

Wilderness Tourism Association



BRITISH COLUMBIA | CANADA



Annual Report *and* Statement *of* Accounts

2015 / 2016

Board of Directors 2015

PRESIDENT

Jim DeHart (BCROA)

VICE-PRESIDENT

Brad Harrison (BLBCA)

TREASURER

Scott Ellis (GOABC)

SECRETARY

Kevin Smith (Maple Leaf Adventures)

PAST PRESIDENT

Brian Gunn (Stathcona Park Lodge)

DIRECTORS

Dave Pinel (SKGABC)

Ian Tomm (Helicat Canada)

Andre Kuerbis (BCFROA)

Breanne Quesnel (Spirit of the West
Adventures)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Scott Benton

AUDITOR

Not appointed

Message from the President

I would like to thank you all for attending and continuing to support the important work of the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC. We have just completed the strategic review of the WTA with the board and I am encouraged by the continued interest and support for the organization going forward.

A key message that has reverberated with the sector is the continued issues with government's approach to the adventure or nature based tourism sector. As a result, we have joined with 18 other organizations to lead the development of a provincial Adventure Tourism Strategy. WTA offered to take the administrative lead on this project. I have to thank Brad Harrison for taking the working lead on this file on behalf of the WTA and Scott Benton for stepping in part-way through the process and adding his valuable government experience to the discussion.

Industry has just delivered this targeted, actionable strategy to government and we hope that the timing is right to make some changes moving forward. This is the first time that we have had 19 adventure/nature based sectors together on the same page. We need to continue this approach with government and other resource sectors so that we can increase the WTA's influence consistent with the level of impact our sector has on the economy, local jobs and the protection of the environment in which we work.

We continue to have issues with government decisions and lack of support regarding other resource sectors, ranging from fish farm impacts to mine spills to logging practices – and the application of

existing regulatory requirements, never mind the improvements that we seek. It is my strong belief that if we can implement the strategic level changes proposed in the Adventure Tourism Strategy that we will finally be able to address the specific issues in a more effective way.

Unfortunately, Evan Loveless could not be in attendance, however I would still like to formally thank him for his years of work and dedication to the organization. Evan was an influential executive director with a good perspective on policy and understanding of provincial issues.

I would also like to welcome Scott Benton to the role of executive director. Scott was recruited through informal discussions and came on as an interim executive director to allow both the WTA and Scott to evaluate each other. I am impressed with Scott's approach and happy to have him as a key member of the WTA team moving forward.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your support in my twelve years as a director and particularly during the last four years as president of the WTA. I look forward to working with the new executive of the association and the improved stature and influence of the WTA as it continues to evolve.

Jim DeHart, President

Report from the Executive Director

This past fiscal year will likely be remembered as a year of change for the WTA. One of the most noticeable is the departure of long time Executive Director Evan Loveless. Evans knowledge, commitment to policy development and passion for the tourism industry will be missed. In reviewing the WTA files, Evan's policy expertise and attention to detail stand out in his many years of contribution and accomplishment of the WTA.

Many of the challenges facing the nature based tourism sector remain today as they were 20 years ago however in some instances they are intensifying. The WTA's work continues on trying to get movement on the tenure harmonization and security in access, land and resource use conflicts, marine and fisheries stewardship, and industry development. operations on visual quality objectives, wilderness characteristics, site use and habitat.

Progress has been very slow and frustrating for all adventure tourism sectors. The issue by issue approach is not proving successful which had resulted in 19 tourism sectors coming together to take a more strategic approach in addressing the issues facing the adventure tourism sectors today. The WTABC is committed to addressing these issues by advocating for government and industry to be more proactive in addressing tenure rights, recognizing tourism values and support of the nature based tourism industry. We are optimistic we can be more successful by working collaboratively with the Adventure Tourism Sector as a whole.

