination BC as part of the process to implement the tax. The tax would be applicable for a five-year period, with the option to renew.

If Keremeos/Cawston/Hedley areas were in agreement, the fund may yield approximately \$10,000-\$20,000 for additional marketing activities for those areas. Outreach is currently underway to those fixed roof accommodators that own properties with at least 4 units. If Princeton joined the MRDT process, the revenue would be significantly higher due to the volume of accommodators in that area.

Destination Appeal

About Similkameen Valley

Similkameen Valley is in the southern interior of British Columbia, extending from Richter Pass in the east to Similkameen River's headwaters in E.C Manning Provincial Park in the west. Primary access is along Highway 3 (Crowsnest). Communities, parks, and hamlets include Cawston, Chopaka, Coalmont, Eastgate, Hedley, Keremeos, Olalla, Manning Park, Princeton, Tulameen and the Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands. For travellers eastbound from Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, the Similkameen touring route is the start of the Crowsnest Highway 3 which continues through the Kootenay Rockies region and into Alberta. The route also offers an alternative to Highway 5 and 5A to the Okanagan via the Connector.



The Valley is rich in First Nations' heritage as well as western, mining, and agricultural history and seven provincial parks. Key activities include fishing, hiking, and biking, trail riding, snowmobiling, downhill and Nordic skiing.

Key attractions for experienced based themes include:

- Provincial Parks: Cathedral, E.C. Manning, Bromley Rock, Stemwinder, Allison Lake, Otter Lake
- China Ridge Recreation Area
- The Kettle Valley Rail Trail, section of The Great Trail
- First Nations Culture: Museum, Snaza'ist Discovery Centre Interpretive Centre, rodeo, POW WOW
- Keremeos, Fruit Stand Capital of Canada
- Cawston, Organic Farming Capital of Canada
- Award-winning Similkameen Valley VQA wine route with farm-to-table dining experiences and continuous growth in high quality accommodation experiences
- The Grist Mill & Gardens, home to BC's oldest operating flour mill, gardens filled with heritage varieties of fruit and flowers, and historical exhibit

The Similkameen Route is an alternative route to the more known Highways 5 (Yellowhead) and Highway 1 for north/east bound travellers from the Lower Mainland (where the bulk of opportunity exists for this valley corridor). There is also opportunity to intercept those travelling to / from Alberta via Highway 3 and destinations via Highway 97.

The audience focus continues to be on outdoor recreation enthusiasts with interests in agriculture experiences segmented by couples and families.

Tourism Strategy

By positioning Similkameen Valley as a safe, rural outdoor destination with strengths in agri-tourism and recreational experiences, families and couples alike will discover the rugged, rustic, and real Similkameen, while our loyal visitors will continue return again and again.

Key opportunities include experience-based themes, and location features by season. Typically, the summer season is at full capacity. Stakeholder outreach through telephone and online surveys will support the process to confirm current offerings to promote.

While the close proximity of Similkameen Valley to Vancouver and the Lower mainland provides the critical mass needed to attract visitors to the area, most other destinations in BC also target this market. Similkameen has both visitor and market research to guide the target audience choices to ensure we are approaching those that have an interest the types of experiences that make up Similkameen. Due to planned highway construction on Highway 1, there is a new opportunity to attract visitors by diverting them via Highway 3 westbound, which is an ideal alternative corridor route.

The strategy reflects limited resources for destination marketing with leveraged funding from Destination BC.

Customer Journey

The focus of the marketing strategy is to provide relevant travel information by experience themes in a



factual way that supports the customer journey. Specifically, to create awareness of Similkameen Valley as a travel destination (dream phase), to assist in trip planning (plan phase), generate referrals for businesses (operators to close the sale) find information while visiting (digital and print media) and to encourage positive word-of-mouth (share).

While the internet presence is accessible to all markets, the strategy will focus on the BC market, as BC continues to be the number one market for visitation to Similkameen Valley.

Economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt differently for each sector of the tourism economy, some local businesses have lost more than 50% in revenues, some have closed, others are thriving.

Collectively Destination Canada, Destination BC, Similkameen Valley Planning Society, Similkameen Independent Wine Growers, the Crowsnest Tourism Alliance, and local operators all contribute to the overall marketing effort for the Valley. Therefore, SVPS marketing objectives are based on quantifiable performance indicators that can be attributed to the activities of the society, not the visitor economy as a whole.

Marketing Strategy

Marketing Objectives

1. Increase website traffic from the BC market
2. Increase referrals to operators through the website
3. Increase positive word of mouth through social media reach and engagement

Note: Quantifiable objectives will be finalized after the digital audit and in consideration of the timing to activate paid promotion due to the marketing restrictions by the PHO orders.

