

Tourism, Heritage and Culture

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Tourism, Heritage and Culture
ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Province of New Brunswick

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TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor

Her Honour the Honourable Brenda Murphy

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Isabelle Thériault
Minister

From the Deputy Minister (acting) to the Minister

**Honourable Isabelle Thériault
Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture**

Madame:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Shannon Wilson
Deputy Minister (acting)

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I am honoured to present the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture's annual report for 2023-2024. As a new member of this vibrant and dynamic team, I am excited to take on the role of minister and continue promoting and supporting our province's tourism, arts, cultural, heritage, and sports and recreation sectors.

Although I was not directly involved in the activities of the past year, the department has shown unwavering dedication and resilience in pursuing its mission. This report stands as a testament to the collective efforts of the department's staff, partners, and stakeholders, who worked diligently to achieve results.

Looking ahead, we will continue to innovate, adapt and find new ways to celebrate our rich heritage, enhance our cultural offerings, strengthen sport and recreation, and encourage and welcome visitors from near and far.

I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who has contributed to this fiscal year's successes. I look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders as we explore new horizons and continue to create meaningful, lasting impacts in our communities.



Honourable Isabelle Thériault
Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture

DEPUTY MINISTER'S MESSAGE

With hard work, dedication and continued support from the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture staff in 2023-2024, the department demonstrated resilience and innovation. The staff attentively listened to the needs of the tourism, arts and culture, heritage and sports and recreation sectors. They collaborated closely with stakeholders from these sectors to provide meaningful support, resulting in a very successful year for the department.

THC employees stepped up the department's tourism campaign, inviting people from outside and within the province to explore festivals, communities and attractions, enjoy the natural beauty and outdoor adventure found in New Brunswick's provincial parks, and experience the region's history, arts, diverse culture and friendly people. New Brunswick's beautiful provincial parks in the 2023-2024 tourism season welcomed more than 920,000 visitors, with visitation expected to rise in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The Explore NB program had a significant impact on the provincial economy, contributing more than \$2 billion, and non-resident tourist spending has increased by 21 per cent since 2022.

Public art projects by New Brunswick artists were commissioned for new government buildings, including École Claudette-Bradshaw, École Le Mascaret and the Campbellton Addiction Services Centre. Part of New Brunswick's Public Art Policy is to showcase the work of local artists and bring art to the community.

The Archaeology and Heritage Branch was vital in managing the province's archaeological and built heritage. The branch issued 159 Archaeological Field Research Permits, 10 Archaeological Site Alteration Permits, and five Provincial Heritage Permits.

Additionally, the Community Museums Summer Employment Program assisted in hiring 122 employees for 69 institutions. These employees had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of New Brunswick's history and develop valuable job skills.

The department collaborates with partners to ensure everyone feels connected to New Brunswick as their place in the world. They serve New Brunswickers, stakeholders and communities throughout the province, playing an essential role in making New Brunswick a place people love, encouraging visitors to return again and again.



Shannon Wilson
Deputy Minister (Acting)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Strategy and Operations Management

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) uses leading business practices to develop, communicate and review strategy. This provides the Public Service with a proven methodology to execute strategy, increase accountability and continuously drive improvement.

Government Priorities

Our vision for 2023-2024 is a vibrant and sustainable New Brunswick. To make progress towards this vision, we must focus on our government's priorities.

- Energize private sector
- Vibrant and sustainable communities
- Affordable, responsive and high-performing government
- Dependable public health care
- World-class education, and
- Environment

HIGHLIGHTS

- Significant improvements were made at the Village Historique Acadien, including developing new experiences: a year-round walking club reached a membership of more than 100 and 10,000 kilometres travelled; winter activities attracted thousands of people using more than 20 kilometres of snowshoe and Fatbike trails.
- Increased funding by \$360,000 to the New Brunswick Arts Board, also known as Arts NB, to enhance the reach and impact of its artist-in-residence program.
- CollectionArtNB added 23 works of visual art to the provincial collection – including five pieces from Indigenous artists. These new acquisitions were exhibited at Old Government House and toured throughout New Brunswick.
- Arts and Culture Branch launched the NB Artist Registry website, listing 100+ professional New Brunswick artists that schools may contact to pursue projects for the Artists in Schools program.
- Entered into a partnership with the New Brunswick Museum and the City of Edmundston to renew the Antique Automobile Museum in Edmundston.
- Put in place a new process to assign place names in the province, including addressing derogatory place names.
- Changed the name of a community, mountain and protected natural area in Restigouche County, replacing derogatory place names.
- Launched a Community Public Art pilot program that provided public art best practices toolkits and workshops to five local government entities and Regional Services Commissions.
- Parks NB began the process of taking over management of Fundy Trail Provincial Park in 2023 for operation in 2024.
- In 2023, Parks NB invested more than \$1 million in climate change action, including planting 120,000 new trees, completing bioswales, post-storm dune remediation, and a state-of-the-art stormwater purification system.
- Parks NB programming highlights include providing transportation ‘free-of-charge’ and educating 5,831 New Brunswick school children within our parks on climate change (up from 3,100 in 2022). Ten ‘Learn to Camp’ programs were delivered during the summer of 2023 within provincial park campgrounds to 225 participants.
- The Government of New Brunswick invested \$9.5 million in capital improvements for our provincial parks based on third party-generated condition assessments, accessibility audits, and revenue generation. Investment highlights included campground upgrades at Murray Beach, expansion of Fundy trail’s east-end reception and interpretation centre, and Mount Carleton gatehouse renovation.
- The *Always Inviting* consumer advertising campaign extended an invitation to travellers across Canada and the eastern United States to come “Explore NB in 2023.” Target audiences included Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes, Alberta, British Columbia, New England and the Mid-Atlantic in the United States.
- The Explore NB Cruiser and Street Team continued to travel around New Brunswick, visiting attractions, parks, communities and special events throughout the province. The team connected with thousands of locals and visitors to share tourism information and build awareness for the Explore NB brand. More than 80 communities were supported by the Explore NB Street Team, which was also promoted in-province through radio ads, digital marketing efforts and contest giveaways during summer, fall and winter.
- Partnership opportunities for cities, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), and Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) to buy into provincial advertising campaigns with a matched

investment by the department were made available through the 2023-2024 Co-op Partnership Program. The program also allowed tourism operators and sector organizations to enhance their websites and digital content offerings.

