

Nova Scotia's Tourism Summit 2025

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (Subject to Change)

CHECK OUT OUR **SILENT AUCTION** (MEZZANINE) & **EXHIBITING PARTNERS**

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

9:15a.m.	REGISTRATION AND COFFEE & MUFFIN NETWORKING	Mezzanine
10:00am-11:am	2025 TOURISM SUMMIT OPENING Nova Scotia's Own Juno Award Winner - Classified TIANS WELCOMING REMARKS – TIANS Chair Kevin Toth KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Mental Resilience to Achieve the Impossible For Leah Goldstein, surpassing limits and achieving what many deem impossible is a way of life—not luck or chance. Her unparalleled success in ultra-endurance racing, military leadership, and world championship combat sports is rooted in one fundamental truth: mental strength is the ultimate competitive edge. Leah reveals the No Limit Mindset—the proven mental strategies she uses to cultivate resilience, overcome setbacks, and outperform even the toughest competitors. Attendees will discover the three essential practices Leah applies daily to train her mind into a relentless, focused, and adaptable force. Leah's insights provide actionable techniques to reframe challenges, maintain unwavering focus under pressure, and harness the power of mindset to transform goals into reality.	Commonwealth Ballroom
11:30am-12:20pm	#1 Risky Business – Future Proofing Your Tourism Operation Between cyber- attacks becoming increasingly sophisticated, weather-related events; Insurance mitigation and financial fraud, future proofing your business has become more important than ever. During this session, explore what proactive measures you can take that will help protect your business and your guest. Bring your thoughts and questions! <i>Meredith Cowan - Executive Director, Department of Emergency Management</i> <i>Thomas Rizzuto - Cybersecurity Specialist, ON-LINE Computer Services</i> <i>Stephen Hiscock - Manager of Government & Stakeholder Relations, Atlantic Region – Insurance Bureau of Canada</i>	Lunenburg Room
11:30am-12:20pm	#2 Checking In – A Look at Future Accommodation Trends Join Natacha Pouzin and Emile Gourieux from Smith Travel Research (STR) as they review the most recent hotel performance across Canada with a special focus on what is happening in NS. Get the latest data about what kinds of hotels are performing best, how independent hotels compare to branded properties and what can smaller operators do to be more competitive in these times of uncertainty. They will reveal STR's newest Canadian forecast for 2026. <i>Emile Gourieux - Regional Director, Smith Travel Research Canada</i> <i>Natacha Pouzin - Sales Executive, Smith Travel Research Eastern Canada</i>	Harbour Room A/B
11:30am-12:20pm	#3 Ensuring Access – Nova Scotia's Competitiveness The success of any destination is dependant on reliable, safe access and transportation for visitors. Leveraging our road, air and marine connections will support year-round access and increase visitor dispersion. Come learn about current and future investments being made by transportation partners that will enhance access and more competitively position Nova Scotia in the global market. <i>Mark Wilson - Owner, President and Chief Executive Officer, Bay Ferries Limited</i> <i>Marie Manning - VP Business Development & CCO, HIAA</i> <i>Laurence LeFrançois - Specialist Director, Service Planning, VIA Rail Canada</i>	Atlantic Ballroom

12:30 – 1:30pm	CHAIRMAN’S LUNCHEON Remarks from the Honourable Dave Ritcey Join us as the Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, the Honourable Dave Ritcey provides remarks. Celebrate TIANS Past Chairs TIANS Chair, Kevin Toth, will address delegates as we acknowledge TIANS esteemed Past Chairs. During the luncheon, TIANS will also be recognizing a select number of community groups that are making significant contributions to the health and well-being of our communities.	Commonwealth Ballroom
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Best Practices for a New Approach to Tourism Growth During the development of the NS Tourism Strategic Plan, TIANS and TNS carried out a jurisdictional scan on destinations that shared similarities to Nova Scotia. As we embark on the Implementation Phase of the Nova Scotia Strategy, we are delighted to be joined by our friends from the Maine Office of Tourism and the Scottish Tourism Alliance as they share an update on progress they are making on similar strategic challenges. Moderated by Dr. Rick Williams from Praxis Research <i>Marc Crothall, MBE, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Tourism Alliance</i> <i>Carolann Ouellett - Director, Tourism, Film & Outdoor Recreation, Maine Department of Economic & Community Development</i>	
2:30pm - 3:00pm	EXHIBITOR NETWORKING / AUCTION BREAK	Mezzanine
3:00pm - 4:00pm	#1 Chicken or Egg – Extending NS’s Tourism Season to Drive Growth Despite being a long-held aspiration, many communities and businesses continue to be challenged by an open for business mindset. How do we align resources to support off-peak tourism product and experience development? How do we embrace innovation and cross-sector collaboration and develop conditions to support year-round operation of our key tourism assets? <i>Leslie Wilson - President and General Manager, Ski & Bike Wentworth</i> <i>Martin Kejval - CEO, Cape Smokey</i> <i>Glenn Squires - CEO, Pacrim Hospitality Services Inc.</i>	Atlantic Ballroom
3:00pm - 4:30pm	#2 One Small Step – The Impact of Regenerative Tourism Workshop Industry is increasingly hearing the terms sustainable tourism and regenerative travel, but what businesses or destinations in Nova Scotia are already operating using these values and seeing the benefits? Why have they made this shift, and what best practices are they learning? This unique workshop style session features speakers who are “walking the walk” and will share insight on how to apply these practices. Take away practical suggestions for applying regenerative tourism practices within your business. (90 minutes) <i>Celes Davar - President, Earth Rhythms</i> <i>Lesley Robb - Founder, Swell Impact</i> <i>Brittany Parker - Director of Hospitality, Benjamin Bridge Winery</i> <i>Jeff Nearing - VP Business Events, Discover Halifax</i>	Harbour Room A/B
6:00pm	PRE-GALA DINNER RECEPTION HOSTED BY TASTE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND VIA	VIA Rail Station
7:00pm	2025 TOURISM AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE GALA DINNER GUEST MASTER OF CEREMONIES, STEVE MURPHY	Commonwealth Ballroom