Marketing Strategy Overview

All operators and communities rely on the destination marketing efforts of both Destination Canada and Destination BC to create inspiration for travel to Canada and BC.

Destination BC released their 2021-2023 Global Marketing Strategy and 2021 Plan update, March 9th with recovery scenarios. DBC guides BC's tourism industry with their recovery strategy, key messaging, and timing for marketing as travel restrictions change.

At the local level, Similkameen Valley's marketing strategy must ensure there is relevant information on the official Similkameen Valley visitor website similkameenvalley.com to support trip inspiration, trip planning and business referrals. Content marketing, social media and digital advertising will support the domestic marketing strategy focusing on seasonal storytelling by experience themes highlighting local business stories. New for 2021 will be the introduction of a Blog series with social media and digital advertising campaigns to support marketing communications.

Organic search continues to be the number source for the website visits therefore, search engine optimization will also be a key strategy. A website audit will reveal opportunities for improving the visitor experience and content needs to be updated to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on available experiences and seasonal re-openings.

Promotional activities are targeted to the BC market primarily, which is in alignment with current visitation to the area (pre and mid COVID-19). This strategy is supported financially by the community tourism [cooperative funding program](#) of Destination BC for domestic marketing. According to Destination Canada the domestic markets are expected to lead recovery because of pent-up demand for leisure travel in short-haul markets. Monitoring of visitor research will inform the strategy as it is anticipated the spending patterns, priorities and the world view of consumers will be different. Also, the industry will be different due to the number and type of tourism services that will be available throughout recovery.

Visitor and Market Research - Overview

Consumer research can be used for target marketing, content creation, experience design, and destination development. SVPS invested in visitor and market research for the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen area creating a baseline from 2019. This information is used to target our audiences directly through location data sources by market segments. Detailed information about the visitor segments and their descriptions can be found on the Industry Resource section of Similkameen's website. Note this information is for internal purposes only and subject to Non-disclosure Agreements by the data providers. [Research | Similkameen Valley](#)

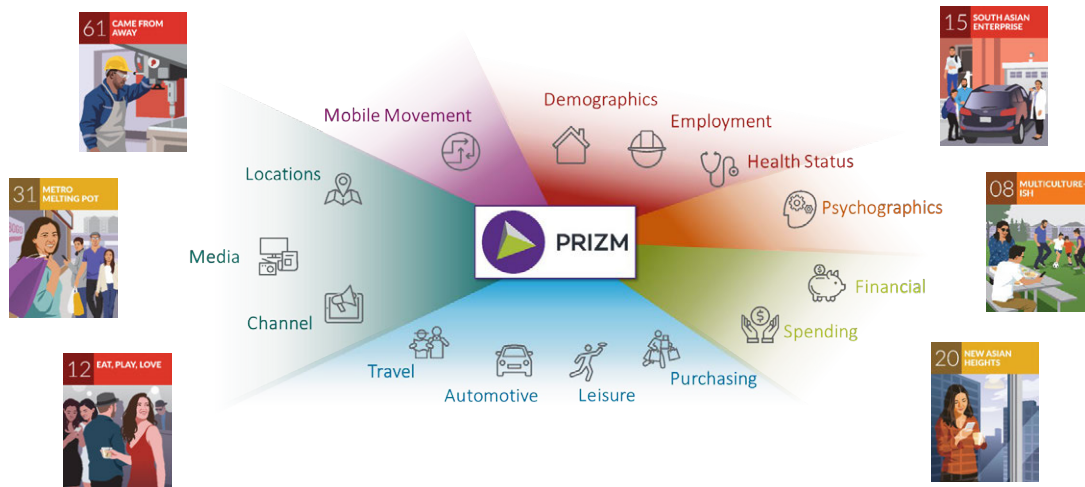
Visitation volumes and market segment reports for the [Thompson Okanagan](#) region is monitored for insights from 2020 and 2021.

Market research is provided through [Environics Analytics](#) sources, the research firm who created the market segmentation program for [Destination Canada](#), called the [Explorer Quotient](#) or EQ. In addition, to viewing markets by EQ, we can also understand them by the 67 PRIZM segments in Canada. Enter your [postal code](#) and check out a segment example based on your neighbourhood.

PRIZM



The PRIZM segmentation system classifies Canada's neighborhoods at a postal code-level into actionable, lifestyle segments



Target Audience Personas:

Road Touring Similkameen Valley – Rugged, Rustic, Real

- Our most loyal visitors are families who have been visiting Similkameen Valley as a destination or part of road trip to eastbound destinations from the Lower Mainland and those who choose our valley as the destination itself. Key opportunities include intercepting more drive-through traffic or appeal to travellers taking other routes.
- Life stage opportunities include couples, and friends as new experiences are being offered with farm to table and wine/culinary options.
- With the trend toward outdoor rural spaces to relax and be in nature, a slower pace, a close drive from the Lower Mainland, than other locations, Similkameen Valley could appeal to the Authentic Experienter, Cultural Explorer, and Rejuvenator.
- Needs would include consideration for children (play area), pets, and small groups.

