



TourismBC

COMMUNITY TOURISM  
FOUNDATIONS

# COMMUNITY TOURISM

## PLAN

# BURNS LAKE AND LAKES

## DISTRICT

**May 31, 2012**

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## 1 Summary

The Village of Burns Lake and Lakes District have undertaken a comprehensive process to develop a Community Tourism Plan. This process began with confirmation of the Community's Tourism Vision – Burns Lake and Lakes District (2008):

“Our vision is to be part of a vibrant community that includes a desirable, healthy and affordable lifestyle. A family-oriented destination – A Place Where Visitors Want to Come Back!

Through the spirit of inclusiveness, cooperation and collaboration all community members including local government contribute to this vision.”

In pursuit of this vision, the overall goal of Burns Lake and Lakes District is to increase tourism to the area to diversify the local economy and achieve greater economic prosperity in a sustainable manner. While short term gains can be achieved through investment in specific summer 2012 events, this longer term vision for tourism would be achieved over a period of five to ten years, in a manner that enhances the community. Burns Lake and Lakes District have established the following tourism objectives:

- ✓ To grow the tourism industry strategically as a way of diversifying the local economy and expanding the tax base, increasing the jobs and income available to residents while recognizing community values;
- ✓ To enhance destination development and appeal for visitors through the strategic use of regional, provincial, national and private infrastructure investments;
- ✓ As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets;
- ✓ To encourage tourism operators to consistently and strategically market the area to target markets by cooperating with the lead tourism organization and to leverage resources wherever possible; and
- ✓ To sustain a tourism management function to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, funding and communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism.

Specific and quantifiable objectives were established by the Working Group during the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 planning session:

### Short Term:

- Grow registration at Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival by 30%
- Establish baseline value of tourism in Burns Lake and Lakes District

### Medium Term:

- Increase number of touring travelers who stop in Burns Lake (measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps through the Visitor Centre (VC))
- Grow overall value of tourism
- Grow occupancy during select festival weekends
- Grow festival attendees
  - Big Pig

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- 2 other identified signature festivals

## Long Term:

- Grow overall value of tourism
- Establish Interpretive/Cultural Centre visitor attendance and revenues targets

The following lessons and indicated actions were distilled from the Burns Lake and Lakes District Situation Analysis and give rise to the key issues and opportunities subsequently incorporated in this tourism plan:

1. Burns Lake and Lakes District is well placed to secure economic returns from the tourism economy given its location along Highway #16, a major touring route in Northern BC.
2. A balanced approach to tourism is indicated, that includes both destination development and market development. In the short term, destination development in Burns Lake and Lakes District should focus on investments in mountain biking/Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival and on the proposed clan carving/village walking tour. In the medium term, investments in trails, campsite maintenance and the development of 1-2 more signature festivals and events may offer potential. In the longer term, the development of an Aboriginal Cultural/Interpretive Centre may offer significant potential to create an anchor attraction to draw in touring travelers from Highway #16.
3. In the short, medium and long term, Burns Lake and Lakes District needs to encourage the development of visitor experiences that are unique, compelling, and consistent with a focused tourism vision including those that feature authentic and interactive aboriginal cultural experiences of the six First Nations, lake and trail based activities and mountain biking. As well, the Olympic quality Nordic facilities represent a unique sport tourism opportunity.
4. Burns Lake and Lakes District should focus on a limited number of target markets that are seeking the tourism experiences it is uniquely positioned to offer. These include:
  - 4.1 Touring market traveling along Highway #16 – conversion to longer lengths of stay.
  - 4.2. Mountain biking travelers primarily from Northern British Columbia, the rest of BC and Alberta.
  - 4.3. Regional markets from Prince Rupert, Smithers, Vanderhoof, Prince George – the growth and development of specific festivals and events in Burns Lake and Lakes District will appeal to the regional population base as will lake-based experiences such as angling.
  - 4.4. Sport Tourism Associations – specifically Nordic events/associations that will utilize Burns Lake’s Olympic quality Nordic trails; potential for other sporting events with new investment in Recreation Centre.

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5. Burns Lake and Lakes District has secured immediate short term funding in support of tourism development and marketing that necessitates a concentrated effort of staff resources and organization in the near term in order to maximize returns from this investment. Once these immediate opportunities are leveraged and the community returns to more traditional levels and sources of funding, this short term organization will evolve with the proposed hiring of an Economic Development Officer. This new position at the Village should work closely with the proposed Tourism Advisory Committee including the Burns Lake Band, the Chamber of Commerce, the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association and others to secure funding and to implement the medium and long terms strategies identified in this plan.

In the short term, the Village of Burns Lake should play a leadership role working closely with the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association in the implementation of the tourism plan strategies and tactics related to the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival. Funding has been secured to expand festival content and enhance marketing efforts for the upcoming August 2012 festival.

The Burns Lake Band should continue to play a leadership role in the development of the clan carvings and in pursuit of the proposed Interpretive Centre. In the short term the placement of the carvings throughout the Village must be carefully considered in order to create a memorable walking tour for visitors that not only showcases the carvings themselves but also the scenic vistas, services and amenities offered in Burns Lake.

In order to support the implementation of medium and long term strategies, it is further recommended that a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) be formed to work closely with the Village's new proposed Economic Development Officer. This TAC should include representation from tourism operators, the Northern BC Tourism Association, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area B and E, six First Nations, Chamber of Commerce, BC Parks, College of New Caledonia, Community Futures, and Local Clubs/Associations/Councils.

6. In order to secure the necessary funds for plan implementation, partnerships with other organizations will be critical and opportunities to leverage resources should be sought out and maximized. While funding has been secured in support of short-term tourism plan initiatives related to the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival and the clan carvings, it is important to note the on-going funding for medium and long term funding must be confirmed.
7. Burns Lake and Lakes District should build in evaluation tools to monitor plan implementation wherever possible.
8. If Burns Lake and Lakes District is to successfully grow its tourism economy, it is essential that the community and its tourism stakeholders work in partnership with local First Nations, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area B and E, Northern BC Tourism Association, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC, potential funders and others.

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The merger of the community's vision and objectives for tourism combined with these key lessons and indicated actions from the Situation Analysis has led to the development of a comprehensive tourism plan that includes a set of short, medium and long term strategies and tactics. These strategies and tactics address the form of organization in support of tourism plan implementation, funding for tourism initiatives, tourism product development and tourism promotion.

In order to grow the tourism economy in Burns Lake and Lakes District a number of strategies must be pursued. First it is necessary to organize for tourism product and market development and to secure and manage the investment of focused resources in the implementation of this plan.

Potential funding partners have been contacted including the following:

- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC)
- Nechako-Kitimaat Development Fund (NKDF)
- Village of Burns Lake
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area B and E/Economic Development

As well, funds have been made available through the Tourism BC Community Tourism Opportunities (CTO) program.

Initial applications for funding have been submitted where deadlines were immediate. These funding applications need to be monitored and once confirmed, immediate short term implementation of product development and promotion strategies must commence.

In the medium and longer term sustainable funding will need to be secured. This could involve increased dedicated funding from local and regional sources in support of economic development which could also be augmented with Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT) collection in the Village or preferably through a cluster of Highway #16 communities.

To secure short-term results, dedicated paid resources should be engaged to manage implementation of immediate opportunities for funding and tourism product/ market development that will generate economic returns for summer 2012.

It is recommended that the Village of Burns Lake lead the short term implementation of strategies and tactics associated with the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival working closely with the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association. These organization and funding strategies and tactics are captured in the strategies that follow. The Burns Lake Band should continue to lead the development of the clan carvings working closely with the Village to establish their placement in the context of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. As well, the proposed Interpretive Centre feasibility study should continue to be led by the Burns Lake Band in conjunction with other local First Nations.

With the proposed hiring of an Economic Development Officer, supported by the recommended Tourism Advisory Committee, it will then be possible to implement a

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series of product and market development strategies in the medium and long term when adequate funding is secured.

## **Destination/Product Development:**

Burns Lake and Lakes District has the “raw materials” to develop tourism but it currently lacks a critical mass of market-ready tourism products that are strong motivators for multi-day travel. As identified in the Situation Analysis and as discussed by the working group, to achieve long-term growth in tourism, Burns Lake and Lakes District needs to put concerted effort into developing tourism products.

The priority product categories that are motivators for travel and/or for stopping along the Highway #16 touring route to be developed and promoted include:

- Aboriginal cultural experiences
- Mountain biking experiences

Secondary tourism products that are lower motivators for travel but can enhance visitor satisfaction and increase length of stay, include:

- Lake/trail based experiences
- Signature festivals and events

Niche tourism products, that are smaller product categories than the primary or secondary markets but where Burns Lake and Lakes District has some competitive advantages include:

- Sport tourism
- Freshwater angling

Amenities such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverage options will be needed to support the growth in tourism products.

Ideally, all of the identified priority products (primary, secondary, and niche) should receive resources from Burns Lake and Lakes District’s tourism initiatives. However, with limited budgets it will be most important to put adequate resources toward the primary tourism products first. **It is proven more effective to put enough resources into a few areas than to spread out resources too thinly.**

## **Market Development/Promotion:**

Priority market promotional strategies should be directed to the key target markets, which include tourism traffic along Highway #16, mountain bike travelers, regional markets, such as Prince George and Smithers, freshwater anglers, and Nordic event organizers, and would include rebranding and repositioning, co-operative and joint marketing initiatives, media relations, highway signage, social media, and participation in industry events and opportunities.

## 2 Introduction and Methodology

This tourism plan for Burns Lake and Lakes District addresses the conclusions and indicated actions brought forward from the Situation Analysis which accompanies this report. This Situation Analysis was reviewed with local tourism stakeholders on April 25, 2012. The tourism plan that follows is intended to guide the tourism activities of Burns Lake and Lakes District in the short, medium and long term. The plan sets out the tourism objectives that the community will strive to achieve, using the strategies and specific tactics detailed herein. Recommendations are made related to organizing for tourism plan implementation and to funding opportunities. Evaluation methods to track the objectives, strategies, and tactics are listed, and estimated budget amounts for each activity are provided.

### 2.1 Planning Process

Burns Lake and Lakes District have embarked upon a joint tourism planning initiative through the Community Tourism Foundations program offered by Tourism BC as part of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. The *Community Tourism Foundations* program provides resources to assist communities in developing a comprehensive tourism plan. It offers a range of tools, proven resources and customized destination development assistance to communities focusing on tourism marketing and development. Its step-by-step approach can accommodate the needs of communities at different stages of the tourism development process. The full planning cycle is engaged, beginning with an initial assessment phase, followed by a market, product and destination analysis (the 'Situation Analysis') and a subsequent strategic planning phase.

In 2009 Burns Lake and Lakes District participated in the *Community Tourism Foundations* one-day pre-qualification workshop. The one-day workshop is appropriate for communities that are in the early stages of establishing tourism in their area and would like to engage with Tourism BC by learning more about the tourism industry and the *Community Tourism Foundations* program. The final product from the one-day workshop was a Tourism Assessment document which provided an overall summary of the tourism industry in British Columbia and some suggested strategies for the Burns Lake and Lakes District tourism working group to implement.