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

7:30am - 2:30pm	REGISTRATION	Mezzanine
8:00am-9:30am	INDUSTRY BREAKFAST SPONSORED BY THE WESTIN NOVA SCOTIAN Westin Host Remarks NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM SECTOR STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE	Commonwealth Ballroom
9:30am-10:30am	#1 Plowing Our Way to Prosperity - Agricultural Heritage Driving Tourism Growth The tourism experience is a living demonstration of Nova Scotia’s way of life, and no better example is the interconnectivity between our agricultural heritage and our culinary expertise. Tourism preserves our countryside amenities and social traditions, and drives local economies. FarmWorks Investment Co-operative is helping bridge the gap supporting new enterprises and greatly enhancing the support local movement and fostering culinary excellence. <i>Kim MacPherson - Chef and Owner of Lupin Dining & Pantry</i> <i>Linda Best - Medical Microbiologist and Gastroenterology Researcher</i> <i>Rebecca Tran - Founder, The Station Food Hub Company</i> <i>Poet MacLean – Owner, Lake City Cider/Darty Brewing</i> <i>Shawn Crouse - Red Seal Chef and Manager, Tatamagouche Farmers’ Market</i>	Harbour Room A/B
9:30am-10:30am	#2 Grow Your Business with Tourism Nova Scotia Tourism Nova Scotia’s programs and resources can help you reach your business goals while building a thriving, year-round tourism industry in line with the new Nova Scotia Tourism Sector Strategic Plan. Hear directly from TNS’s program managers about the opportunities to work together to attract visitors, leverage emerging research and technology, and extend the tourism season. The team will help you connect with the right programs and information to help you reach your goals. Moderated by Afton Doubleday, Director, Outreach and Engagement. <i>Nick Fry - Business Development Manager</i> <i>Peter Johnson - Market Development Manager</i> <i>Tanya Johnson - Marketing Manager</i> <i>Jessica Spooner - Experience Development Manager</i> <i>Amanda Tate - Research Manager</i>	Commonwealth Ballroom
9:30am-10:30am	#3 Rise of the Machines - Putting AI into Action for Your Tourism Business In the rapidly evolving global market, AI has become a catalyst for innovation and productivity and Nova Scotia’s Tourism Strategic Plan has identified the critical importance of understanding and using AI to our advantage. At the forefront of this, is the Canadian Tourism Data Collective from Destination Canada. Come see how DMO’s and tourism operators can leverage this award-winning AI based platform to improve targeting and marketing return on investment including detailed segmented visitor profiles. <i>Meaghan Ferrigno - Senior Vice President, Chief Data and Analytics Officer, Destination Canada</i>	Atlantic Ballroom
10:30am - 10:45am	NETWORKING /ACTION BREAK	Mezzanine



10:45am-11:45am	#1 Game Changer – Driving Brand NS & Economic Growth Through Events Events are a critical element to generating year-round tourism activity. Over the past few years, Nova Scotia has leveraged our natural attributes and existing infrastructure to attract a number of significant world class events, creating a lasting legacy in host communities. What are the key elements that go into attracting events of this magnitude, and how can smaller communities work together to punch above our weight and elevate our standing on the global stage. <i>Frank Denis - Executive Director, Sail Nova Scotia</i> <i>Suzanne Fougere - Executive VP, Strategy & Business Development, Events East Group</i> <i>Susan Jeffries - Executive Director, Culture & Heritage Development</i>	Atlantic Ballroom
10:45am-11:45am	#2 Community Prosperity Through Cultural Partnerships Cultural and historical travel accounts for 40% of all global travel, with the potential to create significant employment opportunities and stimulate economic transformation. The Tourism Strategy for Nova Scotia calls for action to capitalize on tourism's potential while preserving and enhancing history and culture as a pathway to generate prosperity at the community level. This session will explore how to maximize your business impact by leveraging culture as a competitive advantage. <i>Gwen LeBlanc - Manager of Community Economic Development at the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse</i> <i>Lewis MacKinnon - Executive Director, Gaelic Affairs, NS Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage</i> <i>Robert Bernard, Executive Director, NS Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network</i> <i>Juanita Peters - Executive Director, Africville Museum</i>	Harbour Room A/B
11:45am-1:30pm	CLOSING SUMMIT LUNCHEON & SERVE IT UP! RECOGNITION Delegates will enjoy a pre-lunch screening of a short documentary viewing from our partners at Devour! The Food Film Fest. Join us as we celebrate and recognize the 2025 Graduates of the Serve it Up! Culinary Career exploration program – shining a light on rising talent. CLOSING KEYNOTE Human Excellence and Tech Innovation – Nova Scotia's Talent Pipeline Can Nova Scotia accelerate the talent pipeline by leveraging innovative and best in class education models? How do we foster strong industry partnerships and embrace digital transformation to enhance productivity and workforce engagement? <i>Join an open discussion with Philip Mondor, President and CEO of Tourism HR Canada, who will share the latest research and insights that will make you rethink your approach with your current and future workforce.</i>	Commonwealth Ballroom
1:30pm	CLOSING REMARKS FOR THE 2025 TOURISM SUMMIT	Commonwealth Ballroom



— TOURISM SUMMIT —
**NOVA SCOTIA
NEEDS TOURISM**
The Westin Nova Scotian | Dec 1–3, 2025