

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

SPECTACULAR
NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



As we come together close to the end of 2019 for our Annual General Meeting and Conference, I am so proud of our industry and how it is growing its contribution to our territorial economy. The number of licensed tourism operators is up again and while 2018 visitation and visitor spend numbers are not yet officially released, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has shared preliminary numbers with us and I am excited about what you are going to see when these become public.

Last year when we gathered at our AGM, members highlighted the success of our team's marketing efforts and the growth of our industry's contribution to our economy. Advocating for increased investments in our organization,

members were clear that they valued the work we do and the team that does it. Discussions about this priority and about the results our territory was enjoying have been ongoing with our funding partners. Our Board was delighted when the Government of the Northwest Territories tabled an increased budget for tourism in the Legislative Assembly earlier in 2019. The budget included increased funding for our organization to grow our marketing efforts with a big bang campaign annually over and above our "always on" digital marketing plan. We've added one person to the team to lighten the load on our staff, and we appreciate the investment the GNWT is making in our organization and the industry we support.

We have leveraged GNWT investments, securing an additional \$1.5 million dollars for marketing projects that we began implementing last year and are finishing in the year ahead. These additional projects help us implement market research to ensure we are on track with our new digital strategy. They augment domestic and international marketing, enable development of new markets and they position us well in a digital marketing world on multiple platforms with modern technology solutions.

This *Year in Review* looks back on our fiscal year 2018/19. The report highlights some of our key activities and accomplishments, but it is just a snapshot. Our team does so much more. We are introducing you to our exciting 2020 integrated marketing campaign at the AGM and Conference

this November. I hope you are able to stop at our Augmented Reality station to experience just a part of the campaign first-hand.

My term as your Chairperson draws to a close this year. I am stepping down to focus on family and I do so proud of our organization's accomplishments and of our team. I would like to thank our Board members whose inputs and volunteer hours have added to our collective success. I would like to thank GNWT and Cannon for putting trust in our team and being solid partners for us. And finally, I would like to thank our staff whose dedication and passion to this industry and to our membership is making sure there is an overflow of economic benefits to so many more than just our membership.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Susan Wright

Chairperson, NWT Tourism

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

In 2018/19 NWT Tourism invested \$4,318,627 dollars to market the Northwest Territories as a spectacular destination domestically and internationally. Of that investment, \$3,454,545 was funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories and \$864,082 was funding from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. Here are some of the highlights of our marketing programs delivered in the past year including a snapshot of steps we've taken to ensure our marketing strategies and tactics are evolving to keep up with the technology platform evolution that is revolutionizing destination marketing worldwide.

MARKET RESEARCH

In 2017 NWT Tourism undertook research to establish benchmark measurements for Canadian awareness of our destination, of our brand among other Canadian destination brands and of intention to travel on the new highway to Tuktoyatuk before it was opened as well as advertising recall. In February 2019, we went back into the market to remeasure. We learned that the perception of unique experiences in the NWT had grown, more Canadians expressed they were inspired to learn more about the NWT, there was an

increase in product awareness, and an increase in logo and advertising recall. There was a significant increase in the awareness of the new highway to the Arctic Ocean and an increase in the intention to travel on it. We also learned that destination awareness (aided and unaided) remained stable and national advertising recall was stable. NWT Tourism will go back in market in March 2020 to remeasure again, following our 2020 Integrated Marketing Campaign's roll out. These steps are important as they help us assess the effectiveness of our advertising for the territory.

AGENCY OF RECORD RFP

In October 2018, NWT Tourism went back into the market with a Request For Proposals, creating a competition for those who would be interested in serving as our Agency of Record for the next three years. Following evaluation of written proposals, two finalists were invited to present a case study to the evaluation committee in person. Outcrop Communications was the successful proponent in the process, and continues to serve NWT Tourism and our industry with their global partners.



Mike Olson of Outcrop Communications hand delivers Outcrop's written proposal to Brenda Anderson at NWT Tourism.

CONSUMER DIRECT MARKETING

With more than 70% of travellers globally now exploring and booking their travel experiences via mobile phones, NWT Tourism is changing the way we reach the consumer to take advantage of new platforms and consumer habits.

While the print marketing we do is limited, NWT Tourism still prints and distributes our annual Explorer's Guide. 30,000 copies were printed and distributed to Visitor Information Centres across Canada in early 2019. These are also being distributed at our consumer show events and by ourselves and our business partners at marketing events.