With the devastation of the Babine mill fire in January 2012, the provincial government offered assistance to the community of Burns Lake. It was determined to continue the work from the pre-qualification workshop for the Burns Lake and Lakes District and to implement the full *Community Tourism Foundations* program.

The resources provided through the *Community Tourism Foundations* program include the services of professional facilitators to assist in the planning process. Tourism British Columbia oversaw this project that included the guidance and assistance of a working group comprising representatives from Burns Lake Band, Lake Babine Nation, the Chamber of Commerce, Burns Lake and Lakes District community members and tourism operators, the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association (BLMBA), the Trails Committee, Southside Economic Development Association, the Village of Burns Lake, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Area B and E (RDBN Electoral Area B and E), the regional tourism association, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC (AtBC) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

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The planning process began with an exploratory meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 during which local tourism objectives and tourism planning to date was considered within the context of provincial and federal tourism initiatives, in particular those led by Tourism BC as part of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation and AtBC. Tourism experiences now available to visitors were reviewed along with current marketing efforts undertaken by Tourism BC, Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA), the RDBN Electoral Area B and E and the Village of Burns Lake.

Subsequent to this initial meeting, a comprehensive Situation Analysis for tourism in Burns Lake and Lakes District was prepared and distributed to the working group that considered global, national, regional and local market conditions and trends and their implications for the development of a tourism plan. This Situation Analysis was reviewed with the working group in a meeting held on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012. During this meeting, the working committee provided direction on the priorities that should be included in the tourism plan from a short term, medium term and long term perspective. The final meeting to review the draft community tourism plan was held on May 9, 2012. The following plan includes input from this meeting.

The participation of the following individuals is gratefully acknowledged – without their contribution and attendance at the planning sessions held April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and anticipated attendance on May 9, 2012 it would not have been possible to develop this strategic tourism plan within such a short period of time:

## ***Burns Lake and Lakes District Representatives:***

Quinten Beach (Village of Burns Lake Councillor)  
Dirk Beckman (Northern Nature Tours)  
Bill Miller (Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, Chair / Electoral Area B)  
Dean Mckinley (Northern Development)  
Bill Chapman (Lakes Outdoor Recreation Society/Burns Lake Community Forest)  
Jeff Ragsdale (Village of Burns Lake, Development Services Coordinator)  
Kevin Derksen (Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association)  
Wes Sam (Burns Lake Band)  
Sandy Doré (Bulkley Valley Credit Union)  
Rick Schritt (long time resident)  
Steve Freeman (Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, Electoral Area E)  
Cindy Shelford (Burns Lake Native Development Corporation / Lakes Economic Development Association)  
Kelly Friesen (Southside Economic Development Association)  
Corrine Swenson (RDBN Electoral Area B and E )  
Pauline Goertzen (Community Futures, Operations & Contract Manager (Smithers))  
Keith Van Tine (Trail Committee Member)  
Susan James (Noralee Resort)  
Logan Wilson (Village of Burns Lake, Recreation Coordinator)  
Rise Johanson (Takysie Lake Resort)  
Sheryl Worthing (Village of Burns Lake, Chief Administrative Officer)  
Marilyn Joseph-Williams (Lake Babine Nation)  
Ron Zayac (Chamber of Commerce)  
Heide Monteith (Burns Lake Visitor Centre)  
John Illes (Village of Burns Lake, Councillor)

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## ***Provincial and Federal Representatives:***

Peter Harrison (Director of Partnership Marketing, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation)

Clint Fraser (Northern BC Tourism Association)

Tracy Dunsford (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)

Keith Henry (Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC)

Cheryl Chapman (Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC)

Suzanne Denbak (Tourism British Columbia Facilitator)

## 2.2 Tourism Plan

In the preparation of the tourism plan, the following principles are kept in mind:

- **Visitor Needs**. BC communities must be responsive to visitor needs. Communities need to understand visitor needs first, develop tourism experiences to meet those needs, and then market the appropriate tourism experience to the appropriate type of visitor.
- **Inclusiveness**. To address the issues and opportunities facing the tourism industry, consultation and collaboration need to form the basis of plan development.
- **Effective Partnerships**. Tourism is a fragmented industry and effective partnerships among tourism operators, communities, destination marketing organizations, and all levels of government are essential to building a cohesive, strong and sustainable tourism industry in British Columbia.
- **Sustainability**. Tourism in British Columbia will be developed in a sustainable manner, recognizing the need for economic, social, and environmental sustainability.
- **Community Support**. To be successful, tourism development in communities needs to be supported by all areas of a community, including businesses, local government, and residents.

The tourism plan is the embodiment of the overall vision, economic goals, and serves as a roadmap for the years ahead to achieve the community's vision with regard to tourism. This tourism plan presents objectives for the short, medium and long-term and while it provides a roadmap, it is also flexible enough to take new, unexpected opportunities into consideration during implementation.

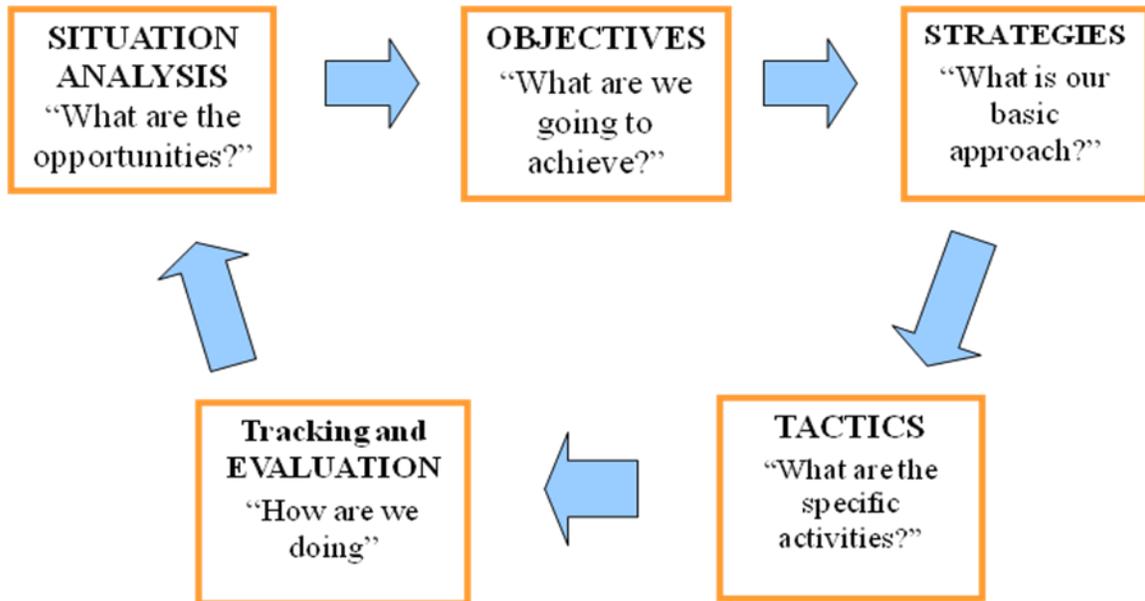
The tourism plan accomplishes the following:

1. Defines the business situation – past, present and future.
2. Defines the tourism-related opportunities and problems facing the community.
3. Establishes specific and realistic business objectives.
4. Defines strategies and tactics required to accomplish the objectives.
5. Establishes a timetable and pinpoints responsibility for execution of programs.
6. Establishes control and review procedures to monitor effectiveness of programs and performance against the defined objectives.

Once the tourism plan is completed and implementation begins, results should be tracked regularly such that an updated plan, with learning from the current year's activities, can be even more effective in increasing tourism to the community. For many

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communities, the objectives and strategies should be reviewed, with most of the updates occurring on the detailed tactics. The planning cycle can be illustrated as follows:



## 3 Conclusions and Indicated Actions from the Situation Analysis

The following key lessons and indicated actions distil the analysis from the Burns Lake and Lakes District Situation Analysis into the key issues that the tourism plan must address.

### A. The Tourism Opportunity

**Burns Lake and Lakes District is well placed to secure economic returns from the tourism economy given its location along Highway #16, a major touring route in Northern BC.** Visitors will wish to experience the unspoiled nature surrounding Burns Lake and in particular the vast network of freshwater lakes offering 4800 km of shoreline. Burns Lake and Lakes District is home to six First Nations and many visitors, particularly from the European touring markets, will wish to experience authentic, hands-on aboriginal cultural experiences and soft outdoor adventure that incorporates cultural learning and interpretation.

Burns Lake and Lakes District is also building its reputation as Northern BC’s mountain biking “mecca” and there is significant opportunity to grow visitation from this segment through leveraged investments in mountain biking trails and festivals such as the Big Pig Mountain Biking event held in August each year.

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## B. The Approach to Tourism Growth

**A balanced approach to tourism is indicated, that includes both destination development and market development.** As Burns Lake and Lakes District does not yet have a critical mass of tourism experiences, destination development is essential for tourism growth. Destination development should focus on a few specific areas that are unique and compelling and consequently have tourism potential while avoiding other areas that are not unique or where crowding may be detrimental to the natural environment or the quality of life for residents. In the short term, destination development in Burns Lake and Lakes District should focus on investments in mountain biking/Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival and on the proposed clan carving/village walking tour to be developed this summer. In the medium term, investments in trails, campsite maintenance and the development of 1-2 more signature festivals and events may offer potential. In the longer term, the development of an Aboriginal Cultural/Interpretive Centre may offer significant potential to create an anchor attraction to draw in touring travelers from Highway #16. If this is accompanied by a conference centre/hotel, then the regional/provincial meetings market can also be targeted.

In all cases, destination development should be accompanied by enabling infrastructure that will minimize inconvenience to residents (to address issues such as traffic, highway crossings, parking, etc.). However, some inconvenience will inevitably occur with more people on the streets, especially during the summer months when more visitors travel.

**While market development is needed to promote Burns Lake and Lakes District to potential visitors, promotion by itself can only achieve limited growth in tourism.** However, in concert with destination development, Burns Lake and Lakes District will have the potential to achieve growth in tourism over the short, medium and long term. In the short-term, promotion must focus on market-ready experiences such as mountain biking.

## C. Unique Selling Proposition

**In the short, medium and long term, Burns Lake and Lakes District needs to encourage the development of visitor experiences that are unique, compelling, and consistent with a focused tourism vision.** Burns Lake and Lakes District will be successful in attracting increased numbers of visitors if tourism experiences are developed that feature authentic and interactive aboriginal cultural experiences of the six First Nations, lake and trail based activities and mountain biking. As well, the Olympic quality Nordic facilities represent a unique sport tourism opportunity.

There is generally greater potential in tourism destinations that are seen as unique with a perceived single focus. For example, Costa Rica is seen as an eco-tourism destination and Stratford, Ontario is known for its Shakespearean festival. While these two destinations provide unique tourism experiences, the measure of their success is not because they offer better eco-tourism or better theatre experiences than other destinations but because they are perceived as such. Both of these destinations offer much more than eco-tourism or theatre but they focus on these attributes because they are unique and compelling. While it is not anticipated that Burns Lake and Lakes District will become a stand alone tourism destination competing on the world stage, there still needs to be a compelling reason for travellers to make the effort to stop their vehicle

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along Highway #16 and visit Burns Lake and Lakes District rather than simply passing through.