- Invested \$290,000 in 68 projects and initiatives that strengthened physical literacy in children and youth.
- The department's budget reached a record of \$75.1 million, representing an increase of \$13 million between 2021-2022 and 2023-2024. This supported significant investments across the government's tourism strategy and the heritage, arts, sport and cultural sectors.
- Mactaquac Provincial Park Golf Course was chosen to host a PGA TOUR Americas men's golf tournament in July 2024.
- The Parks NB team was a national finalist for the 2023 Sustainable Tourism Award from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.
- Ryan Coleman, Manager at New River Beach and Herring Cove Provincial Parks was the recipient of the Air Canada Future Leader's Award at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada national awards.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Outcome # 1 Accommodations room nights sold

Accommodation room nights are the number of hotel and motel rooms sold to travellers in New Brunswick.

Why is it important?

Accommodation room nights are a primary indicator of the number of visitors and New Brunswickers travelling in New Brunswick and the overall health of the tourism industry.

Overall Performance

With 1.87 million room nights sold, the 2023 target of recovering to 100 per cent of 2019 was met.

Sales were up seven per cent over 2022.

The occupancy rate in August was 80 per cent.

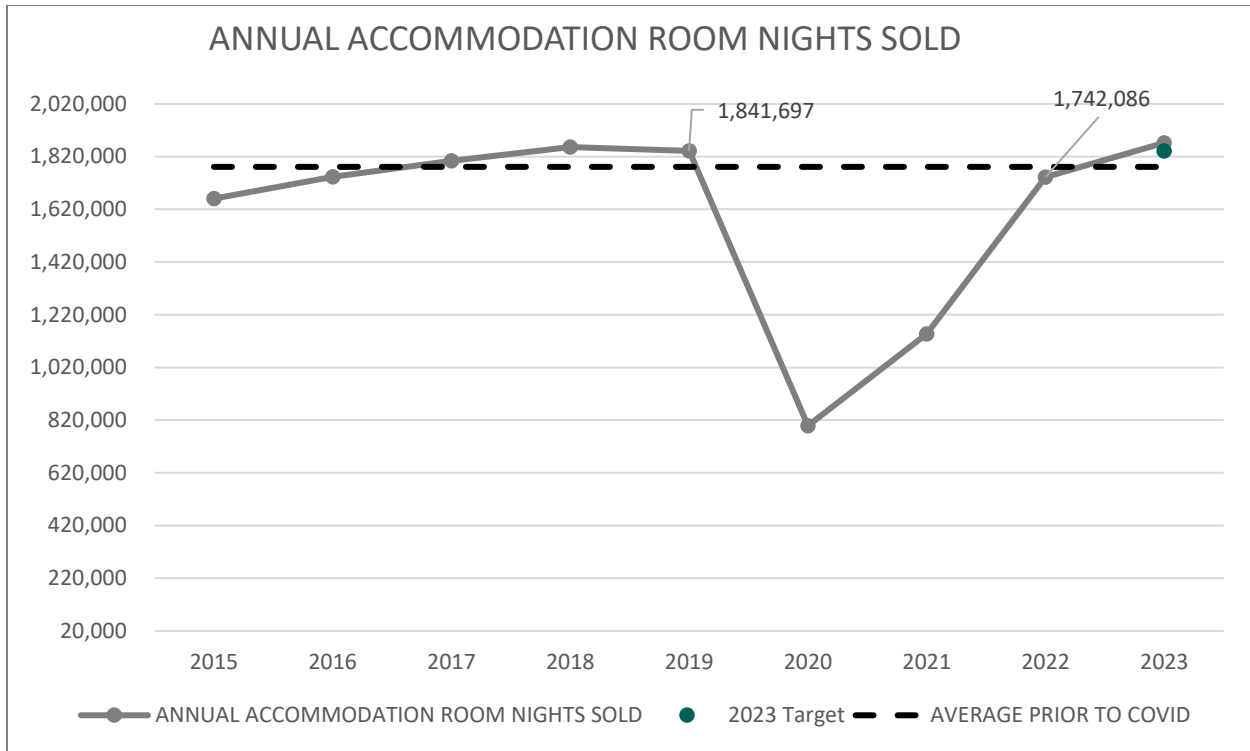
Initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the outcome

- Extended the season at Republique Provincial Park and Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- Introduced shoulder season fees on Provincial Parks
- Launched a new Parks Marketing Campaign
- In partnership with Destination Canada, launched a Fall Campaign
- Additional tactics around our Fish and Hunt Campaign
- New Winter Campaign that expanded beyond snowmobile
- Festivals and Events Strategy

Baseline: 1,841,697 room nights in 2019

Target: The industry recovering to 2019 numbers

Actual: 1.87 million room nights sold in 2023. The target of recovering to 100 per cent of 2019 was met and was up seven per cent.



Outcome # 2 Provincial Park Campsite Nights

This measure counts the number of campsite nights occupied in provincial parks.

Why is it important?

Provincial parks are an essential recreation and tourism destination. The importance and benefits of camping and getting outside have been elevated due to travel restrictions and pressures from the pandemic.

Campsite night sales also represent the most significant revenue source and are critical to financial performance.

Overall Performance

The target of achieving 2019 numbers was not met; however, 2023 numbers exceeded 2022.

Campground 1 at Mactaquac Provincial Park was delayed opening in 2023.

Due to Hurricane Lee in September 2023, there were 4,262 campsite nights cancelled that weekend.

Initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the outcome

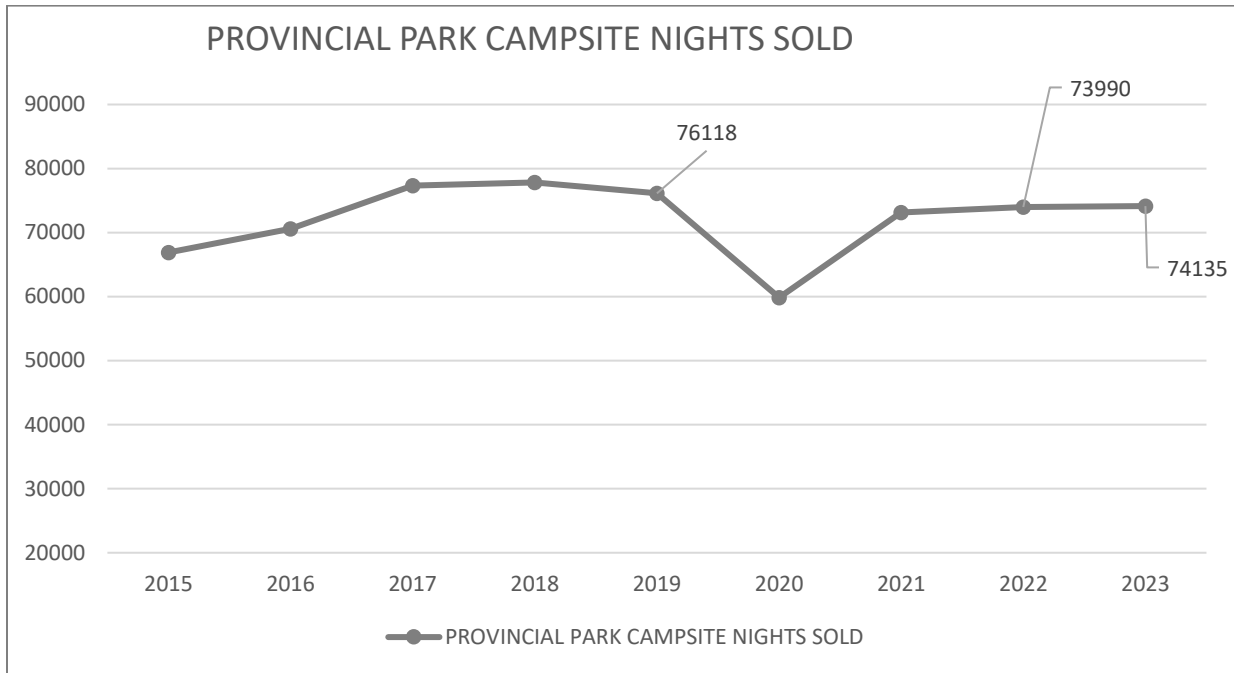
- Extended the season at Republique Provincial Park, Mount Carleton and Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- Introduced shoulder season fees on Provincial Parks
- Launched a new Parks Marketing Campaign

- Infrastructure investments in our parks

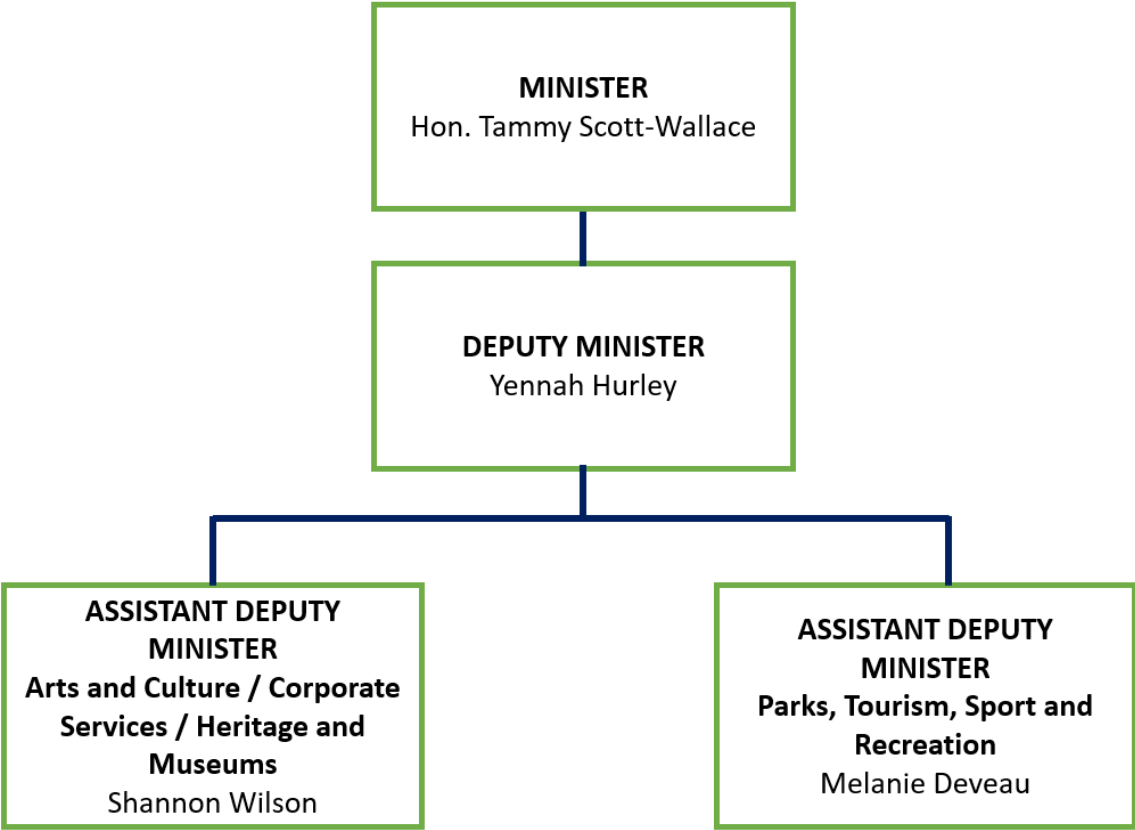
Baseline: 73,990 campsite nights sold in 2019

Target: 76,118 (2019 numbers)

Actual: 74,135



OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS



*As of March 31st, 2024

DIVISION OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

Parks & Capital Branch

The Parks Branch provides inclusive, protected natural and cultural destinations that inspire wellness, enjoyment, and education for all. With a vision that all people are stewards of New Brunswick's permanently protected natural and cultural destinations, the branch is responsible for the stewardship of 25 provincial parks. The branch manages and operates 12 provincial parks, a fishing lodge, and multiple day-use parks. The parks include camping, golf courses, bike parks, trails, beaches, marinas a ski hill and multiple retail operations. The branch also plays a significant role in supporting tourism entrepreneurs and not-for-profit organizations.

The branch also develops the department's capital budget and coordinates the implementation of all projects. It ensures that projects meet all legislative and regulatory requirements.