CALL CENTRE

In 2018/19 staff in our Yellowknife Call Centre handled 4,307 orders for hard copies of our guide and sent out close to 2,165 road maps for travellers considering coming by road. We responded to 581 enquiries from visitors who were seeking assistance in planning their trips to the Northwest Territories.

SPECTACULAR NWT WEBSITE

In the past year we have made significant upgrades to our Spectacular NWT website. The changes improved the experience for the website visitor who comes to explore travel experiences, to get travel planning information and to find available travel options they can buy. Our focus in the upgrade was to make it easy and fast to find the experiences and activities a visitor is looking for, to find and enjoy compelling stories about our destination and to find operators and the packages they have available for purchase.

The SpectacularNWT.com website had almost 300,000 users who visited approximately 775,000 web pages this past year. A strategy for the site this year was to drive traffic to tourism operators' pages, connecting people further down the path to purchase funnel. Total operator listings visited in the past year was in excess of 80,000. That is a 23% increase over the previous year!

INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Our integrated campaign in 2018/19 featured a series of "love letters" that focused on the feeling evoked when visitors experience the spectacular sites and activities in the NWT. Ads appearing like love letters or postcards were placed as digital advertising, advertorials, appeared in social media marketing and were themed across all our advertising channels.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media followers grew across Facebook and Instagram in the past year. Facebook, by far the largest social media outlet in terms of visitor numbers and engagement grew by almost 2,500 followers, ending with 72,000 followers. The total number of followers on all NWT Tourism social media accounts now has a potential reach of 1.4 million people.

CONTENT MARKETING

The stories we produce about the NWT continue to be a draw for website visitors. Almost 150,000 pages were viewed this year, making the stories we produce account for 20% of the website traffic we receive. Our most popular stories with potential visitors have been about the Aurora or about general touring themes.

CONSUMER SHOW PROGRAM

Our Consumer Show Program is an important part of our annual marketing plan. Attending consumer shows allows NWT Tourism to increase general awareness of the Northwest Territories as a travel destination in face-to-face encounters with the public. NWT Tourism purchases a block of booth space at each show, and booth space is offered to tourism operators at a reduced rate. This partnership enables NWT Tourism to make a bigger impact at a consumer show than if we attended alone and it enables operators to sell trips to consumers directly at the show. Shows attended by NWT Tourism and operators were the Toronto Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show, the Toronto Sportsman Show, the Calgary Outdoor Adventure show and the Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show.



Molly Prendergast from Black Feather promotes paddling in the NWT.



Peter Magill (Town of Hay River) and Helen Panter (Parks Canada) promote attractions in the South Slave Region at the Calgary Outdoor Adventure Show.



Lawrence Neyando from Arctic Motorcycle Adventures in Inuvik promotes driving the Dempster Highway and the services he offers to make it possible by motorcycle.



Tour operators and NWT Tourism staff pause at the Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show for a photo.

MEDIA MARKETING

MEDIA SHOWS

Getting travel writers, bloggers, influencers and broadcast networks to do stories about our destination, showcasing it to a broad audience helps us build awareness of the Northwest Territories. Our media promotional program includes attending media shows to meet with media representatives who are interested in our destination and hosting media familiarization tours (FAMs).

NWT Tourism attended three media shows in this fiscal year. Canada Media Marketplace was attended by 96 travel media based in the United States and NWT Tourism met with 24 media members there. We also attended the Travel Media Association of Canada Conference, conducting 32 business to business meetings with travel media from across Canada.

At Go Media, Destination Canada's flagship media show, NWT Tourism met with 32 media members. Media were from Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Germany and six other international markets.

MEDIA FAMs

NWT Tourism hosted 11 media FAMs in the 2018/19 fiscal year. Check out this link for an article that ran in Canadian Geographic Travel in 2018: <https://cangeotravel.ca/article/road-tripping-to-the-arctic-ocean/>. Media from Canada, the United States, Australia, Japan, China, Germany and South Korea visited various regions in both summer and winter.

NWT TOURISM PHOTO LIBRARY

A lot of work goes into managing our photo and video assets. As we or our marketing and travel trade partners

produce marketing content, finding the best images or video to help produce compelling marketing materials needs to be easy and fast. NWT Tourism populates and maintains an online photo database that is used by travel trade, travel media, and other marketing partners who are promoting the Northwest Territories as a travel destination.