## D. Target Markets

**Burns Lake and Lakes District should focus on a limited number of target markets that are seeking the tourism experiences it is uniquely positioned to offer.** A review of available market research indicates that the following target markets offer the highest potential for tourism returns for Burns Lake and Lakes District:

- Touring market traveling along Highway #16 – conversion to longer lengths of stay. This market is characterized by international travelers (USA, Germany, Netherlands, UK) who are 55+ years of age, affluent, well-educated, often retired and traveling without children. This older demographic is interested in unique aboriginal cultural and heritage experiences, festivals and events that coincide with their journey and easily accessed soft outdoor adventure such as walking tours and short interpretive hikes, rock hounding tours, boat rentals/tours of petroglyphs etc.
- Mountain biking travelers primarily from Northern British Columbia, the rest of BC and Alberta. Mountain biking travelers are primarily between the ages of 25 and 45 years, are well-educated and affluent. They travel specifically to experience mountain biking trails/parks. This market will wish to experience the ever growing world-class trail system being developed in Burns Lake. In addition, if the Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival grows its content, duration and awareness levels, this event has the potential to generate significant economic impact for a specific time period as well as growing awareness to drive biking visitation at other times of year.
- Regional markets from Prince Rupert, Smithers, Vanderhoof, Prince George – the growth and development of specific festivals and events in Burns Lake and Lakes District will appeal to the regional population base as will lake-based experiences such as angling. These regional markets are younger than the European touring market segment and participate in outdoor activities more frequently. Events should be unique to the region and offer sufficient content to encourage overnight stays. Possible events for consideration include Aboriginal Days, the Dog Show, Southside Bluegrass Festival, Coldsmoke Snowmobile/Winter Festival, Performing Arts Festival
- Sport Tourism Associations – specifically Nordic events/associations that will utilize Burns Lake's Olympic quality Nordic trails; potential for other sporting events with new investment in Recreation Centre

## E. Organizing for Tourism

**Burns Lake and Lakes District has secured immediate short term funding in support of tourism development and marketing that necessitates a concentrated effort of staff resources and organization in the near term in order to maximize returns from this investment. Once these immediate opportunities are leveraged and the community returns to more traditional levels and sources of funding, this short term organization will evolve with the proposed hiring of an Economic Development Officer.** This new position at the Village should work closely with the proposed Tourism Advisory Committee including the Burns Lake Band, the Chamber of

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Commerce, the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association and others to secure funding and to implement the medium and long terms strategies identified in this plan.

In the short term, the Village of Burns Lake should play a leadership role working closely with the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association in the implementation of the tourism plan strategies and tactics related to the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival. Funding has been secured to expand festival content and enhance marketing efforts for the upcoming August 2012 festival.

The Burns Lake Band should continue to play a leadership role in the development of the clan carvings and in pursuit of the proposed Interpretive Centre. In the short term the placement of the carvings throughout the Village must be carefully considered in order to create a memorable walking tour for visitors that not only showcases the carvings themselves but also the scenic vistas, services and amenities offered in Burns Lake.

In order to support the implementation of medium and long term strategies, it is further recommended that a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) be formed to work closely with the Village's new proposed Economic Development Officer. This TAC should include representation from tourism operators, the Northern BC Tourism Association, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, six First Nations, Chamber of Commerce, BC Parks, College of New Caledonia, Community Futures, and Local Clubs/Associations/Councils.

Ongoing support for local tourism operators should also be investigated including establishing industry training such Tourism Business Essentials, World Host training etc. AtBC also offers training programs for new aboriginal operators that focus on cultural sharing and authenticity.

## F. Funding Tourism Product Development and Marketing Strategies

**In order to secure the necessary funds for plan implementation, partnerships with other organizations will be critical and opportunities to leverage resources should be sought out and maximized.** Funding must be secured both to support tourism product development/promotion in the short term, medium term and long term.

Potential funding partners and sources include:

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT)
- Rio Tinto
- Burns Lake Community Forest
- Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA)/Tourism BC
- Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC
- RDBN Electoral Area B and E
- Village of Burns Lake
- Additional Hotel Room Tax collected from visitors by accommodators located in the Village or collaboratively with other communities along Highway #16

While funding has been secured in support of short-term tourism plan initiatives related to the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival and the clan carvings, it is important to note the on-

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going funding for medium and long term funding must be confirmed. While the tourism plan identifies all the opportunities identified by the Working Group, the level of funding ultimately secured in support of these initiatives will permit the proposed Tourism Advisory Committee to make recommendations regarding implementation priorities.

## G. Monitoring and Evaluation

**Burns Lake and Lakes District should build in evaluation tools to monitor plan implementation wherever possible.** These evaluation tools will help Burns Lake and Lakes District to judge whether an activity should be continued, expanded, contracted, or eliminated as part of an annual planning process. Tourism BC Research Planning and Evaluation team offers a number of monitoring tools such as the Value of Tourism Model and the Commercial Accommodation Survey that can be accessed free of charge through NBCTA.

## H. The Importance of Partnerships

**If Burns Lake and Lakes District is to successfully grow its tourism economy, it is essential that the community and its tourism stakeholders work in partnership with local First Nations, the RDBN Electoral Area B and E, Northern BC Tourism Association, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC, potential funders and others.** The development of authentic and unique aboriginal cultural experiences must be led by the six local First Nations with support from local governments and the entire community. A continued investment by BLMBA in mountain biking trails and promotion can leverage expertise available through Mountain Bike BC, NBCTA and others. Execution of marketing and promotional strategies and tactics can leverage expertise available in both NBCTA and AtBC. With limited resources for tourism product and market development, leveraging the expertise and existing initiatives within the region is a critical factor that will drive future success.

## 4 Tourism Vision

The Village of Burns Lake and Lakes District have already established a vision for tourism which has been established by an earlier Working Group and confirmed in the April 3, 2012 initial meeting:

Community Tourism Vision – Burns Lake and Lakes District (2008)

“Our vision is to be part of a vibrant community that includes a desirable, healthy and affordable lifestyle. A family-oriented destination – A Place Where Visitors Want to Come Back!

Through the spirit of inclusiveness, cooperation and collaboration all community members including local government contribute to this vision.”

## 5 Tourism Objectives

The overall goal of Burns Lake and Lakes District is to increase tourism to the area to diversify the local economy and achieve greater economic prosperity in a sustainable manner. While short term gains can be achieved through investment in specific summer 2012 events, this longer term vision for tourism would be achieved over a period of five to ten years, in a manner that enhances the community. Burns Lake and Lakes District have established the following tourism objectives:

- ✓ To grow the tourism industry strategically as a way of diversifying the local economy and expanding the tax base, increasing the jobs and income available to residents while recognizing community values;
- ✓ To enhance destination development and appeal for visitors through the strategic use of regional, provincial, national and private infrastructure investments;
- ✓ As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets;
- ✓ To encourage tourism operators to consistently and strategically market the area to target markets by cooperating with the lead tourism organization and to leverage resources wherever possible; and
- ✓ To sustain a tourism management function to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, funding and communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism.

Specific and quantifiable objectives were established by the Working Group during the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 planning session:

### Short Term:

- Grow registration at Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival by 30%
- Establish baseline value of tourism in Burns Lake and Lakes District

### Medium Term:

- Increase number of touring travelers who stop in Burns Lake (measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps through the Visitor Centre (VC))
- Grow overall value of tourism
- Grow occupancy during select festival weekends
- Grow festival attendees
  - Big Pig
  - 2 other identified signature festivals

### Long Term:

- Grow overall value of tourism
- Establish Interpretive/Cultural Centre visitor attendance and revenues targets

## 6 Tourism Strategies Overview

In order to grow the tourism economy in Burns Lake and Lakes District a number of strategies must be pursued. First it is necessary to organize for tourism product and market development and to secure and manage the investment of focused resources in the implementation of this plan.

Potential funding partners have been contacted including the following:

- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC)
- Nechako-Kitimaat Development Fund (NKDF)
- Village of Burns Lake
- RDBN Electoral Area B and E/Economic Development

As well, funds have been made available through the Tourism BC Community Tourism Opportunities (CTO) program.

Initial applications for funding have been submitted where deadlines were immediate. These funding applications need to be monitored and once confirmed, immediate short term implementation of product development and promotion strategies must commence.

In the medium and longer term sustainable funding will need to be secured. This could involve increased dedicated funding from local and regional sources in support of economic development which could also be augmented with Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT) collection in the Village or preferably through a cluster of Highway #16 communities.

To secure short-term results, dedicated paid resources should be engaged to manage implementation of immediate opportunities for funding and tourism product/ market development that will generate economic returns for summer 2012.

It is recommended that the Village of Burns Lake lead the short term implementation of strategies and tactics associated with the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival working closely with the Burns Lake Mountain Biking Association. These organization and funding strategies and tactics are captured in the strategies that follow. The Burns Lake Band should continue to lead the development of the clan carvings working closely with the Village to establish their placement in the context of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. As well, the proposed Interpretive Centre feasibility study should continue to be led by the Burns Lake Band in conjunction with other local First Nations.

With the proposed hiring of an Economic Development Officer, supported by the recommended Tourism Advisory Committee, it will then be possible to implement a series of product and market development strategies in the medium and long term when adequate funding is secured.

### **Destination/Product Development:**

Burns Lake and Lakes District has the “raw materials” to develop tourism but it currently lacks a critical mass of market-ready tourism products that are strong motivators for

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travel. Most of Burns Lake and Lakes District's experiences are geared to residents and while there are small pockets of tourism product, there is not enough that is clustered together to make it easy to draw a potential visitor to spend a day or several days.

To achieve long-term growth in tourism, Burns Lake and Lakes District needs to put concerted effort into developing tourism products. Without more market-ready tourism product, market development and promotional efforts can only achieve limited growth in the short term. The priority product categories to be developed and promoted are recommended as follows:

Primary tourism products (that are motivators for travel and/or for stopping along the Highway #16 touring route):

- Aboriginal cultural experiences – Burns Lake and Lakes District is blessed with the history and heritage of six First Nations. Aboriginal cultural experiences on their own or combined with an outdoor experience are highly sought by the touring market that is already traveling through the Village along Highway #16. Opportunities to create market ready visitor experiences that provide authentic, interactive and engaging learning should be pursued. In the short term, the proposed clan carvings and in the longer term, consideration for the proposed Interpretive Centre (dependent on feasibility study and available capital) could be considered priority product development investments.
- Mountain biking experiences – As a result of strategic investments in quality trail development and in promotion through events such as the Big Pig, Burns Lake is growing its reputation as a mountain biking 'mecca' in Northern BC. Mountain biking travelers are motivated to travel for these experiences and continued investment in this sector will build Burns Lake's current competitive edge.