Visitor Research

For Similkameen Valley, the primary visitor is from BC. For Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) area (Refer to Appendix A), visitor research was available through mobile phone movement patterns, with visitor counts provided by [TELUS Insights](#). The highest visitor counts by origin areas were analyzed using the [EnviroNics Analysis](#) data sources to profile our visitor segments and to provide additional information about where more like them can be found for target marketing. *Note: The research excludes residents of the Thompson Okanagan region.*

Visitors to the RDOS in 2019 can be characterized by the following market segmentation descriptions, released by the new PRIZM segments of EnviroNics Analytics in 2020.

BC Market Segments – Target Audiences ages 25-64

Highest Visitation

- Asian Avenues and Eat, Play, Love Median Household Maintainer (MHHM) Age 42- segments from the Vancouver market - Cultural Explorer
- South Asian Society from Surrey and Abbotsford - Free Spirits
- *Suburban Sports **#1 Household Count in BC MHHM Age 41** – from Abbotsford, Langley, Maple Ridge - Gentle Explorer (*This segment located outside Vancouver)
- Just Getting By and Scenic Retirement from Chilliwack - Gentle Explorer
- Friends and Roomies from Victoria - Cultural Explorer
- Slow-Lane Suburbs from Nelson - Rejuvenator
- Country & Western from Fruitvale - Rejuvenator
- Mature & Secure from North Vancouver - Authentic Experienter

Additional Target Audiences

- Family Mode – No Hassle Traveller from BC
- Kick-Back Country – Rejuvenator from BC
- New Country – Rejuvenator from BC
- Residents in the Okanagan Corridor

Rural BC – ages 25-54

Rural get-away in BC (outside the Lower Mainland) Couples, Families, Empty Nesters with ability to travel frequently.

- Interests in outdoor activities, hiking, biking, camping, fishing, golf and food to table experiences, organic produce, wine tasting.
- While similar in demographics to the urban group, this group differs in that they live in rural BC and seek to discover new places vs escapism.
- They already enjoy an outdoor rural lifestyle but want to experience the small-town charm they are used to in other locations.
- The **Suburban Sports** PRIZM Segment make up the number one market by household count in BC and rank 4th for visitor volume to Similkameen (which is relative to their market size).



PRIZM Segment **Suburban Sports** are strongest on this construct of racial infusion and are accepting of ethnic diversity within families, such as inter-racial marriage, believing that it enriches people's lives. EQ Type: Gentle Explorer. They like to travel to Jasper.

Median Household Maintainer Age 52. Also 47% have children living at home. They represent the highest household count in BC at 6% or 123,442. Above average interest in camping, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing.

High radio listenership (12 hours per week), and watching TV (18 hours per week), less time spent on reading the newspaper 1 hr and the Internet (about 3.5 hours per week), minimal for magazines. 79% currently on Facebook and 23% Twitter.

Urban BC – ages 25-54

Urban get-away-from the Lower Mainland BC. Couples, Families, Empty Nesters with ability to travel frequently.

- Interests include outdoor activities, hiking, biking, camping, fishing, golf and food to table experiences, organic produce, wine tasting.
- Interested in connecting with the locals and do not require high end services but appreciate the authenticity of the “mom & pop” operations.
- The **Asian Avenues** PRIZM Segment make up 4% of household counts in BC and rank first for visitor volume to Similkameen, followed by **Eat, Play Love**.



PRIZM Segment **Asian Avenues**, are confident in advertising and relate to role models promoted by advertising and the consumer society. Median Household Maintainer Age 53. Also 53% have children living at home. The represent 4% of households in BC 81,208. EQ Type: Personal History Explorer

High radio listenership (11 hours per week), and watching TV (11 hours per week), less time spent on reading the newspaper and the Internet (about 4 hours per week), low use for magazines. 75% currently on Facebook and 42% on Instagram.