In this past year we had 2,732 photos in our public library folder available for use and 5,046 photo downloads were completed by parties choosing to use our images to tell their stories about our territory as a travel destination.

MEDIA COVERAGE

In the 2018/19 fiscal year, media ad equivalency value in North America totaled \$2,485,291 with a total circulation of 103,546, 930.



Lawrence Neyando of Arctic Motorcycle Adventures travelled up the Dempster Highway to Tuktoyaktuk with Motorcycle Mojo Magazine this summer.



Shawn Buckley, owner of Great Slave Fishing Tours, shares a laugh – and a fish fillet – on Yellowknife Bay with Brandy Yanchyk, television producer.

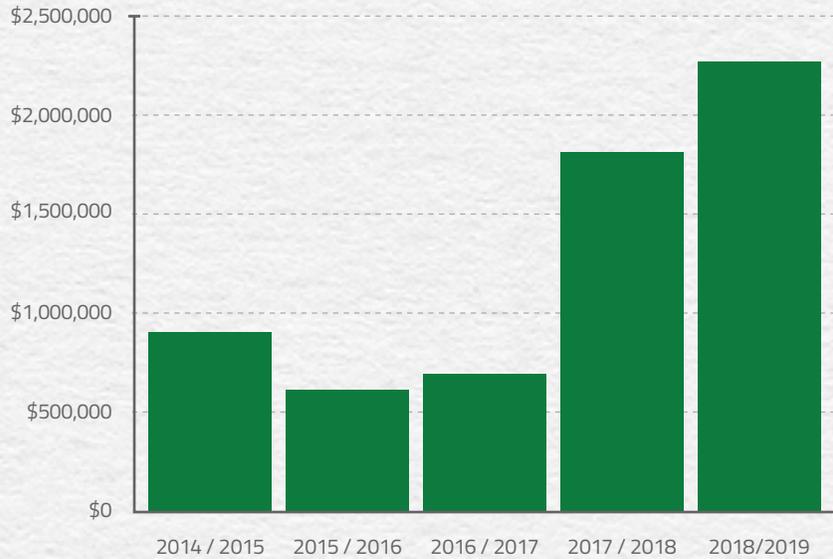
MEETING & INCENTIVE TRAVEL

This is the fifth year that NWT Tourism has operated the NWT Conference Bureau. A total of 24 proposals to host conferences in the NWT were prepared and submitted to external organizations for evaluation and destination selection by event planners. These proposals were valued at \$4,495,600 in terms of potential economic activity. At the end of the fiscal year, 11 of those proposals had been selected and future conferences coming between 2019 and 2021 were valued at \$1,210,800.

There is a long lead on conference business, as many bids submitted are for conferences taking place from one to five years away, but this past fiscal year our primary highlight was the realization of revenue from conferences that occurred.

A total of \$2,326,000 worth of conference bureau business was realized. This was a 25% increase in revenue in comparison to the previous year.

**CONFERENCES THAT HAVE OCCURED
(REVENUE REALIZED)**



Six site visits were hosted this year. Site visits are a tool used by NWT Tourism when our destination has been shortlisted for one of three final conference destinations. We plan these visits in partnership with hotels, rental car companies, municipality/ community partners and our aim is always to convince conference planners that our destination can deliver to their requirements.

In addition to the above, NWT Tourism attends Meeting & Incentive Trade Shows to promote the destination and generate sales leads. The City of Yellowknife and the Explorer Hotel continue to co-invest in marketing the capital city as a great conference destination and we appreciate their contribution to our marketing in this sales channel.

NAME OF SHOW	LOCATION OF SHOW	BUSINESS PARTNERS
Incentive Canada	Montreal, Québec	N/A
Incentive Works	Toronto	Explorer Hotel
CSAE	Ottawa	N/A
Destination Direct/ Tête-à-Tête	Ottawa	City of Yellowknife, Explorer Hotel



Robin Williams, Manager NWT Conference Bureau shows all the NWT has to offer in terms of meeting and incentive experiences and facilities at Incentive Canada.

TRAVEL TRADE PROMOTIONS

The travel trade is an important channel for NWTT's marketing activities in our international markets. NWT Tourism staff work closely with a variety of international travel trade companies who have offices in Canada to ensure they are up to date about information on our tourism products.