Secondary tourism products (that are lower motivators for travel but can enhance visitor satisfaction and increase length of stay):

- Lake/trail based experiences – Burns Lake and Lakes District offer visitors more than 4800 km of freshwater shoreline. While many destinations in BC have lake-based product, few offer this scale of experience. Development of lake-based experiences should be supported including equipment rental and a supporting network of trails connecting a series of lake experiences. Historic First Nations trails could play an important role in these experiences.
- Signature festivals and events - . Burns Lake and Lakes District has a number of festivals and events and there is opportunity to further develop one or two (in addition to the Big Pig noted above) to become signature festivals and events. These should be festivals and events that are unique and compelling. Some of the festivals and events that have potential to become a motivation for a visit include the Coldsmoke Snowmobile Races and Southside Bluegrass Festival. This does not suggest that other festivals and events are not important, as some festivals and events are motivators for travel while others serve to increase visitor satisfaction and increase length of stay although they may not motivate a trip. For those that become signature festivals and events, adequate resources must be available to ensure the events are well promoted and well organized for visitors so they have a positive experience and generate positive word-of-mouth.

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Niche tourism products (that are smaller product categories than the primary or secondary markets but where Burns Lake and Lakes District has some competitive advantages):

- Sport tourism – Burns Lake and Lakes District offer Olympic quality Nordic facilities that are suitable for provincial and national competitions. Continued support and investment in the maintenance of these facilities will allow the Village to host these competitions.
- Freshwater angling – Burns Lake and Lakes District offers 4800 km of freshwater shoreline and a wealth of angling experiences.

## *Tourism amenities:*

Amenities such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverage options will be needed to support the growth in tourism products. These opportunities need to be communicated to the private sector and encouraged in the most appropriate places in the community, but it is expected that the private sector will respond at the right time.

The tourism products above were identified in the Situation Analysis and by the working group as being competitive advantages for Burns Lake and Lakes District compared to other destinations, and are known to be growth sectors or have high demand.

The distinction between primary and secondary, and niche products does not mean that the secondary and niche products are not important. All of the products identified are considered priority products but they may play a different role. The primary products have greater visitor volume, revenue potential, and are motivators for visiting Burns Lake. The secondary products have less visitor volume, revenue potential, and/or are weaker motivators for travel. The niche products have even still less potential. Ideally, all of the identified priority products (primary, secondary, and niche) should receive resources from Burns Lake and Lakes District's tourism initiatives. However, with limited budgets it will be most important to put adequate resources toward the primary tourism products first. **It is proven more effective to put enough resources into a few areas than to spread out resources too thinly.**

These product priorities should not suggest that other tourism experiences in Burns Lake and Lakes District are not important, but the above have been identified as priorities due to their size, uniqueness, and potential to positively affect significant numbers of visitors. Other tourism experiences and products that provide more for a visitor to do and make a stay more enjoyable also play an important role in visitor satisfaction and an increased length of stay.

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## Market Development/Promotion:

The priority market development strategies would be directed to the key target markets as follows.

Key Target Markets	Promotional Strategies
All markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repositioning and rebranding initiatives.</li> <li>• Set up of core communication materials that are consistent with the brand and relevant to all markets with particular emphasis on primary markets.</li> <li>• Joint co-operative advertising and promotions that efficiently reach the primary markets but also reach other markets.</li> </ul>
Primary markets	
Touring traffic along Highway #16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations, website, cooperative marketing and advertising activities, highway signage, mobile applications, social media, lure brochure distributed in key gateways.</li> </ul>
Mountain biking travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations, website, social media</li> </ul>
Secondary and niche markets	
Regional markets (Prince George-Smithers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations, website, cooperative marketing and advertising activities mostly in co-operation with Tourism BC / NBCTA</li> </ul>
Freshwater anglers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations, website, social media</li> </ul>
Nordic event organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Tourism BC Sports Tourism communications/events; direct contact with event organizers; presence on <a href="http://www.hostingbc.com">www.hostingbc.com</a> website</li> </ul>

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## 6.1 SHORT TERM STRATEGIES/TACTICS MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

- 1. Establish a formal tourism mandate within the Village of Burns Lake and clearly identify individuals/resources responsible for short-term tourism plan implementation (Organization and Funding)**

<b>Tactic 1.1</b>	<b>Secure Village of Burns Lake Council support for CAO to lead short-term tourism plan implementation related to the Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival working closely with the BLMBA</b>
Short Description	Establish the Village of Burns Lake as the lead organization for short-term plan implementation related to the Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival working closely with the BLMBA
Quantifiable Objectives	Short term investments in tourism product development and market development related to the Big Pig occur in a timely and efficient manner with plan objectives achieved for summer 2012
Rationale	Implementation of the tourism plan must be led by one organization in partnership with other stakeholders if short term results are to be secured in an efficient and timely manner
Action Steps	1.1.1 Present tourism plan to Village Council 1.1.2 Secure Council approval for Village to lead short term implementation related to Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival working closely with BLMBA
Potential Partnerships	BLMBA
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake CAO
Timeframe	Immediate
Budget	Existing resources
Measure of Success	Council Resolution to lead short-term plan implementation related to the Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival utilizing funding secured from grants

- 2. Secure short-term funds in support of tourism plan implementation (Organization and Funding)**

<b>Tactic 2.1</b>	<b>Identify potential funding partners and submit applications for funding support in keeping with program requirements and deadlines</b>
Short Description	Funding is required to permit plan implementation and must be secured in a timely manner to permit execution of plan strategies having impact in summer 2012 and beyond.

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Quantifiable Objectives	\$100,000 to \$125,000 in short term funding
Rationale	There are some immediate opportunities to secure funding contributions from a number of regional, provincial and federal organizations.
Action Steps	2.1.1 Identify and contact potential funding partners 2.1.2 Make applications to various programs within program deadlines (Tourism BC/NBCTA, AANDC, OBAC, NKDF, NDIT) 2.1.3 Follow up with potential funds/respond to questions 2.1.4 Confirm funding available
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, Tourism BC, NBCTA, AtBC, AANDC, NDIT, OBAC, NKDF
Lead Responsibility	Tourism BC will assist in initial contact with Village taking primary responsibility
Timeframe	May, 2012
Budget	Existing Resources
Measure of Success	Appropriate funding secured for tourism plan implementation in the short term

### 3. Expand programming and content of the Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival in order to draw increased overnight visitation during the event and to continue to build awareness of Burns Lake as a mountain biking destination (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 3.1</b>	<b>Hire paid event coordinator to create and execute expanding programming</b>
Short Description	To assist the volunteer base of the BLMBA, an experienced event coordinator could help in creating and executing new programming and festival content of market-ready quality
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	The delivery of an expanded Big Pig Mountain Bike Festival will require dedicated resources to create a critical mass and quality of experiences that will build attendance
Action Steps	3.1.1 Recruit, interview and hire experienced mountain bike event coordinator
Potential Partnerships	Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA
Timeframe	June, 2012
Budget	\$20,000
Measure of Success	Big Pig Event Coordinator hired

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<b>Tactic 3.2</b>	<b>Enhance programming elements of Big Pig</b>
Short Description	Additional experiences are needed to create longer stays and to draw markets from farther away
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	A critical mass of experiences that justify travel to Burns Lake and that warrant a multi-day stay offer an immediate opportunity to secure economic benefit in summer 2012
Action Steps	<p>3.2.1 Investigate mountain bike film showcase including a possible film premier</p> <p>3.2.2 Investigate addition of a 24-hour photography showdown with prizes or 24-hour videography showdown</p> <p>3.2.3 Secure higher profile talent for the Big Pig Gig</p> <p>3.2.4 Add additional free concerts throughout the event at Spirit Square</p> <p>3.2.5 Review other successful events (Crankworx etc.) for other programming ideas</p>
Potential Partnerships	Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	Big Pig Event Coordinator/BLMBA
Timeframe	June/July 2012
Budget	\$25,000
Measure of Success	Enhanced programming executed in 2012

<b>Tactic 3.3</b>	<b>Increase prize money available to riders</b>
Short Description	Each event's prize money would be increased
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	The size of the purse is a key factor in attendance by riders. If the purse is large enough, well known riders will attend the event and thereby create a 'buzz' leading to more attendance by biking enthusiasts.
Action Steps	3.3.1 Increase prize money for each event
Potential Partnerships	Possible sponsors
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA/Big Pig Event Coordinator
Timeframe	June/July 2012
Budget	\$10,000
Measure of Success	Increased prize money offered to riders

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## 4. Increase promotion of mountain biking/Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 4.1</b>	<b>Expand poster/brochure/trail map distribution to include all mountain biking clubs in BC/Alberta and high traffic bike/gear shops; include package offer that includes accommodation/race entry fees/T-shirt etc.</b>
Short Description	Targeted distribution of festival information, trail maps and other travel information direct to mountain biking clubs and their members and to bike/gear shops offers good potential to build visitation during the summer of 2012.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	The festival poster accompanied by the brochure/trail map will heighten awareness of Burns Lake and when accompanied by a special package offer for club members will motivate visitation during the festival
Action Steps	<p>4.1.1 Create a database of all mountain biking clubs in BC and Alberta including address, # of members etc. (beginning with close in regional markets)</p> <p>4.1.2 Create a database of all bike retail shops (beginning with close in regional markets and expanding to all of BC and Alberta)</p> <p>4.1.3 Create an overnight accommodation package for promotion that provides strong value-add/excitement</p> <p>4.1.4 Distribute to clubs/retail shops</p> <p>4.1.5 Join Mountain Biking BC and secure promotional benefits</p>
Potential Partnerships	Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA/Big Pig Festival Event Coordinator
Timeframe	By July 10 <sup>th</sup>
Budget	\$10,000
Measure of Success	200 packages sold

<b>Tactic 4.2</b>	<b>Engage a mountain biking social media coordinator</b>
Short Description	Burns Lake/Big Pig profile in social media should be strategically managed with new and exciting content provided on a regular basis to a growing community of followers
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival

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Rationale	Social media is increasingly used to share information about 'trending' events and to grow excitement amongst a community of targeted followers who share a passion. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc. are already well entrenched with mountain biking enthusiasts and the Big Pig Festival and Burns Lake Mountain biking opportunities should raise their social media profile
Action Steps	<p>4.2.1 Recruit/interview/hire social media coordinator</p> <p>4.2.2 Identify relevant blogs/forums and participate regularly</p> <p>4.2.3 Manage Facebook page/community</p> <p>4.2.4 Twitter feed</p> <p>4.2.5 Assist event coordinator with mountain biking club/retail outlet database development</p>
Potential Partnerships	Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA/Big Pig Festival Event Coordinator
Timeframe	Immediate and ongoing
Budget	\$10,000
Measure of Success	Social media coordinator engaged; Facebook followers increasing

