



For Immediate Release
March 24, 2022

TOURISM INNOVATORS EARN “SPARK” GRANTS AND MENTORSHIPS

Awards will help trio of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast operators enhance their unique offerings

Secwépemc Territory (Williams Lake, BC) – A trio of local tourism operators will be provided financial support for innovative enhancements to their tourism offerings as the winners of the “Spark” Mentorship and Grants Program in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast “Spark” Program 2021/22 winners are:

- Cheryl Macarthy & Dave Jorgenson – Historic Stays,
- Alex Bracewell - Bracewell Alpine Wilderness Adventures, and
- Erin Yeo & Kelly Servinski – Tutti Gravel Inn.

Each of the winners will receive a \$3,000 grant, a three-month mentorship, and additional partner support to help them develop their local tourism ideas. Details on the projects will be shared once they are under way.

Since the fall of 2021, tourism operators, small businesses, and non-profit organizations from across the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast were encouraged to share their ideas to enhance current offerings, address gaps or challenges, motivate travel and longer stays, and increase year-round visits. The top five finalists presented their tourism ideas at a virtual pitch session held this March 22. A judging panel of partner representatives and a tourism entrepreneur from outside the CCCTA region selected the three winning applicants.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast “Spark” Program is presented by Destination BC in collaboration with the Tourism Innovation Lab, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, and Community Futures.

For more information visit www.tourisminnovation.ca/CaribooChilcotinCoast

QUOTES:

Andre Kuerbis, Chair of the board, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (CCCTA)

“The operators and the ideas that won support under ‘Spark’ are all taking concrete steps to enhance the tourism offerings in our region. Our land without limits already offers an incredible array of visitor experiences and the three ‘Spark’ projects are going to add to that.”

Richard Porges, President & CEO, Destination BC

“We are thrilled to be awarding ‘Spark’ grants and mentorships to three local tourism entrepreneurs in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region. It will be exciting to see these winning initiatives come to fruition and build upon the region’s robust offerings.”

Mackenzie Moore, Emergency Program and Industry Training Manager, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (CCCTA)

“The support under the ‘Spark’ program will help the winners make their innovative and exciting ideas a reality. Everyone at CCCTA is looking forward to seeing these projects come to life.”

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead, Tourism Innovation Lab

“We congratulate the three winners of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast “Spark” Program and are excited to work with them to help develop new and exciting tourism initiatives in the area”.

Media Contact(s):

Andre Kuerbis, Board Chair, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association | C: 250-217-6438 | emergency@landwithoutlimits.com

Destination BC Media Relations: Media.Relations@DestinationBC.ca

Justin Lafontaine, Program Lead, Tourism Innovation Lab | P: 416-712-8819 | info@tourisminnovation.ca

About Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association:

Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism is a Regional Destination Management Organization that works in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport, Destination British Columbia, Destination Canada and industry partners in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region to help foster the sustainable growth of the tourism. For more information on the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region visit www.landwithoutlimits.com.

About Destination BC:

Destination British Columbia (Destination BC) is a Provincially funded, industry-led Crown corporation that supports a strong and competitive future for BC's tourism industry through a combination of global marketing, destination development, industry learning, cooperative community-based programs, and visitor servicing. Destination BC's programs help to improve the visitor experience, support businesses and communities across the province, and strengthen BC's worldwide reputation as a destination of choice. For more information about Destination BC's programs and services, please visit: www.DestinationBC.ca

About Tourism Innovation Lab:

The Tourism Innovation Lab is a non-profit initiative created to find, foster and support new tourism ideas, experiences and partnerships, to cultivate and propel collaborations between the tourism and tech sectors, and to build a community of tourism innovators, idea makers and entrepreneurs. Launched in Ontario in 2018, the Lab and its "Spark" Mentorships & Grants Program are expanding to British Columbia. The Tourism Innovation Lab is a program of Hackforge and is based at the University of Windsor-EPICentre. For more information, please visit: www.tourisminnovation.ca