CHINA

After signing on Flow Creative Marketing as our marketing agent in China (see China Trade Mission – page 13) NWT Tourism rolled out a partnership with Alipay Canada to establish our territory as a destination on the Alipay Marketing Platform. A number of videos featuring NWT travel experiences were prepared by Flow Creative to be featured on Destination Canada's marketing platforms and to be shared on our own social media platforms in China.

AUSTRALIA

NWT Tourism established a General Sales Agent (GSA) in Australia in December 2018 with the assistance from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (Cannor). Lizzie Doyle, a specialist in marketing Canadian tourism products in Australia and the owner of prMarketing in Australia brings over 20 years of experience managing Canadian tourism travel trade relationships and marketing in the Australian marketplace to our team.

Lizzie visited the NWT, undertaking training with NWT Tourism regarding our destination and products. She undertook an audit in Australia to determine what NWT tourism products were being sold in the market and she is now working closely with our trade ready operators to grow our share of this market.

SOUTH KOREA

In South Korea, NWT tourism partnered with a key wholesaler account, Pharos Travel, to create a guidebook on NWT Tourism products for distribution to Korean travel agents. A variety of articles were posted at various large outlets such as JoongAng Dail (newspaper) and AB-Road (Naver posts and magazine articles). A consumer contest was launched by Destination Canada and one of the prizes was a trip to the Northwest Territories.

South Korea's TV Chosun features the NWT and wins the 2019 Explore Canada Award of Excellence at Destination Canada's Go Media event!

Destination Canada in South Korea teamed up with NWT Tourism and our industry partners, along with Air Canada, and TV Chosun to "dispel the myth that genius babies are the product of honeymoon activities under the northern lights" in a comedy reality television series called "My Wife's Secret Recipe".

NWT Tourism and a number of tourism suppliers in the NWT hosted Travel Blogger Jeseung Yeon and his award winning comedian wife, Huun-Hee Hong and their TV crew. The television crew followed this celebrity couple in their pursuit of happiness through YOLO spirits, small luxuries and on their honeymoon trip to the

CHINA



Kylik Kisoun Taylor meets with travel agents during the federal trade mission to China.

AUSTRALIA



NWT Tourism CEO, Cathie Bolstad signs an agreement with Lizzie Doyle, establishing a General Sales Agent in Australia.



Lizzie Doyle (pr Marketing) in Australia presents the NWT to staff at Qantas Holidays.

Northwest Territories, where they saw the northern lights and so much more. Filling four episodes of their reality television series “My Wife’s Secret Recipe”, TV Chosun brought delight and laughter to its audience at home as they saw this comedy couple experience winter activities for the first time, including hot tubbing at Blachford Lake Lodge (right).

GERMANY

Our General Sales Agent in Germany, Michaela Arnold, regularly makes sales calls to a variety of key tour companies in Germany, promoting our destination and educating travel agents about the products and experiences in the NWT. With Connor funding this year, we produced a German Language Explorers’ Guide and we entered into a partnership with Fraserway RV to wrap an RV to feature NWT as a great travel destination.

A media fam and travel trade FAM to the Western Arctic was also scheduled to grow the German market’s understanding of the new highway and new product along this route. We now have over 25,000 followers on our German Language Facebook page.

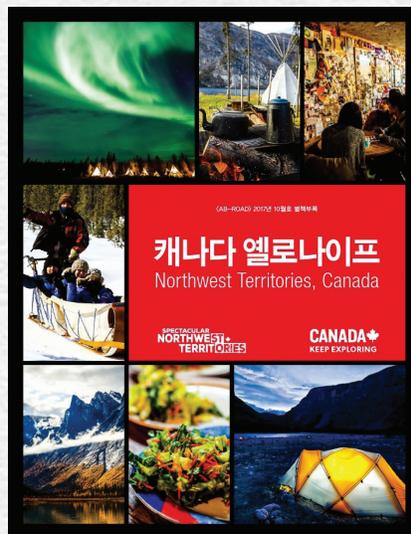
JAPAN

Our General Sales Agent, Eiko Tanaka, works closely with Destination Canada in Japan and with other members of Team Canada in Japan to coordinate the marketing activities with key trade accounts as part of the Canada Theatre program. The content-based marketing promotion focuses on developing key stories and experiences that will encourage the Japanese tour wholesalers to develop new itineraries for travel in Canada and we are making sure travel to the NWT is part of the promotions.

SOUTH KOREA



Celebrity Couple Jeseung Yeong and his award-winning comedian wife, Huon-Hee Hong contemplate what newly married life means as they experience for the first time a hot tub in winter in the NWT.