Highlights

- Parks NB began the process of taking over management of Fundy Trail Provincial Park in 2023 for operation in 2024.
- Parks NB extended the season for camping and day use at République, Mount Carleton, Hopewell Rocks and Parlee Beach provincial parks in 2023 to a date later in the autumn due to increased demand.
- In 2023, Parks NB invested more than \$1 million in climate change action, including planting 120,000 new trees, completing bioswales, post-storm dune remediation, and a state-of-the-art stormwater purification system.
- Parks programming highlights include providing transportation 'free-of-charge' and educating 5,831 New Brunswick school children within our parks on climate change (up from 3,100 in 2022). Ten 'Learn to Camp' programs were delivered during the summer of 2023 within provincial park campgrounds to 225 participants.
- More than 11,000 people participated in various events such as Adrenaline Bike Fest, Sand Sculpture, Kids Adventure Games, Seek the Highest Peek and Adrenaline Snow Fest.
- Mount Carleton hosted the first combined professional learning day for the Anglophone and Francophone school sectors in 50 years.
- The Government of New Brunswick Invested \$9.5 million in capital improvements in Parks NB based on third-party generated condition assessments, accessibility audits, and revenue generation. Investment highlights included campground upgrades at Murray Beach, the expansion of Fundy Trail's east-end reception and interpretation centre, and the Mount Carleton gatehouse renovation.
- Earned revenue by Parks NB increased by 11.95 per cent to more than \$10 million. Mactaquac Golf revenue was up 15.8 per cent to \$1.5 million. Sugarloaf Ski Park revenue was up 30.47 per cent.
- Campground reserved/occupied nights were up slightly by 0.35 per cent despite an abnormally high rainfall in summer 2023.

Tourism Development

The Tourism Development Branch is responsible for providing vision and leadership around business and tourism experience development to New Brunswick tourism entrepreneurs, small businesses, regions, not-for-profits and communities to create research-based, safe, market-ready experiences which set our province apart from the competition.

In addition, the unit assists, guides and facilitates discussions with government stakeholder departments and industry members to develop a sustainably managed trail network throughout the province. The branch also supports the industry financially in building and maintaining the motorized and non-motorized trail networks.

Highlights

- A Risk Management Plan and Emergency Response Plans have become an expectation of responsible tourism businesses. To assist businesses with risk planning, the Branch held training workshops targeted to those in the following sectors: Outdoor Adventure, Fish and Hunt, Trail organizations and Festivals and events. More than 100 businesses participated in the online workshops and nearly 50 joined the in-person sessions over three days.
- A goal of the Fish and Hunt Strategic Vision is fostering pride of place by increasing the appreciation of the outdoors while equipping youth with life skills. Wildlife Wednesday is a program delivered to school-aged children in collaboration with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). Eight sessions were hosted online and in person on various topics related to the outdoors.
- The branch financially supported Recreation NB in hosting a provincial Trails Summit. More than 80 participants who built and maintained trails attended this first event.
- Provided funding through the Trail Infrastructure Fund: \$270,000 to Snowmobile Motoneige NB to support the purchase of groomers for four clubs that manage 8,000 kilometres of trails; \$270,000 to Quad NB to support 14 infrastructure projects on their 10,000 kilometres of trails.
- The Signature Trail Infrastructure Fund supports the development of trails with high tourism and recreational value.
 - Christmas Mountain Snowmobile Trail - \$26,212
 - Fundy ATV Trail Network - \$62,840
 - Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne - \$63,146
 - Coastal Link Trail - \$237,161
 - Fundy Highlands Snowmobile Trail - \$119,473
 - Historic Highlands Snowmobile Trail - \$29,131
 - Mountain Bike Minto Trails - \$35,682
- Community-led tourism development is vital for creating sustainable and equitable growth. The department supports Neguac, Fundy-St. Martins and Sussex with the implementation of their destination development plans.
- Tourism is a bridge to truth and reconciliation. It is a vehicle to foster understanding, trust and respect through shared experiences. The branch supported the development of Elsipogtog First Nation's Tourism Strategy, New Brunswick's Indigenous-led, community-first strategic plan.

Strategic Marketing

The work of the Strategic Marketing Branch is to communicate with the target visitor through innovative, integrated, technology-driven solutions. It speaks to potential visitors where they are, providing the information they need through a wide range of tactics and channels. This includes advertising campaigns, owned media channels and destination brand management

Highlights

- The *Always Inviting* consumer advertising campaign extended an invitation to travellers across Canada and the Eastern United States to come “Explore NB in 2023.” Target audiences included Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes, Alberta, British Columbia, New England U.S. and Mid-Atlantic U.S.
- Following the success of the 2022-2023 advertising strategy, paid media continued to employ an always-on advertising approach to drive brand awareness and increase conversion for *Outdoorsy Suburban Families* and *Young Urban Cultural Enthusiasts* in target markets throughout the year.
- Tactics included traditional and digital media, a robust audio and video strategy, custom content in media outlets such as LCBO, Ricardo, Porter Airlines and Dax Podcast Network, and an external market activation in Toronto during a prime vacation planning period.
- Fall and winter marketing efforts were expanded to support an increased focus on shoulder season travel. This included a fall marketing partnership with Destination Canada targeting high-value guests in the Mid-Atlantic United States. For winter, increased efforts included expanding target markets to Ontario, Quebec and New England, plus regional and Maritime markets for snowmobile and non-motorized winter offerings. Dedicated marketing efforts for Fish & Hunt and Parks NB supported seasonal bookings through targeted interest campaigns.
- Summer, winter and fall 2023 campaign results achieved 450+ million impressions, 35+ million video views and 622,000+ website clicks.
- The Explore NB Cruiser and Street Team continued to travel around New Brunswick, visiting attractions, parks, communities, and special events throughout the province. The team connected with thousands of locals and visitors to share tourism information and build awareness for the Explore NB brand. More than 80 communities were supported by the Explore NB Street Team, which was also promoted in-province through radio ads, digital marketing efforts and contest giveaways during summer, fall and winter.
- Partnership opportunities for cities, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), and Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) to buy into provincial advertising campaigns with a matched investment by the department were made available through the 2023/24 Co-op Partnership Program. The program also allowed tourism operators and sector organizations to enhance their websites and digital content offerings.

Trade Sales & Partnerships

The Trade Sales and Partnership unit is responsible for growing dollars to support market/program development in North American and European markets through government and private investment. This supports new opportunities to influence and enhance existing programming and develop new innovative initiatives that drive awareness in longer-haul markets and visitation to New Brunswick and the industry, from highly competitive markets.