<b>Tactic 4.3</b>	<b>Develop high quality mountain biking video featuring Burns Lake and the Big Pig</b>
Short Description	High quality, professionally produced video footage/soundtrack is needed to promote awareness of Burns Lake mountain biking and the Big Pig Festival
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	High quality video posted in suitable locations provides a 'taste' of the excitement of mountain biking in Burns Lake and is one of the most effective marketing tools for speaking with this market segment
Action Steps	<p>4.3.1 Establish project scope/key messages/tone and feel</p> <p>4.3.2 Contract with professional videographer</p> <p>4.3.3 Capture footage</p> <p>4.3.4 Post-production editing/soundtrack</p> <p>4.3.5 Post on YouTube, Facebook, website etc.</p>
Potential Partnerships	Village, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA/Big Pig Festival Event Coordinator
Timeframe	Summer 2012
Budget	\$30,000
Measure of Success	High quality video/soundtrack produced and posted

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<b>Tactic 4.4</b>	<b>Work in conjunction with Northern BC Tourism Association to expand media relations efforts around the Big Pig Festival</b>
Short Description	Target media outlets/journalists and invite to experience Burns Lake mountain biking/Big Pig Festival
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase festival attendance; increase race registration by 30%; increase accommodation occupancy levels during the festival
Rationale	Unpaid editorial coverage in targeted mountain biking publications, websites, blogs etc. will build the aspirational quality of a mountain biking trip to Burns Lake and motivate the market to investigate further, purchase and visit
Action Steps	<p>4.4.1 Identify targeted media outlets</p> <p>4.4.2 Create media familiarization tour and invite select journalists</p> <p>4.4.3 Provide an incredible Burns Lake mountain biking experience</p> <p>4.4.4 Track publication dates and profile received</p>
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA/Big Pig Festival Event Coordinator
Timeframe	Summer 2012 and ongoing
Budget	\$2,000
Measure of Success	Unpaid editorial coverage in targeted publications; advertising equivalency

## 5. Create a clan carving/village heritage walking tour in Burns Lake (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 5.1</b>	<b>Implementation of first pilot phase of aboriginal carvings located throughout the Village</b>
Short Description	A sufficient number and size of carvings are required to create visitor interest and justify stopping in Burns Lake. The first phase will begin with four to five clan carvings in various Village locations
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase number of touring travelers stopping in Burns Lake (as measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps distributed through the VC)
Rationale	Touring travelers in particular are interested in local aboriginal culture and the development of a walking tour featuring aboriginal carvings will provide a strong reason for them to pull off the Highway and visit Burns Lake. Once in town, they will likely shop and/or dine and if they enjoy their experience, they will generate favorable word of mouth
Action Steps	5.1.1 Establish a Project Committee that includes

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	<p>representation from six First Nations, Village, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, AtBC, downtown businesses. Rick Braam of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism &amp; Innovation is available to assist with coordination</p> <p>5.1.2 Review plans on locations and construction and placement details</p> <p>5.1.3 Review potential to commission additional carvings (ideally 8-10 carvings to create a compelling reason to visit)</p> <p>5.1.4 Review scale of carvings (monumental carvings of 12' or more will have more visual impact and memorability for visitors)</p>
Potential Partners	Lake Babine Nation, other First Nations, AANDC, Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, private land owners
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band
Timeframe	Immediate (carvings are underway)
Budget	\$20,000
Measure of Success	Phase I Carvings erected in October, 2012 Phase II plan established

<b>Tactic 5.2</b>	<b>Plan a walking tour route that incorporates suitable locations for aboriginal carvings, existing heritage buildings, lake vistas, picnic spots, washrooms, vehicle parking, retail/restaurant locations. The tour would have to take into consideration activities and timing associated with the Downtown revitalization.</b>
Short Description	A walking tour incorporating key highlights from Burns Lake's nature, history and heritage will create a unique and compelling reason for visitors to stop their vehicle and experience the Village.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase number of touring travelers stopping in Burns Lake (as measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps distributed through the VC)
Rationale	A walking tour that creates a complete visitor experience must be created that provides multiple reasons to stop and experience Burns Lake including a taste of local aboriginal culture, a chance to experience the lake, a reason to stretch your legs and be entertained and educated along the way. The longer a visitor spends in the Village, the more likely they are to frequent local businesses.
Action Steps	<p>5.2.1 Work collaboratively with First Nations, shops and services to design a proposed walking tour that captures the 'best of Burns Lake'</p> <p>5.2.2 Ensure this tour provides necessary</p>

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	supporting infrastructure such as parking, crosswalks, access to the VC for self-guided walking tour map etc. 5.2.3 Walking tour to encompass both initial clan carvings and potential locations for additional carvings
Potential Partnerships	Lake Babine Nation, retail, restaurants, Visitor Centre, Ministry of Highways
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band/Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	By September 2012
Budget	Existing staff/resources
Measure of Success	Plan for walking tour complete

## 6. Support the development of emerging aboriginal cultural experiences in Burns Lake and Lakes District (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 6.1</b>	<b>Support Lake Babine Nation as they develop a salmon harvest visitor experience</b>
Short Description	Each year in August, Lake Babine Nation has a salmon harvest which when combined with their smokehouse, boat trips to Old Fort and cabins offers the potential for an authentic and memorable visitor experience.
Quantifiable Objectives	Number of visitors experiencing Lake Babine salmon harvest – Year One target – 20 (pilot project)
Rationale	Aboriginal cultural experiences are highly sought by the touring market in particular visitors from European countries. However, it is important to note that these experiences must be authentic and of consistent high quality before they are promoted.
Action Steps	6.1.1 Provide advice as requested by Lake Babine Nation
Potential Partnerships	AtBC, NBCTA, AANDC, local tour operators
Lead Responsibility	Lake Babine Nation
Timeframe	Summer 2012 – pilot program
Budget	Existing staff/resources
Measure of Success	New market ready aboriginal cultural experience developed in summer 2012 for promotion in 2013

## 7. Consideration for the development of the proposed First Nations Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre and Hotel (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 7.1</b>	<b>Burns Lake Band to conduct a feasibility study of the proposed Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre/Hotel</b>
Short Description	The Burns Lake Band has proposed the development

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	of a Cultural/Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre and Hotel.
Quantifiable Objectives	Visitation to Interpretive Centre (once constructed); overall value of tourism in Burns Lake; employment targets (during construction and upon opening)
Rationale	This development, if feasible, would provide an anchor attraction for Burns Lake that leverages its unique selling proposition associated with local aboriginal culture. A well designed and programmed Cultural Centre offering interactive, hands-on, authentic experiences would be a compelling draw for the touring market. The conference and hotel facility would generate business outside of summer months.
Action Steps	7.1.1 Conduct a feasibility study for the project
Potential Partnerships	AANDC, AtBC
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	Funding already secured by Burns Lake Band
Measure of Success	Feasibility assessed by May, 2012

## 8. Begin development of trails strategy for Burns Lake/Lakes District

<b>Tactic 8.1</b>	<b>Inventory existing trails</b>
Short Description	Working together with representatives from Recreation Sites and Trails, an inventory of existing trails including historic First Nations Trails can be established
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall growth in value of tourism; increase trail usage #'s
Rationale	Access to nature and the network of lakes in the area offers an important visitor experience. Prior to undertaking a more formal strategy for trail development and promotion, it will be important to understand the current inventory of trails.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1.1 Contact Recreation Sites and Trails for support, mapping and their inventory</li> <li>8.1.2 Confirm funding available from Community Forest for volunteer expenses</li> <li>8.1.3 Field GPS of all trails (consider using the EveryTrail application that can be downloaded to Google Earth)</li> </ul>
Potential Partnerships	First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Trails Committee
Timeframe	Summer 2012
Budget	\$5,000 potentially from Community Forest
Measure of Success	Inventory of trails established

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## 9. Invest in campsite and trail maintenance

<b>Tactic 9.1</b>	<b>Utilize funding available through the Community Forest program to maintain existing campsites and trails around Burns Lake/Lakes District</b>
Short Description	Campsites and trails can be maintained for visitor use.
Quantifiable Objectives	Campsite occupancy levels
Rationale	Continued investment in campsite and trail maintenance is needed to ensure sites are suitable for visitor use
Action Steps	9.1.1 Secure funds from Community Forest 9.1.2 Undertake campsite and trail maintenance
Potential Partnerships	Community Forest, Trails Committee
Lead Responsibility	Lakes Outdoor Recreation Society
Timeframe	Summer 2012
Budget	\$40,000 potentially from Community Forest
Measure of Success	Campsites and trails maintained for visitor use

### *6.2 MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIES/TACTICS OCTOBER 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 2013*

**At the request of the Working Group, this tourism plan includes all the opportunities identified by the Working Group for the medium and long term, however, it is recognized that the level of funding ultimately secured in support of these initiatives must be determined. This funding level will permit the proposed Tourism Advisory Committee working together with the Economic Development Officer to make recommendations regarding medium and long term implementation priorities.**

## **10. Revisit individuals/resources responsible for tourism plan implementation (Organization and Funding)**

<b>Tactic 10.1</b>	<b>Establish Burns Lake and Lakes District Tourism Advisory Committee</b>
Short Description	Establish a working group of local tourism stakeholders to support the Economic Development Officer as he/she proceed with tourism plan implementation
Quantifiable Objectives	Investments in tourism product development and market development occur in a timely and efficient manner with plan objectives achieved in the medium and long term
Rationale	Effective plan implementation requires the ongoing support of the local community and its tourism stakeholders

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Action Steps	<p>10.1.1 Recruit Committee members from Tourism Working Group</p> <p>10.1.2 Ensure potential representation from RDBN Electoral Area B and E, NBCTA, AtBC, First Nations, Chamber, Community Futures, College of New Caledonia, BLMBA, other local clubs/societies, tourism operators</p> <p>10.1.3 Establish written mandate of the Committee</p> <p>10.1.4 Schedule regular meetings to status plan implementation</p>
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, NBCTA, AtBC, First Nations, BLMBA, Chamber, Community Futures, College of New Caledonia, clubs/societies, tourism operators
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	October, 2012
Budget	\$1,000 (meeting venues/refreshments)
Measure of Success	Committee established/meeting regularly/productive dialogue and contributions to plan execution

<b>Tactic 10.2</b>	<b>Investigate medium-term sources of funding</b>
Short Description	Funding available through a variety of sources can be investigated in order to continue short-term momentum
Quantifiable Objectives	Secure adequate funding to support priority medium-term strategies
Rationale	The execution of strategies and tactics in the short term must continue in order to see returns from tourism in the medium term.
Action Steps	10.2.1 Identify potential sources of funds (private sector, grants, loans, sponsorships, advertising sales, ticket sales etc.)
Potential Partnerships	TBD
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	Staff time/resources
Measure of Success	Medium term funds for tourism product development and promotion secured

## 11. Continue to invest in the Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival programming and event content (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 11.1</b>	<b>Continue to offer expanded 2012 programming and incorporate new elements every year</b>
Short Description	Continue to expand event programming in order to

