



## **RESEARCH SERVICES**

# **VALUE OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA VISITOR CENTRE @ MERRITT STUDY RESULTS - FOR DISTRIBUTION**

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## Executive Summary

Due to increasing needs in communities around the province, Research Services, Tourism British Columbia has developed a methodology that Visitor Centres (VCs) can use to measure the impact of the VC on traveller behaviour and to determine the economic benefit of the VC. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the British Columbia Visitor Centre @ Merritt (hereafter referred to as Merritt VC). Specifically, the study objectives were:

1. To profile travellers who use the Merritt VC in terms of traveller and trip characteristics.
2. To measure the influence the Merritt VC has on the decision-making process of travellers in British Columbia: the influence the VC has on the length of stay, expenditures, and selection of additional or alternative activities, attractions or destinations.

A two-location, two-stage survey design was used to examine the study objectives. Travellers were interviewed at two locations: the Merritt VC and a reference site (Britton Creek). The purpose of collecting information from Britton Creek was to obtain information about the typical traveller to the Merritt region for comparison with travellers who used the VC. On-site interviews collected information from travellers during their trip and a mailback questionnaire collected information from travellers after their trip. The purpose of the mailback questionnaire was to gather information about trip motivation, planning, experiences and activities, to compare mid-trip and post trip perceptions regarding the VC's impact on traveller behaviour, and to understand travellers' perceptions of the Merritt region and British Columbia upon trip completion.

- Between May 17 and September 4, 2006, 3,438 people were approached at either the Merritt VC or at Britton Creek. Of those, 2,737 agreed to complete the interview but 32 were excluded because they were from the local area. One hundred and eight respondents who were travelling in an organized tour group were removed from the analysis in an effort to represent the results of independent travellers. Fifteen incomplete surveys were also excluded. This resulted in 2,582 useable surveys. One thousand two hundred and fifty (48%) were conducted at the Merritt VC and one thousand three hundred and thirty two (52%) were conducted at Britton Creek.
- Seventy-five percent of travellers at either Merritt VC or Britton Creek agreed to complete the mailback survey and 64% of these returned the mailback surveys by January 4, 2007, resulting in 1,131 useable mailback surveys for analysis.
- Travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC were very similar to those interviewed at Britton Creek with respect to their market origins. At both locations, over two-thirds of travellers were from British Columbia (67% Merritt VC; 70% Britton Creek), one-fifth were from other provinces in Canada (19% Merritt VC; 18% Britton Creek), whereas less than a tenth were from the US (7% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) or from other countries (7% Merritt VC; 5% Britton Creek).
- At the Merritt VC, the average travel party size was 2.7 people and only 23% of travel parties included children. Those parties at the VC who travelled with children had 4.2 members in their party on average. The average travel party size was slightly larger at Britton Creek (2.8 people)

and a larger proportion were travelling with children (26%). Those parties at Britton Creek who travelled with children also had 4.2 members in their party on average.

- The majority of respondents were travelling for leisure purposes (Merritt VC 47%; Britton Creek 47%), or to visit friends and family (Merritt VC 43%; Britton Creek 41%) while fewer were travelling for business (Merritt VC 7%; Britton Creek 9%).
- Most travellers at both locations used car/truck/motorcycles (Merritt VC 94%; Britton Creek 94%) as their primary mode of transportation.
- A higher proportion of travellers at both locations were staying with friends or relatives (Merritt VC 44%; Britton Creek 44%) compared to those whose primary accommodations included resorts/hotels/motels/B&Bs (Merritt VC 39%; Britton Creek 36%). Fewer respondents reported using campgrounds or RV parks (Merritt VC 13%; Britton Creek 15%).
- Over three-quarters (78%) of travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC had a primary destination within British Columbia, 11% were touring with no particular primary destination and the remaining 11% had primary destinations outside British Columbia. The proportion of travellers interviewed at Britton Creek who had a primary destination within British Columbia was lower (73%) as was the proportion that were touring with no particular primary destination (9%). However, the proportion of those interviewed at Britton Creek with destinations outside British Columbia was higher (18%) than those interviewed at the Merritt VC.
- One quarter (25%) of mailback respondents originally intercepted at the Merritt VC had considered other destinations, most frequent of which were places in the Thompson Okanagan (64%) and the Lower Mainland (28%). A similar proportion (26%) of those originally interviewed at Britton Creek had considered other destinations to visit which included places in the Thompson Okanagan (63%) and the Lower Mainland (25%).
- Travellers at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek were similar in terms of their primary motivations for travel. Spending quality time with family and/or friends was the overwhelming motive cited by almost three-fifths of all respondents (58% Merritt VC; 55% Britton Creek), followed by the opportunity to rest, relax and recuperate (12% Merritt VC; 12% Britton Creek). Rounding out the top five motivations were seeing natural wonders and important natural sites, participating in a hobby or sport and experiencing unspoilt nature.
- Travellers at both locations were fairly similar in terms of the length of their trip as well as time spent in BC. Overall, travellers at the Merritt VC spent an average of 9 days away from home including 8 days in British Columbia. Similarly, travellers at Britton Creek spent 9 days away from home including 6 days in British Columbia.
- A majority of travellers indicated that they were just passing through the Merritt region (89% Merritt VC; 92% Britton Creek). For those who were not passing through, respondents at the Merritt VC spent an average of 1 day in the Merritt region and those at Britton Creek spent an average of 2 days in the Merritt region.

- The majority of travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek spent three weeks or more planning their trip (76% Merritt VC; 75% Britton Creek), with the most common planning horizons being 3 to 8 weeks (31% Merritt VC; 33% Britton Creek) and greater than 13 weeks (32% Merritt VC; 32% Britton Creek).
- Past experience (79% Merritt VC; 75% Britton Creek) was the top information source used before travel. Also important, but less frequently used information sources included friends/relatives (52% Merritt VC; 48% Britton Creek), the Internet (44% Merritt VC; 42% Britton Creek), travel guide books (42% Merritt VC; 37% Britton Creek) and Visitor Centres (26% Merritt VC; 20% Britton Creek).
- The most frequently cited information sources used during travel included Visitor Centres (53% Merritt VC; 36% Britton Creek), previous experience (47% Merritt VC; 43% Britton Creek) and travel guide books (43% Merritt VC; 38% Britton Creek). A notably higher proportion of Merritt VC mailback respondents cited Visitor Centres than did their counterparts at Britton Creek.
- A fairly large proportion of travellers at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek were flexible regarding trip activities in that they had less than a quarter of their trip activities in the Merritt region planned before arriving in the region (49% Merritt VC; 39% Britton Creek). On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents were inflexible in that they had planned out more than three-quarters of their trip activities in the Merritt region (37% Merritt VC; 51% Britton Creek).
- At both interview sites, almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were inflexible in terms of time in the Merritt region (63% Merritt VC; 65% Britton Creek). Only one-sixth of travellers were very flexible with time in the region and could extend their stay by a day or more (16% Merritt VC; 17% Britton Creek).
- The majority of travellers at both interview sites were inflexible in terms of time in BC (54% Merritt VC; 56% Britton Creek). However, at least one-third of travellers indicated they could extend their trip in BC by a day or more (33% Merritt VC; 34% Britton Creek).
- In the mailback survey, travellers were asked about leisure activities they participated in during their trip. The three most frequently cited activities at the Merritt VC were visiting parks (50%), shopping for local arts and crafts (44%) and participating in soft adventure activities (44%). The most common responses given at Britton Creek were participating in soft adventure activities (53%), visiting parks (51%) and shopping for local arts and crafts (40%).
- In terms of interest in activities on future trips, travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC were very similar to their counterparts from Britton Creek. At the Merritt VC, travellers were most interested in visiting parks (59%), participating in soft adventure activities (55%), visiting a museum, heritage or historic site (50%), shopping for local arts and crafts (50%) and visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor (49%). At Britton Creek, travellers were most interested in visiting parks (60%), participating in soft adventure activities (60%), visiting a museum, heritage or historic site (48%), shopping for local arts and crafts (47%) and fine dining (45%).

- Almost three-quarters (71%) of travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC spoke with a Visitor Information Counsellor.
- Almost all (95%) of the Merritt VC mailback respondents indicated that the VC either met or exceeded their expectations.
- Sixteen percent of visitors interviewed at Britton Creek had stopped, or planned to stop, at the Merritt VC on their current trip. In the mailback survey, almost a third (30%) indicated that they actually had visited the Merritt VC.
- A quarter (25%) of the mailback respondents originally intercepted at the Merritt VC visited at least one other VC in British Columbia during their trip. A slightly higher proportion (29%) of Britton Creek mailback respondents visited at least one other VC in the province.
- Positive images of the Merritt region were dominated by the beautiful scenery/landscapes of the region, family and friends, weather, location/proximity and cleanliness.
- Negative images of the Merritt region focussed on the hot desert-like weather, the lack of major attractions, limited/poor selection of restaurants, limited number of rest stops and isolation.
- Respondents to the mailback questionnaire were asked to rate various components of their trip and their overall travel experience in the Merritt region. Ratings were high for overall travel experience and for each trip component regardless of respondents' interview location.
- Respondents to the mailback questionnaire were asked about their satisfaction with their trip in British Columbia. The majority of travellers were either 'very satisfied' (79% Merritt VC; 74% Britton Creek) or 'somewhat satisfied' (8% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) with their experience in all of British Columbia.
- More than a half of the Merritt VC mailback respondents were 'very likely' (27%) or 'likely' (27%) to return to the Merritt region for a future trip whereas almost two-thirds of mailback respondents at Britton Creek were 'very likely' (35%) or 'likely' (29%) to return.
- In terms of likelihood of taking another leisure trip in British Columbia, an overwhelming majority of travellers at both sites indicated that they were either 'very likely' (86% Merritt VC; 83% Britton Creek) or 'likely' (10% Merritt VC; 13% Britton Creek) to take another trip.
- Average daily expenditures per party for travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC (\$168.73) were lower than that spent by visitors interviewed at Britton Creek (\$173.98). Average daily expenditure **per person** was also calculated. Travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC spent \$64.16 per person per day and travellers interviewed at Britton Creek spent \$65.99 per person per

day. Average daily expenditure varied depending on respondents' market origin, accommodation type, travel party size and age.

- In the summer of 2006, Merritt VC users were estimated to have spent over \$0.6 million in the Merritt region and over \$44.4 million on their trip throughout the rest of the province.
- The Merritt VC had a positive impact on traveller behaviour. Eleven percent learned about new activities, places or attractions; 7% reported that they would spend extra time in the region; 6% would spend extra time in other parts of British Columbia, and over a fifth (21%) would make another trip in/to British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the Merritt VC<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional spending as a result of these findings was calculated and presented in the full study results. These estimates can be obtained from the British Columbia Visitor Centre @ Merritt.

## Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>METHODS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
DATA COLLECTION - INTERVIEW .....	7
DATA COLLECTION - MAILBACK.....	9
DATA ANALYSIS .....	9
<b>RESULTS</b> .....	<b>11</b>
TOURIST CHARACTERISTICS (DEMOGRAPHICS).....	11
TRIP CHARACTERISTICS .....	14
TRIP PLANNING .....	19
TRIP FLEXIBILITY .....	21
TRAVELLER ACTIVITIES .....	23
USE OF THE VISITOR CENTRE.....	25
SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW PROVINCIAL VISITOR CENTRE .....	29
PERCEPTIONS OF THE MERRITT REGION AND BRITISH COLUMBIA .....	30
EXPENDITURES .....	34
IMPACT OF THE VC ON TRAVELLER BEHAVIOUR IN BRITISH COLUMBIA .....	37
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND INTERVIEWS COMPLETED</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>APPENDIX B – QUESTIONNAIRES</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>APPENDIX C – RESPONSE BIAS TESTING</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>APPENDIX D – OTHER VCS VISITED</b> .....	<b>91</b>
<b>APPENDIX E – AMENITIES/SERVICES AT THE NEW 2008 PROVINCIAL VISITOR CENTRE</b> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>APPENDIX F – COMMENTS FROM MERRITT VC MAILBACK SURVEY</b> .....	<b>109</b>

## Introduction

Visitor Information Counsellors at British Columbia's 114 Visitor Centres (VCs) provided travel counselling and advice to nearly 1.7 million visitor parties in 2006. In addition, many more visitors used the VCs without actually speaking with a Counsellor. The use of the VCs provides communities with an opportunity to influence the activities and satisfaction of travellers, thus increasing the length of stay and the probability of a return visit to the community and British Columbia. Due to increasing needs in communities around the province, Research Services, Tourism British Columbia has developed a methodology that Visitor Centres (VCs) can use to measure the impact of the VC on traveller behaviour and to determine the economic benefit of the VC. A pilot project was conducted in 2001 to test the methodology of measuring such impacts. This study at the British Columbia Visitor Centre @ Merritt (hereafter referred to as Merritt VC) in the summer of 2006 was designed using the methodology developed in the 2001 pilot project.

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Merritt VC. Specifically, the study objectives were:

1. To profile travellers who use the Merritt VC in terms of traveller and trip characteristics;
2. To measure the influence the Merritt VC has on the decision-making process of travellers in British Columbia - the influence the VC has on the length of stay, expenditures, and selection of additional or alternative activities, attractions or destinations.

## Methods

A two-location, two-stage survey design was used to examine the study objectives. Travellers were interviewed at two locations, the Merritt VC and at a reference site (Britton Creek). The purpose of collecting information at Britton Creek was to obtain information about the typical traveller to the Merritt region for comparison with travellers who used the VC. On-site interviews collected information from travellers during their trip and a mailback questionnaire collected information from travellers after their trip. The purpose of the mailback questionnaire was to gather information about trip motivation, planning, experiences and activities, to compare mid-trip and post trip perceptions regarding the VC's impact on traveller behaviour, and to understand travellers' perceptions of the Merritt region and British Columbia upon trip completion.

### Data Collection - Interview

Two interviewers collected data between May 17 and September 4, 2006. For the most part, the interviewers' schedule consisted of a systematic sample of four continuous days of interviewing followed by two days off, alternating on a daily basis between the VC and Britton Creek (Appendix A).

Potential respondents were randomly selected at each location, as they exited the VC or passed a predetermined point at Britton Creek. Respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in an eight to ten minute interview and were given a *Super, Natural British Columbia*® refrigerator magnet for their time if they agreed to participate. Respondents were then asked if they were residents of the Merritt region (includes anyone living north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and



between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake). If so, they were eliminated from the remainder of the interview ensuring that only non-resident travellers were interviewed. Travellers who were part of an organized tour group were also screened out of the survey in an effort to focus on independent travellers. Business travellers were eliminated after the first few questions of the interview. The interviewers recorded responses on handheld computers (Palm Pilots) using Techneos Data Entryware software.

During the interview, questions were asked about (see Appendix B for questionnaires):

- traveller demographics,
- primary trip purpose,
- primary destination,
- primary mode of transportation,
- trip duration,
- length of stay in the Merritt region and in British Columbia,
- primary activity in the Merritt region,
- primary accommodation,
- daily expenditures,
- trip flexibility,
- use of the VC,
- perceived impacts of the VC on the rest of their trip, and,
- suggestions for the new 2008 Provincial VC.

In addition, mailing addresses were collected from those respondents in the interview who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire. A copy of *British Columbia Magazine* and a chance to win a digital camera were used as incentives to achieve a high participation rate in the mailback questionnaire.

Between May 17 and September 4, 2006, a total of 3,438 people were approached either at the Merritt VC or Britton Creek. Of those, 2,737 agreed to complete the interview but 32 were excluded because they were from the local area. One hundred and eight respondents who were travelling in an organized tour group were removed from the analysis in an effort to represent the results of independent travellers. Fifteen surveys that were barely filled out, and for all practical purposes considered incomplete, were also excluded resulting in 2,582 useable surveys. One thousand two hundred and fifty (48%) were conducted at the Merritt VC and one thousand three hundred and thirty two (52%) were conducted at Britton Creek (Table 1).

Table 1. Travellers surveyed at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

	Travellers Approached	Agreed to Interview	From Local Community <sup>1</sup>	Part of Organized Tour Group	Incomplete Surveys	Useable Traveller Surveys <sup>2</sup>
Merritt VC	1,775	1,363	17	89	7	1,250 (48.4%)
Britton Creek	1,663	1,374	15	19	8	1,332 (51.6%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,438</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2,582 (100.0%)</b>

1. The Merritt region includes the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake.

2. Includes 207 business travellers who were eliminated from the survey after the first several questions of the interview (91 Merritt VC; 116 Britton Creek).

## Data Collection - Mailback

Mailback questionnaires were sent to consenting visitors with a business reply envelope and a *British Columbia Magazine* in mid-July 2006 (for visitors interviewed between May 17 and July 17) and in mid-September 2006 (for visitors interviewed between July 18 and September 4). The first mailing was followed by a second mailing of a reminder postcard and a third mailing of just a questionnaire and a business reply envelope. Responses were accepted until early January 2007.

The mailback questionnaire collected a variety of information including (see mailback questionnaire in Appendix B):

- travel party demographics,
- trip duration,
- length of stay in British Columbia,
- primary destination,
- destination decision-making,
- trip motivation,
- trip activities,
- trip planning,
- trip expenditures,
- the VC's impact on their trip,
- use of other VCs in British Columbia,
- positive and negative images of the Merritt region,
- satisfaction with the Merritt region and British Columbia, and,
- the likelihood of returning to the Merritt region and British Columbia.

Seventy-five percent of travellers at either the Merritt VC or Britton Creek agreed to complete the mailback survey and 64% of these returned the mailback surveys by January 4, 2007, resulting in 1,131 of useable surveys for analysis (Table 2).

Table 2. Mailback survey response from travellers intercepted at the Merritt VC or Britton Creek.

	<b>Travellers Asked to Participate in Mailback<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Agreed to Complete Mailback</b>	<b>Incomplete Addresses</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>Useable Mailback Surveys</b>
Merritt VC	1,152	873 (75.8%)	12	296	<b>565 (64.7%)</b>
Britton Creek	1,213	905 (74.6%)	14	325	<b>566 (62.5%)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,365</b>	<b>1,778 (75.2%)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>1,131 (63.6%)</b>

1. Does not include business travellers (n=207) or the 15 respondents who dropped out of the survey. Also excluded are 10 travellers who did not respond to the request to participate in the mailback survey.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and summarize results of the report. 'Don't know/No response' answers and responses from business travellers have been excluded from the analyses for all questions unless otherwise noted.

For most sections, the report presents results at the Visitor Centre beside results at the reference site in an effort to compare potential differences between travellers who use Visitor Centres and typical travellers to the region. When necessary, results are presented by traveller sub-group (e.g. segmented based on traveller demographics or trip characteristics) to examine the difference among sub-groups.