The branch worked closely with the NB Tourism Industry Advisory Committee, Federal/Provincial (FPT) committees, and relationships and initiatives on the provincial, Atlantic Canadian and national front.

Highlights

- Sixty-two customized New Brunswick and pan-Atlantic marketing partnerships were formed with North American and European-based Tour Operators and receptive tour operators in Canada.
 - These marketing partnerships were key in promoting, creating demand and selling New Brunswick packaged travel experiences in international markets, supporting *The Invitation* strategy. The department's efforts were to actively invite visitors from international markets back to the province.
- More than 1,000 travel agents, travel counsellors and Canada specialist agents in target markets were trained about New Brunswick.
- Forty-eight representatives of travel companies from North America and Europe were hosted on customized familiarization tours of New Brunswick.
- Port Saint John welcomed 75 cruise ships in 2023 – 174,229 passengers and 73,441 crew. May 30, 2023, marked the most significant single cruise ship visit in the history of Port Saint John, with 5,931 passengers and 2,113 crew arriving aboard the Oasis of the Seas. In 2023, there were nine inaugural calls, seven triple ship days and nine double ship days in Saint John, and the first cruise ship call ever in December. The branch plays an active supporting role with Port Saint John and the New Brunswick shore excursion operators.
- The branch worked actively with the city destination marketing organizations, associated New Brunswick airports, and other government departments to continue fostering relationships with the airlines and support programming/initiatives.
- The branch ensured the alignment of Federal/Provincial partnerships through Destination Canada: The Federal Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism (ACAT) and the Atlantic Canada Cruise Association (ACCA). The branch worked by accessing relevant research and influencing the development and involvement of innovative programs and initiatives that benefited the industry. The new ACAT was officially in place as of October 1, 2023, effective until March 31, 2028, with a Federal-Provincial pot of \$30M to support research, marketing and sales initiatives in North American and European markets of focus. The federal government contributes 60 per cent of the funding, with the province's contributing 40 per cent.

Travel Media

The Travel Media unit is responsible for working with a range of journalists to embrace/push out distinct stories on New Brunswick ... creating awareness in longer-haul highly competitive markets within North America and Europe. On a provincial and a pan-Atlantic level, the team strategically targets newspaper journalists, magazine editors, social media influencers, and broadcast TV and radio producers whose focus represents a “fit” for New Brunswick as a travel destination and supports the marketing goals and overall direction.

- New Brunswick welcomed 80 traditional North American/European travel media. Some critical print outlets were the Globe & Mail, The Lonely Planet, The Toronto Star, The Toronto Sun, Forbes, Saltscapes, PostMedia (Canada's largest newspaper chain), the New York Times and

GoNomad.com (fifth largest travel blog website in the world). Some key broadcast outlets on the ground were RDS (French sports TV channel in Québec), the Sportsman Channel, CBC, CTV, Echappées Belle and TV5 Monde, both outlets, France based, World Fishing Network, Outdoor Life Network, Global television network (14 Canadian markets) and City TV in six major markets (Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver).

- For North American travel media coverage, New Brunswick had 8,638 mentions, 8.5 billion impressions and \$492 million in advertising value. For European travel media coverage, New Brunswick had 222 articles, \$11,604, 202 in advertising value and 366,576,984 impressions.
- New Brunswick worked with Redpoint through the ACAT program on two highly successful initiatives. The province was involved in a listicle story that reached 164 million readers. The province was also involved in a radio audio news release with an audience reach of 17 million.
- The earned media value from the U.S. through the ACAT program for the four Atlantic provinces was more than \$9 million. New Brunswick had 30 per cent of this total, with \$2.7 million in media advertising value.
- The branch worked closely with the RSCs and DMOs. Travel media travelled throughout the province and produced stories with some key themes being the Bay of Fundy, beaches, outdoor adventure, parks, food and drink, culture, fish and hunt, snowmobile and family travel.

Festivals and Events

The newly formed Festivals and Events Branch drives visitation by growing New Brunswick's festivals and events across four main categories: festivals, major events, business events and sport tourism.

Highlights

- The *Invitation Festival Fund* was established to support New Brunswick festivals that attract visitors and drive overnight stays in the province. In 2023-2024, 55 festivals received funding through this program for an investment of \$804,000.
- The team also worked with seven signature festivals to help grow these festivals and enhance their offerings to make them more appealing to visitors from our key markets of Ontario, Quebec, and New England.
- The branch worked with the City of Moncton to bring the Atlantic Slam NCAA basketball event to the Avenir Centre and saw the Croix Bleu-Medavie stadium host 23,000 Guns n' Roses and Carrie Underwood fans for the first large concert at this venue.
- On the business events front, branding was completed for the partnership between the department and the cities of Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. The *Meet. Connect. Explore NB* branding was launched at the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) convention in Saint John in November, and it will be featured prominently at events where business planners gather. This partnership will allow the three cities to have an expanded presence at existing trade shows and access new markets they could not successfully penetrate by themselves, aiming to increase business event bookings in the province by 22 per cent by 2028.
- A sport hosting plan is being developed in collaboration with the Sport and Recreation Branch and will be launched in 2024-2025.

Heritage and Museums Division

The Heritage and Museums Division facilitates the promotion, awareness, understanding, conservation and preservation of New Brunswick's human and natural heritage resources for present and future generations. They support all levels of government, First Nations, industry and individuals on best practices for conserving and managing heritage and archaeological resources to benefit present and future generations and support responsible development and growth in New Brunswick.

Archaeology and Heritage

The Archaeology and Heritage Branch, with its two units, Regulatory and Heritage Services, plays a pivotal role in the conservation, management, and promotional development of New Brunswick's archaeology and heritage.

The Regulatory Unit, a key component of the branch, is entrusted with the administration of the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Their role in providing enforcement and oversight for Archaeological, Built Heritage and Paleontological work being undertaken in the province ensures the security and confidence of all involved in the conservation efforts.

The Heritage Services Unit provides financial assistance, heritage planning and leadership to the province's heritage and museum communities.

