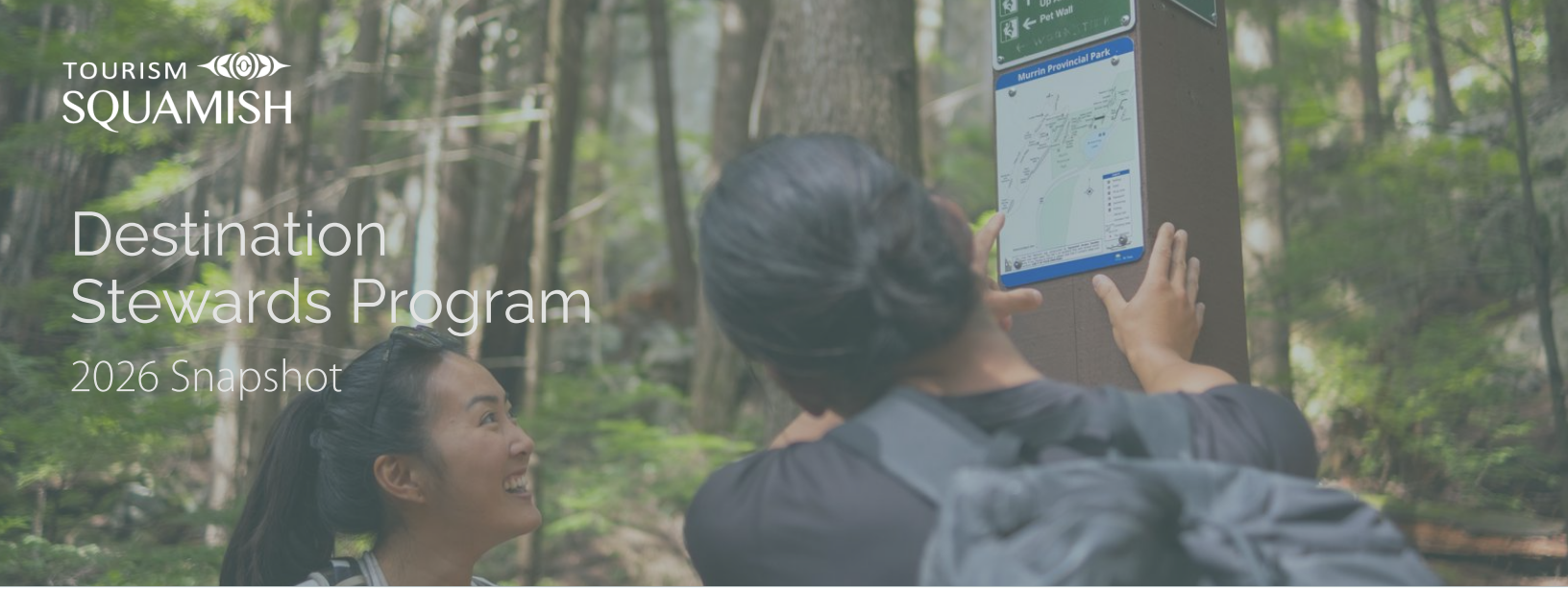


TOURISM SQUAMISH

Destination Stewards Program

2026 Snapshot

SHARING SQUAMISH: STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

Each summer, Tourism Squamish's Destination Stewards connect with visitors at trailheads, parks, community spaces and popular recreation sites across Squamish. Easy to spot in their bright yellow shirts, the team brings visitor information, local knowledge and responsible recreation messaging directly to the places where people are exploring.

Their role is practical: to help visitors enjoy Squamish safely and responsibly, while encouraging care for nature, respect for wildlife, and appreciation for the cultural and community values that make Squamish unique.

Launched in 2020, the program has become an important part of Tourism Squamish's approach to destination management - turning everyday visitor interactions into opportunities for education, connection, local recommendations and stewardship. At the same time, the team gathers on-the-ground observations that help Tourism Squamish and its partners better understand how recreation areas are being used and where visitor needs or pressures are emerging.

2026 AT A GLANCE

- **27,015** visitor greetings
  Including **8,080 responsible recreation conversations**
- **116** field observations
  Across parks, trails, community spaces and events
- **207 kg / 456 lb**
  of litter removed from recreation and community areas
- **80 visits**
  included litter collection and site stewardship



Top 5 locations by litter collected



Downtown/Estuary
Junction Park
Pseudo-tsuga Hub
Oceanfront
Cat Lake

DESTINATION STEWARDS | 2026 INSIGHTS

TOURISM SQUAMISH
HARDWIRED for ADVENTURE

WHAT WE LEARNED IN THE FIELD*



Parking and access are the clearest pressure points

Across 108 observations where parking was applicable, parking was recorded as **limited or full 86% of the time,** at locations where parking was assessed. Pressure was particularly evident at Shannon Falls, the Stawamus Chief and Brohm Lake, where full lots and vehicle movements can affect both the visitor experience and access to recreation areas.