Detailed information about all the relevant market segments for Similkameen Valley with their descriptions can be found on the Industry Resource section of Similkameen’s website. Note this information is for internal purposes only and subject to Non-disclosure Agreements by the data providers. [Research | Similkameen Valley](#)

Alberta Market Segments – Target Audiences ages 25-64

Highest Visitation

- **Modern Suburbia** from Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray - Virtual Traveller
- **Country & Western** from La Crete Area - Rejuvenator
- **Suburban Sports** from Fort McMurray, Grand Prairie - Gentle Explorer
- **All Terrain Families** from Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray - Free Spirits

Additional Target Audiences

- **Friends & Roomie** from Edmonton, Calgary - Cultural Explorer
- **Midtown Movers** from Edmonton - Free Spirits
- **Middle-Class Mosaic** from Calgary - No Hassle Traveller
- **Multicultural-ish** from Calgary, Edmonton - Free Spirits
- **Diverse & Determined** from Edmonton, Calgary - Cultural History Buff
- **Multicultural Corners** from Edmonton, Calgary - Free Spirits
- **Mid-City Mellow** from Edmonton, Calgary - Personal History Explorer
- **Savvy Seniors** from Edmonton, Calgary - Authentic Experienter
- **Mature & Secure** from Edmonton, Calgary - Authentic Experienter
- **Downtown Verve** from Calgary - Cultural Explorer
- **Juggling Acts** from Fort McMurray, Grand Prairie - Free Spirits
- **Stressed in Suburbia** from Grand Prairie - Gentle Explorers

Detailed information about all the relevant market segments for Similkameen Valley with their descriptions can be found on the Industry Resource section of Similkameen's website. Note this information is for internal purposes only and subject to Non-disclosure Agreements by the data providers. [Research | Similkameen Valley](#)



Category	Alberta Highlights
Household Count	Of the 67 PRIZM Clusters identified in Canada, Modern Suburbia rank 1st, making up 123,489 households, or 7.5% of the total Households in Alberta (1,644,476)
Maintainer Age	Median Household Maintainer Age is 41
Children at Home	58% of couples have children living at home
Household Income	Above Average Household Income of \$141,199 compared to Alberta at \$125,945
Top Social Value	Confidence in Advertising: A tendency to trust and use advertising as a source of reliable information. Also, a tendency to identify with the fashions and the role models promoted by advertising and the consumer society
Media Habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11hrs/week listening to the Radio, 18hrs/week watching TV, 0hr/week reading the Newspaper and 4.6hrs/day on the Internet. Weekly Magazine usage is minimal (4min/day) • 77% currently use Facebook, 48% use Instagram and 36% use Twitter



Population:
182,302
(0.48% of Canada)

Households:
115,585
(0.77% of Canada)

Average Household Income:
\$91,040

Average Household Net Worth:
\$423,879

House Tenure:
Rent

Education:
University

Occupation:
White Collar/Service Sector

Cultural Diversity Index:
Low

Sample Social Value:
Multiculturalism

Market Research

Market profiles provide information about who we can target in addition to our existing visitors. Reviewing the market segments and targeting those that align with our residents' values and the vision for the future of tourism in Similkameen Valley supports businesses and the communities in destination development, experience design, and destination marketing. Market Segmentation can be approached in and cross-referenced in two ways. The Destination Canada Explorer Quotient (EQ) market segmentation program provides 9 Explorer Types to consider; the PRIZM profiles provide 67 market segments, which 53 segments make up the BC and Alberta markets. Both segment profiles use Environics Analytics data sources.

Detailed information about the market segments and their descriptions can be found on the Industry Resource section of Similkameen's website. Note this information is for internal purposes only and subject to Non-disclosure Agreements by the data providers. [Research | Similkameen Valley](#)

BC Explorer Quotient (EQ) Household Count and Population

EQ Type	Household Count	Population
Gentle Explorer (GE)	322,371	788,161
Free Spirits (FS)	319,737	1,029,193
Rejuvenators (RJ)	294,476	724,438
Authentic Experiencers (AE)	260,859	688,581
Cultural History Buffs (CHB)	246,845	462,592
Cultural Explorers (CE)	202,079	398,123
Personal History Explorers (PHE)	145,982	401,775
No Hassle Traveller (NHT)	122,414	338,204
Virtual Travellers (VT)	96,134	233,304

Marketing Partnerships & Opportunities



SVPS has been partnering with Black Press for many years to co-produce the annual [Similkameen Valley Travel Experience Guide](#). A Memorandum of Understanding sets out the roles and responsibilities of each party.

The advertising sales values are leveraged with Destination BC funding to support the alignment of both Similkameen Valley and Destination BC brands within the design and content of the guide. Leveraged funding for this project has been approved for the 2021 and 2022 editions.

In the event Destination BC funds were no longer available for this partnership the graphic files would be provided to Black Press to carry on the guide (as they did before the partnership), with Similkameen Valley branded source files as a legacy.

Black Press leads the advertising sales, ad designs, printing and distribution of the guide and Destination BC funds support the graphic design, copywriting/editing, photography, and project management which is led by SVPS.



SVPS has partnered with Similkameen Wine Growers (SIW) on content creation for both partner websites and they continue to exchange information about market ready product to raise awareness of SVPS' tourism activities for the wine/cider members of the association. SVPS and SIW are open to new ways to partner on initiatives.