Highlights

- The Archaeology and Heritage Branch issued 159 Archaeological Field Research Permits, 10 Archaeological Site Alteration Permits, and five Provincial Heritage Permits in 2023. The permits and the accompanying regulatory review completed by the branch support heritage conservation and responsible development in New Brunswick.
- The Community Museums Summer Employment Program assisted in hiring 122 employees for 69 institutions. The employees hired had an opportunity to advance their knowledge of New Brunswick history and develop job skills.
- Eighty-three schools across seven districts participated in the New Brunswick Heritage Fairs program. Students in Grades 4-9 had the opportunity to research and present a topic of their choosing related to New Brunswick's history.
- The Built Heritage and Community Cultural Places programs funded rehabilitating 11 New Brunswick heritage sites.
- The Commemorations and Celebrations program funded 13 commemorative and celebratory historical events in New Brunswick communities.
- Archaeology and Heritage Branch social media platforms shared New Brunswick's heritage with the public. They saw an increase of 12 per cent (Facebook), 2.4 per cent (X), and 11.4 per cent (Instagram) from the previous fiscal year.
- THC participated in a cross departmental project to create the GNB Toponymy & Naming Procedure and rename three derogatory place names in Restigouche County.
- THC and the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik signed the agreement Concerning the Conduct of Archaeological Work and Respect for and Protection of Indigenous Burials in Peskotomuhkatikuk.

- THC and Mi'gmawel Tplu'taqnn Inc. signed A Memorandum of Agreement regarding Archaeology and Heritage Matters of Mutual Interest and Implementation of the Heritage Conservation Act.

Village Historique Acadien

The Acadian Historical Village has the dual mandate of preserving and promoting the tangible and intangible heritage of the Acadians of New Brunswick from 1770 to 1950 to the population of New Brunswick and its visitors.

Being in operation during the summer season, from June to mid-September, the Village has also developed a mandate for community activities during the off-season, with an objective to solidify linkages with various audiences. Although the Village has always demonstrated leadership since its opening in 1977, its community involvement has greatly diversified over the past ten years.

Highlights

- Increase of year-round visitors of 20 per cent compared to 2022-2023
- Revenue increase of 12 per cent compared to the previous year
- Development of new products
- Thematic guided tours allow you to discover the historic site from a specific angle, which reveals an often-overlooked part of the history of Acadia in New Brunswick. The themes covered are:
 - Textiles: a woman's story
 - Stories of deportation
 - Visit to the Village's artifact collection
 - Food in Acadia
- Les Jams du Village is a series of musical sessions coordinated and hosted by our musicians. The community is invited to participate with or without a musical instrument. The goal is to share Acadian musical heritage and create authentic kitchen parties inside the historic houses of the Village.
- In 2023, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Caraquet Acadian Festival, the Village created Taste History, a guided taste tour led by the Village historian. A real success, this new signature product is sold out at each presentation.
- Despite the numerous challenges caused by COVID-19, the project management team for the transformation of the Lobster Hatchery, a historic building installed in the Village in 2010, was finally able to initiate the final stages of development of the project. The hatchery is scheduled to open to the public in June 2024.
- Since 2012, the historic site has been open, free, to walkers during the off-season. In 2023, the Village has created a rest and dining area for the walking community and off-season visitors.
- In 2021, to help the community set positive personal goals, the Village launched the Les Sabots Dorés walking club. In 2023, nearly ten members reached the milestone of 1,352 kilometres travelled in the Village. To encourage them to continue their journey, the Village has launched the second chapter of the club, which invites them to travel an additional 2,750 kilometres! The Les Sabots Dorés walking club has around 60 active members.
- In the fall of 2023, the Acadian Historical Village team took over the management of L'Espace Cotravail, which is a place that allows the community, visitors and workers to access an internet

connection, a low-cost workspace and meeting space. The Coworking Space operates Monday to Friday from mid-September to the end of April.

- Since winter 2022, the Village has offered free access to 8.6 kilometres of fat bike trails developed on the historic site and the vast lands surrounding it. In 2023, the Village developed a new 2.3 kilometre route, improving the original route.
- Since winter 2022, the Village has also offered fat bike rentals to its winter customers. In 2023, the number of fat bikes available for rental has increased. It is now possible to rent electric fat bikes to satisfy the tastes and needs of a wider clientele.
- Five per cent increase in fat bike rental revenue compared to 2022. Since winter 2022, the Village has offered free access to 2.8 kilometres of snowshoe trails developed on the historic

Corporate Services Division

The Corporate Services Division provides customer-focused services to enable and enhance departmental programs, priorities and performance. The division comprises three branches: Human Resources; Financial Services, Information Management and Technology; and Strategic Initiatives and Policy.

The Human Resources Branch provides expert advice and oversees programs and processes in all human resources areas, including workforce planning, workplace health, safety and wellness, employee and organizational development, staffing and recruitment, classification, official languages, and employee and labour relations.

The Financial Services, Information Management and Technology Branch provides expert advice and oversees programs and processes in financial management, strategic procurement, information technology and management, records management and office space management.

The Strategic Initiatives and Policy Branch provides expert advice and oversees programs and processes in the areas of strategy development and priority management, organizational improvement and performance management, policy and legislative development, legislature coordination, right-to-information requests, administration of the department's agencies, boards, and commissions (ABCs) and corporate website administration.

Highlights

- Continued to educate people leaders on Health and Safety requirements, ensuring it is a top priority to keep employees safe and help reduce accident rates.
- Created opportunities through the Evolving Leaders Program.
- Filled 21 vacant positions to reduce vacancy rate by seven per cent.
- Human Resources developed 10 new working relationships with organizations to help the department recruit great candidates for our positions. Programs included the New Brunswick Teen Apprenticeship, Retiree Employment Agency and CFB Gagetown Career and Educational Fair.

Arts and Culture Division

The Arts and Culture Division provides leadership for developing, implementing, and monitoring government programs, policies and strategies supporting the arts and cultural industries:

- Film television, and new media

- Music and sound recording
- Book and periodical publishing
- Visual arts and fine craft

Recognizing that the arts are integral to the economic and cultural fabric of New Brunswick, the branch promotes community cultural development and the flourishing of our cultural sector. The branch manages collectionArtNB and collaborates closely with the New Brunswick Arts Board to create and coordinate programs that advance the arts and artistic careers in New Brunswick. By championing organizations and initiatives at the heart of the cultural sector through advisory and technical services, collaborative efforts, thoughtful policy development, and strategic support, the branch aims to ensure that our province remains a vibrant and culturally rich place to live and work.