In an effort to provide practical and actionable information to meet stakeholders’ operational or marketing needs, this report will focus on practical differences rather than statistical differences. The rationale for this approach is that very small and unimportant differences can be found to be statistically significant under certain circumstances. As such, this report typically takes note of where there is a difference of  $\pm 10$  percentage points (ppts) or more. In the report’s tables, differences that are 10 ppts or more higher than the Reference Site are highlighted in blue, while differences that are 10 ppts or more lower are shown in red (Figure 1).

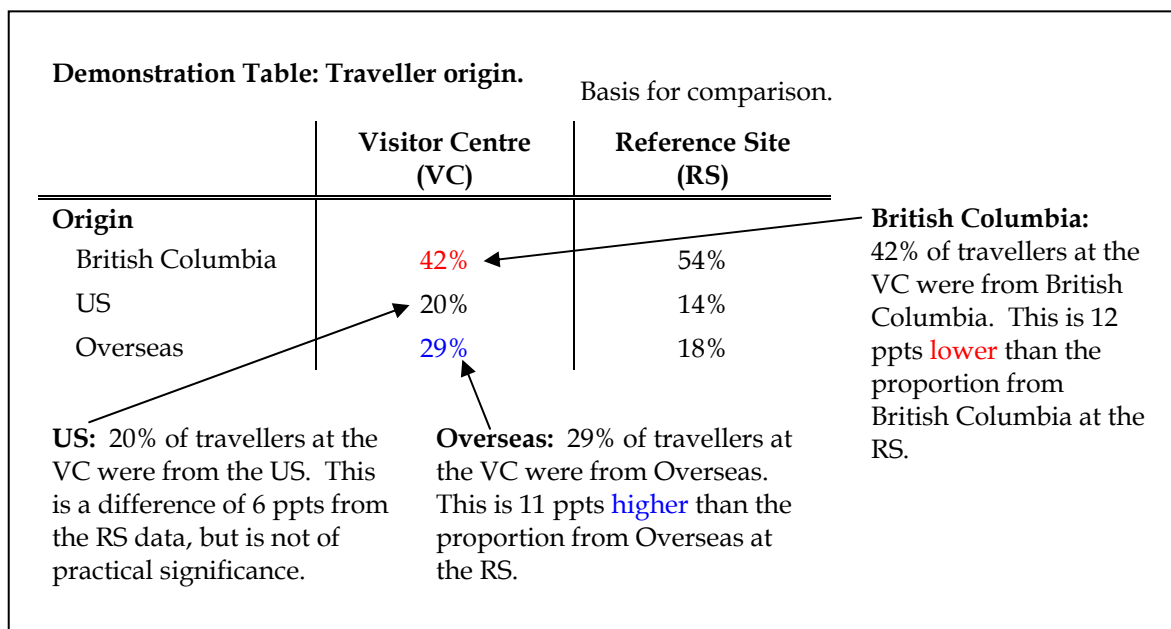


Figure 1. Interpreting the tables. Data is fictitious and for illustrative purposes only.

The study design produced four sets of data (the interview responses at the Visitor Centre and reference site, and the mailback responses from these two locations). At both locations, the respondents and the responses could vary between the interview and mailback questionnaires because travellers could drop out of the study by not agreeing to complete the mailback questionnaire or by not completing the mailback questionnaire even if they had agreed to complete it (which could cause non-response bias). Both instances could cause the mailback questionnaire results to be unrepresentative of travellers interviewed on-site. Similarly, the responses to similar questions in the interview and mailback questionnaires could vary due to real differences in traveller behaviour (for example, a traveller may have perceived that the VC had a different impact on their trip when they were interviewed compared to the responses on the mailback questionnaire).

Response biases were assessed to ensure validity of the final results by way of examining practical differences among the aforementioned data sets. Results of these assessments (Appendix C) and several

other factors indicated that the interview information is the best source of data when the same or similar questions were asked on both the interview and mailback questionnaire. Thus, mailback questionnaire responses were used only when the question was not asked in the interview and when sample sizes permitted. All results presented in the remainder of this report are from the interview unless otherwise noted.

## Results

### Tourist Characteristics (Demographics)

Travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC were very similar to those interviewed at Britton Creek with respect to their market origins. At both locations, over two-thirds of travellers were from British Columbia (67% Merritt VC; 70% Britton Creek), one-fifth were from other provinces in Canada (19% Merritt VC; 18% Britton Creek), whereas less than a tenth were from the US (7% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) or from other countries (7% Merritt VC; 5% Britton Creek; Table 3).

At both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek, the majority of travellers from provinces outside of British Columbia originated from Alberta (50% Merritt VC; 70% Britton Creek) and Ontario (25% Merritt VC; 14% Britton Creek). Fewer travellers were from Saskatchewan, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, North West Territories and the Yukon (Figure 2). Notable differences were apparent in the proportion of visitors from Alberta and Ontario.

The largest proportion of US visitors was from Washington (36% Merritt VC; 50% Britton Creek), California (11% Merritt VC; 12% Britton Creek) and Oregon (8% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek). US visitors also came from eighteen additional states, most frequent of which were Arizona, Florida, Texas, New York and Pennsylvania (Figure 3). Notable differences were apparent in the proportion of visitors from Washington.

At the Merritt VC and Britton Creek, most overseas travellers were from Europe (76% and 83%, respectively), while fewer were from Asia/Pacific (17% Merritt VC; 13% Britton Creek). There was a notable difference in the proportion of travellers from the UK at Britton Creek (55%) compared to the Merritt VC (43%; Figure 4).

With respect to age and education, there were no significant differences between respondents at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. At both locations, 70% or more of travellers were over the age of 44 with the largest proportion between 45 to 54 years of age. The majority of respondents at both locations had at least a college or technical diploma (66% Merritt VC; 60% Britton Creek, Table 3).

Over half (52%) of Merritt VC respondents and almost two-thirds (64%) of Britton Creek respondents came from households with annual incomes of \$65,000 or more (Table 3).

At the Merritt VC, the average travel party size was 2.7 people and nearly a quarter of traveller parties (23%) included children. Those parties at the VC who travelled with children had 4.2 members in their party on average. The average travel party size was slightly larger at Britton Creek (2.8 people) and a

slightly larger proportion were travelling with children (26%). Those parties at Britton Creek who travelled with children also had 4.2 members in their party on average (Table 3).

Table 3. Traveller demographics at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

	Merritt VC		Britton Creek	
	Number of Travellers	Percentage of Travellers	Number of Travellers	Percentage of Travellers
<b>Origin</b>				
British Columbia	837	67.0%	926	69.6%
Other Canada	236	18.9%	240	18.0%
US	87	7.0%	101	7.6%
Other International	89	7.1%	64	4.8%
<b>Age<sup>1</sup></b>				
Under 24 Years	16	1.4%	24	2.0%
25-34 Years	87	7.6%	98	8.1%
35-44 Years	199	17.4%	231	19.0%
45-54 Years	290	25.3%	310	25.6%
55-64 Years	284	24.8%	285	23.5%
65 Years or Older	270	23.6%	265	21.8%
<b>Education<sup>1</sup></b>				
Less Than High School	28	2.4%	47	3.9%
High School	198	17.3%	240	19.8%
Some Technical, College or University	162	14.1%	196	16.2%
College or Technical Diploma	274	23.9%	271	22.4%
University Degree	326	28.5%	328	27.1%
Masters or a PhD Degree	155	13.5%	129	10.7%
Other <sup>2</sup>	2	0.2%	0	0.0%
<b>Income<sup>1, 3</sup></b>				
Less than \$25,000	10	8.3%	4	3.7%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	28	23.1%	21	19.4%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	20	16.5%	14	13.0%
\$65,000 to \$99,999	32	26.4%	31	28.7%
\$100,000 or More	31	25.6%	38	35.2%
<b>Party Size<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average Party Size-Total	1,153	2.67	1,216	2.78
Average Party Size-Parties without children	883	2.20	899	2.27
Proportion with children	270	23.4%	317	26.1%
Average Party Size-Parties with children	270	4.22	317	4.21

1. Business travellers were not asked these questions and therefore are not part of the analysis.

2. Other responses include alternative health certificate.

3. Annual household income was only asked on a quarter of the mailback surveys through random selection, hence the smaller sample size. This was done to test the impact that the income question has on response rate. Mailback surveys which did not include the income question generated a marginally higher response rate.

### Origin of Canadian Travellers From Outside of BC by Province

Where are you from?

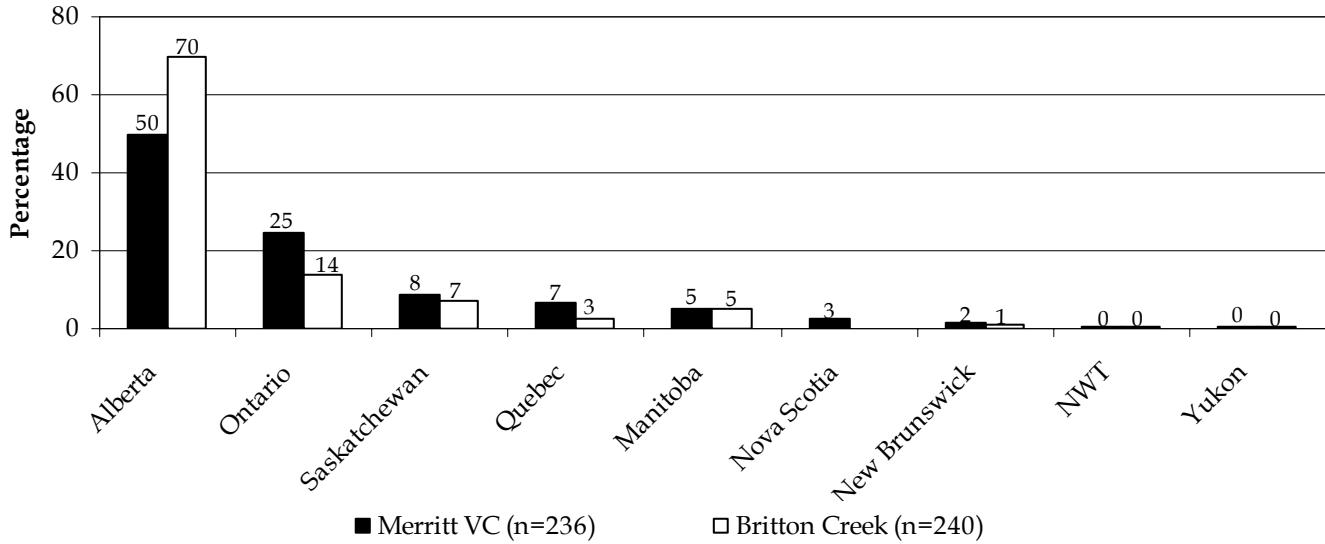


Figure 2. The percentage of travellers from provinces outside of British Columbia at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

### Origin of U.S. Travellers by State

Where are you from?

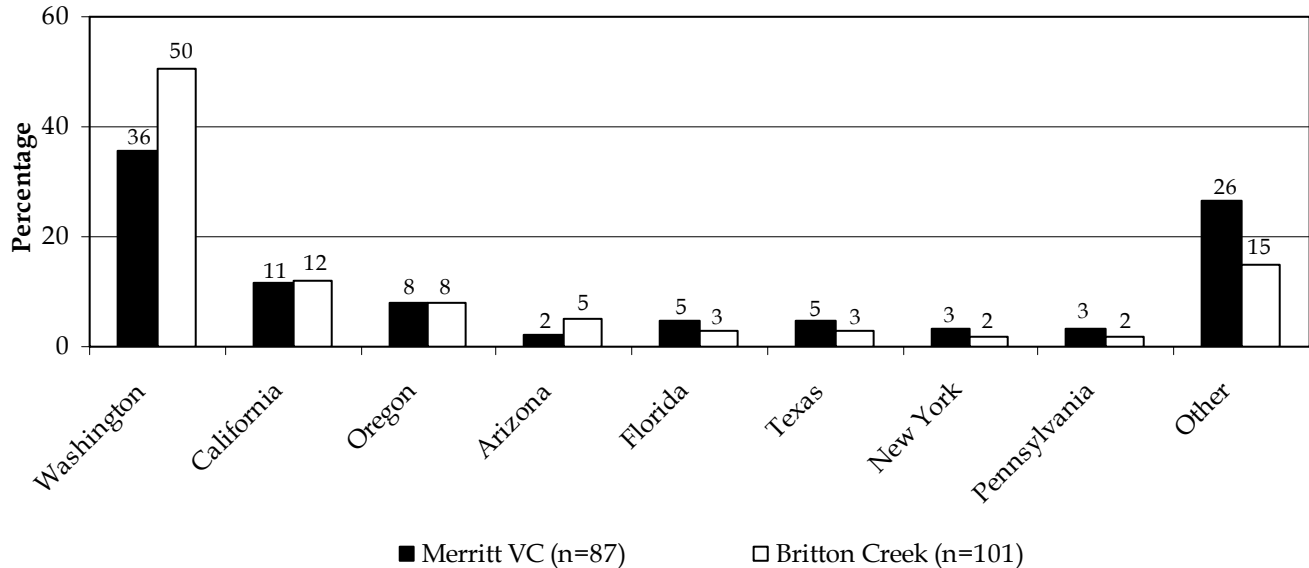


Figure 3. The percentage of US travellers from each state at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. At the VC, 'Other' includes visitors from 18 states: Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. At Britton Creek, 'Other' includes visitors from 13 states: Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina and Virginia.

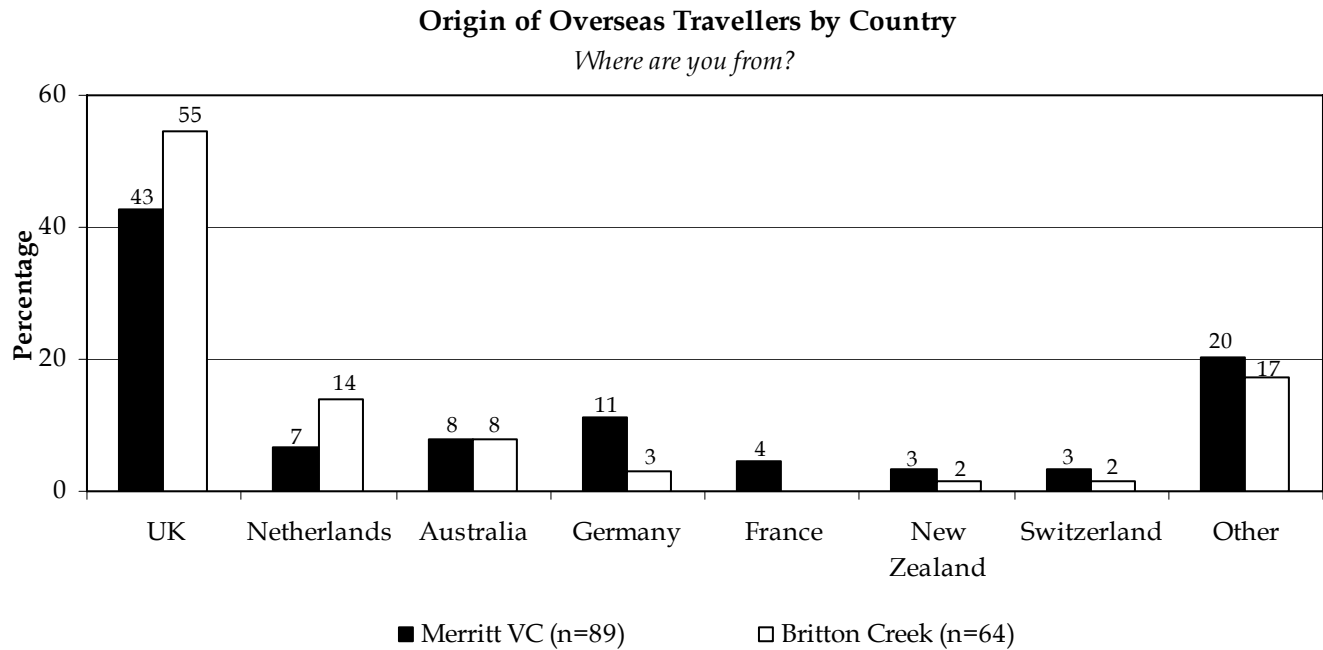


Figure 4. The percentage of travellers from countries other than Canada and the US at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. At the VC, 'Other' includes travellers from 17 countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Finland, Former Yugoslavia, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates. At Britton Creek, 'Other' includes travellers from 8 countries: Denmark, France, Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Japan, Indonesia and South Africa.

### Trip Characteristics

The majority of respondents were travelling for leisure purposes (Merritt VC 47%; Britton Creek 47%), or to visit friends and family (Merritt VC 43%; Britton Creek 41%) while fewer were travelling for business (Merritt VC 7%; Britton Creek 9%, Table 4).

Most travellers at both locations used car/truck/motorcycles (Merritt VC 94%; Britton Creek 94%) as their primary mode of transportation. Recreational vehicles/campers were the next most frequently cited mode of transportation (Merritt VC 6%; Britton Creek 6%). At both interview sites, other modes of transportation like buses, bicycles, trains, hitch-hiking and cruise ships were mentioned but by far less respondents.

A higher proportion of travellers at both locations were staying with friends or relatives (Merritt VC 44%; Britton Creek 44%) or staying at resorts/hotels/motels/B&Bs (Merritt VC 39%; Britton Creek 36%). Fewer respondents reported using campgrounds or RV parks (Merritt VC 13%; Britton Creek 15%).

Over three-quarters (78%) of travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC had a primary destination within British Columbia, 11% were touring with no particular primary destination and the remaining 11% had primary destinations outside British Columbia. The proportion of travellers interviewed at Britton Creek who had a primary destination within British Columbia was lower (73%) as was the proportion that were touring with no particular primary destination (9%). However, the proportion of those interviewed at Britton Creek with destinations outside British Columbia was higher (18%) than those interviewed at the Merritt VC.

Table 4. The primary trip purpose, mode of transportation and primary accommodations of travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

	Percentage of Travellers	
	Merritt VC	Britton Creek
<b>Primary Trip Purpose</b>	<b>n=1,250</b>	<b>n=1,330</b>
Leisure	47.4%	46.6%
Visiting Friends & Family	42.6%	41.2%
Work/Business Activity	7.3%	8.7%
Other <sup>1</sup>	2.7%	3.5%
<b>Mode of Transportation<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>n=1,159</b>	<b>n=1,216</b>
Car/Truck/Motorcycle	93.9%	93.6%
RV/Camper	5.5%	6.1%
Bus	0.3%	0.0%
Bicycle	0.1%	0.3%
Other <sup>3</sup>	0.3%	0.0%
<b>Primary Accommodations<sup>2,4</sup></b>	<b>n=1,128</b>	<b>n=1,180</b>
Resort/Hotel/Motel/B&B	39.1%	36.0%
Campground/RV Park	13.0%	14.5%
Friends or Relatives	44.1%	44.2%
Other <sup>5</sup>	3.7%	5.3%

1. Other trip purpose responses included moving (n=28), medical reasons (n=25), funerals (n=18), real estate (n=6), job interview (n=1) and school (n=1).