The financial and membership challenges facing the WTA over the past number of years are similar to other non-profit organizations. Financial pressures are growing against falling membership and financial support. Meanwhile workload and demand increases. The question most nonprofits are asking themselves today is what value proposition does our organization bring to its members? Providing answers to this question is paramount for the WTA board over the next twelve months. Retaining and growing membership in the WTA has to be one on the top priorities in the coming year along with delivering on the changes the membership needs to be successful in their businesses.

Scott Benton, Executive Director

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Notice to Reader was presented highlighting the differences in year over year situation. The year finished with a net income of \$11,514.00. No anomalies were identified and the WTA remains in the black with a similar financial position as last fiscal year at year end. Travel expenditures were higher than forecast but overall budget balanced under the forecast total expenditure. It was noted that membership revenues did not meet the anticipated increase. The Treasurer acknowledged Royal Roads and several other organizations who provide considerable in kind contributions to the WTA over the course of the year. It was suggested this should be tracked as well for future reference and letters of thanks go out. The following Statements were prepared without audit and approved by the WTA Executive.

Scott Ellis, Treasurer

Wilderness Tourism Association of BC
Statement of Financial Position
September 30, 2016 with comparative information for 2015
Unaudited Notice to Reader

ASSETS	2016	2015
Current Assets		
Cash	\$17,939.00	\$11,636.00
Restricted Cash- AT Strategy	\$4,750.00	
Accounts Receivable	\$1,300.00	
Prepaid Expenses	\$700.00	\$700.00
Capital Assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$24,689.00	\$12,336.00
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and accrued liabilities	\$12,250.00	\$0.00
Deferred Revenue- AT Strategy	\$4,750.00	\$0.00
\$17,000.00		
Net Assets		
Invested	\$0.00	\$0.00
<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>\$7,689.00</u>	<u>\$12,336.00</u>
	\$24,689.00	\$12,336.00

WTA Accounting Principles

The WTA follows the principles of cash basis accounting where all revenues (fees, grants and donations etc.) are only recognized when received, and expenses are only recognized when paid.

Use of estimates

In conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, management is required to make estimates and assumptions that could affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures during the year. Actual results could differ from those reported. Note these statements have been prepared without audit.

Financial instruments

The WTA's general financial instrument is cash but could also include receivables and payables. The carrying values of these financial instruments approximate their fair value.

Statement of Operations September 30, 2016

	2015-16	2014-15
Revenue		
Stakeholder Contributions	\$ 49,595.00	\$ 47,238.00
Donations	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,072.00
Project Funding	\$ -	\$ 20,241.00
Other Earned Income	\$ 15,002.00	\$ 1,641.00
HST Received	\$ 715.00	\$ 507.00
<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>\$ 66,062.00</u>	<u>\$70,699.00</u>
Expenses		
Management Fees	\$ 24,277.00	\$ 30,300.00
Administration Fees	\$ 6,934.00	\$ 6,132.00
Travel	\$ 5,394.00	\$ 1,922.00
Telephone/Conferencing	\$ 1,009.00	\$ 1,310.00
Postage	\$ 45.00	\$ 45.00
Office Supplies	\$ -	\$ 65.00
Meetings & Conferences	\$ 1,190.00	\$ -
WTA General Meetings	\$ 112.00	\$ 1,584.00
Membership & Dues	\$ 472.00	\$ 473.00
Liability insurance	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 2,372.00
Communications-	\$ 645.00	\$ 971.00
Promotions		
WCB- Society Fees	\$ -	\$ 385.00
Taxes	\$ 1,095.00	\$ 1,703.00
Bank Charges	\$ 1,310.00	\$ 1,438.00
Misc expenses	\$ 30.00	\$ -
Total operating Expenses	\$ 43,563.00	\$ 48,700.00
MAPPS Project	\$ 735.00	\$ 11,763.00
other projects	\$ 10,250.00	\$ 1,575.00
Total Other Projects	\$10,985.00	\$13,338.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$54,548.00</u>	<u>\$62,038.00</u>
Net Income	\$11,514.00	\$8,661.00\$

Note: Promotion and advocacy expense includes: the website, press release services and printing and copying etc.