Highlights

- More than \$13.2 million was invested in arts and culture organizations, initiatives and events that contributed to artists earning a living, New Brunswickers having access to arts and culture in their communities, and New Brunswick arts and culture gaining greater visibility outside New Brunswick. (Recipients are listed at www.gnb.ca/culture).
- Continued to work with sector stakeholders and seven government departments to implement and advance recommendations of the Premier’s Task Force on the Status of the Artist report. Key accomplishments include improvements and investments in programming, such as a \$360,000 funding increase to Arts NB for the Artist in Residence Program expansion and \$150,000 in funding allocated for Community Public Art Projects and artist-focused improvements to the Public Art program.
- The Community Public Art pilot program provided best practices toolkits and workshops to five local government entities and Regional Services Commissions. It also offered each client a \$30,000 grant to commission a Public Art project that would benefit professional artists in the province and introduce five communities and regions to a new work of Public Art.
- Commissioned public art projects by New Brunswick artists for new government buildings Écoles Claudette Bradshaw and Le Mascaret, and the Campbellton Addiction Services Centre. Part of the New Brunswick Art Policy is to profile the work of New Brunswick artists and bring art to communities and New Brunswickers.
- A new online registry has been launched for the recently improved Artists in Schools program that will increase access and encourage engagement with the program from teachers, schools, and artists. The registry already includes more than 100 artists prepared to pursue projects in both official languages.
- Through its website, Inspired by NB campaign, and social channels, ArtsCultureNB continued to raise awareness among New Brunswickers of the vital work of artists. By supporting the arts and culture sector, we build local pride and create positive perceptions of our artistic communities. CollectionArtNB added 23 works of visual art to the provincial collection – including five pieces from Indigenous artists. These new acquisitions were celebrated at an opening exhibit at Old Government House in September 2023 and then toured throughout New Brunswick.

Sport and Recreation Division

The Sport and Recreation Branch plays the lead role within the government in overall system development. Its primary functions are providing leadership, working with the system to develop

vision, policy, and support programs, allocating strategic financial support, and consulting with partners and stakeholders.

The branch provides strategic leadership and support to grow and develop quality sport, physical activity and recreation opportunities for all New Brunswickers. The branch is government's voice for sport, physical activity and recreation at the federal-provincial-territorial level. It provides input to national priorities, including the Canadian Sport Policy, the Framework for Recreation in Canada and the Common Vision for Physical Activity in Canada – Let's Get Moving. It also seeks out key alliances in-province with related policy fields such as health, social inclusion, justice, education and tourism.

The branch works with partner organizations to pursue a strong and valued recreation and sport delivery systems. It drives good governance and organizational practices, leadership development, safe sport and recreation, and quality programming at all levels. It also supports inclusive, accessible, quality opportunities that contribute to the well-being of all New Brunswickers.

Highlights

- Partnered with the Department of Environment and Local Government and the Department of Justice and Public Safety in the Inter-Departmental Alignment Network to increase collaborative community development and impact.
- Conducted a pilot project with Recreation NB to assess gender-equitable facility access and supported the lead She is Active campaign network partner, Sport NB, in continuing to address barriers women and girls face in sport and recreation.
- Initiated the development of a Physical Activity Strategy and Framework for Action involving a multi-sectoral approach and engagement with numerous partners representing provincial, regional, and local mandates. The strategy's goal is to see New Brunswickers become more active and gain associated physical and mental health benefits.
- Supported the development of a Sport Hosting Strategy.
- Helped more than 107,000 participants stay active through 215 grants to local and regional organizations to support quality sport, physical activity, and recreation programming.
- Delivered funding for 16 Inclusive Community Recreation Infrastructure upgrades to support equity-deserving populations.
- Invested \$290,000 in 61 projects and initiatives that strengthened physical literacy in children and youth aimed at increasing accessibility, reducing barriers to sport participation, and supporting Indigenous capacity and leadership. Funding was matched through the Sport Participation Bilateral Agreement with Sport Canada.
- Developed a 3-year implementation plan for the Envisioning Sport Project towards a stronger, valued, better coordinated, and streamlined system that supports participation, athletes and those responsible for developing and delivering programs.
- Conducted a pilot project with seven provincial organizations to assess governance, organizational strength and operational effectiveness.
- Initiated modernization of the Recreation Infrastructure Planning Tool (RIPT) with key departments and partners.
- Continued to support the NB Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism which provides participants with an independent third-party mechanism for managing and resolving complaints.
- In partnership with the Canadian Sport Institute-Atlantic and provincial sport and multi-sport organizations, designed the 2029 Canada Games Sport Development Program was designed to support Team New Brunswick's performance.

- Launched the formal bid process for the 2029 Canada Summer Games in collaboration with the Canada Games Council.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Table 1: Ordinary Expenditure Status Report by Program Component

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024 (\$ 000's)

Ordinary Program	Budget	Actual	Variance (Under) Over
Administration	3,280.0	3,096.4	(183.6)
Provincial Parks			
Parks Programming and Planning	1,239.4	1,233.4	(6.0)
Parks Operations	13,606.3	14,357.1	750.8
Trails Fish and Wildlife			
Culture, Archaeology, Heritage and Sport			
Arts and Culture	14,266.7	14,503.0	236.3
Archaeology and Heritage	16,414.0	16,348.5	(65.5)
Sport and Recreation	6,933.0	6,946.1	13.1
Tourism			
Destination Marketing	13,229.0	13,195.5	(33.5)
Tourism Development	4,309.0	3,669.6	(639.4)
Trade Sales and Partnerships	2,605.0	2,726.8	121.8
Total Ordinary Expenditures	75,882.4	76,076.4	194.0

Table 2: Special Purpose Accounts Expenditure Status Report by Program

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024 (\$ 000's)

	Parlee Beach Maintenance	Viscount Bennett Trust Fund	Arts Develop't Trust Fund	Sports Develop't Trust Fund	Go NB!
Opening Balance	399.4	75.1	6.7	6.3	276.3
Revenues					
Budget	79.0	10.0	1,200.0	1,000.0	300.0
Actual	112.2	0.0	1,200.0	1,043.6	400.5
Variance (Under) / Over	33.2	10.0	0.0	43.6	100.5
Expenses					
Budget	60.0	10.0	1,200.0	1,000.0	300.0
Actual	132.8	-	1,200.0	1,043.6	559.3
Variance (Under) / Over	72.8	(10.0)	-	43.6	259.3
Closing Balance	378.8	75.1	6.7	6.3	117.5