JAPAN



Eiko Tanaka, General Sales Agent in Japan takes sales appointments at travel trade events and presents a showcase of the five regions in seminars to Japanese buyers

GERMANY



Michaela Arnold, NWT Tourism's General Sales Agent in Germany attends travel trade events, promoting the Northwest Territories.



TOURISM 2020 MARKETING INITIATIVES

REGIONAL MARKETING

The GNWT provides funding to NWTT Tourism to focus marketing efforts on special initiatives that are initiated by the Department of Industry, Tourism & Investment (ITI) that both ITI and NWT Tourism wish to advance together. The annual budget includes \$250,000 that is allocated to the five regions (\$50,000 each) and the rest is set aside for special initiatives that may arise.

WESTERN ARCTIC

A variety of activities were undertaken including a refresh and reprint of the Dempster Highway Passport booklet, attendance at the Abbotsford RV and Calgary Motorcycle Shows, ads created and placed in Motorcycle Mojo, and purchasing of Globe & Mail advertorial space. Ads were placed in the Town of Inuvik Guide and the Dawson City Guide. Work commenced on updating the travel planning video for the Dempster Highway and Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway which will be used in the summer months at the GNWT's visitor centres in Dawson City and Inuvik.

NORTH SLAVE REGION

Brochures featuring community activities and maps were produced for four Tlicho communities and were distributed to hotels and visitor centres so that visitors were encouraged to explore a bit further while in the communities. Support was given to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for the showcase of their



Western Arctic Region



North Slave Region

new Arts and Crafts Centre at the opening event held as part of the first ever NAKA Festival in March. Two photo/video shoots were undertaken resulting in over 800 new photos and a number of new video clips which are

now being used for tourism promotion. Boosted social media posts and paid search advertising was implemented for festivals and a new video loop to showcase the NWT was developed for use at the Yellowknife airport.

SAHTU REGION

Work to develop a comprehensive Sahtu Regional Guide was undertaken and the project will be completed this year. The guide is designed for use by residents as well as tourists. As part of this project, regional and community maps were developed. A flatsheet was created for Sahtu Adventures to support attendance at the Toronto Adventure Show. Social Media advertising was placed and community itineraries were added to the spectacularnwt.com website and were promoted on social media.



Sahtu Region

DEHCHO REGION

A major summer video shoot was completed and new videos to feature activities in the region were developed and served up on a variety of social media platforms that pointed back to the website and feature stories. One of the videos was selected for repurposing in collaboration with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada for its national marketing platforms. Promotional items were purchased for use at consumer trade shows.



Dehcho Region

SOUTH SLAVE REGION

Print and digital advertising featuring festivals in the region were placed. Boosted social media posts for the Dark Sky Festival, Slave River Paddle Festival and featuring the waterfalls driving route were placed. Driving itineraries were created and posted on spectacularnwt.com and flatsheets to promote summer and winter tourism product were produced along with community brochures, all of which were used at consumer shows in the spring. Feature ads for operators in the region were developed for our website and a highway billboard collaboration was undertaken with Parks Canada as part of their highway wayfinding signage promotional plan.