Crowsnest Tourism Alliance (CTI) was successful with a new cooperative funding application for 2021 from Destination BC. The group developed the [Cruise the Crowsnest](#) digital campaign microsite to promote the destinations along this route from Manning Park to Christina Lake. The website and digital campaign are being led by SVPS and the social media account set-up and management by Destination Osoyoos, new blog content will be led by Boundary Country, so each partner is contributing to the alliance.

The current CTI partners are Similkameen Valley Planning Society, Similkameen Independent Winegrowers, Destination Osoyoos and Boundary Country / Regional District Kootenay Boundary.

The Crowsnest Tourism Alliance has the potential to grow partners from Hope, BC to Alberta with the cooperative funding application for Destination BC intake for 2022. An evaluation of the new partnership and exploration of partnership expansion will be undertaken in 2021. Typically, applications for funding are required the November prior to the following fiscal year of Destination BC.

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association was successful with a Province of BC Rural Dividend grant to support marketing and development of the Crowsnest Highway. An update is pending from this source.



SVPS has been supported since the first year of implementation of the 2012 Tourism Plan by the Tourism BC and subsequently, the Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program (Co-op Marketing Partnerships). This funding has been essential to the success of our small rural area of BC, with limited resources. These leveraged funds were used to establish and maintain industry standards for a digital footprint to promote Similkameen Valley. The funds are required for close in markets BC, Alberta and Washington state and are subject to alignment with the PHO travel advisories and Destination BC criteria.

The funding program is competitive; however, this evaluation criteria process is currently suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so funds to April 1, 2022 are approved. In addition, DBC has provided additional one-time funds to communities to allow for the planning and support of local industry.

The program goals are to drive consumer demand and increase tourism revenues by investing resources where and when capacity exists; to leverage private and public funds to maximize the marketing impact, and to support the [Powerful Marketing Network](#), by creating deep collaboration to enhance BC's global competitiveness and supporting necessary capabilities such as shared data and content, and industry digital readiness.

Marketing Tactics

Digital Marketing



Digital marketing utilizes internet and online based digital technologies such as desktops, mobile phones and other digital media and platforms to promote products and services. The digital strategy for Similkameen Valley includes **website marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing and programmatic digital advertising.**

Similkameen Valley digital marketing performance had mixed results from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The Facebook account realized a general decrease in user engagements/impressions, while [SimilkameenValley.com](https://www.similkameenvalley.com) and the Instagram account had generally positive impacts. Similkameen launched its first digital display campaign in the fall of 2020, which concluded just before the pause in marketing was directed by Destination BC as per the PHO with favourable results.

Website Marketing (Similkameenvalley.com)

The consumer website is the number one marketing asset for Similkameen Valley. The objective of the website is to be a trusted resource for travel information. The content should create awareness for those who are new to Similkameen, to inspire travel, to assist with planning, to generate referrals to the local businesses and to share information. The website is the main call to action (CTA) for organic search and promotional activities that drive traffic to the website. The content supports all phases of the customer journey except the booking phase.

Regular monitoring of the website through analytics provides insights that direct the design, content, and user experience flow to align with our target audiences. From January to December 2020, [SimilkameenValley.com](https://www.similkameenvalley.com) was visited by **68,152 users (+32%)** over **82,647 sessions (+33%)** and **156,748 page views (+36%)**. Users spent an average of **1 minute and 48 seconds per session (+13%)** and viewed **1.9 pages per session (+3%)**.



Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action. When effective, it helps create a relationship with the audience, which leads to trust. Content should attract the right audience, inspire them to travel, engage them to consider our destination and lead them to local operators to close the sale.