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	build awareness, excite the mountain biking community and draw regional and longer haul mountain biking markets
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase event attendance in 2013
Rationale	Successful festivals and events continue to reinvent themselves and offer new and exciting programming to remain appealing to target markets. The Big Pig has the opportunity to drive economic returns during the festival and to contribute to growing awareness of Burns Lake as a mountain biking destination.
Action Steps	<p>11.1.1 Secure ongoing funding for festival event coordinator and investment in new programming elements (e.g. sponsorship)</p> <p>11.1.2 Investigate new programming elements that will contribute to festival appeal and build 'hype'</p> <p>11.1.3 Incorporate gear demo tents</p> <p>11.1.4 Investigate industry conference in conjunction with festival</p> <p>11.1.5 Continue to increase prize money for riders</p> <p>11.1.6 Secure high profile talent for Big Pig Gig</p>
Potential Partnerships	Village of Burns Lake/ RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA
Timeframe	Summer 2013
Budget	\$30,000 dependent upon sponsorship revenue
Measure of Success	New program elements and growing appeal and awareness of festival

## 12. Build awareness of enhanced signature festivals and events to regional markets (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 12.1</b>	<b>Continue promotion of Big Pig Mountain Biking Festival as described in short term opportunities</b>
Short Description	The Big Pig is becoming Burns Lake's most notable event. This growing awareness which was given a jumpstart in the short term should be continued if funding is available.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth; festival attendance growth; accommodation occupancy rates during events;
Rationale	Mountain biking and the Big Pig is an integral element of Burns Lake/Lake District's unique selling proposition and the momentum generated by the short term investment in event promotion should be continued to accelerate growth in visitation from this market sector.
Action Steps	<p>12.1.1 Continue marketing to database of biking clubs/retail outlets</p> <p>12.1.2 Continue to maximize web presence and</p>

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	social media profile related to mountain biking in Burns Lake 12.1.3 Continue media relations efforts 12.1.4 Expand distribution of mountain biking video to longer haul markets, film showcases and other mountain biking events
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Lead Responsibility	BLMBA
Timeframe	2013 and beyond
Budget	\$10,000 per year
Measure of Success	No. of event attendees, no. of racers, media coverage secured

## 13. Continuation of Clan Carving Project (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 13.1</b>	<b>Expansion of pilot project with additional carvings.</b>
Short Description	If pilot is successful and a second phase is identified carvings must be commissioned and strategic locations for the placement of the additional carvings must be identified in order to contribute to a compelling visitor experience.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase number of touring travelers stopping in Burns Lake (as measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps distributed through the VC)
Rationale	The locations of the aboriginal clan carvings must be strategically placed along a walking tour route that creates an entire visitor experience sufficient in scale/quality to justify stopping along Highway 16.
Action Steps	13.1.1 Consideration for expanded locations for aboriginal carvings in light of a more comprehensive visitor experience that incorporates the lake, picnic spots, services and amenities along a quiet and pedestrian friendly route 13.1.2 Secure input/approval of First Nations, Tourism Advisory Committee and any other relevant stakeholders
Potential Partnerships	Lake Babine Nation, Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, private land owners, Carving Project Committee
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band/Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	Summer 2013
Budget	\$20,000
Measure of Success	Additional aboriginal carvings installed in strategic locations along a pedestrian friendly walking tour

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<b>Tactic 13.2</b>	<b>Develop interpretive signage to accompany carvings that shares the aboriginal stories and culture associated with each piece</b>
Short Description	Interpretive signage that shares the stories, myths and legends related to the carvings is required to enhance the visitor experience.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase number of touring travelers stopping in Burns Lake (as measured by number of self-guided walking tour maps distributed through the VC)
Rationale	Market research confirms that visitors touring along Highway #16 are looking for opportunities to experience aboriginal culture and to learn and educate themselves. While hands-on and personal interactions are preferred, interpretive signage will provide a proxy until deeper experiences could be available at the proposed Aboriginal Cultural Interpretive Centre.
Action Steps	<p>13.2.1 Request First Nations provide the stories/myths/legends that are appropriately shared with visitors</p> <p>13.2.2 Secure signage contractor/design signage/write copy</p> <p>13.2.3 First Nations approval and sign off</p> <p>13.2.4 Manufacture and install</p>
Potential Partnerships	Lake Babine Nation, other local First Nations, Carving Project Committee
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band/Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	2012
Budget	TBD (included in Downtown Revitalization budget?)
Measure of Success	High quality, educational and authentic interpretive signage erected sharing the stories of the aboriginal carvings

## 14. Develop a self-guided walking tour map of the clan carvings/village heritage buildings/lakefront (Promotional)

<b>Tactic 14.1</b>	<b>Develop a self-guided walking tour map of the clan carvings/village heritage buildings/lakeside picnic/parks</b>
Short Description	A self-guided walking tour map will guide visitors through their Burns Lake experience and will highlight spots of interest including the clan carvings, heritage buildings, picnic spots and other amenities (washrooms, parking, shops, restaurants)
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	A self-guided walking tour map will facilitate visitors' willingness to stop and stay in Burns Lake and

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	provide them with the assurance that there is enough to see/do to warrant their investment of time.
Action Steps	<p>14.1.1 Engage designer to document the proposed walking tour in a visually appealing, visitor friendly format</p> <p>14.1.2 Review mock-ups with Committee, local shops/restaurants for accuracy, completeness</p> <p>14.1.3 Offer select advertising opportunities to subsidize cost of production</p> <p>14.1.4 Finalize and print</p> <p>14.1.5 Distribute in key locations such as Visitor Centre, Spirit Square, free ferry</p>
Potential Partnerships	VC, Chamber of Commerce, local shops/restaurant owners, BC Ferries, First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2012
Budget	\$5,000 per year
Measure of Success	Self-guided walking tour map produced and distributed

## 15. Ensure Phase 2 and 3 of the Burns Lake downtown revitalization project addresses visitor needs (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 15.1</b>	<b>Revisit downtown revitalization concepts from the perspective of visitors and their requirements</b>
Short Description	The Village of Burns Lake is undertaking a downtown revitalization project and has the opportunity to ensure that this investment addresses not only the needs of residents but contributes to a positive and memorable visitor experience.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Overall village attractiveness, parking, signage, ease of highway crossing will all contribute to influencing and visitor to stop in Burns Lake and having done so have a pleasant and memorable experience.
Action Steps	<p>15.1.1 Convene Downtown Revitalization Committee and Tourism Advisory Committee for a joint concept review session</p> <p>15.1.2 Conduct a comprehensive review of proposed village experience from the perspective of the visitor</p> <p>15.1.3 Amend plans as necessary</p>
Potential Partnerships	Visitor Centre, Chamber of Commerce, tourism stakeholders
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	October, 2012
Budget	Existing resources/staff time
Measure of Success	A downtown revitalization plan that successfully

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	incorporates visitors needs and will contribute to a memorable visitor experience
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## 16. If feasible, proceed with development of Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre/ Hotel project

<b>Tactic 16.1</b>	<b>Proceed to next phase of project development – concept refinement; building design; exhibit and programming concepts.</b>
Short Description	Assuming a favorable feasibility study and appropriate capital exists for the proposed Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre and Hotel, the next phase in project development would be finalization of the overall concept, facility, exhibit and programming design.
Quantifiable Objectives	Grow value of tourism economy
Rationale	This development could provide an anchor attraction for Burns Lake that leverages elements of its unique selling proposition associated with local aboriginal culture. A well designed and programmed Cultural Centre offering interactive, hands-on, authentic experiences would be a compelling draw for the touring market. The conference and hotel facility would generate business outside of summer months.
Action Steps	16.1.1 Undertake concept refinement 16.1.2 Complete facility design including architectural/structural/electrical/mechanical design 16.1.3 Complete programming and exhibit design 16.1.4 Hire a grant writer to seek funding and/or utilize existing resources for grant writing 16.1.5 Obtain confirmation from SD91 regarding use of property
Potential Partnerships	TBD
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band
Timeframe	2012/2013
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	Concepts finalized and design drawings ready for tender

## 17. Improve signage for visitors(Promotion)

<b>Tactic 17.1</b>	<b>Identify immediate opportunities to improve signage for visitors</b>
Short Description	There may be some immediate opportunities to improve highway signage either in cooperation with Highways or by utilizing private lands
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth

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Rationale	Improved signage that conveys reasons why visitors should stop in Burns Lake and Lakes District, provides simple directions etc. will promote stopping
Action Steps	<p>17.1.1 Contact Highways to review signage opportunities</p> <p>17.1.2 Identify immediate signage requirements that could utilize private land and secure approvals to proceed</p> <p>17.1.3 Design/construct/install</p>
Potential Partnerships	Burns Lake Band, Lake Babine Nation
Lead Responsibility	TBD Note: This could be accomplished in the short term if a champion is identified
Timeframe	Summer 2012
Budget	Existing staff/resources
Measure of Success	Improved signage for visitors

<b>Tactic 17.2</b>	<b>Develop a signage strategy for Burns Lake and Lakes District</b>
Short Description	Prior to significant investments in a new signage along the Highway and throughout Burns Lake and Lakes District, it will be important to develop a guiding strategy to ensure a cohesive and effective overall approach to orientation and wayfinding.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Effective signage will promote visitor experiences and encourage travelers to stop and stay in Burns Lake and Lakes District
Action Steps	<p>17.2.1 Research existing studies/research on signage</p> <p>17.2.2 Contact Highways to review existing signage and upgrade through current budgets</p> <p>17.2.3 Consider Request for Proposal for development of a Burns Lake and Lakes District signage/wayfinding strategy</p> <p>17.2.4 Engage qualified consultant</p> <p>17.2.5 Work together with consultant, community representatives, tourism operators etc. to develop comprehensive strategy for signage and wayfinding</p>
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, Ministry of Highways, Chamber of Commerce, First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	Spring 2013
Budget	\$10,000
Measure of Success	Signage/wayfinding strategy developed

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<b>Tactic 17.3</b>	<b>Design/construct/install new signage</b>
Short Description	New and improved signage should be designed, constructed and installed in keeping with the approved signage/wayfinding strategy.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Effective signage will promote visitor experiences and encourage travelers to stop and stay in Burns Lake and Lakes District
Action Steps	17.3.1 Develop tender specifications/bid package 17.3.2 Tender and award 17.3.3 Construct and install
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, Ministry of Highways
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	Summer 2013
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	New signage and wayfinding in place for summer 2013

## 18. Invest in select local festivals in order to build content, increase appeal and draw overnight visitation from regional markets. (Product Development/Promotion)

<b>Tactic 18.1</b>	<b>Consider existing and potential local festivals and events that will draw regional markets and build overnight stays</b>
Short Description	Burns Lake and Lakes District currently hosts a number of festivals and events that have the potential to grow overnight visitation if there is sufficient program content and interest. A select number of these existing and/or proposed events must be compared to the regional market's interest/demand and a short list of high return opportunities identified.
Quantifiable Objectives	Festival attendance; accommodation occupancy levels during event; Grow overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Festivals and events with sufficient programming content to drive day and overnight visitation from regional markets serve as a catalyst to encourage visitation. Having visited once for a specific event and enjoyed their experience, regional travelers may return to enjoy other experiences.
Action Steps	18.1.1 Inventory existing festivals, attendance levels, area of origin (Southside Bluegrass Festival, Colds smoke Snowmobile Races, Aboriginal Days, Dog Show etc.) 18.1.2 Compare event experiences with regional market interest levels and assess opportunity to grow attendance and overnight stays 18.1.3 Identify 2-3 festivals that warrant an