2. Business travellers were not asked these questions and therefore were not part of the analysis.

3. Other transportation responses included train (n=1), hitch-hiking (n=1) and cruise ship. (n=1).

4. Daytrip travellers who were not using accommodation were excluded from the analysis (n=63).

5. Other accommodation responses included second homes (n=30), cabins (n=38), rental houses (n=7), boats (n=6), cruise ship (n=5), houseboat (n=4), timeshares (n=4), hostels (n=4), dorms (n=3), cottage (n=1), vehicles in unspecified location (n=1), sleep clinic (n=1) and bible camp (n=1).

A majority of the visitors at the Merritt VC who were travelling to destinations within British Columbia were travelling to the Thompson Okanagan (58%), including 8% who specified the Merritt region as their primary destination. Other regional travel destinations included Vancouver, Coast and Mountains (27%), Vancouver Island (10%), Kootenay Rockies (3%), Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (1%) and Northern British Columbia (<1%). Similarly at Britton Creek, most respondents were travelling to the Thompson Okanagan (55%), including 5% who specified the Merritt region as their primary destination. Other regional travel destinations included Vancouver, Coast and Mountains (28%), Vancouver Island (12%), the Kootenay Rockies (3%), Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (1%) and Northern British Columbia (<1%).

The one hundred and thirty two travellers at the Merritt VC whose primary destinations were outside of British Columbia were going to other Canadian destinations (64%), the US (33%) or to other international destinations (2%). The two hundred and sixteen travellers at Britton Creek whose primary destinations were outside of British Columbia were going to other Canadian destinations (82%), the US (18%) or to other international destinations (<1%). The US destinations cited most often were Alaska (52%) for travellers interviewed at Merritt VC and Washington State (50%) for those interviewed at Britton Creek. The most frequently mentioned Canadian destination was Alberta (74% Merritt VC; 78% Britton Creek).



Mailback survey respondents were asked whether they considered other destinations or routes when planning their trip. Almost three-quarters of respondents (75% Merritt VC; 74% Britton Creek) did not consider other destinations or routes. Amongst those that did consider going elsewhere (25% Merritt VC; 26% Britton Creek), the majority of alternative destinations were other places in the Thompson Okanagan (64% Merritt VC; 63% Britton Creek) and the Lower Mainland (28% Merritt VC; 25% Britton Creek). Fewer respondents considered visiting other provinces/territories in Canada (22% Merritt VC; 19% Britton Creek), the Kootenay Rockies (11% Merritt VC; 18% Britton Creek), Vancouver Island (14% Merritt VC; 14% Britton Creek), international destinations (10% Merritt VC; 9% Britton Creek), Northern BC (2% Merritt VC, 6% Britton Creek), or the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (1% Merritt VC; 3% Britton Creek).

In the mailback survey, visitors were asked to provide reasons for choosing their primary destinations or routes. Five hundred and forty-two mailback respondents from the Merritt VC provided 671 reasons for selecting their primary destination. The most frequent responses were as follows:

- Visiting friends/family (40%);
- Quickest/shortest route (21%);
- Personal reasons (11%);
- Attractions (10%);
- Landscape/scenery (8%).

Five hundred and forty-four mailback respondents from Britton Creek provided 703 reasons for selecting their primary destination. The most frequent responses were as follows:

- Visiting friends/family (40%);
- Quickest/shortest route (14%);
- Personal reasons (14%);
- Attractions (11%);
- Landscape/scenery (10%).

Travellers at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek were very similar in terms of their main motivation for travel. Spending quality time with family and/or friends was the overwhelming motive cited by almost three-fifths of all respondents (58% Merritt VC; 55% Britton Creek), followed by the opportunity to rest, relax and recuperate (12% Merritt VC; 12% Britton Creek). Rounding out the top five motivations were seeing natural wonders and important natural sites (8% Merritt VC; 9% Britton Creek), participating in a hobby or sport (6% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) and experiencing unspoilt nature (4% Merritt VC; 4% Britton Creek, Figure 5).

### Main Trip Motivation

What was the main motivation for taking this trip?

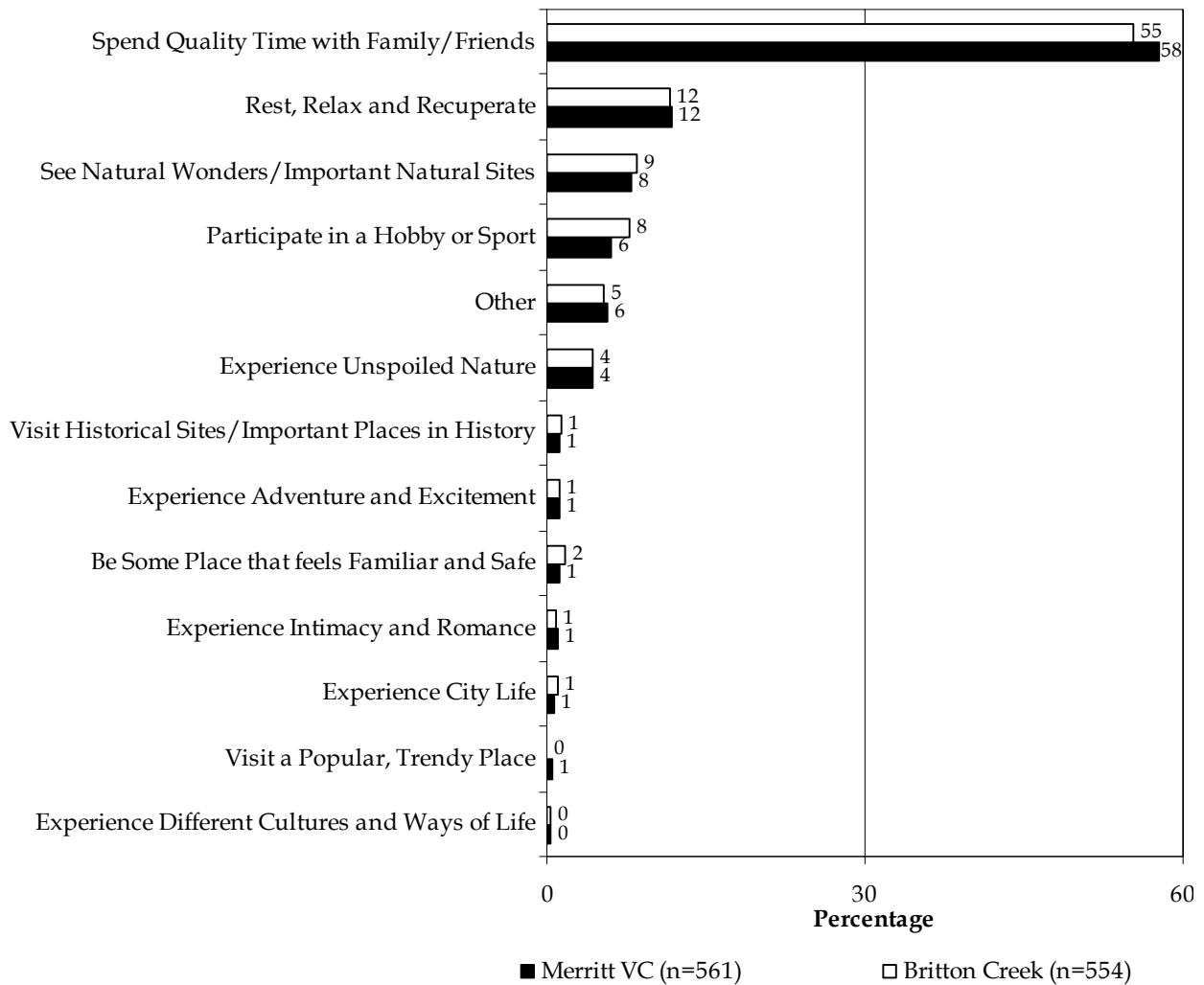


Figure 5. Main trip motivation for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. At the VC, 'Other' includes moving, real estate, medical reasons, volunteering, picking up/dropping off people, business, convention, seeing Canada, Celebration of Life, LDS temple, transporting horse, delivering trailer and cruise. At Britton Creek, 'Other' includes concert, music festival, moving, real estate, medical reasons, picking up/dropping off people, business, convention, conference, seeing someplace different, peace event, cabin getaway and complementary hotel package.

Travellers at both locations were fairly similar in terms of the length of their trip as well as time spent in BC. Overall, travellers at the Merritt VC spent an average of 9 days away from home including 8 days in British Columbia. Similarly, travellers at Britton Creek spent 9 days away from home including 6 days in British Columbia.

A majority of travellers indicated that they were just passing through the Merritt region (89% Merritt VC; 92% Britton Creek). For those who were not passing through, respondents at the Merritt VC spent an average of 1 day in the Merritt region and those at Britton Creek spent an average of 2 days in the Merritt region.

On average, travellers from international countries (other than the US) at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek spent substantially more time away from home on their trip than did travellers from any other market origin (Figure 6; Figure 7). Travellers from Canadian provinces (other than BC) were a distant second followed by visitors from the US. Regardless of survey location, BC residents spent the fewest number of days away from home. With respect to length of stay in BC, travellers from international countries (other than the US) interviewed at both locations spent more time on average in BC than did visitors from other origins. Although the length of stay in the Merritt region was fairly similar for all traveller groups, visitors from BC tended, on average, to spend the most amount of time in this region. This was true for those interviewed at the Merritt VC as well as at Britton Creek.

**Average Days Spent Away From Home and in British Columbia by Travellers to the Merritt VC**

*How many days will you be away from home?  
How many days will be spent in British Columbia?  
How many of those days will be spent in the Merritt region?*

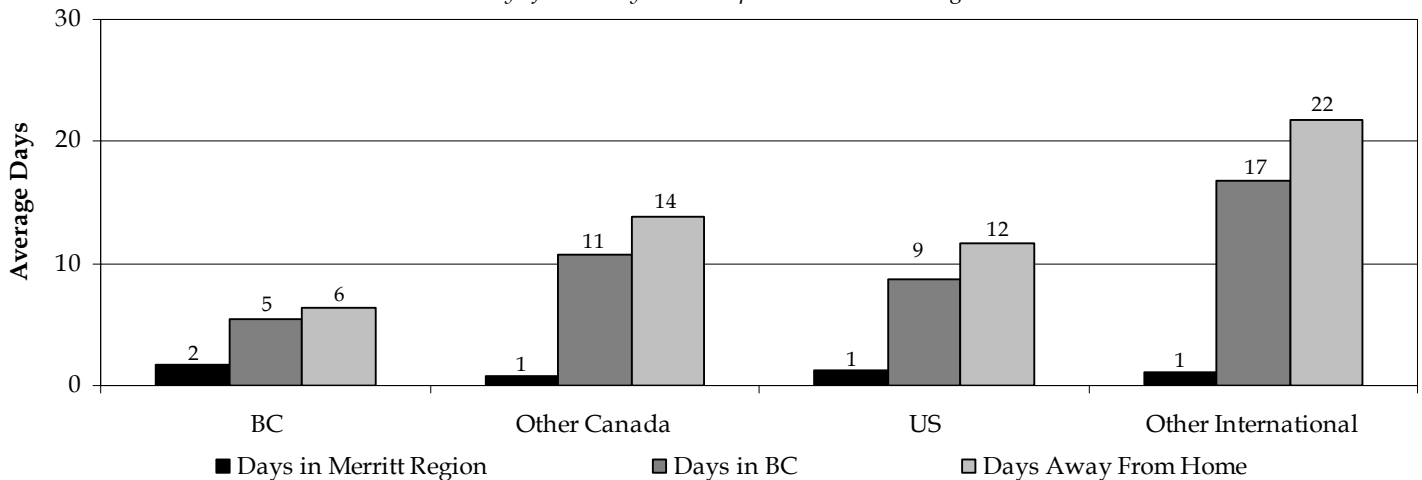


Figure 6. The average number of days spent away from home, in British Columbia and in the Merritt region by traveller origin at the Merritt VC (n=1106 'Away from home'; n=1138 'Days in British Columbia'; n=123 'Merritt region').

**Average Days Spent Away From Home and in British Columbia by Travellers to Britton Creek**

*How many days will you be away from home?*

*How many days will be spent in British Columbia?*

*How many of those days will be spent in the Merritt region?*

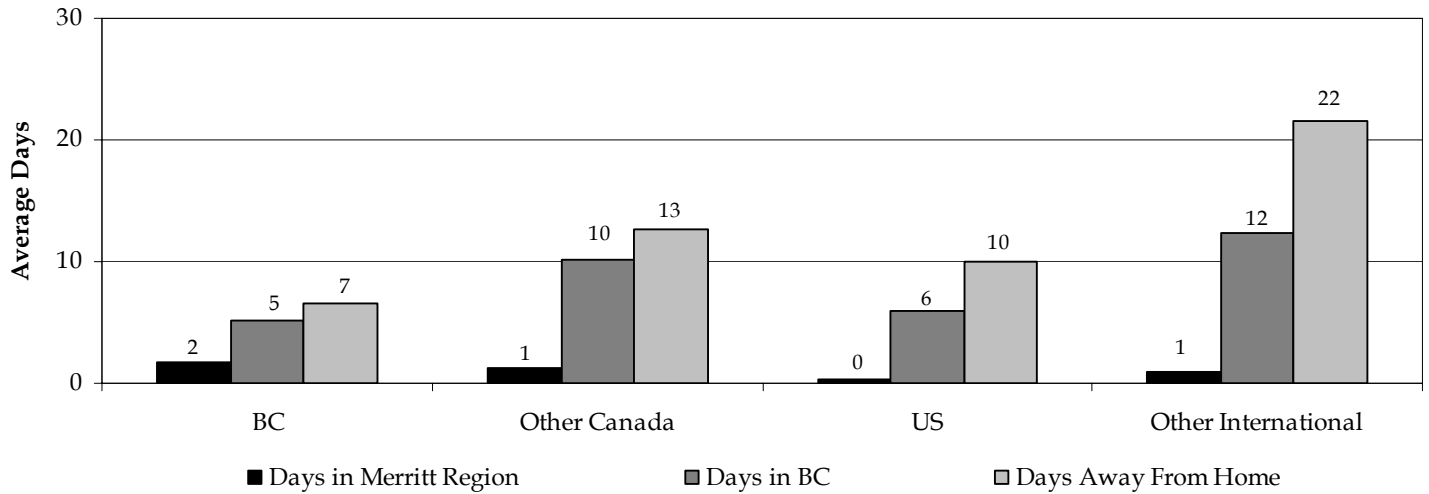


Figure 7. The average number of days spent away from home, in British Columbia and in the Merritt region by traveller origin at Britton Creek (n=1170 'Away from home'; n=1183 'Days in British Columbia'; n=95 'Merritt region').

**Trip Planning**

Based on responses from the mailback survey, travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek were similar to each other with respect to their trip planning horizons. The majority of travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek spent three weeks or more planning their trip (76% Merritt VC; 75% Britton Creek) with the most common planning horizons being 3 to 8 weeks (31% Merritt VC; 33% Britton Creek) and greater than 13 weeks (32% Merritt VC; 32% Britton Creek, Table 5).

Table 5. Trip planning horizons for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

Trip Planning Horizons	Percentage of Respondents	
	Merritt VC (n=554)	Britton Creek (n=545)
Day of Departure	1.4%	0.9%
1-6 Days	8.5%	9.5%
1-2 Weeks	14.3%	14.1%
3-8 Weeks	30.5%	32.5%
9-12 Weeks	13.7%	11.0%
13 Weeks+	31.6%	31.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In the mailback survey, travellers were asked about various information sources they used to plan their trip. Past experience was the top information source for both travel groups (79% Merritt VC; 75% Britton Creek). Also important, but less frequently used information sources included friends/relatives (52% Merritt VC; 48% Britton Creek); Internet excluding the HelloBC website (44% Merritt VC; 42% Britton Creek), travel guide books and brochures (42% Merritt VC; 37% Britton Creek) and Visitor Centres (26% Merritt VC; 20% Britton Creek, Figure 8).

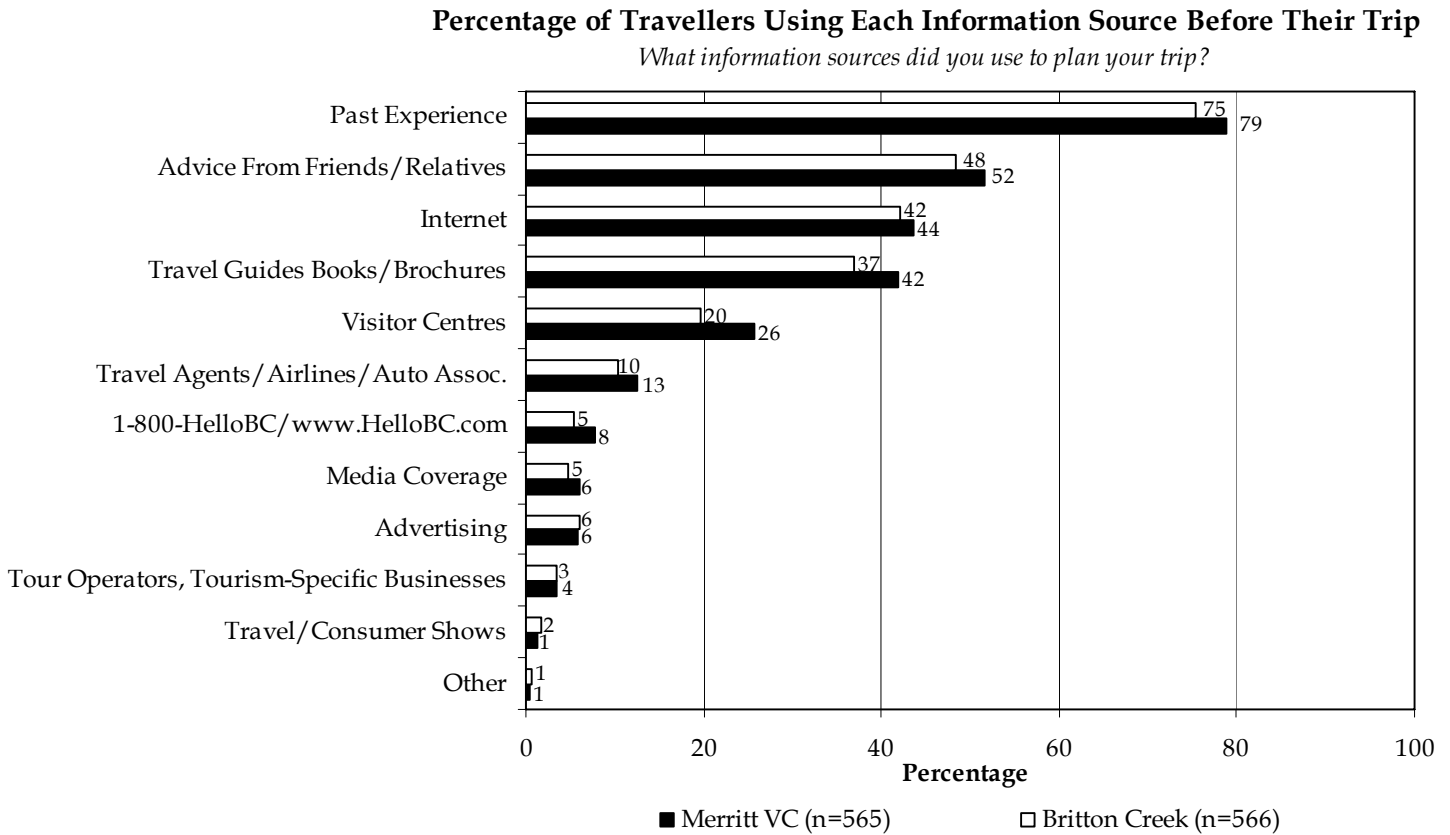


Figure 8. The percentage of travellers using each information source for trip planning at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Percentages add to more than 100% because travellers could use more than one information source for planning their trip. At the VC, 'Other' includes Chamber of Commerce. At Britton Creek, 'Other' includes campground memberships, Parks Canada information centre and timeshare information.