South Slave Region



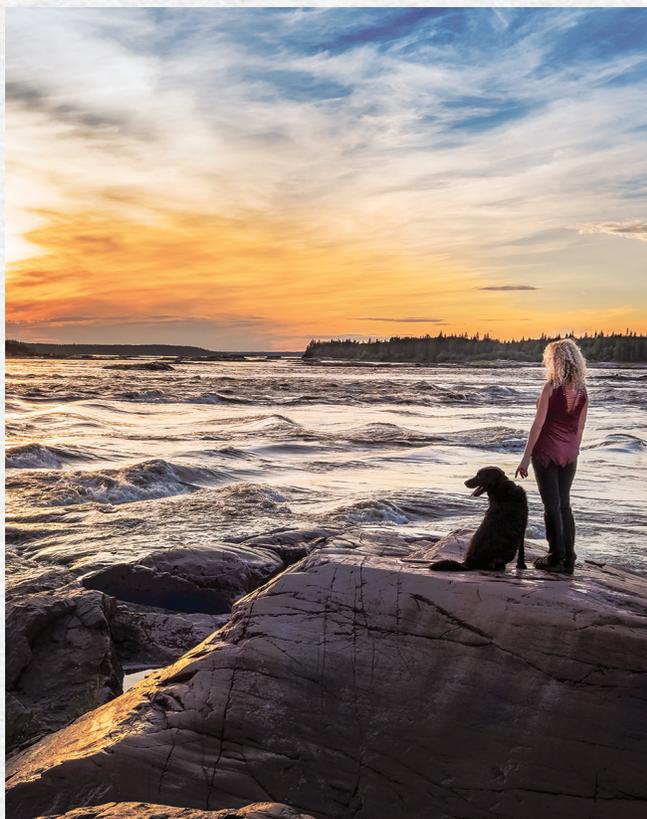
North Slave Region



Sahtu Region



Western Arctic



South Slave Region



Dehcho Region

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

FEDERAL TRADE MISSION TO CHINA

NWT Tourism participated in the federal trade mission to China in July 2018. Along with the federal and territorial Ministers of Tourism, the NWT Delegation included representatives from Aurora Village, Blachford Lake Lodge, Tundra North Tours and Yellowknife Tours. NWT Tourism signed an agreement with Flow Creative Marketing Limited (FLOW), a marketing agency in Hong Kong with a presence in Beijing, China and Vancouver, BC.

TOURISM WEEK

NWT Tourism worked with GNWT-ITI to celebrate Tourism week, producing print advertising in English and French to highlight the value of tourism to the territory.

A contest on social media channels that invited residents to nominate excellent visitor hosts in their communities was held and prizes were given out in each region.

MOU WITH INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

In September 2018, NWT Tourism signed an MOU with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the GNWT, establishing a framework for the three organizations to work together in a new way. The MOU supports the development and marketing of tourism businesses in the NWT that provide authentic Indigenous cultural experiences to contributing to the growth of Indigenous tourism.



NWT Tourism signs on Flow Creative Marketing as it's Chinese Marketing Agency in July 2019.



Tracy St. Denis (Assistant Deputy Minister – GNWT, Keith Henry (President & CEO of ITAC) and Cathie Bolstad (CEO – NWT Tourism) sign the MOU in Yellowknife.

INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

NWT Tourism continues work on important advocacy issues. This includes working on territorial industry issues and national issues in partnership with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and the Provincial & Territorial Industry Associations (PTTIA).

Advocacy activities this year included:

- Work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the GNWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources to get the federal regulatory changes made to enable a one-day fishing license in the NWT. We were delighted to see the federal law changes were approved in May 2018 for implementation April 1, 2020.
- Advocating for liquor license options that work for tourism operators who provide outdoor adventure experiences and events as part of their tourism product;
- Addressing cost increases for land leases as leases are coming up for renewal;
- Addressing regulatory requirements for wildlife viewing permits related to tourism operators providing wildlife viewing as part of an overall tourism product/experience;
- Working with GNWT ITI on solutions to address industry concerns regarding unlicensed tourism operators and safety related issues in the North Slave region;
- Airline cancellations in the capital city and impact on tourism operators, their travel trade partners and tourists; and
- Strengthening Visitor Services in the capital city and growing frequency and consistency in how visitor data is collected across the territory. All advocacy efforts are focussed on our mission which is to grow the tourism industry for the NWT to support a strong and sustainable economy.

2018 CONFERENCE

The 2018 Annual General Meeting and Conference was held in Yellowknife, NT. If you missed it, here are some photos of just some of the spectacular moments.



Minister Wally Schumann presents Neil Hartling of Nahanni River Adventures with the Mike Stilwell Lifetime Achievement Award



2018 Operator of the Year - Andrew Moore of Yellowknife Sportfishing Adventures receives his award from Susan Wright – Chairperson of NWT Tourism



Jhillian Adams accepts the GNWT Parks Operator Award on behalf of winner Bruce Davidson.



Minister Wally Schumann presents Alex Hall with an award for Outstanding Service to the industry.



Bill Braden (Centre) celebrates his 2018 Service Excellence award with Margaret Peterson (left) and Amanda Peterson (right).



Mike Olson is Auctioneer at the Gala Event and NWT Tourism establishes a \$15,000 scholarship fund!

AGM HIGHLIGHTS



Delegates participate in workshop sessions to explore the changes, challenges and opportunities the tourism industry is facing, network together and enjoy a jigging presentation from the students at Mildred Hall School.





SPECTACULAR
NORTHWEST 
TERRITORIES

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