This was also reflected in visitor behaviour: where non-compliance with posted rules was observed, parking and vehicle-related issues were among the most common themes.



Overall site conditions are strong, but targeted issues remain

Despite pressure at some high-use locations, the overall condition of Squamish's recreation sites was positive. Trails were rated in **good condition on 94% of visits**, while restrooms were assessed as clean on **93% of visits where facilities were available**. Picnic areas and benches were rated clean on **82% of applicable visits**.

These observations help distinguish destination-wide issues from specific locations where relatively small improvements to servicing, signage or infrastructure could make a meaningful difference.



Waste is widespread, even where disposal infrastructure exists

Destination Stewards collected litter on **80 of 116 visits (69%)**, removing approximately **207 kg / 456 lb** over the season. Plastics were found on 96% of litter-collection visits, followed by organic waste (85%), paper (83%), cans (78%) and cigarette butts (73%).

Interestingly, usable bins or waste disposal were recorded on **89% of all visits**, suggesting that litter management is not simply a question of adding more bins. Education, servicing, site design and visitor behaviour all have a role to play.



Responsible recreation messaging remains important

Posted rules were generally being followed, with compliance recorded during **73% of observational visits,** recurring themes included parking and vehicle behaviour, smoking, dogs in restricted areas and illegal camping.

Throughout the season, Destination Stewards had **8,080 responsible recreation conversations**, giving the program an opportunity to address these behaviours through timely, face-to-face education rather than enforcement.



On-the-ground presence helps visitors discover more of Squamish

The Stewards' role goes beyond managing impacts. Being positioned at high-volume locations creates opportunities to recommend other recreation areas, events, local businesses and experiences.

Shannon Falls was particularly valuable as a visitor touchpoint, allowing the team to connect with travellers early in their Squamish experience and introduce Downtown, local businesses, events and other places to explore.

*These findings reflect observations made during 116 Destination Steward visits. Percentages represent the share of visits where a condition was recorded. Results are not directly comparable with previous years due to changes in locations covered and survey methods.

DESTINATION STEWARDS | 2026 INSIGHTS

STRONGER TOGETHER

Partnerships are at the heart of the Destination Stewards program. Throughout the 2026 season, the team learned from and worked alongside organizations including **BC Parks, SORCA, Squamish Access Society, Squamish Search and Rescue / AdventureSmart, the BC Conservation Officer Service, Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council, Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region, Squamish Dirt Bike Association and Tourism Squamish member businesses.**

These relationships strengthen the Stewards' local knowledge while creating more opportunities for community organizations and businesses to connect directly with visitors.

Partnerships also came to life in the field. Stewards supported Tourism Squamish's For the Love of Trails campaign with SORCA, joined the Squamish Access Society for a visitor-facing coffee morning, participated in recreation-focused outreach and used firsthand product experiences to make more informed visitor recommendations. Tourism Squamish members also supported stewardship through the **Red Bag Program, with 8 participating businesses / 174 Red Bags returned in 2026. Thank you to the members who helped extend responsible recreation messaging across the community.**.



HOW THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS TOURISM SQUAMISH MEMBERS



Connecting visitors with local businesses
Stewards regularly answer questions about what to do, where to go and what to experience next, creating another opportunity to connect visitor demand with Tourism Squamish members.

Encouraging visitors to explore more of the community
Local recommendations can help move visitors beyond the busiest recreation areas and toward Downtown, events, activities, food and beverage businesses and other experiences.

Building stronger product knowledge
Product familiarization and member engagement help ensure stewards understand local experiences and can confidently recommend the right experience to the right visitor.

Creating partnership opportunities
Targeted activations allow businesses and community organizations to engage with visitors where they are already spending their time.

Supporting better destination management
On-the-ground observations contribute to a better understanding of the visitor experience, with 2026 findings helping to inform Tourism Squamish's work with partners, land managers and the District of Squamish.

GET INVOLVED IN 2027

There are several ways Tourism Squamish members and community partners can be part of the Destination Stewards program:

- Host an experience familiarization or training session for the team
- Share seasonal updates, visitor information and key messages
- Partner with us on a targeted visitor activation or outreach day
- Support or participate in the Red Bag Program
- Let us know about visitor questions, challenges or opportunities you are seeing

Interested in getting involved?
Contact Nikki (nikki@tourismsquamish.com) to start a conversation about the 2027 Destination Stewards season.

The Destination Stewards program is a Tourism Squamish initiative, delivered in collaboration with community partners. Together, we're helping visitors experience Squamish responsibly, connecting them with more of our community, and caring for the places that make Squamish special. Learn more at exploresquamish.com/page/tourism-in-squamish/