Mailback survey respondents were also asked to identify three sources of information that they found to be *most useful before their trip*. Previous experience (48% Merritt VC; 45% Britton Creek), advice from friends/relatives (41% Merritt VC; 39% Britton Creek) and travel guide books and brochures (36% Merritt VC; 36% Britton Creek) were the three information sources found most useful by visitors interviewed at both locations.

In the mailback survey, travellers were also asked to identify sources of information that they used *during the trip*. Visitor Centres (53%), previous experience (47%) and travel guide books and brochures (43%) were cited most often by visitors interviewed at the Merritt VC. Information sources used most often during the trip by visitors interviewed at Britton Creek included previous experience (43%), travel guide books and brochures (38%) and Visitor Centres (36%). A notably higher proportion of Merritt VC respondents used Visitor Centres than did their counterparts interviewed at Britton Creek (Figure 9).

**Percentage of Travellers Using Each Information Source During Their Trip**

*What information sources did you use during your trip?*

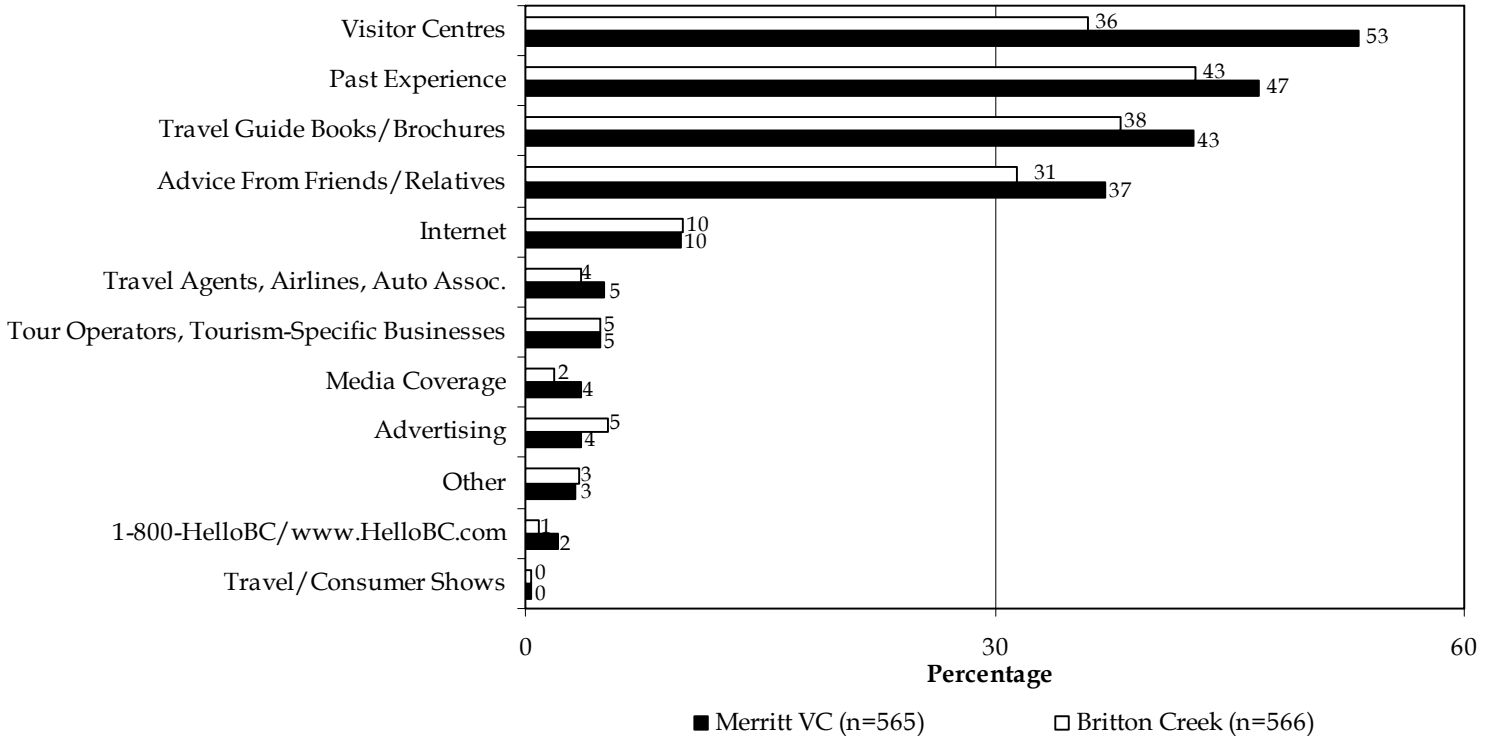


Figure 9. The percentage of travellers using each information source during their trip at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Percentages add to more than 100% because travellers could use more than one information source for planning their trip. At the VC, 'Other' includes discovering on our own, dry hot weather, locals, hospital, resort and package from organizers. At Britton Creek, 'Other' includes Campground memberships, friendly locals, Parks Canada Info Centre, timeshare info and Yellow Pages.

**Trip Flexibility**

Travellers were asked about their flexibility in terms of:

- the percentage of trip that was planned before their arrival in the Merritt region;
- the amount of time that they had to spend in the Merritt region; and
- the amount of time that they had to spend in British Columbia.

A fairly large proportion of travellers at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek were flexible regarding trip activities in that they had less than a quarter of their trip activities in the Merritt region planned before arriving in the region (49% Merritt VC; 39% Britton Creek). On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents were inflexible in that they had planned out more than three-quarters of their trip activities in the Merritt region (37% Merritt VC; 51% Britton Creek, Figure 10).

At both interview sites, almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were inflexible in terms of time in the Merritt region (63% Merritt VC; 65% Britton Creek). Only one-sixth of travellers were very flexible with time in the region and could extend their stay by a day or more (16% Merritt VC; 17% Britton Creek, Figure 11).

The majority of travellers at both interview sites were inflexible in terms of time in BC (54% Merritt VC; 56% Britton Creek). That said, at least one-third of travellers indicated they could extend their trip in BC by a day or more (33% Merritt VC; 34% Britton Creek, Figure 12).

### Percentage of Pre-Planned Activities in the Merritt Region

*What percent of your trip activities in Merritt were planned before you arrived in the region?*

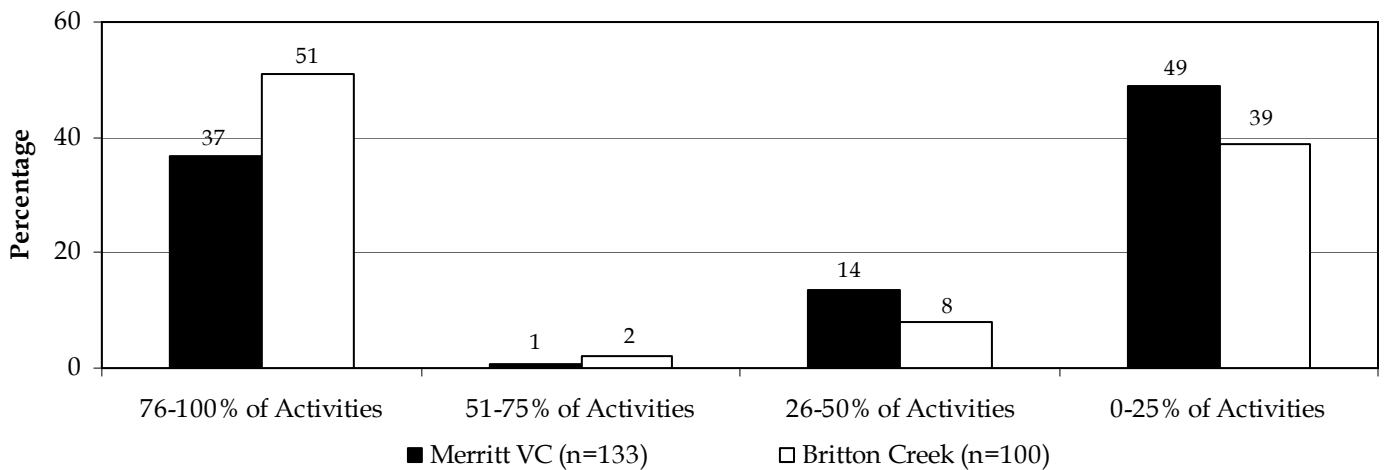


Figure 10. The percentage of pre-planned activities in the Merritt region for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

### Trip Flexibility Regarding Time in the Merritt Region

Which statement best describes your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in the Region?

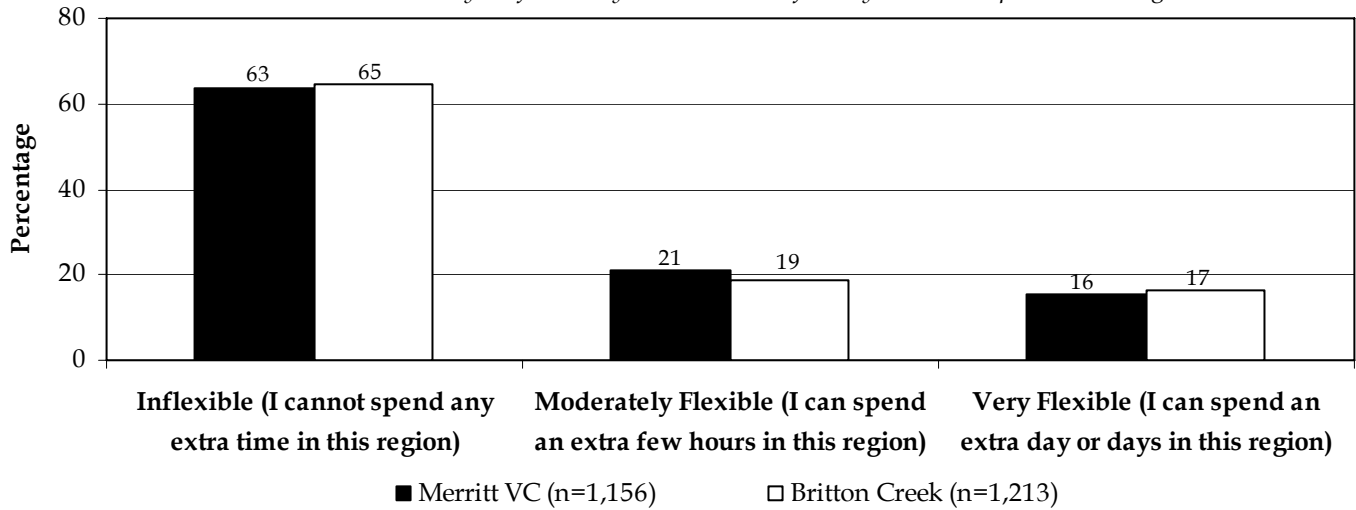


Figure 11. Travellers' rating of trip flexibility regarding the time in the Merritt region for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

### Trip Flexibility Regarding Time Spent in British Columbia

Which statement best describes your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in BC?

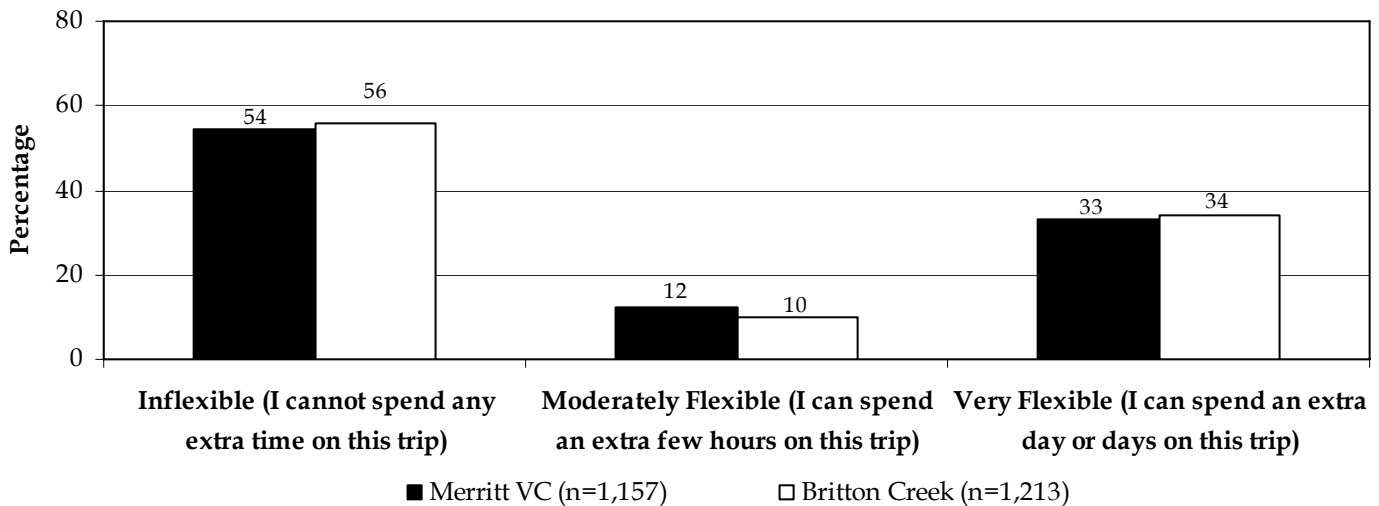


Figure 12. Travellers' rating of trip flexibility regarding the time spent in British Columbia for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

### Traveller Activities

Travellers that were not passing through the Merritt region (11% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) were asked about their primary leisure activities while in the Merritt region. The most common responses cited at the Merritt VC were dining (23%), camping (18%), fishing (10%), sightseeing (9%) and attending the Merritt Mountain Music Festival (6%). The most common responses cited at Britton Creek were dining (36%), visiting family/relatives/friends (16%), fishing (14%), camping (13%), and boating/canoeing/swimming (5%).



In the mailback survey, travellers were asked about leisure activities they participated in during their trip. The top activities were the same at each site but the order varied (Table 6). The most frequently cited activities by visitors at the Merritt VC were visiting parks (50%), shopping for local arts and crafts (44%), participating in soft adventure activities (44%), fine dining (41%) and visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor (31%). The most common responses given at Britton Creek were participating in soft adventure activities (53%), visiting parks (51%), shopping for local arts and crafts (40%), fine dining (39%) and visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor (28%; Table 6).

Table 6. Participation in trip activities for travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

Participation in Activity	Percentage of Respondents	
	Merritt VC (n=565)	Britton Creek (n=566)
Visiting parks <sup>1</sup>	49.7%	51.1%
Shopping for local arts and crafts	44.4%	39.9%
Participating in soft adventure activities <sup>2</sup>	43.5%	52.5%
Participating in fine dining	41.1%	38.7%
Visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor	30.6%	28.3%
Visiting a museum, heritage or historic site	28.3%	23.0%
Visiting a winery	21.8%	17.0%
Attending a festival, fair or exhibition	17.7%	15.5%
Visiting an art gallery or studio	17.7%	14.5%
Visiting family attraction <sup>3</sup>	13.1%	13.8%
Golfing or attending a golfing event	12.0%	11.8%
Attending or participating in a sporting event <sup>4</sup>	10.3%	10.2%
Other <sup>5</sup>	8.0%	5.1%
Visiting a First Nations attraction or event	5.7%	5.1%
Visiting a spa	5.0%	4.2%
Participating in hard adventure activities <sup>6</sup>	4.6%	4.2%

1. Includes municipal, provincial or national parks, or natural areas outside parks.

2. Includes activities such as wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, kayaking, cycling and hiking.

3. Includes activities such as mini golf, waterslides and zoos.

4. Does not include golf.

5. At the VC, 'Other' activities included visiting family/friends, mall shopping, ballroom dancing, bridge tournament, casino, wedding, live theatre/cinema, real estate, graduation, reunion, school, annual picnic, LDS temple, bingo, business, child-minding, garage sale and genealogical research. At Britton Creek, 'Other' activities included visiting family/friends, wedding, casino, dance lessons, bridge tournament, live theatre/cinema, medical reasons, funeral, reunion, Mission of Mercy, marina and mini-cruise.

6. Includes activities such as white water rafting, rock climbing and mountain biking.

In the mailback survey, travellers were asked about leisure activities they would participate in on future leisure trips. Travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC were very similar to their counterparts from Britton Creek with respect to activities they intended to participate in on future trips. The most frequently cited activities included visiting parks (59% Merritt VC; 60% Britton Creek), participating in soft adventure activities (55% Merritt VC; 60% Britton Creek), visiting a museum, heritage or historic site

(50% Merritt VC; 48% Britton Creek), shopping for local arts and crafts (50% Merritt VC; 47% Britton Creek) and visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor (49% Merritt VC) or participating in fine dining (45% Britton Creek; Table 7).

Table 7. Future leisure trip activity preferences of travellers at Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

Participation in Activity on Future Trip	Percentage of Respondents	
	Merritt VC (n=565)	Britton Creek (n=566)
Visiting parks <sup>1</sup>	58.6%	60.4%
Participating in soft adventure activities <sup>2</sup>	55.0%	59.7%
Visiting a museum, heritage or historic site	50.3%	48.2%
Shopping for local arts and crafts	49.9%	47.2%
Visiting a farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor	49.0%	44.0%
Participating in fine dining	47.4%	44.9%
Visiting a winery	45.0%	41.7%
Attending a festival, fair or exhibition	43.7%	41.3%
Visiting an art gallery or studio	34.2%	29.5%
Visiting family attraction <sup>3</sup>	27.8%	29.0%
Golfing or attending a golfing event	21.8%	19.6%
Attending or participating in a sporting event <sup>4</sup>	20.9%	21.4%
Visiting a spa	20.2%	18.6%
Visiting a First Nations attraction or event	18.9%	21.7%
Participating in hard adventure activities <sup>5</sup>	15.0%	16.8%
Other <sup>6</sup>	7.1%	4.2%

1. Includes municipal, provincial or national parks, or natural areas outside parks.

2. Includes activities such as wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, kayaking, cycling and hiking.

3. Includes activities such as mini golf, waterslides and zoos.

4. Does not include golf.

5. Includes activities such as white water rafting, rock climbing and mountain biking.

6. At the VC, 'Other' activities included visiting family and friends, live theatre, casino, ballroom dancing, annual picnic, bingo, child-minding, car show, gardens, garage sales, genealogical research, heritage festival, highland games, LDS temple, shopping and seeing the ocean. At Britton Creek, 'Other' activities included visiting family and friends, live theatre, casino, square dancing, bridge tournament, marina, reunion, mini-cruise and peace event.