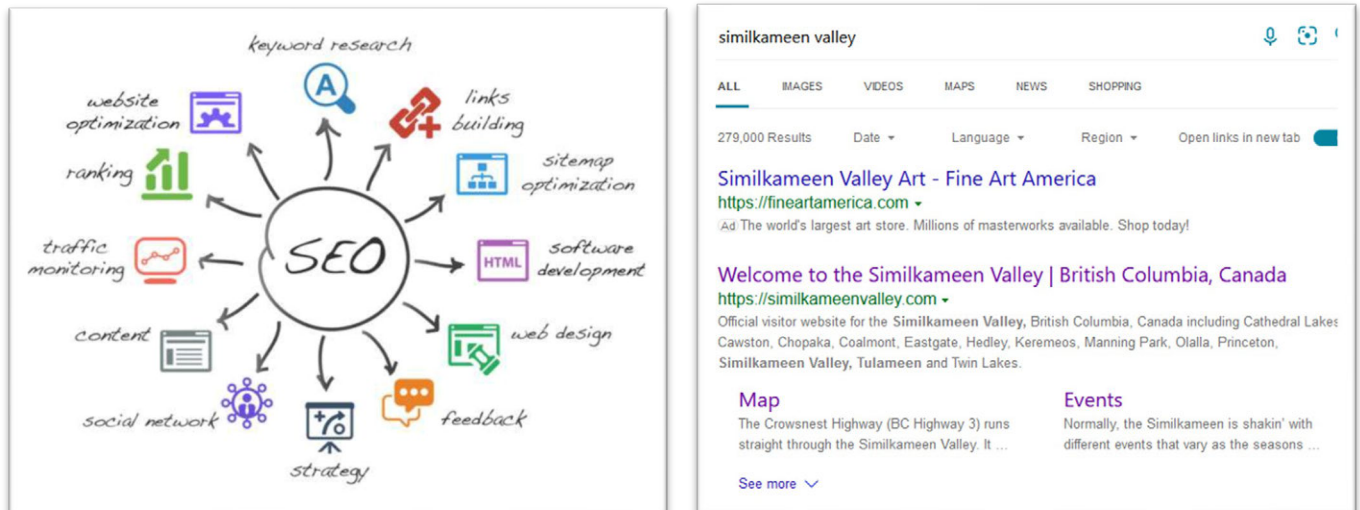
A content strategy will be developed to adjust to the impacts of COVID-19 to ensure accurate information is available on the website and updated for each season (Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter). Investment in content includes imagery, purposeful copywriting/storytelling for the website, new blog series and social media. The following will be considered in the content plan:

- Increase market penetration from existing visitor origin areas in BC and Alberta when the market opens again, pending PHO
- Increase market share from existing personas from elsewhere in BC and Alberta when the market opens again, pending PHO
- Target new segments that currently do not visit the RDOS
- Focus on Highway 3 as an access route for eastbound traffic from the Lower Mainland
- Target key markets with existing awareness, by season and EQ type, based on research patterns to grow existing market areas
- Expand shoulder season where capacity exists for operators (fall, winter/spring)
- Maintain fresh seasonal content for travel inspiration and trip planning for the main call-to-action similkameenvalley.com to generate operator referrals in the context of a destination story
- Align with Destination BC brand messaging to amplify Similkameen Valley's brand
- Feature market ready product described through the lenses of sustainability and accessibility
- Focus on transformative experiences that connect people and places with nature and wellness
- Encourage visitors to share their experiences and tell their Similkameen stories for us
- Support lead generation to the local businesses through similkameenvalley.com

SEO – Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) helps search engines (Google/Bing) return the most relevant results. Organic search is the number one way in which users access Similkameen Valley’s website; therefore, maintenance of an effective SEO strategy is important.

An audit will be performed to direct the SEO strategy and improve the user experience and content creation. Strategy elements include content grouped into categories, internal linking, content length, headings, refreshed content, tags for images, in-bound links, titles, new blog.



Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to techniques that target social networks and applications to spread brand awareness or promote products. Social media marketing campaigns usually center around establishing a social media presence on major platforms by creating shareable content and advertorials.

Similkameen has established a presence on both Facebook and Instagram. An annual content calendar guides the information to post based on seasons, experience themes, and national holidays. User generated content is the main source of content; however, with the new blogs coming online we will have a new CTA for our posts, which will be boosted with budget when travel marketing is allowed. Until then, messaging will align with Destination BC recommendations as per the funding requirements.

Hashtags are used to help users find our information: #Similkameen #cruisethecrowsnest #ExploreBC