Table 3: Special Operating Agency Expenditure Status Report by Program

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024 (\$ 000's)

	Budget	Actual	Variance (Under) Over
Opening Balance	4,997.6	4,997.6	-
Revenues			
Mactaquac Golf Course	1,438.0	1,514.3	76.3
Hopewell Rocks	5,039.0	4,826.5	(212.5)
Sugarloaf Lodge	454.0	640.6	186.6
Parlee Beach Campground	661.0	671.6	10.6
Expenses			
Mactaquac Golf Course	2,247.0	2,015.9	(231.1)
Hopewell Rocks	5,455.0	5,475.7	20.7
Sugarloaf Lodge	460.0	472.4	12.4
Parlee Beach Campground	436.0	356.8	(79.2)
Closing Balance	3,991.6	4,329.8	338.2

Table 4: Capital Expenditure Status Report

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024 (\$ 000's)

	Budget	Actual	Variance (Under) Over
Capital	9,514.0	9,444.9	(69.1)

Table 5: Ordinary Revenue Status Report by Source

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024 (\$ 000's)

	Budget	Actual	Variance (Under) Over
Return on Investment	1.0	0.0	(1.0)
Sale of Good and Services	4,565.0	5,202.1	637.1
Conditional Grants	875.0	437.5	(437.5)
Miscellaneous	4.0	7.9	3.9
Total Ordinary Revenues	5,445.0	5,647.5	202.5

SUMMARY OF STAFFING ACTIVITY

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Secretary to Treasury Board delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2023-2024 for Tourism, Heritage and Culture.

NUMBER OF PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AS OF DEC. 31 OF EACH YEAR		
EMPLOYEE TYPE	2023	2022
Permanent	168	178
Temporary	78	44
TOTAL	239	222

The department advertised 74 competitions, including 64 open (public) competitions and 10 closed (internal) competitions.

Pursuant to sections 15 and 16 of the *Civil Service Act*, the department made the following appointments using processes to establish merit other than the competitive process:

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Specialized Professional, Scientific or Technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a high degree of expertise and training a high degree of technical skill recognized experts in their field 	15(1)	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	0
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	7

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within Parts 1, 2 (school districts) and three (hospital authorities) of the Public Service.	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	8
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular, properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	12
Regular appointment of students/ apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry-level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	1

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, no complaints alleging favouritism were made to the Deputy Head of Tourism, Heritage and Culture and no complaints were submitted to the Ombud.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

BILL #	NAME OF LEGISLATION	DATE OF ROYAL ASSENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
None			
NAME OF REGULATION	EFFECTIVE DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES	
<i>New Brunswick Regulation 85-104 under the Parks Act (O.C. 85-420)</i>	April 1, 2024	Changed name from Fundy Trail Parkway Provincial Park to Fundy Trail Provincial Park. Established entry fees for Fundy Trail Provincial Park. Established camping fees for Fundy Trail Provincial Park.	

The acts for which the department was responsible in 2023-2024 may be found at:

<https://laws.gnb.ca/en/bycategory/cs?categoryId=departmentId&itemId=tourism>

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture has continued to respect its Official Languages obligations. The following outlines the actions taken during 2023-2024 in four focus areas.

Focus 1

Ensure access to service of equal quality in English and French throughout the province:

All employees are reminded annually of their responsibility to always actively offer service (by telephone, in person, through signage, by correspondence and by electronic services) to the public in both Official Languages.

The department conducts random audits to verify that the active offer of service is being made in both Official Languages: by telephone, in person, through signage, through correspondence and all electronic services.

The department continues to support second language training for employees to ensure the capability to offer quality services in both Official Languages throughout the province. Eleven employees were approved and participated in second-language training in 2023-2024.

Parks NB has created a signage committee to ensure that all external and internal signage in parks is consistent and of equal quality in both official languages. The committee established a new process for approving new signs and started an inventory of signs in all parks.

Focus 2

An environment and climate that encourages, for all employees, the use of the Official Language of their choice in their workplace:

The department provides all new employees with a form requesting information about their preferred language of work. This ensures employees receive any documentation in their chosen language.

Performance reviews are offered and conducted in the employee's official language of work. Managers review the language of work and service policies with their employees to ensure they understand their right to work in their language of choice and their obligation to provide an active offer and service in both Official Languages.

Small and large meetings were held in a manner that encouraged the use of both Official Languages.

Focus 3

New and revised government programs and policies will take the realities of the province's official linguistic communities into account:

When Memorandums to the Executive Council and briefs are submitted to the Executive Council Office, the department considers the potential impact of all its policies and programs on both linguistic communities.

The department encourages employees to participate in programs in the language of their choice.

The department ensures that all visual health and safety information is posted in both Official Languages.

Focus 4

Ensure Public Service employees have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the *Official Languages Act*, relevant policies, regulations, and the province's obligations with respect to Official Languages:

Official Languages policies are key components of employee orientation. New employees must complete the mandatory e-learning modules for Language of Service and Language of Work offered in the GNB Knowledge Centre.

The department sends annual reminders to all employees of their responsibility to always provide an active offer of service in both Official Languages and make all information and resources available to employees and managers.

The department monitors employee compliance with the *Official Languages Act* and the Language of Service policy.

Conclusion

The department continues to educate employees about the responsibilities of the *Official Languages Act* in their daily work and strives to provide quality services to clients in both Official Languages. The Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture resolved two Official Languages complaints for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Section 1 – Includes the current reporting year and the previous year.

Tourism, Heritage and Culture did not receive any recommendations from the 2023 or the 2022 Auditor General’s reports.

NAME AND YEAR OF AUDIT AREA WITH LINK TO ONLINE DOCUMENT	RECOMMENDATIONS	
	TOTAL	
Not applicable		

IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS TAKEN
Not applicable	

RECOMMENDATIONS NOT IMPLEMENTED	CONSIDERATIONS
Not applicable	

Section 2 – Includes the reporting periods for years three, four and five.

Tourism, Heritage and Culture did not receive any recommendations from the 2021, 2020 or 2019 Auditor General’s reports.

NAME AND YEAR OF AUDIT AREA WITH LINK TO ONLINE DOCUMENT	RECOMMENDATIONS	
	TOTAL	IMPLEMENTED
Not applicable		

REPORT ON THE *PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT*

Under section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive officer shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive officer is responsible. The Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.