## Use of the Visitor Centre

This section mainly summarizes data from travellers who were interviewed at the Merritt VC unless otherwise noted.

Travellers stopped at the Merritt VC for a variety of reasons (Figure 13). The three most common reasons given were to use the washroom facilities (52%), to take a break from travelling (43%) and to obtain refreshments (17%). Fewer travellers mentioned the need to obtain route information (9%), a map (9%) or attraction information (9%). Less than 5% of respondents stopped to obtain information on

accommodation, camping, adventure recreation, events, dining opportunities or to purchase merchandise or BC Parks parking passes. Four percent of travellers stated other reasons for stopping at the VC including general interest, using a phone/fax or looking up numbers in a phone book, checking the status of their reservations, mechanical difficulties with their automobiles, or seeking out banking and shopping information.

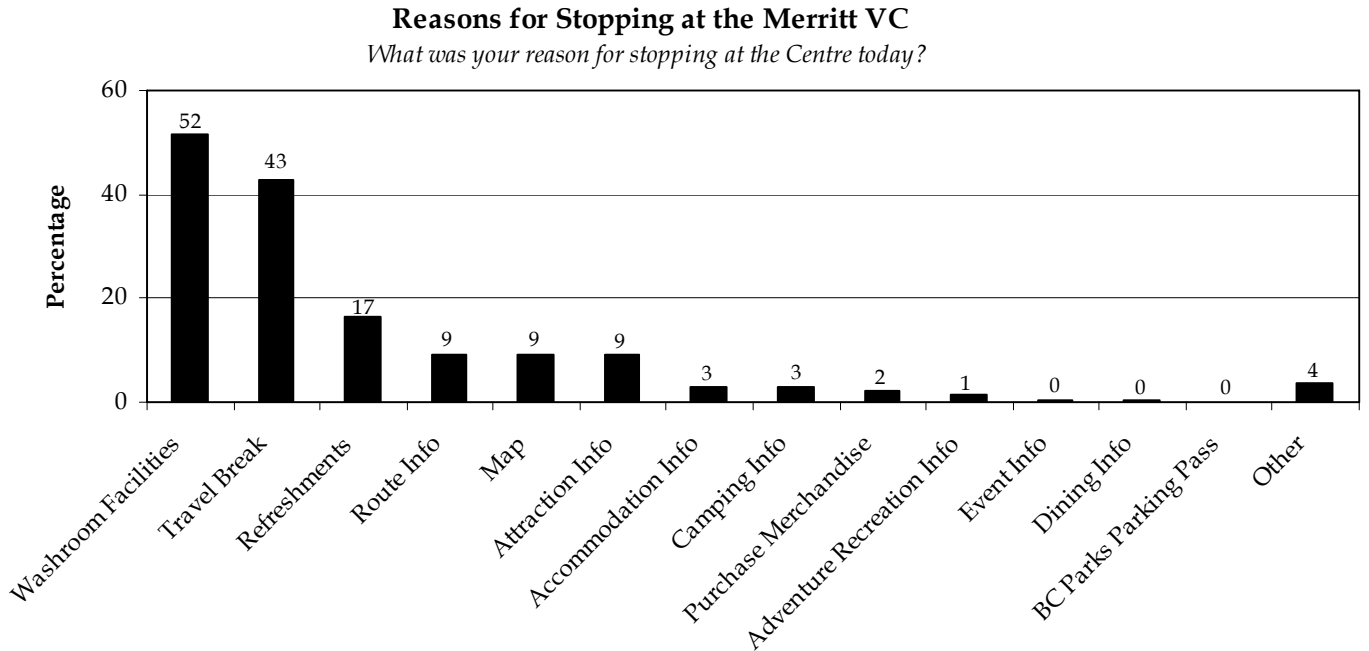


Figure 13. The reasons why travellers stopped at the Merritt VC (n=1,158). The total exceeds 100% because respondents could give more than one reply.

When travellers were asked what information or other things they actually obtained at the VC, they identified various types of information (Figure 14). The most frequently obtained items included attraction information (35%), route information (20%) and maps (17%). Fewer travellers mentioned obtaining refreshments (13%), merchandise (12%), information about accommodation (10%) or campgrounds (6%). Less than 5% of travellers obtained information on adventure recreation opportunities, events, dining or BC Parks parking passes. Two percent of travellers obtained other things from the VC including use of phone/fax, or obtaining information on real estate, weather, tow truck or car dealerships, banking service, bookstores, or Tourism BC (Figure 14). Thirty-one percent of travellers stated that they did not obtain anything from the VC

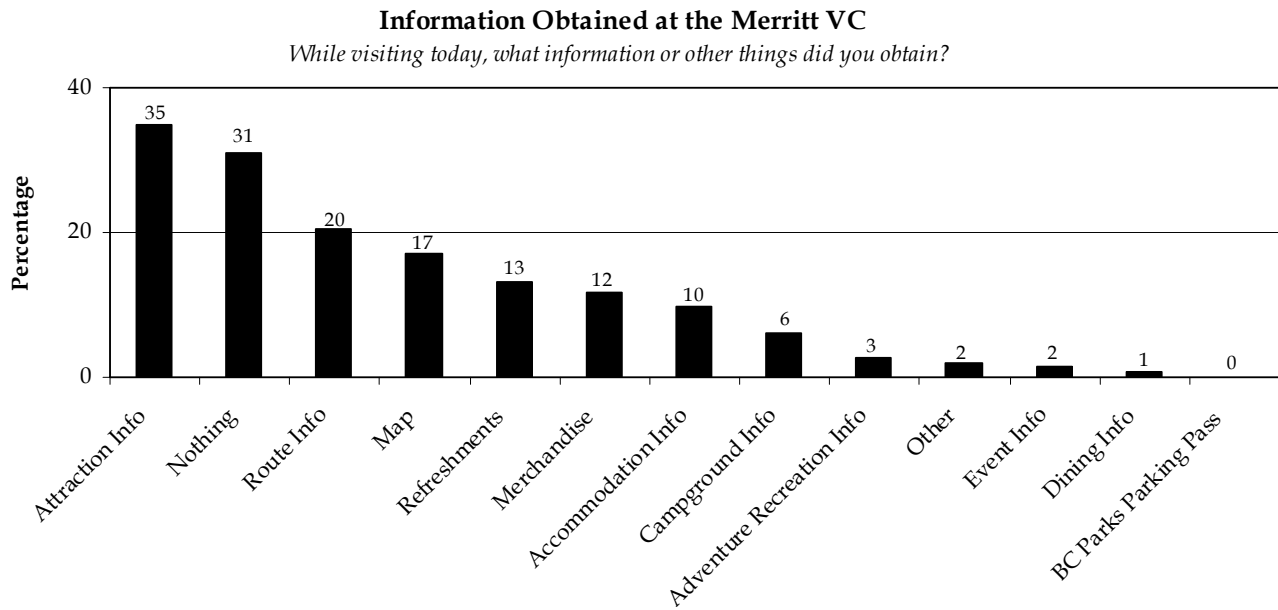


Figure 14. The information obtained by travellers at the Merritt VC (n=1,158). The total exceeds 100% because respondents could give more than one reply.

A majority of travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC spoke with a Counsellor (71%). Visitors from the US (88%) were most likely to speak to a Counsellor followed by visitors from other parts of Canada (81%) and from other countries (74%). Least likely to speak to a Counsellor were visitors from British Columbia (66%, Table 8).

Table 8. The percentage of travellers who spoke with a Counsellor at the Merritt VC by traveller origin.

Traveller Origin	Percentage that Spoke with a Counsellor	
	Yes (n=819)	No (n=331)
British Columbia	66.1%	33.9%
Other Canada	81.4%	18.6%
US	87.7%	12.3%
Other International	74.4%	25.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>

Visitor Information Counsellors only spoke to a proportion of visitor parties, many visitors did not speak to Counsellors while using the VC. The proportions of visitor parties who spoke to Counsellors and who did not speak to Counsellors were obtained at the interview. Using this information, the total number of visitor parties serviced by the Merritt VC between May 17 and September, 2006 was estimated to be 33,400 parties.

In the mailback survey, travellers were asked, "Overall, how well did the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt live up to your original expectations?" Almost all (95%) of travellers responded that the VC either met or exceeded their expectations (Table 9). Thirty-two percent of travellers indicated that the VC exceeded their expectations while 63% felt the VC met their expectations.

A substantially larger proportion of US travellers (51%) felt that the VC exceeded their expectations compared to travellers from other origins (29% BC; 34% other Canada; 36% other international). A higher proportion of travellers who spoke with a Counsellor replied that the VC exceeded their expectations (39%) compared to those that did not speak to a Counsellor (21%). A slightly higher proportion of respondents who were travelling for leisure (34%) felt that the VC exceeded their expectations compared to those who were visiting family and friends (31%, Table 9).

Table 9. The proportion of travellers who felt the Merritt VC fell short, met or exceeded their expectations by traveller origin, those that did or did not speak with a Counsellor and primary trip purpose.

	Percentage of Travellers who Felt the Merritt VC Fell Short, Met, or Exceeded Their Expectations <sup>1</sup>		
	Fell Short (n=35)	Met (n=443)	Exceeded (n=227)
<b>Overall</b>	5.0%	62.8%	32.2%
<b>Origin</b>			
British Columbia	4.7%	65.9%	29.4%
Other Canada	3.9%	62.6%	33.5%
US	3.8%	45.3%	50.9%
Other International	17.9%	46.4%	35.7%
<b>Spoke with a Counsellor</b>			
Yes	3.6%	57.4%	39.0%
No	8.9%	70.5%	20.5%
<b>Primary Purpose</b>			
Leisure	4.7%	61.8%	33.5%
Visit friends & family	5.2%	63.7%	31.0%

1. Excludes 32 don't know responses.

Sixteen percent of visitors interviewed at Britton Creek had stopped, or planned to stop, at the Merritt VC on their current trip. For those who hadn't, reasons for not visiting the VC included not needing to stop (71%), insufficient time (13%), having no interest (6%), stopped elsewhere (3%), did not know about it (2%), not on route (1%), already visited on a previous trip (1%), closed/crowded/too busy upon stopping (1%), missed it (<1%) and other general reasons (<1%).

In the mailback survey, Britton Creek respondents were asked if they had visited the Merritt VC. Almost a third (30%) indicated that they had. For those who hadn't, reasons for not visiting the VC included already knowing what to do and see (55%), insufficient time (20%), previous knowledge of the area (11%), visiting another VC (4%), not knowing about VC (4%), having information prior to trip (2%), overcrowding or closed VC (2%) and no rest stop services in VC (1%).

In the mailback questionnaire, travellers were also asked if they had visited any other VCs in British Columbia. Of the 559 valid responses from those interviewed at the Merritt VC, a quarter (25% or 138 responses) indicated that they had visited at least one other VC in British Columbia. Of the 544 valid responses from those interviewed at Britton Creek, a slightly higher proportion (29% or 157 responses) indicated that they had visited at least one other VC in British Columbia. The locations of the other VCs visited are diverse, and are listed in Appendix D.

### Suggestions for New Provincial Visitor Centre

Travellers were asked, "A new Provincial Visitor Centre offering services including trip planning, information counselling, reservations, ticketing, retail, and food and beverage sales will be built on this site in 2008. What additional amenities and services would you like to see at the new centre?" Over half (56%; or 702) of the 1,250 visitors interviewed at the Merritt VC provided a total of 1,166 suggestions (Appendix E). Over half of the suggestions referred to washroom facilities/features (27%) or snacks/refreshments/restaurants (26%). Fewer suggestions came forward about children's play area (6%), grassy/sheltered area surrounding the new Centre (5%), parking (5%), amenities of the new building (5%), information services (5%), a gas station (4%), the structure of the new building (2%), maps and displays (2%), additional merchandise/services (2%), hours of operation (2%), signage/directions (1%), local arts and crafts (1%) and pet friendly features (1%). Less than 1% of responses were related to accommodation, staff, ATM's/currency exchange, hiking/walking trails, museums, golf or casinos. One percent of responses were general comments which were not necessarily relevant to the new Centre (Table 10).

Table 10. Additional amenities and services travellers would like to see at the new Provincial Visitor Centre.

Response Category	Responses (n=1,166)	Percentage of Responses
Washrooms Facilities/Features	320	27.4%
Snacks/Refreshments/Restaurants	300	25.7%
Children's Play Area	66	5.7%
Grassy/Sheltered Surrounding Area	61	5.2%
Parking	60	5.1%
Amenities of the New Building	58	5.0%
Information Services	53	4.5%
Gas Station	44	3.8%
Structure of the New Building	27	2.3%
Maps and Displays	25	2.1%
Additional Merchandise/Services	23	2.0%
Hours of Operation	21	1.8%
Signage/Directions	16	1.4%
Local Arts and Crafts	16	1.4%
Pet Friendly Features	16	1.4%
Accommodation	11	0.9%
Staff Related	8	0.7%
ATM/Currency Exchange	7	0.6%
Hiking/Walking Trails	7	0.6%
Museums	5	0.4%
Golf	4	0.3%
Casino	2	0.2%
Other General Comments	16	1.4%

**Perceptions of the Merritt Region and British Columbia**

In the mailback questionnaire, travellers were asked “What positive and/or negative images come to mind when you think of the Merritt region as a vacation destination?” Positive and negative image questions were asked to obtain an understanding of what travellers perceive the Merritt region to be doing right and what the Merritt region can work on in terms of attracting and keeping travellers in the region.

At both sites, the majority of respondents provided positive comments towards the Merritt region (64% Merritt VC; 63% Britton Creek), over a third of respondents provided negative comments (34% Merritt VC; 34% Britton Creek) and almost a third of respondents did not provide any comment (32% Merritt VC; 31% Britton Creek). Of the responses provided, twice as many were positive (1,485) as were negative (599). Positive responses were dominated by the beautiful scenery/landscapes of the Merritt region (22% Merritt VC; 26% Britton Creek), the presence of family and friends (13% Merritt VC; 9% Britton Creek) and weather (11% Merritt VC; 9% Britton Creek). Other positive comments received from Merritt VC respondents included location/proximity (5%), cleanliness (5%) and roads/links/highways (5%). Additional positive comments from travellers interviewed at Britton Creek included roads/links/highways (8%), quiet/uncrowded (6%) and rest stops/services (5%, Figure 15).

**Ten Most Frequent Positive Images of the Merritt Region**

*What positive images come to mind when you think of the Merritt Region as a vacation destination?*

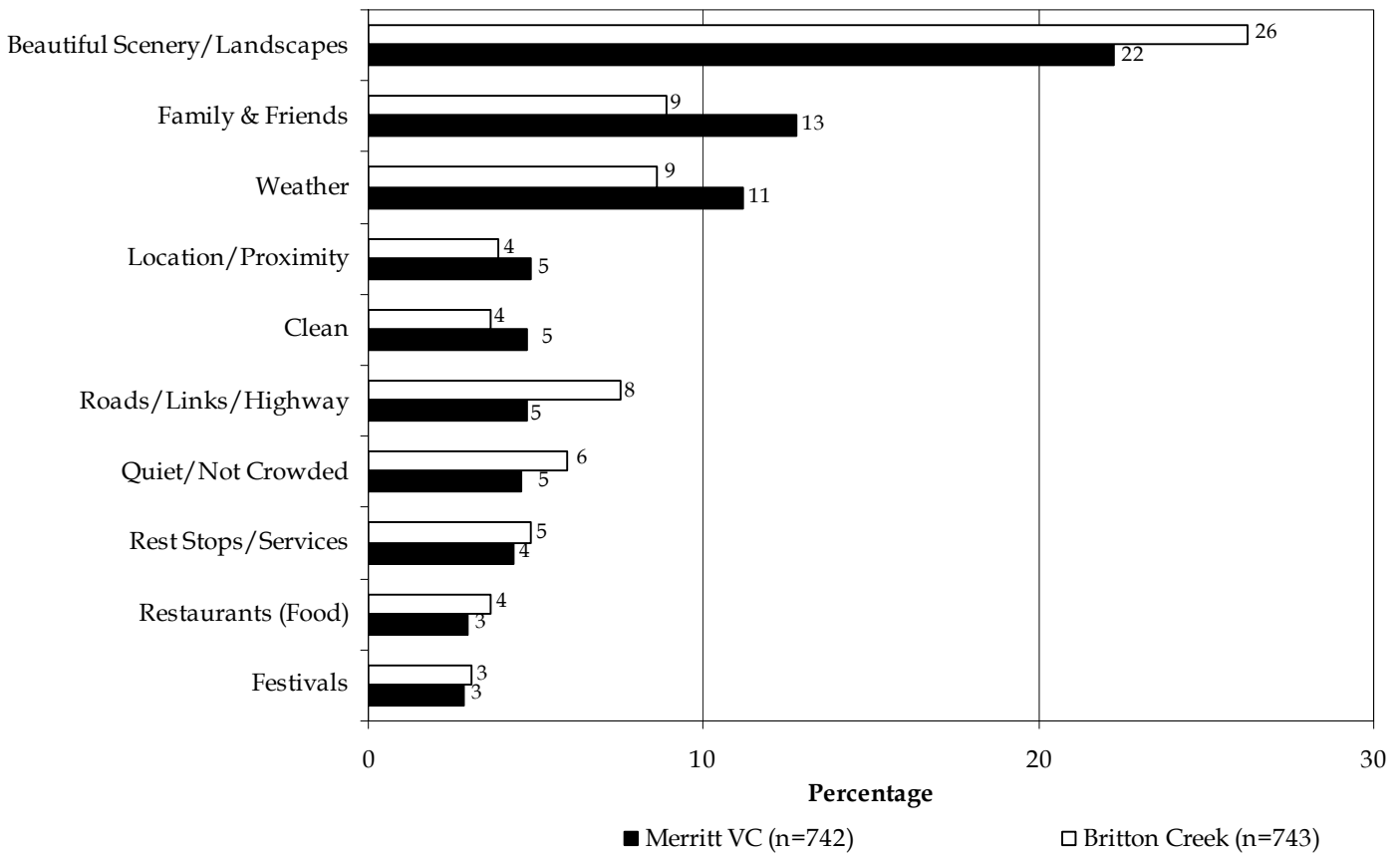


Figure 15. The most frequent positive images respondents had of the Merritt region. At the Merritt VC, 360 respondents replied with 742 images; while at Britton Creek, 359 travellers replied with 743 images.

