

UPDATE: NORPASS, Sichuan Visa Pilot & PNWER Product Themes

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NORPASS

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Background

- Concept introduced in 2002 as a Norpass Rail & Sail program
- Walk-on only, bi-national travel pass between Washington, BC & Alaska (“Eurail”) that could include state ferry systems in Washington & Alaska, BC Ferries and possibly Alaska Railroad and the Victoria Clipper.
- Purpose was to provide convenient and flexible travel for tourists planning adventure travel through the Pacific NW.

Benefits

- All transportation systems have indicated an excess capacity for foot traffic and are eager to create new revenue sources.
- Encompasses the 2-nation vacation strategy by connecting the PNW through BC to Alaska.
- Supports multi-modal transportation model – Ferry, Rail, Bus, Floatplane, etc.
- Complements the cruise industry
- Provides unique tourism product offerings for our DMO's

Next Steps

- Support ferry operators as they discuss feasibility and logistics
- Support and thanks to Ryan Burles from Blackball Ferry Line for taking this on
- Governments to support joint reservations, flexible tariffs and ticketing using an interline airline model

Sichuan Visa Pilot

Why A Synchronized Visa Process?

- Chinese visitors want to visit both countries but different visa processes lead to confusion and increased costs for wholesalers
- Increasing interest in Alaska cruise requires a visa to both the US and Canada
- Increasingly Chinese travelers are gaining easy access to other destinations; the US and Canada need to compete to get their share

The Time is Right for Efficient Parallel Visa Processes

- In a recent report, TIAC reports that 32.5% of international visitors to Canada do so after first landing at a US gateway
- With BTB, the US and Canada are already sharing traveler security information and flight manifests

Sichuan Visa Pilot

- As we move to BTB 2.0, PNWER proposes a pilot program for the Sichuan flight into Vancouver
- Chinese would travel to US consulate in Chengdu for a joint interview which starts a parallel process for both visas that follows one timeline
- Both nations retain ability to make individual admissibility decisions
- Small, contained, low season, manageable, share resources where possible, use technology, measure ROI

Next Steps

- Bilateral discussion among experts and decision-makers is needed
- Industry would like to see government help with innovation and demonstrate willingness to explore

PNWER Product Themes

What Differentiates the PNWER Region?

- First Nations Tourism
- Gold Rush Trail
- Crown of the Continent
- Marine Tourism: Cruise, Scenic Ferries, Leisure Boating, Fishing
- Winter: Snow, Ski, Mountains
- Scenic Rail Experiences
- Gardens
- And ???



Moving Forward...

Future of PNWR Tourism Committee

- To ensure regional representation and a healthy committee, all PNWER States/Provinces annually to commit to supply a committee member
- Representatives could be nominated from industry, state or provincial destination marketing organizations or be tourism officials.

Our Mission?

- Produce annual PNWER Tourism Dashboard to:
 - Tell story of Tourism's economic impact
 - Provide data to inform policy decisions
 - Tell story of where tourism is winning and losing
 - Be a key education tool for legislators
- Explain the needs of Tourism with respect to Preclearance and Visa Synchronization; propose pilots where appropriate

Our Mission!

- Accelerate marketing collaboration to strategically leverage resources and incrementally build Tourism
- To support the Two Nation Vacation, foster collaboration among product sectors to develop themed routing and product groups that differentiate the PNWER region