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Tourism Cares Brings North American Travel Trade to Victoria, B.C.

US-based non-profit holds Summit on nature positivity, Indigenous tourism

Victoria, British Columbia – September 28, 2022 – US-based non-profit Tourism Cares will bring more than 120 travel industry professionals to Victoria, British Columbia for its signature Meaningful Travel Summit. On Canada's west coast and on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, Victoria is the capital of the province of British Columbia and is a community known for its commitment to sustainable tourism.

The Meaningful Travel Summit is a global event that unites travel and tourism industry professionals around interactive, educational activities and experiences that assist local community enterprises and encourage sustainable tourism. Over the three days, attendees will build relationships with local changemakers, fellow travel industry colleagues, and Indigenous-led organizations to gain practical knowledge and discuss how they can use their businesses to positively impact tourism communities and enhance stewardship of lands receiving visitors.

"Nature-based experiences are some of the fastest-growing elements in tourism, and one the travel industry can play a direct role in helping to responsibly manage," said Greg Takehara, CEO of Tourism Cares. "Wilderness areas across Canada share a symbiotic relationship with Indigenous communities, a heritage teeming with stories that define Canada's culture today. Conservation of our natural resources is critical for destination communities and the travel experience."

“It means a lot for Destination Greater Victoria to partner with Tourism Cares and for our community to host the Meaningful Travel Summit. The conference program is very engaging and I know delegates will have an amazing experience,” said Paul Nurse, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria. “Increasingly, destination management and destination stewardship are becoming core functions of our organization. Examples include creating the IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Conference, establishing a Sustainability Committee within our governance framework and Destination Greater Victoria achieving a Carbon Neutral designation. The Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Summit aligns with Destination Greater Victoria’s values of working collaboratively with stakeholders, including First Nations groups, and giving back to our community.”

Tourism Cares designs its Meaningful Travel Summits by working closely with local community organizations and stakeholders to pinpoint the greatest needs, challenges, and opportunities for tourism to positively contribute to the local economy. Programme content was designed in partnership with Destination Greater Victoria, with additional support from the Songhees Nation, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), Synergy, 4VI, and Tartanbond. There will be experiences with partners where attendees will disperse across Victoria to visit with, and in some cases volunteer their time in service to the community. These include Eagle Wing Tours, Sandown Centre for Regenerative Agriculture, Sea Change Marine Conservation Society, PEPÁKĒN HÁUTW Foundation, Peninsula Streams Society, and Power To Be.

Those organizations, and many more across Canada and the United States, will be featured on Tourism Cares’ Meaningful Travel Maps (www.tourismcares.org/meaningful-map), which Tourism Cares is developing to help tour operators and travel advisors find vetted, authentic community tourism businesses and services for their itineraries. The maps are designed to link the travel trade and visitors to non-profits and other social enterprises, giving visitors and tour operators insight into the places that share their values, as well as local changemakers a platform to promote their actions more broadly.

In addition to education and experiential visits and volunteering, the Tourism Cares with Victoria program will also support local Indigenous businesses in Canada with grant funding, provided by the Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy. The Tourism Cares Impact Grants focus on investing in the resiliency of destinations through community-level tourism initiatives that create social and environmental impact. Total grant amounts awarded will be approximately \$30,000 CAD and up to three organizations will be chosen in two rounds: fall 2022 and early 2023. For more information on the Tourism Cares Impact Grant Fund, visit www.tourismcares.org/support-a-grant

The Summit falls over Canada’s National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day that honors the lost children and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Tourism Cares will highlight efforts to support Indigenous communities through tourism and encourage attendees to participate in local events to honor the day. For more information, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>

The Meaningful Travel Summits are made possible by the support of its members and sponsors. Tourism Cares is proud to announce the sponsors of the Victoria Summit, including Destination Greater Victoria, Air Canada, Travel Insurance Advisors, LLC, Trip Mate, Booking.com, Eagle Wing Tours, Rocky Mountaineer, Tauck, WeTravel, 4VI, Accor, American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) NTA , Tauck-Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy, United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA), MaCher.

To learn more about the benefits of joining the Tourism Cares Community and to find additional information on events happening in 2023, please visit <https://www.tourismcares.org/>.

About Tourism Cares

Tourism Cares, Inc., a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advances the travel industry's positive impact to help people and places thrive. We believe it's in all our best interest to support the destinations our industry depends on so that communities, travelers, and businesses can prosper. We mobilize the entire industry to use its business as a force for good by uniting, activating and inspiring all sectors to make a positive impact through travel. Learn more at TourismCares.org and [@TourismCares](https://twitter.com/TourismCares).

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