The negative images respondents mentioned were associated with the hot, desert-like weather (16% Merritt VC; 17% Britton Creek) and the lack of major attractions in the Merritt region (9% Merritt VC; 14% Britton Creek). Other negative images provided by Merritt VC respondents included limited/poor selection of restaurants (6%), limited rest stops (5%) and isolation (5%). Additional negative images provided by Britton Creek respondents included isolation (8%), limited/poor selection of restaurants (5%) and limited activities in the Merritt region (5%), Figure 16).

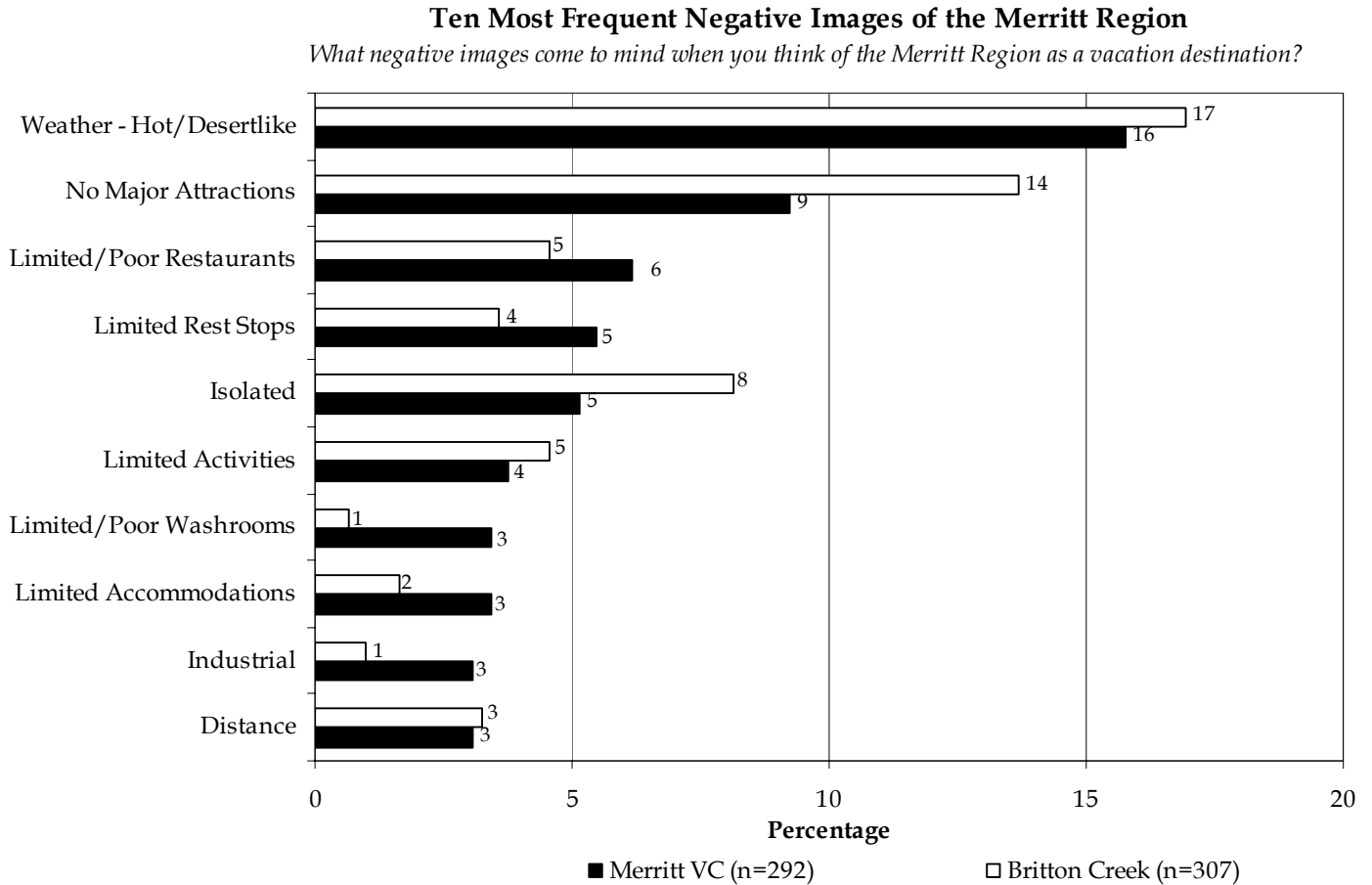


Figure 16. The most frequent negative images respondents had of the Merritt region. At the Merritt VC, 190 respondents replied with 292 images, while at Britton Creek, 193 travellers replied with 307 images.

Respondents to the mailback survey were asked to rate various components of their trip and their overall travel experience in the Merritt region. Ratings were high for overall travel experiences (91% Merritt VC; 91% Britton Creek) and for each trip component regardless of respondents' original interview location. At an individual level, customer service (95% Merritt VC; 89% Britton Creek), access to information about Merritt (92% Merritt VC; 88% Britton Creek) and recreation/adventure opportunities (85% Merritt VC; 85% Britton Creek) received the most positive assessments (Figure 17).



**Percentage of Travellers Rating Trip Components as Good or Excellent**

*Please rate your experience with each component of your trip and your overall travel experience in the Merritt region.*

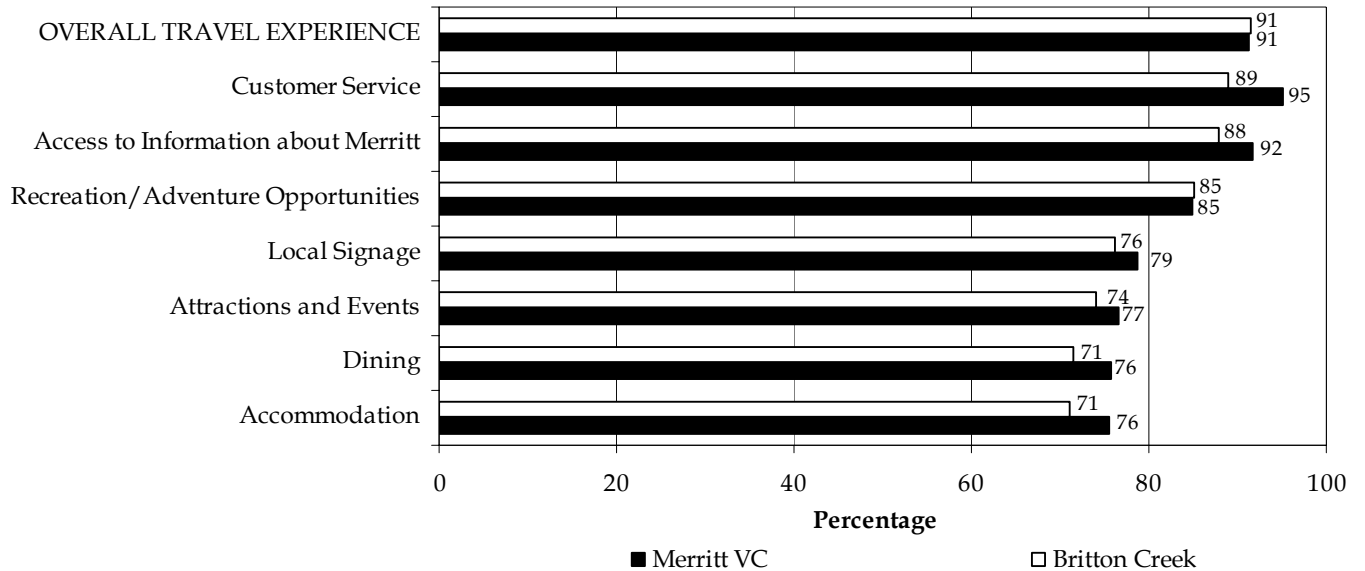


Figure 17. Travellers’ rating of trip components and overall trip experience in the Merritt region.

Respondents to the mailback questionnaire were asked about their satisfaction with their trip in British Columbia. The majority of travellers were either ‘very satisfied’ (79% Merritt VC; 74% Britton Creek) or ‘somewhat satisfied’ (8% Merritt VC; 8% Britton Creek) with their trip (Figure 18).

**Satisfaction With Trip to British Columbia**

*Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trip in British Columbia?*

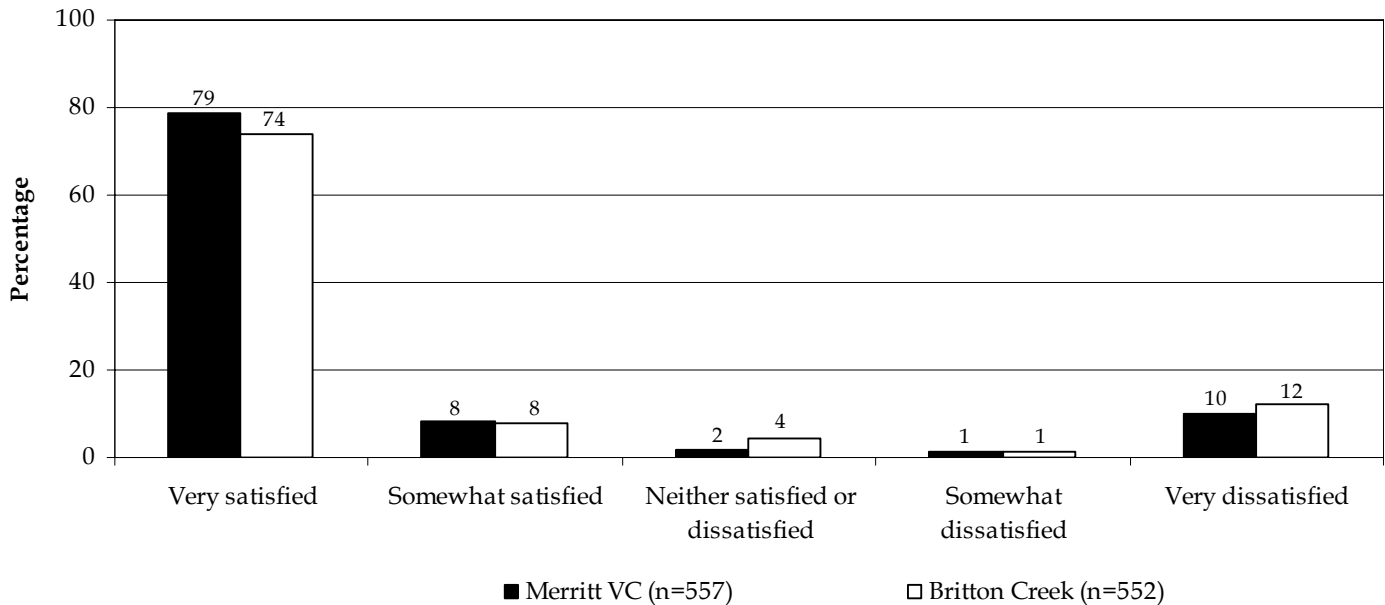


Figure 18. Satisfaction with trip to BC by travellers at Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Does not include 2 don't know responses at Merritt VC and 3 don't know responses at Britton Creek.

Mailback respondents were asked about their likelihood of returning to the Merritt region or to the province of British Columbia for a future leisure trip. Almost two-thirds (64%) of visitors interviewed at Britton Creek were 'very likely' (35%) or 'likely' (29%) to return compared to over a half (54%) of the travellers at the Merritt VC who were either 'very likely' (27%) or 'likely' (27%) to return to the Merritt region (Figure 19). Respondents who said that they were not likely to return to the region were asked to explain why not. The most prevalent explanation was the desire to explore other places and attractions. Other reasons included lack of family and friends in the area, passing through, lack of attractions, distance, time constraints and unfriendly people.

### Likelihood of Taking Another Trip to the Merritt Region

*Given your experience traveling in the Merritt Region, how likely are you to return for a future trip?*

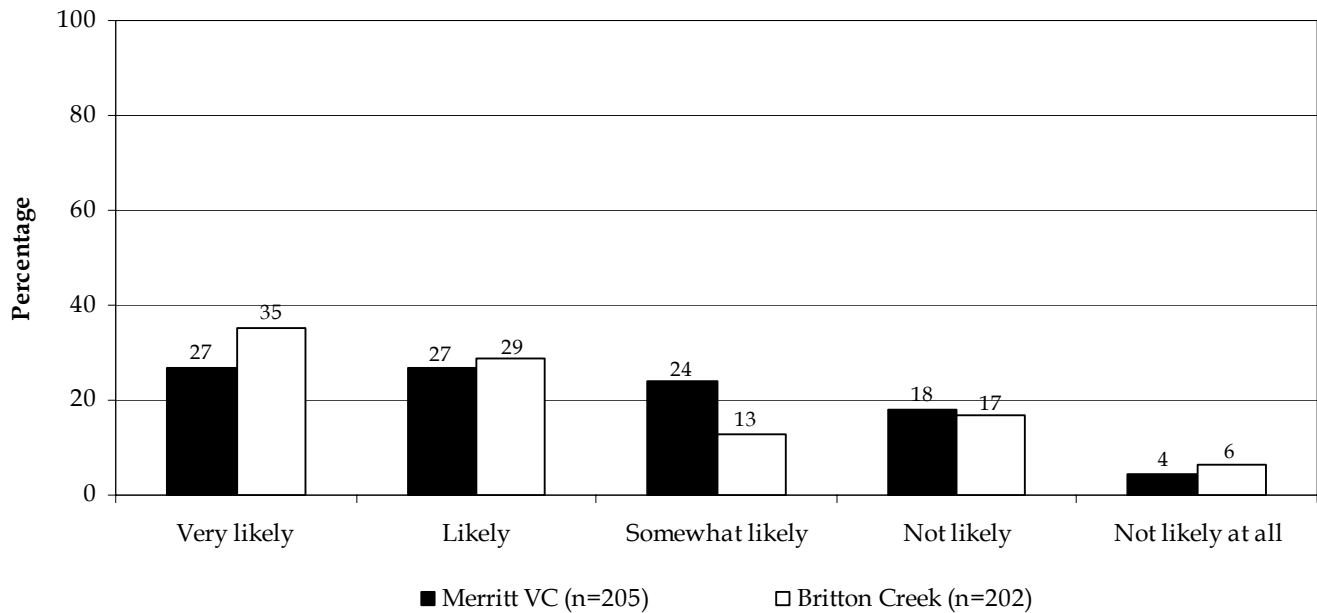


Figure 19. Likelihood of return for a future leisure trip by travellers at Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Does not include 24 'don't know' responses at Merritt VC and 22 'don't know' responses at Britton Creek.

In terms of their likelihood of taking another leisure trip to/in British Columbia, an overwhelming majority of travellers indicated that they were either 'very likely' (86% Merritt VC; 83% Britton Creek) or 'likely' (10% Merritt VC; 13% Britton Creek) to take another trip (Figure 20). Respondents who said that they would make a return trip to/in British Columbia had many reasons. Most of the reasons referred to just loving British Columbia in general, family and friends, living within the province, interesting places/attractions to explore and the beautiful scenery British Columbia has to offer. Activities, favourable past experiences, affordability/relaxation, accessibility, insufficient time on current trip and owning recreational property were also prevalent responses. Respondents who said that they were not likely to return to British Columbia also provided their rationale. The most prevalent explanation was the desire to explore other places and attractions. Other reasons included deforestation, distance, cost, time constraints, lack of fish and reduced service/lack of expansion or upgrades in provincial parks. Respondents who were somewhat likely to take another trip in British Columbia provided positive commentary as well as barriers or constraints. Family and friends, beautiful scenery, presence of a summer home and an affinity for British Columbia were among the reasons to return while the desire to

explore other places, cost, time constraints and travellers' health/age were among the reasons not to return.

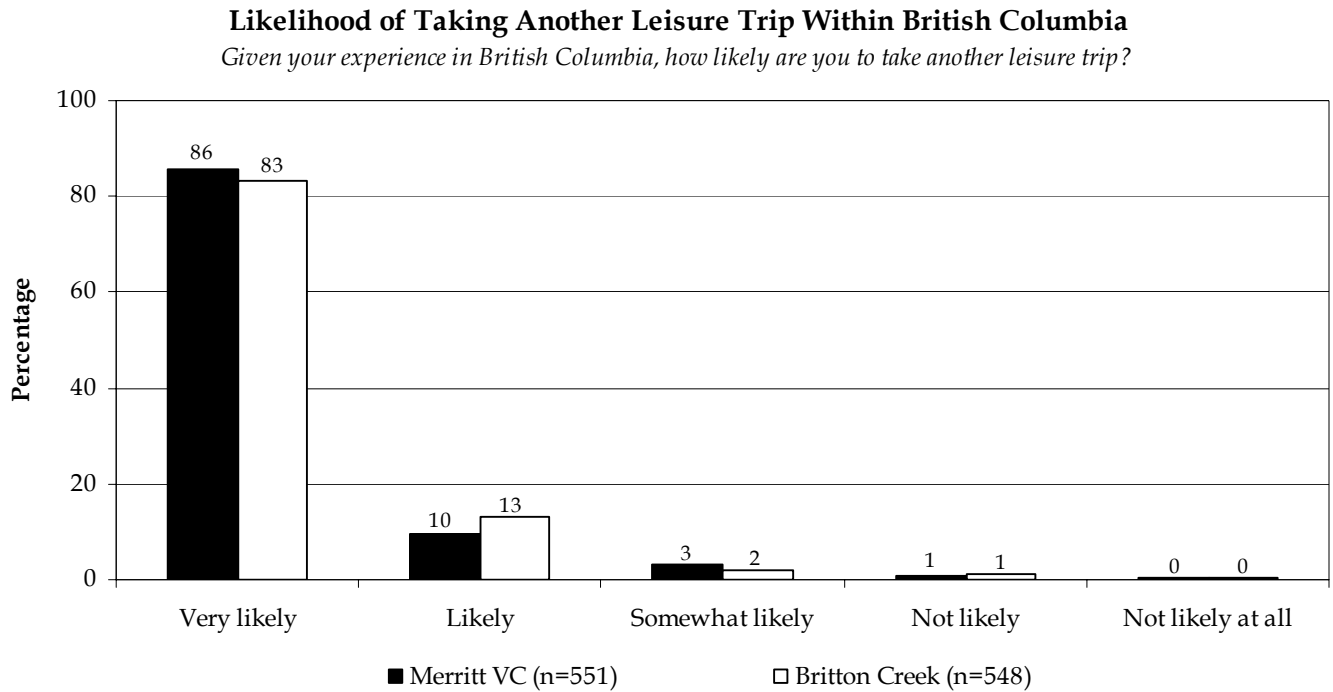


Figure 20. Likelihood of return for a future leisure trip to/in BC by travellers at Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Does not include 6 'don't know' responses at Merritt VC and 8 'don't know' responses at Britton Creek.