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	investment in enhanced programming
Potential Partnerships	Festival organizers, NBCTA, First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2013
Budget	Staff time/resources
Measure of Success	Short list of festivals offering potential to grow overnight stays

<b>Tactic 18.2</b>	<b>If funding permits, invest in selected festivals creating content that excites regional markets and encourages overnight stays</b>
Short Description	The short list of festivals offering potential to grow overnight stays will require an investment to create a critical mass of experiences that justifies the road trip to Burns Lake and offers 2-3 days of entertainment
Quantifiable Objectives	Festival attendance; accommodation occupancy levels during event; Grow overall value of tourism
Rationale	Festivals and events with sufficient programming content to drive day and overnight visitation from regional markets serve as a catalyst to encourage visitation. Having visited once for a specific event and enjoyed their experience, regional travelers may return to enjoy other experiences.
Action Steps	18.2.1 Create new content for selected festivals 18.2.2 Implement to market-ready standards 18.2.3 Promote select festivals and events to regional markets (see Market Development Strategies)
Potential Partnerships	Festival organizers, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2013
Budget	\$15,000
Measure of Success	2-3 festivals offered annually that draw regional overnight visitation

<b>Tactic 18.3</b>	<b>If funding is available, promote 2-3 additional signature events that have critical mass of market ready content</b>
Short Description	The investment is 2-3 additional signature events should be accompanied by promotion to target markets
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth; accommodation occupancy levels during event
Rationale	Regional drive markets must be given a compelling reason to visit Burns Lake and Lakes District and a high quality festival/event targeted and promoted to their interests will generate travel and trial. Once having visited and had an enjoyable experience, they

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	will be more likely to return in order to experience other aspects of Burns Lake and Lakes District.
Action Steps	18.3.1 Media relations efforts – local newspapers 18.3.2 Regional print and radio advertising 18.3.3 Web presence
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2013 and ongoing as events become ‘market ready’
Budget	\$10,000 per year
Measure of Success	Event attendance growth

## 19. Ensure the Visitors’ Guide to Burns Lake and Lakes District Reflects Unique Selling Proposition (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 19.1</b>	<b>Visitors’ Guide to Burns Lake and Lakes District</b>
Short Description	Review to ensure the Visitors’ Guide showcases feature tourism plan experiences and promotes Burns Lake and Lakes District to reflect unique selling proposition and core experiences for target markets.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth;
Rationale	Targeted Visitors’ Guide that showcases Burns Lake and its signature experiences will intrigue target markets and encourage visitation. This Guide should be distributed in key gateways such as BC Ferries, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Prince George, Jasper, RV rental companies etc.
Action Steps	19.1.1 Assess appropriate business model and manage content development to ensure that Burns Lake and Lakes District unique experiences are showcased and that information is provided on the entire range of visitor experiences (not just those who have chosen to advertise)  19.1.3 Ensure design and photography is compelling, copy is easy to read/accurate  19.1.4 Publish and distribute through key gateways – BC Visitor Centre network, BC Ferries, Jasper, etc.
Potential Partnerships	VC, Chamber, Tourism BC, RV rental companies, LD News
Lead Responsibility	Chamber of Commerce/Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	For publication in advance of summer 2013
Budget	Breakeven based upon advertising sales
Measure of Success	Visitors’ Guide designed, published and distributed

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## 20. Utilize web/social media to generate awareness of Burns Lake and Lakes District experiences, to encourage trial, purchase and repeat visitation. (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 20.1</b>	<b>Enhance Burns Lake and Lakes District web presence</b>
Short Description	Visitors require a visually compelling, easy to navigate web-based tool to assist in trip planning. Burns Lake and Lakes District needs to invest in its web presence for the touring market that is planning their travel itinerary months in advance, as well as for regional markets interested in upcoming festivals/events and specific-interest markets such as mountain biking that want updates on trail conditions etc.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Market research indicates that the majority of travelers utilize the web for trip planning and booking. A friendly, easy to navigate website that features stunning photography, videos and messages the unique experiences Burns Lake and Lakes District has to offer, will contribute to building awareness and ultimately visitation.
Action Steps	<p>20.1.1 Work with RDBN Electoral Area B and E /NBCTA on image bank project to ensure stunning visuals of Burns Lake and Lakes District are available</p> <p>20.1.2 Secure intuitive url for new visitor focused website</p> <p>20.1.3 Contract with web designer/SEO specialist</p> <p>20.1.4 Develop website structure/navigation</p> <p>20.1.5 Develop content including links to local tourism operators</p> <p>20.1.6 Launch and monitor with Google Analytics</p> <p>20.1.7 Maximize presence on <a href="http://www.hellobc.com">www.hellobc.com</a> through provision of new content, participation in blogs</p>
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, First Nations, tourism operators, NBCTA, Ministry of Social Development, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	Fall 2012 and ongoing
Budget	\$30,000
Measure of Success	Track growth in unique visits; time spent on the site etc.

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<b>Tactic 20.2</b>	<b>Develop and launch social media strategy</b>
Short Description	Burns Lake and Lakes District requires a social media profile particularly for those communities that share a passion such as mountain biking, freshwater angling
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Social media is becoming increasingly important as a tool for communicating with target markets particularly those that share a common passion. Burns Lake and Lakes District should leverage a presence in social media including Facebook, Twitter, angling and biking blogs and forums in order to build awareness and generate interest in a trip to Burns Lake and Lakes District.
Action Steps	<p>20.2.1 Engage consultant (possibly NBCTA) to develop a social media strategy for Burns Lake and Lakes District</p> <p>20.2.2 Develop social media content – images, videos</p> <p>20.2.3 Create a network of Burns Lake and Lakes District ambassadors who will participate in regular updates</p> <p>20.2.4 Launch and manage presence with frequent and intriguing updates</p>
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2013 and ongoing
Budget	Existing contract with Chamber
Measure of Success	Social media strategy developed and launched; # of Facebook followers

## 21. Promote Burns Lake and Lakes District freshwater angling experiences (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 21.1</b>	<b>Work in partnership to showcase Burns Lake and Lakes District angling experiences in regional marketing initiatives</b>
Short Description	Burns Lakes/Lakes District abundant angling experiences should be promoted to regional anglers through a variety of channels including a web presence, consumer shows, media relations
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Burns Lake and Lakes District angling experiences are an important niche market that should be developed in order to grow visitation on a year round basis.
Action Steps	<p>21.1.1 Participate in RDBN Electoral Area B and E image bank project to secure stunning visuals of angling experiences</p> <p>21.1.2 Build market awareness through RDBN</p>

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	<p>Electoral Area B and E presence at consumer shows</p> <p>21.1.3 Showcase Burns Lake and Lakes District angling experiences in angling forums, blogs, websites (Freshwater Fisheries Society <a href="http://www.gofishbc.com">www.gofishbc.com</a> , British Columbia Fishing Resorts and Outfitters Association <a href="http://www.wheretofishinbc.com">www.wheretofishinbc.com</a> , <a href="http://www.fishbc.com">www.fishbc.com</a>, <a href="http://www.hellobc.com">www.hellobc.com</a></p> <p>21.1.4 Work with NBCTA to feature Burns Lake and Lakes District angling experiences with targeted angling journalists</p>
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, tourism operators, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2013 and beyond
Budget	Existing resources
Measure of Success	Growing awareness of freshwater angling experiences in Burns Lake and Lakes District

## 22. Promote Nordic facilities and other Sport Tourism opportunities to provincial and national event organizers (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 22.1</b>	<b>Establish relationships with event organizers and provide information in order to secure their interest in Burns Lake for upcoming events</b>
Short Description	Burns Lake and Lakes District's Olympic quality Nordic facilities offer a unique advantage that should be promoted to event organizers. Other upgrades underway to sport venues permit consideration of other sport tourism events as well.
Quantifiable Objectives	Overall value of tourism growth
Rationale	Hosting sporting events generates significant economic impact for the duration of the event. Event organizers require a knowledge level and comfort that the facilities will be to their standards and that the overall experience for athletes and their families/teams will be rewarding. Burns Lake and Lakes District can provide this assurance through the establishment of a personal relationship with event organizers and by the development of a package of information that includes photography, facility statistics, weather history, summary amenities etc.
Action Steps	<p>22.1.1 Dedicated part-time resource to initiate and maintain relationships</p> <p>22.1.2 Attend at Tourism BC Sport Tourism events</p> <p>22.1.3 Participate in Tourism BC Sport Tourism network including a presence in <a href="http://www.hostingbc.com">www.hostingbc.com</a></p>

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	22.1.4 Develop collateral package showcasing Burns Lake facilities and amenities for competitors and their teams 22.1.5 Prepare bids for Provincial and National events 22.1.6 Prepare other bids as appropriate
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, Tourism BC, RDBN Electoral Area B and E, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Omineca Ski Club and other local clubs/associations
Timeframe	2013 and beyond
Budget	\$5,000 per year
Measure of Success	Number of provincial and national events hosted

## 23. Develop a four-seasons trail strategy for Burns Lake and Lakes District (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 23.1</b>	<b>Review inventory of existing trails and identify highest return opportunities for new four season trail development</b>
Short Description	A trail development strategy that begins with an inventory of existing trails and highest return trail opportunities is required to guide future investments.
Quantifiable Objectives	None
Rationale	An investment in trail development should proceed according to a well defined strategy to ensure a trail system evolves that will provide competitive advantage to Burns Lake in key target markets
Action Steps	23.1.1 Define scope of work/terms of reference for the project 23.1.2 Determine if a community member or group can undertake the project. If not, 23.1.2 Issue Request for Proposal to qualified consultants 23.1.3 Assess responses 23.1.4 Select and contract with preferred consultant
Potential Partnerships	First Nations, NBCTA, TrailsBC, Chamber of Commerce
Lead Responsibility	Trails Committee
Timeframe	2013
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	Community member/organization or qualified consultant engaged

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<b>Tactic 23.2</b>	<b>Determine community objectives for trail system and identify target markets/market requirements</b>
Short Description	Community objectives when combined with market requirements must drive a trail investment strategy if it is to be successful
Quantifiable Objectives	Number of trail users (establish a baseline and measure growth)
Rationale	Tourism development through trail usage must occur within an overall community vision for trails in order to have local support. The community's objectives must be compared to proposed target markets' experiential requirements in order to identify markets whose needs are compatible with the trails experience the community wishes to offer.
Action Steps	<p>23.2.1 Community trails workshop to define local needs/objectives</p> <p>23.2.2 Assessment of target markets to define external needs/objectives</p> <p>23.2.3 Merge local objectives with market requirements to identify 'match'</p> <p>23.2.4 Identify highest return trail investment opportunities including potential for historic First Nations trails e.g. Lake Babine Grease Trail; potential to leverage Burns Lake positioning as northern gateway to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park; potential to create a loop tour showcasing a network of lakes, etc.</p>
Potential Partnerships	First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Trails Committee
Timeframe	2013
Budget	Incl. above
Measure of Success	Definition of target markets/experiential requirements

<b>Tactic 23.3</b>	<b>Review inventory of existing trails by season/by user group and identify highest return trail development opportunities</b>
Short Description	Having defined community objectives and target market experiential requirements, the next step in a trail development strategy is to inventory existing trails experiences and identify highest return trail investment opportunities.
Quantifiable Objectives	Number of trail users (establish a baseline and measure growth)
Rationale	The existing trails experiences must be inventoried and compared to desired trail experiences in order to identify the highest return investment opportunities.
Action Steps	23.3.1 Inventory existing trail experiences by season/by use

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	23.3.2 Compare existing experiences to those sought by key target markets 23.3.3 Identify highest return trail investment opportunities
Potential Partnerships	First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Trails Committee
Timeframe	2013
Budget	Incl. above
Measure of Success	Highest return trail investment opportunities identified.