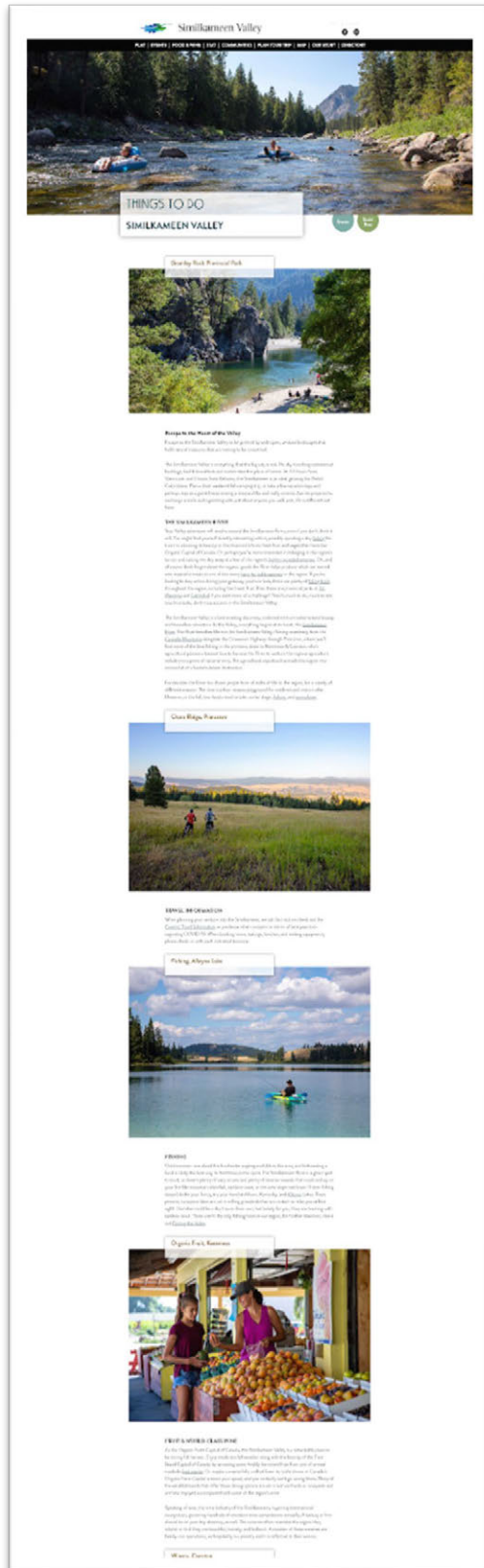


During 2020 @SimilkameenBC Facebook page gained **806 net likes** (-51%), bringing the count to **7,639 followers** (+12%). **144 posts** (-44%) were published in the period resulting in **1,067,220 impressions** (-33%) and **72,979 engagements** (-44%).



The @SimilkameenBC Instagram account gained **1,170 net followers** (+45%), bringing the count to **1,979 followers** (+145%). **120 posts** (+1%) were published in the period resulting in **375,972 impressions** (+269%) and **20,040 engagements** (+216%).

Programmatic Digital Advertising



Programmatic advertising is a system that automates the processes and transactions involved with purchasing and dynamically placing ads on websites or apps. Programmatic advertising makes it possible to purchase and place ads, including targeted advertising content, in less than a second.

We engage the services of [War Room](#), our programmatic agency, who are specialists in the tourism industry and have developed their own proprietary software to support digital target marketing.

We supply the targets audiences based on our research layered with demographics and online behaviours such as who has searched for travel in BC in the last 90 days.

A spring 2022 digital campaign is planned anticipating travel marketing will be allowed and we will be piloting the new blogs as the call-to-action (CTA).

Similkameen Valley launched their first research based digital display campaign Sept. 25-Oct. 25, 2020 resulting in **4,835,360 impressions** and **6,913 ad clicks** to the landing page: <https://similkameenvalley.com/discover-sv/>.

Once on Similkameen Valley's website, Google Analytics user flow metrics show that visitors who clicked through from the HTML landing page went to the Map page first then most commonly the Home page. After that visitors spread their exploration of the full site evenly over 56 other pages.

Cruise the Crowsnest Digital Campaign

[Cruise the Crowsnest](#) supports the “dream and plan” stages in the customer journey with call to action (CTA) links referring to each partner website for more detailed travel information. Our first research-based digital advertising campaign (fall 2021) is planned to be in the BC market mid-August (timing is pending PHO travel guidelines). Additional tactics include social media #cruisethecrowsnest and advertising.



Traditional Marketing

Traditional marketing is a form of communication that is non-digital. It includes the following channels.



Currently there is no traditional marketing planned at this time due to budget.

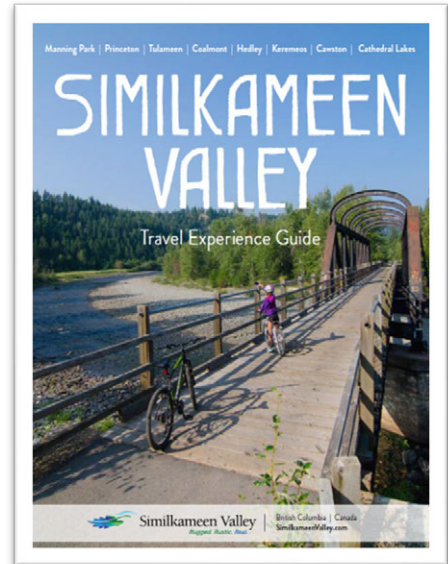
Print Media – Visitor Services

Similkameen Valley creates its own print media in the form of the travel guide and local maps to support the local visitor centres.