### Expenditures

Travellers were asked, "In Canadian Dollars, what were your travel party's total expenditures *yesterday*, including accommodations?" Overall, results were similar at the two interview sites with the average daily expenditures calculated as \$168.73 at the Merritt VC and \$173.98 at Britton Creek.

Travellers from the US interviewed at the VC spent substantially less (\$174.73) on average than US travellers interviewed at Britton Creek (\$211.05). Canadians from outside BC that were interviewed at the VC spent less (\$174.42) than did their counterparts interviewed at Britton Creek (\$184.30). At the Merritt VC, visitors from international countries (other than the US) had the highest daily expenditures (\$198.06) whereas at Britton Creek, respondents from the US had the highest daily expenditures (\$211.05). Respondents from BC had the lowest expenditures at both sites (Table 11).

There were also noteworthy differences in expenditures based upon the primary type of accommodation used by respondents. Respondents interviewed at the Merritt VC who stayed in resorts, hotels, motels or B&Bs (\$226.38) spent less than their counterparts interviewed at Britton Creek (\$239.61). At both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek, travellers who stayed in resorts, hotels, motels or B&Bs spent considerably more than those staying in other types of accommodation (Table 11).

Given that expenditure was asked as a per party daily total, it is not surprising that larger parties spent notably more than smaller parties at both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek. Solo travellers at the Merritt VC spent much less (\$100.00) than did their counterparts at Britton Creek (\$141.63). Other than this, responses were fairly consistent by travel party size for both the Merritt VC and Britton Creek (Table 11).

There were also noteworthy differences in expenditures based upon respondents' age category between interview sites. Respondents interviewed at the Merritt VC who were 24 years and under (\$126.43) and respondents who were between 35-44 years (\$167.83) spent less than their counterparts interviewed at Britton Creek (\$207.25 and \$192.33 respectively), but respondents who were between 55-64 years at the VC spent more (\$187.50) than did similar aged respondents at Britton Creek (\$172.93). There was also variation in average daily expenditures among age categories, but results were different at the two interview sites. At the Merritt VC, respondents who were 55-64 years had the highest daily expenditures (\$187.50) whereas Britton Creek respondents who were under 24 years old had the highest daily expenditures (\$207.25, Table 11).

Average daily expenditure per person was also calculated. Travellers interviewed at the Merritt VC spent \$64.16 per person per day and travellers interviewed at Britton Creek spent \$65.99 per person per day.

Table 11. The average daily expenditures of travellers at the Merritt VC and Britton Creek.

\$ CDN Daily Expenditures*	Average Per Party Daily Expenditure	
	Merritt VC (n=655) <sup>1</sup>	Britton Creek (n=591) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>\$168.73</b>	<b>\$173.98</b>
<b>Origin</b>		
British Columbia	\$156.44	\$153.91
Other Canada	\$174.42	\$184.30
US	<b>\$174.73</b>	\$211.05
Other International	\$198.06	\$196.35
<b>Primary Accommodations</b>		
Resort/Hotel/Motel/B&B	\$226.38	\$239.61
Campground/RV Park	\$135.29	\$126.49
Friends or Relatives	\$131.18	\$132.25
Other <sup>3</sup>	<b>\$165.96</b>	\$140.63
<b>Travel Party Size</b>		
1 person	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$141.63
2 people	\$160.29	\$164.84
3-6 people	\$199.96	\$195.27
7 or more people <sup>4</sup>	\$240.53	\$236.11
<b>Age</b>		
Under 24 Years <sup>5</sup>	<b>\$126.43</b>	\$207.25
25-34 Years	\$152.33	\$160.74
35-44 Years	<b>\$167.83</b>	\$192.33
45-54 Years	\$173.04	\$180.37
55-64 Years	\$187.50	\$172.93
65 Years or Older	\$150.90	\$154.82

\*The top and bottom 2% of responses were trimmed to ensure an accurate mean daily expenditure.

Practical differences between respondents interviewed at the VC and Britton Creek of ± 10% are colour-coded.

1. 40% (n=462) of travellers began trip on the day of interview, and therefore did not have responses, 2% (n=17) Don't Know/No Response. Business travellers were not included in this analysis.
2. 48% (n=579) of travellers began trip on the day of interview, and therefore did not have responses, 2% (n=19) Don't Know/No Response. Business travellers were not included in this analysis.
3. Caution is advised when interpreting these numbers because the sample size for this category is low (n=23 at VC; n=16 at Britton Creek).
4. Caution is advised when interpreting these numbers because the sample size for this category is low (n=15 at VC; n=9 at Britton Creek).
5. Caution is advised when interpreting these numbers because the sample size for this category is low (n=7 at VC; n=8 at Britton Creek).

In the summer of 2006, Merritt VC users were estimated to have spent over \$0.6 million in the Merritt region and over \$44 million on their trip throughout the rest of the province (Table 12)<sup>2</sup>. These figures do not represent the economic impact of the VC but rather the total expenditures of travellers to the Merritt region and in the rest of the province while on the trip during which they were interviewed at the Merritt VC.

Table 12. Estimated expenditures of travellers who visited the Merritt VC.

May 17 - September 4, 2006 <sup>1</sup>	Merritt VC
Estimated Total VC parties for June, July, August and September 2006	33,400
Average Daily Expenditures	\$168.73
Estimated Total Expenditures in Merritt Region by VC Users	\$636,815
Estimated Total Expenditures outside of Merritt Region by VC Users	\$44,447,447
Estimated Total Expenditures in British Columbia by VC Users	\$45,084,263

1. Visitor party statistics reported by the Merritt VC include local residents but exclude visitor parties that do not talk to a Counsellor. Estimated total VC parties in this report exclude residents of the Merritt region. However, all non-resident visitor parties are included, whether or not they spoke to a Visitor Information Counsellor. An estimated 71% of visitor parties speak to a Counsellor, thus the total number of visitor parties is larger than the number who spoke to a Counsellor.

### Impact of the VC on Traveller Behaviour in British Columbia

Travellers were asked several questions to gauge how the Merritt VC impacted their trip. The questions were as follows:

1. *While at the Centre today, did you learn about any activities, places or attractions that you were previously not aware of?*
2. *What were those activities, places or attractions?*
3. *Will you spend some extra time in the Merritt region as a result of the information obtained at the Merritt Visitor Centre? How much time?*
4. *Will you spend some extra time in other parts of British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the Merritt Visitor Centre? How much time?*
5. *Will you make another trip in British Columbia in the future as a result of the information you obtained at the Merritt VC?*

Results from these questions indicate that the Merritt VC had an impact on traveller behaviour. Eleven percent of travellers at the Merritt VC said that they learned about new trip activities as a result of their stopping at the VC. Seven percent replied they would spend extra time in the Merritt region, six percent would spend extra time in other parts of British Columbia, and over a fifth (21%) would make another trip in/to British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VC (Figure 21).

Those travellers who indicated they would spend extra time in the Merritt region and/or in British Columbia, or make another trip to/in British Columbia as a direct result of the VC were used to calculate the economic benefit of the Merritt VC<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of the Merritt Region used for this study is the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake.

<sup>3</sup> Economic benefit estimates can be obtained from the British Columbia Visitor Centre @ Merritt.

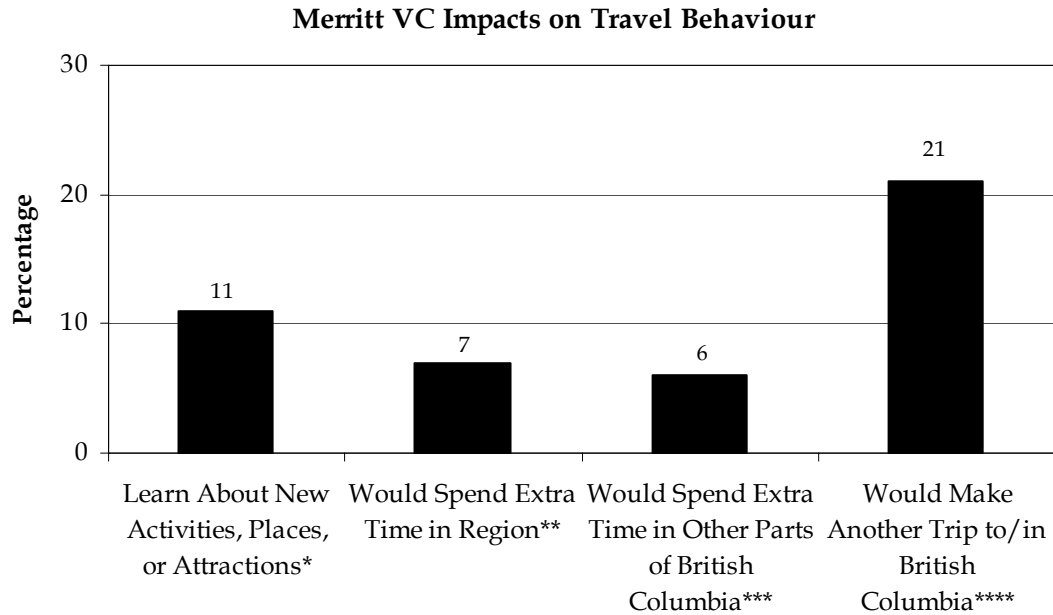


Figure 21. The proportion of travellers at the Merritt VC that learned about new activities, places or attractions, would spend extra time in region, would spend extra time in other parts of British Columbia or would make another trip to/in British Columbia as a direct result of the Merritt VC.

\* Don't Know/No Response =28 (2.4%); \*\* Don't Know/No Response =19 (4.5%); \*\*\* Don't Know/No Response =42 (3.9%); \*\*\*\*Don't Know/No Response=54 (4.7%).

A number of trip and traveller characteristics could influence the impact of the VC on traveller behaviour. Characteristics like traveller origin, speaking with a Visitor Information Counsellor, primary trip purpose, flexibility in trip activities while in the Merritt region, flexibility in the time spent in the Merritt region, and flexibility in the time spent in British Columbia were examined to understand if they influenced the impact the Merritt VC had on traveller behaviour (Table 13).

US and other international travellers were more likely to learn about new activities, places or attractions and to spend extra time in the region and in BC and to make another trip to BC than were respondents from BC or the rest of Canada. Notably, travellers from international countries (other than the US) were also more likely to make another trip to BC in the future as a result of the information obtained from the VC. Travellers from BC, and to a certain extent, from other provinces in Canada, were less likely to be influenced by the VC to spend extra time in the region or elsewhere in BC (Table 13).

Travellers who did not speak with a Visitor Information Counsellor were far less likely to be influenced by the information they received compared to those that did speak to a Counsellor. A considerably higher proportion of travellers who spoke with a Counsellor learned about new activities, places or attractions; would spend extra time in the region; and would take another trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VC (Table 13).

Those who came on their trip for leisure purposes were more likely to learn about new activities, places or attractions, spend extra time in the region and in other parts of BC, and also more likely to make another trip than were those who came to visit family and friends. A considerably higher proportion of travellers who had not pre-planned activities for their trip learned about new activities, places or attractions; and expressed a desire to spend extra time in the region as well as take another trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VC. Trip flexibility, with respect to time in the region and in BC, influenced the impact the VC had on traveller behaviour. Respondents who were very flexible with the amount of time in the region and in BC were much more likely to spend extra time in the province and take another trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VC (Table 13).

Travellers at the Merritt VC learned about a wide range of new activities. A total of 141 activities, places or attractions were mentioned. The most common response was festivals and events such as the Merritt Music Festival and Canada Day celebrations (19%), arts/cultural/local attractions such as the Murals and Museum in Merritt (18%), route information (11%), accommodations such as campgrounds and ranches (11%) and water based recreation such as lakes and lake tours (9%). Other less frequently mentioned items included information on other communities (7%), wildlife viewing opportunities (6%), learning about provincial parks (6%), local shopping/service related information (6%) and land-based recreation offerings (6%, Figure 22).

Additional comments regarding the Merritt VC made by respondents to the mailback survey are included in Appendix F.



Table 13. The impact of the Merritt VC on traveller behaviour by traveller origin, travellers who did and did not speak with a Counsellor, primary trip purpose and flexibility.

	Percentage of Travellers Who:			
	Learned About New Activities, Places or Attractions*	Would Stay Extra Time in Region*	Would Stay Extra Time in Other Parts of BC*	Would Make Another Trip*
<b>Overall</b>	11.1%	7.3%	5.8%	21.2%
<b>Origin</b>				
British Columbia	7.6%	6.6%	3.8%	17.6%
Other Canada	12.3%	3.4%	7.8%	25.3%
US	30.9%	14.7%	10.4%	27.2%
Other International	19.8%	17.2%	14.9%	36.0%
<b>Spoke With A Counsellor</b>				
Yes	14.3%	9.8%	7.1%	27.0%
No	3.3%	0.9%	2.6%	6.4%
<b>Primary Trip Purpose<sup>1</sup></b>				
Leisure	14.1%	10.0%	7.2%	24.5%
Visiting Friends & Family	8.1%	3.4%	4.4%	17.8%
<b>Activity Flexibility - Region</b>				
76-100% of activities pre-planned	16.3%	9.1%	7.0%	26.5%
51-75% of activities pre-planned <sup>2</sup>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
26-50% of activities pre-planned <sup>3</sup>	27.8%	13.3%	6.7%	38.9%
0-25% of activities pre-planned	33.8%	34.9%	5.9%	35.4%
<b>Time Flexibility - Region</b>				
Inflexible (no extra time)	7.8%	N/A <sup>4</sup>	4.2%	18.7%
Moderately Flexible (extra few hours)	14.9%	5.4%	8.5%	21.9%
Very Flexible (extra day(s))	18.4%	9.5%	10.2%	29.8%
<b>Time Flexibility - BC</b>				
Inflexible (no extra time)	9.1%	7.7%	4.0%	20.2%
Moderately Flexible (extra few hours)	12.6% (18)	4.3%	3.5%	18.2%
Very Flexible (extra day(s))	13.8%	8.3%	9.4%	24.1%

\* Due to a relatively high number of 'Don't Know/No Response' answers, Don't Know/No Response' answers were kept in the denominator to calculate the percent of respondents who said 'Yes.' This approach is consistent with previous years and avoids overestimating impact.

1. Thirty-four 'Other' cases excluded from analysis in order to display the most pertinent information.
2. Caution is advised when interpreting these numbers because the sample size for this category is low (n=1).
3. Caution is advised when interpreting these numbers because the sample size for this category is low (n=18).
4. Respondents who indicated that they had no extra time to spend in the region regarding trip flexibility were not asked the impact question about willingness to stay extra time in the region.

**Top 10 New Activities, Places or Attractions Learned About at the Merritt VC**

*What activities, places or attractions did you learn about that you were not previously aware of?*

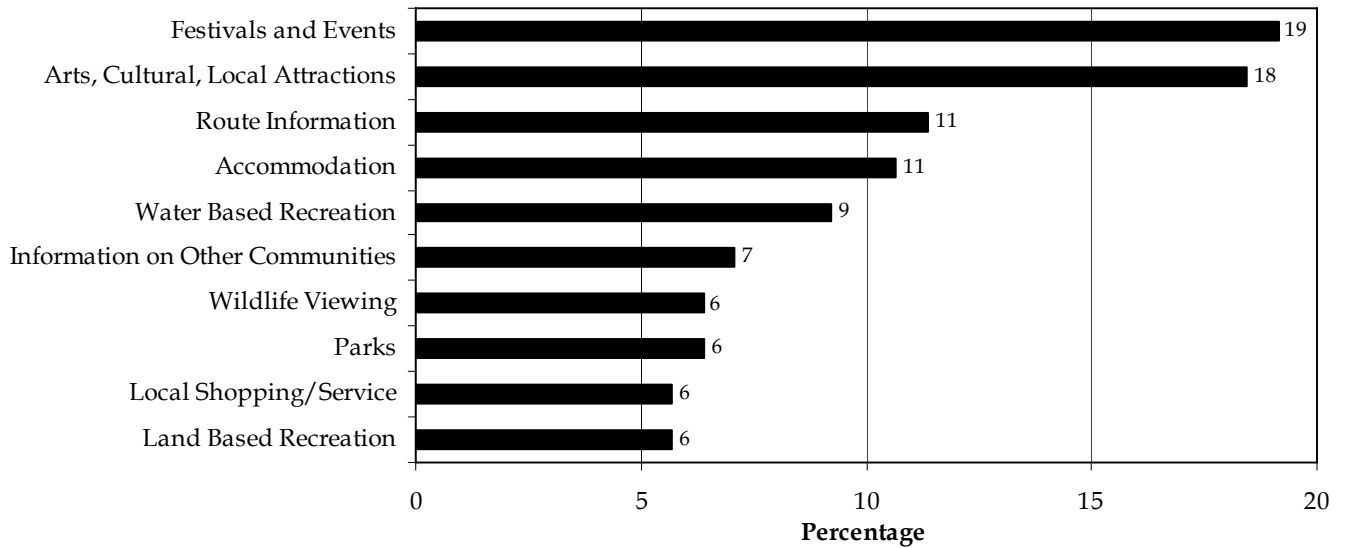


Figure 22. The top 10 activities, places or attractions that respondents learned about at the Merritt VC.

## Conclusions

1. Travellers who stop at the Merritt VC differ slightly from the typical traveller intercepted at Britton Creek. Relative to travellers at Britton Creek, those at the Merritt VC were less likely to:
  - Be from Alberta, Washington State or the UK,
  - Have a primary destination outside BC, or
  - Have pre-planned their activities before arriving in the Merritt region.

Travellers at the Merritt VC were similar to travellers at Britton Creek in their:

- Age,
- Education,
- Travel party size and proportion travelling with children,
- Primary trip purpose,
- Primary accommodations,
- Primary mode of transportation,
- Primary destination,
- Primary motivation for travel,
- Activity participation,
- Intent to participate in activities on future leisure trips,
- Total trip duration,
- Duration of stay in British Columbia,
- Duration of stay in the Merritt region,
- Trip planning horizons,
- Use of information for trip planning,
- Flexibility in terms of time spent in the Merritt region and in British Columbia, and
- Daily expenditures.

2. The profile of travellers can be applied:
  - To ensure that the current information provided to VC users reflects the needs of travellers using the VC.
  - For business planning and management of new and existing tourism businesses in the Merritt region. The data presented provides details on the types of clients new tourism businesses in the Merritt region can expect and characteristics, interests and trip flexibility of potential clients who could be attracted through marketing (brochures, etc.) at the Merritt VC.
  - To design a marketing plan to attract travellers who do not currently use the VC. For example, a plan could be designed to encourage travellers who are in the Merritt region visiting friends and family to use the Merritt VC.
3. Almost all (95%) travellers responded that the VC either met or exceeded their expectations. Thirty-two percent of travellers indicated that the VC exceeded their expectations while 63% felt the VC met their expectations.
4. The Merritt VC had a positive impact on traveller behaviour. Eleven percent of travellers learned about new activities, places or attractions; 7% reported that they would spend extra time in the

Region; 6% would stay extra time in other parts of British Columbia; and 21% would make another trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the information they obtained at the Merritt VC.

