Thompson Okanagan - Accessible Tourism
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Development Strategy

Embracing Our Potential 2.0

- 10 year strategy completed in 2020
- 2.0 is an update on our previous 10 year strategy
  - Sustainability
  - Regional Development projects
  - **Accessible Tourism**
  - Indigenous Tourism
  - Crisis Management
  - Trail Development
  - Partnerships
  - Etc.
Regional Accessibility Specialist

3 X Paralympic Gold Medalist and World Champion

Sonja Gaudet

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TOTA is Committed to Creating a World Renowned Accessible Destination!
Accessible & Inclusive Initiatives

1. Stakeholder Support
2. Strong Partnerships
3. AccessNow Mapping
Stakeholder Support

- In person site consultations
- Built environment recommendations
- Adaptive adventure experience
- Relationship building
- Content creation
- Funding support
- Blogging
Strong Partnerships

- Spinal Cord Injury BC / Access BC program
- Community Recreational Initiatives Society
- Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association
- Access Revolution
- AccessNow
- Expert User Groups
- Travel For All
- SoulFly Experiences
AccessNow is a consumer facing application
Accessible features research & data collection
Pin-pointing accessible experiences
Stakeholder knowledge
Market segment economic driver

Connecting people to inclusive and welcoming experiences for ALL!

accessnow.com
Data Collection - Analysis - Integration

- Team of expert users collecting data & pictures of accessible features at key tourism experiences
- Data analyzed to identify and extract the key priority accessible features
- Detailed data & relevant pictures of the accessible features integrated into the AccessNow app
Measuring Accessibility - Key Priority Indicators

- Parking
- Access Aisles & Route
- Main Entrance
- Washroom
- Adaptive Equipment
- Tour Guide Knowledge
- Text Contrasting & Braille
- Tactile Surfaces
- Lighting
- Service Animal Friendly
- Accommodation
  - Bed heights
  - Washrooms & Wheelin showers
Challenges & Impact

- Fear of compliance
- Building code below standard
- Inconsistent information
- Limited resources & funding

I have found that showing and explaining “WHY” accessible features need to be a certain way - produces the “AHA” moment that then creates awareness, understanding and compassion - and is more likely to be followed up by ACTION and CHANGE!
Access & Inclusion is an Attitude and a Mindset

It’s the way we treat others and the way others treat us -
It’s an opportunity to learn together and from one another -
And it will IMPACT us ALL in one way shape or form throughout our lifetime.