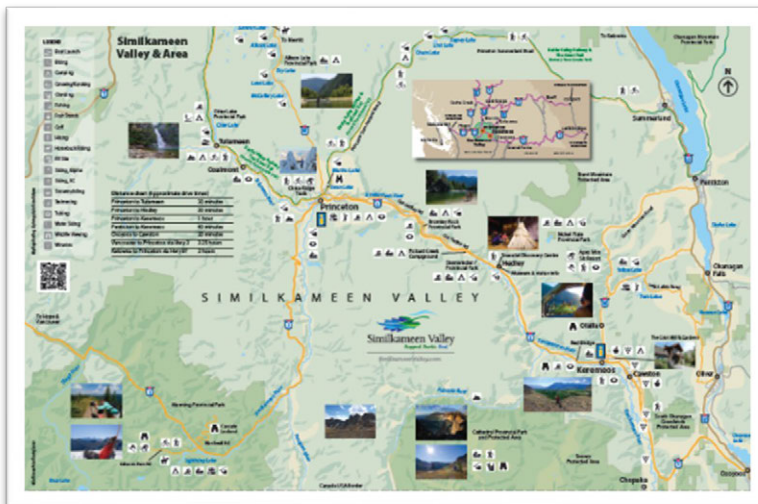
Print Guide

The [Similkameen Valley Travel Experience](#) print guide supports the “visit” stage in the customer journey and is available at the local Visitor Centres and various locations throughout the valley. For 2021, the guide will not promote events but refer readers to the website. Reduced page count and print run is due to lower advertising participation because of COVID-19.

The guide highlights the key travel experiences throughout the Valley with cross-references to geographic locations. Key content is in alignment with the official website and main call to action (CTA) <https://similkameenvalley.com/> and includes regional centre-spread map, top 10 things to do by area including Bromley Rock, Cathedral Lakes, China Ridge, fishing, floating, guided tours, hiking, Manning Park, orchards and wineries, heritage and at the heart of it all, Similkameen River that links the Valley.



Maps



Print maps support the “visit” stage in the customer journey. The maps are available through the visitor centres in Keremeos, Hedley and Princeton. The maps feature the top experiences and key attractions throughout the Valley with a call-to-action for the official Similkameen Valley visitor website for more information. Businesses are encouraged to carry maps. For 2021, current stock is ample, but an updated map will be forthcoming when needed. The tear-off pad maps

provide a quick orientation of the area with Similkameen Valley on one side and the Keremeos/Cawston area on the second side and for the Princeton area a second version covers that area (with Hedley).

The centre spread of the Travel Experiences guide also has the Valley-wide map.

[Online maps](#) are also available to support the awareness, plan and visit stages of the customer journey.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are directly related to the activities of SVPS and include the following:

1. Increase in website traffic from the BC market.
2. Increase from referrals to operators through the website.
3. Increase in positive word of mouth through social media reach and engagement.
4. Leveraging of core funding.
5. Ability to secure partnerships.
6. Engagement with Stakeholders via the online resource centre.

Note: Quantifiable KPIs will be finalized in consideration of the timing to activate paid promotion due to the marketing restrictions by the Provincial Health Officer orders.

Key Activity Timeline

Key Marketing Activity Timeline		
2021 to April 1, 2022	Timing	
2021/22 Destination Marketing Strategy	March	2021
Industry Support (Online Resources)	March	2021
Social Media Posts	On-going	2021
Print Guide Editing	April	2021
Website Audit	April	2021
Content Strategy	April	2021
MRDT Stakeholder Outreach	April/May	2021
Stakeholder Outreach - Listings Update	April/May	2021
Blog - Design, Copy	April/May	2021
Print Guide - Design and Layout	May	2021
Website Updates	May	2021
Crowsnest Fall Campaign Plan	May	2021
Print Guide Release	June	2021
Research - Updated Segment Release	June	2021
Print Maps - Timing as Required	Summer	2021
Crowsnest Fall Campaign Launch	August	2021
Prepare for Fall Photo Shoot	August	2021
Website Updates	August	2021
Fall Photo Shoot	September	2021
Winter Content Plan	September	2021
Website Content Updates	November	2021
Winter Images Website Update	November	2021
Spring Digital Campaign Plan	January	2022
Website Updates	March	2022
Summer Images Website Update	March	2022
Spring Digital Campaign Launch	March	2022

Appendix A – Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS)

Similkameen Valley is located in the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen, in the southern interior of British Columbia. The Similkameen extends from Richter Pass in the east to Similkameen River's headwaters in Manning Park in the west. Primary access is along the Highway 3 (Crowsnest). Communities, parks, and hamlets include Cawston, Chopaka, Coalmont, Eastgate, Hedley, Keremeos, Olalla, Manning Park, Princeton, Tulameen and the Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands. For travellers heading east from Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, Similkameen Country is start of the Crowsnest Highway and an alternative route to access the Okanagan Valley.

Figure 1

The area for the TELUS Insights research was the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) for visitor counts.