Election of the Board

Eight directors from the 2015-16 board of directors let their names stand for nomination to the WTA board in 2016-17. Brian Gunn, Jim DeHart, Breanne Quesnel, Scott Ellis, Brad Harrison, Dave Pinel, Ian Tomm and Kevin Smith were all elected by acclamation. Two new board members; Martin Littlejohn (Western Mountain Bike Tourism Association) and Ross Campbell (Mothership Adventures) were nominated, accepted, and elected to the board by the WTA membership.

The previous executive were acknowledged and thanked for their service and dedication to moving the work of the WTA forward. In particular the leadership shown by Jim DeHart as president and Brad Harrison as vice president were recognized by the membership.

New Business

Four motions were tabled, discussed, and approved. Two of the motions created sub committees to explore possible options for expanding or improving on the current governance and delivery model for the WTA.

The first motion directed a subcommittee to explore stronger connections to TIABC with a report back to the board on their recommendations. Ian Tomm is leading this committee. The second motion created a separate subcommittee to explore alternate groups for the WTA to partner with recommendations back to the board. Brian Gunn is leading this committee. Both committees are expected to complete the work before the end of the second quarter and report back to the board with their recommendations. Any changes resulting from this exploratory work will be put to the membership at a special general meeting or the annual general meeting.

The third motion that was tabled, discussed and approved was focused on a change in membership fees. The was concern the 2014 -15 fee schedule was not attracting members to the WTA based on declining membership numbers. Several options were discussed with the membership settling on the adoption of the TIABC fee schedule. It was agreed this change is immediate and will be implemented for the 2015-16 fees going forward. This makes the fees substantially more attractive to individual companies to join the WTA and is revenue neutral for most associations.

The forth motion that was tabled, discussed and approved was focused on improving the WTA communications on AGM meetings and accomplishments. It was agreed that letters of notification (electronic or surface mail) will be sent to all members for meeting notifications.

New Executive elected:

The election of the new executive took place after the AGM was adjourned. The following individual were nominated, accepted and elected by the WTA Board:

- President: Kevin Smith, of Maple Leaf Adventures
- Vice President: Breanne Quesnel of Spirit of the West Kayak Adventures
- Treasurer: Scott Ellis, Guide Outfitters Association of BC
- Secretary: Brad Harrison Backcountry Lodges of BC Association

Staff Changes: Unfortunately, the WTA's former executive director, Evan Loveless was unable to attend at the meeting due to other commitments. The board of directors and members took some time to acknowledge Evan for his knowledge, skills, determination, and significant contributions to the development of WTA policy and community presence. Evan decided to step back from the executive director's role this past summer to focus on other pursuits. Evans departure leaves a significant gap in the WTA's corporate knowledge.

The WTA engaged Scott Benton as the WTA's executive director in September. Scott formerly served as executive director for the Grasslands Conservation Council of BC. Prior to this he worked for over 30 years with the Province of BC in a variety of technical, management and senior management positions including Executive Director for BC Parks and Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Sustainability Division for the Ministry of Environment. Scott brings a wealth of knowledge of experience in governmental relations, resource planning and management and a solid understanding of the needs and challenges for the adventure tourism industry.

Adventure Tourism Strategy:

A coalition of Adventure Tourism associations has been working together over this past summer and fall to develop an Adventure Tourism Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to advance work on many issues facing adventure tourism operators for the past number of years.

The Strategy is significant for several reasons. It is the first time the adventure tourism sector has come together and reached agreement on a set of objectives that will advance the interests and sustainability of the adventure tourism industry in the years ahead. It presents a cohesive vision and voice to the provincial government on issues that matter most to adventure tourism businesses. It presents a constructive approach that invites government to partner in the growth of the adventure tourism industry in the province.

The document has been sent to the province for consideration. It's our hope to meet with elected official early in the new year to talk about how to advance the work proposed in the strategy. The document will be released to the tourism industry shortly after this meeting. We will send a notice out to members and post the document on our website.