

February 26, 2020

Op-Ed: Sport Tourism Brings People Together

The Pan Am Cross Country Cup is this Saturday at Bear Mountain Resort in Langford. It will bring athletes from 13 countries together to compete in our community. This event is supported by the Greater Victoria Sport Tourism Commission, Province of BC and most importantly, our very active and committed Greater Victoria running community. It will be a great event for everyone involved.

Greater Victoria has attracted sport and recreation enthusiasts for decades – both visitors and those that have moved to enjoy the amenities of our community. Our mild climate, natural environment and infrastructure investments have created a strong sporting culture. Over time, we have amassed one of the most talented and passionate sport communities in the country. Our reputation for hosting high-quality sporting events finds us competing successfully with cities around the world.

What often goes unrecognized however is the role that sport tourism plays in bringing our citizens together. The backbone of these sporting events are the thousands of residents who are volunteers - as passionate as the participants in many cases, and who are integral to successful events. It is our people - our engaged citizens coming together around a shared appreciation for sport - who make the difference. They harness their energy and skills to fuel the growth of sport tourism across the region.

Sport tourism is also good for the local economy. Last year, The Greater Victoria Sport Tourism Commission quantified the impact of hosting sporting events across the region to be over \$117 million. This impact is felt by small businesses like transportation carriers, hotels, and restaurants that are filled by athletes, coaches, trainers, families, fans and visiting media outlets. These visitors also experience our communities as tourists, and it is the warm welcome from Greater Victoria small businesses and residents that is the immeasurable enticement that brings visitors back with friends and family.

Whether you are volunteering for the Times Colonist 10K or the FIBA Men's Olympic Basketball Qualifying Tournament in June, you make a difference in the community. From those of us working in the visitor economy - thank you.

Paul Nursey
CEO – Destination Greater Victoria

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