## 24. Continue to Invest in campsite and trail maintenance

<b>Tactic 24.1</b>	<b>Utilize funding available through the Community Forest program to continue to maintain existing campsites and trails around Burns Lake/Lakes District</b>
Short Description	Campsites and trails can be maintained for visitor use.
Quantifiable Objectives	Campsite occupancy levels
Rationale	Continued investment in campsite and trail maintenance is needed to ensure sites are suitable for visitor use
Action Steps	24.1.1 Secure funds from Community Forest 24.1.2 Undertake campsite and trail maintenance
Potential Partnerships	Community Forest, Trails Committee
Lead Responsibility	Lakes Outdoor Recreation Society
Timeframe	Summer 2013
Budget	\$40,000 potentially from Community Forest
Measure of Success	Campsites and trails maintained for visitor use

## 6.3 LONG TERM STRATEGIES/TACTICS OCTOBER 2013 AND BEYOND

## 25. Secure long-term funds in support of tourism plan implementation (Organization and Funding)

<b>Tactic 25.1</b>	<b>Assess tourism development priority level within economic development portfolio of Village to determine if an increased annual investment in tourism product/market development can be supported by local governments.</b>
Short Description	Funding is required to permit plan implementation beyond 2012 and build upon the momentum initiated.
Quantifiable Objectives	Consistent annual investment in tourism development
Rationale	Short term funding opportunities will support investments that build momentum for tourism development in Burns Lake and Lakes District.

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	However, in order to continue this momentum and see long-term sustainable returns from tourism, an annual investment must be made within an overall economic development portfolio.
Action Steps	25.1.1 Consider role of tourism within overall economic development program 25.1.2 Commit resources to tourism development in the medium and long term so as to provide certainty and to maintain market presence
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	2013 and beyond
Budget	Existing Resources
Measure of Success	Commitment of funds to tourism product/market development secured

<b>Tactic 25.2</b>	<b>Investigate opportunity to collect 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax in all communities along the Highway #16 touring route (excluding Smithers) and work with NBCTA</b>
Short Description	Collection of the 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax can be investigated as an industry generated source of tourism marketing funds which in turn can be leveraged for greater returns
Quantifiable Objectives	Approx. \$100,000 available across region for tourism marketing and promotion
Rationale	Short term funding opportunities will support investments that build momentum for tourism development in Burns Lake and Lakes District. However, in order to continue this momentum and see long-term sustainable returns from tourism, an annual investment must be made. Over 50 communities in BC currently collect the 2% AHRT. While the estimates of AHRT for Burns Lake alone are modest (\$15,000), working collectively as a region (excluding Smithers who already collect the AHRT) has the potential to generate sufficient resources, which when leveraged with other partners such as NBCTA, will have an impact in target markets.
Action Steps	25.2.1 Engage with other tourism organizations along the Highway #16 touring route between Prince Rupert and Prince George to investigate interest level in working together to establish the 2% AHRT 25.2.2 Create a draft business plan for investment of AHRT funds to allow communities/accommodation operators to understand potential investment returns arising from utilizing AHRT funds to 'grow the

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	<p>25.2.3 Create a draft governance model for management of the AHRT to address concerns regarding representation and input to decision making processes</p> <p>25.2.4 Engage with accommodation sector to secure petition of majority of rooms/majority of properties in defined region.</p> <p>25.2.5 Consideration for NBCTA to both leverage and potentially manage marketing for the cluster</p>
Potential Partnerships	RDBN Electoral Area B and E, other communities along Highway #16, NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	TBD
Timeframe	2013
Budget	Existing resources
Measure of Success	\$100,000 in funding secured for tourism plan implementation in the medium and long term

## 26. Create and promote a complimentary collection of experiences along Highway #16 touring route (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 26.1</b>	<b>Establish complimentary cultural, heritage and soft adventure experiences with partner Highway #16 communities in order to promote a collection of market ready offerings to touring travelers</b>
Short Description	A collection of unique and authentic experiences should be created to leverage market exposure and awareness and to build excitement amongst touring travelers on Highway #16. This collection of experiences can be promoted utilizing funds secured from the implementation of the 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax from the region.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase overall value of tourism
Rationale	Leveraging efforts with other communities along Highway #16 will extend the marketing reach of Burns Lake and Lakes District experiences and will create a critical mass of experiences that will lure additional touring traffic to the region.
Action Steps	<p>26.1.1 Identify and brand a collection of complimentary market ready experiences along Highway #16 touring route</p> <p>26.1.2 Create a souvenir passport of experiences that showcase the collection and encourage touring travelers to experience each one</p> <p>26.1.3 Distribute passport at key gateways and throughout network of Visitor Centres along touring routes</p> <p>26.1.4 Consider incorporating value-added</p>

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	elements for passport holders
Potential Partnerships	Communities along Highway #16, NBCTA
Lead Responsibility	TBD
Timeframe	2015
Budget	\$100,000 per year funded by AHRT
Measure of Success	Passport in market; Number of passports in use;

## 27. Potential development of First Nations Cultural/Interpretive Centre/ Conference Centre/ Hotel

<b>Tactic 27.1</b>	<b>Construct Cultural/Interpretive Centre/Conference Centre/Hotel</b>
Short Description	Assuming a positive feasibility result and the necessary capital exists; construction of the facilities can begin.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase overall value of tourism; visitor attendance/revenues once open
Rationale	This development could provide an anchor attraction for Burns Lake that leverages elements of its unique selling proposition associated with local aboriginal culture. A well designed and programmed Cultural Centre offering interactive, hands-on, authentic experiences would be a compelling draw for the touring market. The conference and hotel facility would generate business outside of summer months.
Action Steps	27.1.1 Secure funding 27.1.2 Issue tender documents 27.1.3 Award contract(s) 27.1.4 Commence construction
Potential Partnerships	TBD
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Band
Timeframe	Target opening - 2014
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	New facilities open to the public for summer 2014

## 28. Continue to invest in local festivals and events (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 28.1</b>	<b>Continue short and medium term investments to build content, awareness and excitement around 2-3 events (Big Pig + 2 others)</b>
Short Description	Continue content development for select local events that draw regional and longer-haul visitation
Quantifiable Objectives	Event attendance; accommodation occupancy levels during events; Increase overall value of tourism
Rationale	Festivals and events with sufficient programming content to drive day and overnight visitation from

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	regional markets serve as a catalyst to encourage visitation. Having visited once for a specific event and enjoyed their experience, regional travelers may return to enjoy other experiences.
Action Steps	28.1.1 Investigate new programming opportunities 28.1.2 Continue to increase prize money 28.1.3 Continue to secure high profile entertainment
Potential Partnerships	Festival organizers
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2014 and beyond
Budget	\$60,000 per year
Measure of Success	2-3 festivals offered annually that draw regional overnight visitation

## 29. Continue to invest in visitor/pedestrian friendly downtown revitalization program (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 29.1</b>	<b>Continue phased investment in downtown revitalization</b>
Short Description	Phase III of the downtown revitalization is planned for 2014
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase overall value of tourism
Rationale	The proposed downtown revitalization for Burns Lake will contribute to a memorable and positive visitor experience thereby encouraging favorable word-of-mouth and longer lengths of stay in the village.
Action Steps	29.1.1 Proceed with phased implementation of downtown revitalization plans
Potential Partnerships	Ministry of Highways
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake
Timeframe	2014
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	Phase III complete in 2014;

## 30. Invest in trail system in accordance with approved trails strategy (Product Development)

<b>Tactic 30.1</b>	<b>Begin phased investment in trails in accordance with trails strategy</b>
Short Description	A long term program to invest in Burns Lake and Lakes District trails in a manner that leverages its unique selling proposition related to the expansive network of freshwater lakes, will build market interest and demand.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase overall value of tourism growth; increase trail usage

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Rationale	Research supports that the majority of BC residents participate in outdoor activities. Hiking is one of the most popular. Burns Lake and Lakes District has the opportunity to create a network of trails and connected freshwater lakes in a manner that creates a unique and compelling visitor experience
Action Steps	30.1.1 Proceed with phased implementation trail investments
Potential Partnerships	BCParks, First Nations
Lead Responsibility	Burns Lake Trails Committee
Timeframe	2014 and beyond
Budget	TBD
Measure of Success	Growing network of market-ready trails connecting a series of freshwater experiences

## 31. Continue to invest in campsite and trail maintenance

<b>Tactic 31.1</b>	<b>Utilize funding available through the Community Forest program to maintain existing campsites and trails around Burns Lake/Lakes District</b>
Short Description	Campsites and trails can be maintained for visitor use.
Quantifiable Objectives	Campsite occupancy levels
Rationale	Continued investment in campsite and trail maintenance is needed to ensure sites are suitable for visitor use
Action Steps	31.1.1 Secure funds from Community Forest 31.1.2 Undertake campsite and trail maintenance
Potential Partnerships	Community Forest, Trails Committee, Village of Burns Lake, RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	Lakes Outdoor Recreation Society
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$40,000 from Community Forest
Measure of Success	Campsites and trails maintained for visitor use

## 32. Undertake a branding review and repositioning exercise (Promotion)

<b>Tactic 32.1</b>	<b>Engage the services of a branding consultant to assist Burns Lake and Lakes District and/or Highway #16 communities in translating their unique selling proposition and key messages into a memorable and attractive brand identity</b>
Short Description	Burns Lake and Lakes District currently utilize a number of brand identities and tag lines including ‘Its only Natural’ and “Gateway to Tweedsmuir”, neither of which truly capture the essence of their unique selling proposition and position them against the offerings of their competitors.
Quantifiable Objectives	Increase overall value of tourism

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Rationale	A compelling and memorable brand that captures the unique offerings of Burns Lake and Lakes District and/or Highway #16 communities from a visitor's perspective will assist in building interest and trial. This brand can then be used consistently throughout all marketing and promotional efforts and will eventually gain recognition and 'equity' in target markets.
Action Steps	<p>32.1.1 Develop Request for Proposal for Branding strategy</p> <p>32.1.2 Secure services of experienced branding consultant</p> <p>32.1.3 Undertake branding review and repositioning having consideration both for local community's perspective on the brand and for target market motivators</p>
Potential Partnerships	NBCTA, RDBN Electoral Area B and E
Lead Responsibility	Village of Burns Lake, Economic Development Officer
Timeframe	2014
Budget	\$60,000
Measure of Success	New brand/tag deployed