5. Most visitors who stopped at the VC spoke to a Visitor Information Counsellor (71%). Travellers who spoke to Counsellors were more likely to learn about new activities, places or attractions, to spend extra time in the Region and to take a future trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VC compared to those who did not. These findings highlight the importance of having Counsellors available to help travellers.

## Limitations

1. These results are representative of travellers who stopped at the Merritt VC or Britton Creek between May 17 and September 4, 2006. Trip and traveller characteristics of visitors at other times of the year could differ from those interviewed during the study period.
2. These results are representative of the influence the Merritt VC had on travellers who did not live in the Merritt region. This study did not explore the impact on travellers who call or email for information prior to their visit.
3. Some of the statistics contained within this report were produced with small sample sizes; consequently, some of the results should be treated with caution.
4. Findings from similar studies at other VCs in British Columbia have differed from those presented here. Therefore, the findings presented here cannot be applied to other Visitor Centres.
5. Results presented here do not represent the full range of analysis that can be completed with the data collected. For example, a profile of travellers visiting friends and family versus those that were travelling for leisure could be developed. Please contact Angela Xu, Research Services, Tourism British Columbia ([Angela.Xu@tourismbc.com](mailto:Angela.Xu@tourismbc.com)) for more information on obtaining custom reports using this data.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Interview Schedule and Interviews Completed

Appendix B - Questionnaires

Appendix C - Response Bias Testing

Appendix D - Other VCs Visited

Appendix E - Amenities/Services at the New 2008 Provincial Visitor Centre

Appendix F - Comments from Merritt VC Mailback Survey

## **Appendix A - Interview Schedule and Interviews Completed**

Table A1. The day and number of travellers approached, the number who agreed to the interview, the number of residents, the number of refusals, the number travelling in a tour group and the number of independent tourists interviewed at the Merritt VC during the study period.

	Merritt VC (May-September 2006)					
	Number of People Approached	Agree to Interview	Number of Residents	Refusals	Part of Tour Group	Tourists
May 17	47	35	1	12	5	29
May 19	102	76	1	26	1	74
May 23	61	46	0	15	4	42
May 25	53	45	0	8	1	44
May 29	47	36	0	11	0	36
May 31	44	39	0	5	4	35
Jun 04	58	46	1	12	0	45
Jun 05	62	50	0	12	3	47
Jun 06	45	36	0	9	0	36
Jun 10	40	30	0	10	1	29
Jun 12	41	33	2	8	0	31
Jun 16	25	18	1	7	2	15
Jun 18	38	29	1	9	1	27
Jun 22	27	21	0	6	2	19
Jun 24	26	21	0	5	4	17
Jun 28	42	34	0	8	0	34
Jun 30	49	36	1	13	4	31
Jul 04	37	31	0	6	3	28
Jul 06	37	32	0	5	2	30
Jul 10	46	36	1	10	0	35
Jul 12	46	38	0	8	1	37
Jul 16	41	23	1	18	5	17
Jul 18	41	33	1	8	6	26
Jul 22	40	30	3	10	2	25
Jul 24	50	38	0	12	0	38
Jul 28	48	40	1	8	1	38
Jul 30	58	39	1	19	0	38
Aug 04	56	43	0	13	3	40
Aug 05	52	39	1	13	1	37
Aug 09	39	27	0	12	2	25
Aug 11	43	30	0	13	1	29
Aug 13	44	37	0	7	2	35
Aug 15	42	31	0	11	4	27
Aug 17	52	40	0	12	2	38
Aug 21	35	29	0	6	1	28
Aug 23	45	28	0	17	6	22
Aug 29	41	30	1	11	4	25
Sep 02	42	33	0	9	5	28
Sep 04	33	25	0	8	5	20
<b>Total*</b>	<b>1,775</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1,257</b>

\*Included above are seven incomplete surveys conducted on May 25 (2), June 6, June 30 (2), July 4 and August 15.



Table A2. The day and number of travellers approached, the number who agreed to the interview, the number of residents, the number of refusals, the number travelling in a tour group and the number of independent tourists interviewed at Britton Creek during the study period.

	Britton Creek (May-September 2006)					
	Number of People Approached	Agree to Interview	Number of Residents	Refusals	Part of Tour Group	Tourists
May 18	56	52	0	4	1	51
May 20	68	55	1	13	0	54
May 24	43	33	0	10	1	32
May 26	24	18	1	6	0	17
May 30	63	51	0	12	0	51
Jun 01	50	46	0	4	0	46
Jun 07	58	46	1	12	0	45
Jun 11	42	37	0	5	0	37
Jun 13	31	23	1	8	0	22
Jun 17	38	30	0	8	0	30
Jun 19	13	11	0	2	0	11
Jun 23	56	50	0	6	0	50
Jun 25	55	49	2	6	0	47
Jun 26	26	21	0	5	0	21
Jun 29	66	50	0	16	0	50
Jul 01	61	56	0	5	3	53
Jul 05	33	33	1	0	1	31
Jul 07	49	44	1	5	1	42
Jul 11	40	33	0	7	0	33
Jul 13	40	35	1	5	2	32
Jul 17	53	45	0	8	0	45
Jul 19	34	29	0	5	0	29
Jul 23	43	37	0	6	0	37
Jul 25	48	40	0	8	0	40
Jul 29	54	48	1	6	0	47
Jul 31	55	45	0	10	0	45
Aug 03	64	52	1	12	0	51
Aug 06	55	37	1	18	1	35
Aug 10	31	26	0	5	0	26
Aug 12	53	39	0	14	0	39
Aug 16	54	42	0	12	1	41
Aug 21	62	49	0	13	4	45
Aug 22	52	36	1	16	1	34
Aug 28	31	24	0	7	2	22
Aug 30	22	16	1	6	1	14
Sep 03	40	36	1	4	0	35
<b>Total*</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1,340</b>

\*Included above are eight incomplete surveys conducted on May 30, June 17, June 26, June 29, July 5, July 11, July 19 and August 6.

## Appendix B – Questionnaires

## **Appendix B - Interview Questions (Merritt VC)**

**Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm conducting a survey on behalf of Tourism British Columbia. We'd like to ask you about your trip to the Merritt region and your experiences in British Columbia. Can I please speak with someone in your travel party who is knowledgeable about your trip planning and expenditures?**

1. Would you have approximately 10 minutes to answer some questions? If you participate, we would like to give you a complimentary gift for your time.

- YES       NO    *Are you sure? You will receive a complimentary gift for completing the interview? Thank you.*

2. Are you a resident of the Merritt region? The Merritt region is defined as the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake.

- NO       YES    *Thanks for agreeing to participate, however, we are only interviewing visitors from outside the area.*

3. Are you part of an organized tour group?

- NO       YES    *Thanks for agreeing to participate, however, we are only interviewing visitors who travel independently.*

4. Where do you live (usual place of residence)?

Province \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** State \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** Country (other international) \_\_\_\_\_

**To start, we have a few questions about your current trip.**

**IF FROM BC** 5. What is the **primary** purpose of your trip? Is it for Leisure, Visiting Friends and Family or Business?

- LEISURE  
 VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY  
 WORK/BUSINESS ACTIVITY *Thanks for participating. That completes the interview for business travellers.*  
 OTHER (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_)  
 DK/NR

**IF NOT FROM BC** 5. What is the **primary** purpose of your trip to British Columbia? Is it for Leisure, Visiting Friends and Family or Business?

- LEISURE  
 VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY  
 WORK/BUSINESS ACTIVITY *Thanks for participating. That completes the interview for business travellers.*  
 OTHER (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_)  
 DK/NR

6. What is your **primary** destination (the place that you will spend the most time)?

\_\_\_\_\_  NONE, TOURING       DK/NR

**IF FROM BC** 7. What is your **primary** (most often used) mode of transportation while on this trip?

- CAR/TRUCK/MC     RV     BUS     BICYCLE     OTHER \_\_\_\_\_     DK/NR

**IF NOT FROM BC** 7. What is your **primary** (most often used) mode of transportation while in British Columbia?

- CAR/TRUCK/MC     RV     BUS     BICYCLE     OTHER \_\_\_\_\_     DK/NR

8. Including the day you left your residence and the day you will return, how many days will you be away from your residence for this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ days (**Consult calendar; include day left and day returning**)

9. How many of those days will be spent travelling in British Columbia? \_\_\_\_\_ days

10. And how much time will be spent in the Merritt region? The Merritt region is defined as the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake. **(Consult study area map)**

NONE - JUST \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS      **OR**      \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS       DK/NR  
 PASSING THROUGH

**IF SPENDING TIME IN REGION** 11. What is your **primary** (most time spent) leisure activity while in the Merritt region?

\_\_\_\_\_  NONE       DK/NR

12. On this trip, which of the following best describes your **primary** (most often used) type of accommodation?

Resort/Hotel/Motel/B&B       Campground/RV       Friends or relatives       OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

13. In Canadian dollars, what were your travel party's total expenditures yesterday, including accommodation?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  BEGAN TRIP TODAY       DK/NR

**IF SPENDING TIME IN REGION** 14. Please think about the activities you will participate in or have participated in while in Merritt. What percentage of those were planned before you arrived in this region?

\_\_\_\_\_ %       DK/NR

15. Which of the following statements best describes your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in Merritt?

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME IN THIS REGION AT ALL
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS IN THIS REGION (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS IN THIS REGION
- D. DK/NR

**IF FROM BC AND ENTIRE TRIP IN BC** 16. What about your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend on this entire trip? **(Read choices, if necessary)**

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME ON THIS TRIP AT ALL
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS ON THIS TRIP (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS ON THIS TRIP
- D. DK/NR

**ELSE** 16. What about your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in British Columbia? **(Read choices, if necessary)**

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
- D. DK/NR

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your use of the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt.**

17. What was your reason for stopping at the Centre today? **(Do not prompt, check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN A MAP                            | <input type="checkbox"/> TO BUY A BC PARKS PARKING PASS                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN ROUTE INFO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> TO USE THE CENTRE'S WASHROOM FACILITIES                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN ATTRACTION INFO                  | <input type="checkbox"/> TO TAKE A BREAK FROM TRAVELLING AND GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN ACCOMMODATION INFO (NOT CAMPING) | <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN REFRESHMENTS                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN CAMPING INFO                     | <input type="checkbox"/> TO PURCHASE MERCHANDISE                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN ADVENTURE RECREATION INFO        | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN EVENT INFO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TO OBTAIN DINING INFO                      | <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR   |

18. While visiting today, what information or other things did you obtain? **(Do not prompt, check all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NOTHING                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> DINING INFO           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MAP                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> BC PARKS PARKING PASS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROUTE INFO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> REFRESHMENTS          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ATTRACTION INFO                           | <input type="checkbox"/> MERCHANDISE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACCOMMODATION (EXCLUDING CAMPGROUND) INFO | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAMPGROUND INFO                           | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADVENTURE RECREATION INFO                 | <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EVENT INFO                                |  |

19. While visiting today, did you or anybody in your travel party speak with a Visitor Information Counsellor?

- NO       YES       DK/NR

20. While at the Centre today, did you learn about any activities, places or attractions that you were previously not aware of?

- NO - Go to #22       YES - Go to #21       DK/NR - Go to #22

**IF YES** 21. What were those activities, places or attractions? **(Record up to three)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**SKIP IF Q15 = A (NO EXTRA TIME IN REGION)** 22. Will you spend some **extra** time in Merritt as a result of the information obtained at the Centre?

- NO       YES How much? \_\_\_\_\_ hours **OR** \_\_\_\_\_ nights       DK/NR

**SKIP IF Q15 ≠ A (SOME EXTRA TIME IN REGION) AND Q16 = A (NO EXTRA TIME IN BC)**

23. Will you spend some **extra** time in **other parts of British Columbia** as a result of the information obtained at the Centre?

- NO       YES How much? \_\_\_\_\_ hours **OR** \_\_\_\_\_ nights       DK/NR

24. Will you make another trip in British Columbia in the future as a result of the information you obtained at the Centre?

- NO       YES       DK/NR



## **Appendix B - Interview Questions (Britton Creek)**



**Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm conducting a survey on behalf of Tourism British Columbia. We'd like to ask you about your trip to the Merritt region and your experiences in British Columbia. Can I please speak with someone in your travel party who is knowledgeable about your trip planning and expenditures?**

1. Would you have approximately 8 minutes to answer some questions? If you participate, we would like to give you a complimentary gift for your time.

- YES       NO      *Are you sure? You will receive a complimentary gift for completing the interview? Thank you.*

2. Are you a resident of the Merritt region? The Merritt region is defined as the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake.

- NO    YES      *Thanks for agreeing to participate, however, we are only interviewing visitors from outside the area.*

3. Are you part of an organized tour group?

- NO    YES      *Thanks for agreeing to participate, however, we are only interviewing visitors who travel independently.*

4. Where do you live (usual place of residence)?

Province \_\_\_\_\_ OR State \_\_\_\_\_ OR Country (other international) \_\_\_\_\_

**To start, we have a few questions about your current trip.**

**IF FROM BC** 5. What is the **primary** purpose of your trip? Is it for Leisure, Visiting Friends and Family or Business?

- LEISURE
- VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY
- WORK/BUSINESS ACTIVITY *Thanks for participating. That completes the interview for business travellers.*
- OTHER (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_)
- DK/NR

**IF NOT FROM BC** 5. What is the **primary** purpose of your trip to British Columbia? Is it for Leisure, Visiting Friends and Family or Business?

- LEISURE
- VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY
- WORK/BUSINESS ACTIVITY *Thanks for participating. That completes the interview for business travellers.*
- OTHER (SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_)
- DK/NR

6. What is your **primary** destination (place that you will spend the most time)?

\_\_\_\_\_  NONE, TOURING       DK/NR

**IF FROM BC** 7. What is your **primary** (most often used) mode of transportation while on this trip?

- CAR/TRUCK/MC     RV     BUS     BICYCLE     OTHER \_\_\_\_\_     DK/NR

**IF NOT FROM BC** 7. What is your **primary** (most often used) mode of transportation while in British Columbia?

- CAR/TRUCK/MC     RV     BUS     BICYCLE     OTHER \_\_\_\_\_     DK/NR

8. Including the day you left your residence and the day you will return, how many days will you be away from your residence for this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ days (**Consult calendar; include day left and day returning**)

9. How many of those days will be spent travelling in British Columbia? \_\_\_\_\_ days

10. And how much time will be spent in the Merritt region? The Merritt is defined as the area north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza, south of Logan Lake, and between Spences Bridge and Douglas Lake. **(Consult study area map)**

NONE - JUST PASSING THROUGH      \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS      OR      \_\_\_\_\_ DAYS       DK/NR

**IF SPENDING TIME IN REGION** 11. What is your **primary** (most time spent) leisure activity while in the Merritt region?

\_\_\_\_\_  NONE     DK/NR

12. On this trip, which of the following best describes your **primary** (most often used) type of accommodation?

Resort/Hotel/Motel/B&B       Campground/RV       FRIENDS Or Relatives       OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

13. In Canadian dollars, what were your travel party's total expenditures yesterday, including accommodation?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  BEGAN TRIP TODAY     DK/NR

**IF SPENDING TIME IN REGION** 14. Please think about the activities you will participate in or have participated in while in Merritt. What percentage of those were planned before you arrived in this region?

\_\_\_\_\_ %     DK/NR

15. Which of the following statements best describes your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in Merritt?

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME IN THIS REGION AT ALL
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS IN THIS REGION (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS IN THIS REGION
- D. DK/NR

**IF FROM BC AND ENTIRE TRIP IN BC** 16. What about your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend on this entire trip? **(Read choices, if necessary)**

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME ON THIS TRIP AT ALL
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS ON THIS TRIP (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS ON THIS TRIP
- D. DK/NR

**ELSE** 16. What about your flexibility in the amount of time you have to spend in British Columbia? **(Read choices, if necessary)**

- A. I CAN NOT SPEND ANY EXTRA TIME IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
- B. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA FEW HOURS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA (LESS THAN A DAY)
- C. I CAN SPEND AN EXTRA DAY OR DAYS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
- D. DK/NR

17. On this trip, have you stopped or do you plan to stop at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt?

NO       YES       DK/NR

**IF NO** Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, I'd like to ask a few more questions about yourself.**

18. Including yourself, how many people are in your travel party today? How many are children under 18 and how many are adults?

\_\_\_\_\_ Adult(s)      \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) (under 18)      = \_\_\_\_\_ Total



## **Appendix B - Mailback Questionnaire (Merritt VC)**

# *The British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt*

## *What was your experience?*



Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

**Tourism British Columbia  
Research Services  
Box 9830, Stn Prov Gov't, 300-1803 Douglas Street,  
Victoria, BC Canada V8W 9W5**



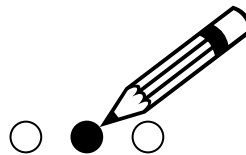
## Your opinions are important...

*Thank you for participating in this survey. Tourism British Columbia and its partners are working together to better understand your experiences, activities and impressions of your trip to the Merritt region and British Columbia.*

*If you have traveled within British Columbia more than once this year, **please tell us about the trip during which you were asked to participate in this survey.***

*Your responses and personal information will be kept confidential and used only for this survey.*

Please answer the survey questions by shading your answer using a pen or pencil. This will help us process the surveys accurately.



Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:



Tourism British Columbia  
Research Services  
Box 9830, STN PROV GOV'T  
300-1803 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC  
Canada V8W 9W5



If you have any questions, please call  
(toll free) 1-877-877-8811 in North America  
or 1-250-356-5629 from elsewhere.

## About your trip...

*This section asks questions about characteristics of your trip within British Columbia. Please answer all of the following questions with respect to the trip you were on when we interviewed you at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt.*

1. How many days did you spend away from your residence on this trip?

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s) away from residence

2. How many of those days were spent in British Columbia? If you are from British Columbia and you spent your whole vacation within the province, this should be the same as your reply to Question 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s) in British Columbia

3. What was your **primary destination** on this trip? Your primary destination is the place you stayed the longest or the place that immediately comes to mind as your destination when describing your trip. *Choose one answer only.*

- Our primary destination was \_\_\_\_\_
- We had no specific destination – we were touring around

4. When planning this trip, did you and/or your travel party consider other destinations or routes?

- Yes                       No                       Don't know

↳ Where? *Please list up to three.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. In general, what made you and/or your travel party choose the destination or route indicated in Question 3?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What was the **main** motivation for taking this trip? Choose **ONE** answer only.

- To rest, relax and recuperate
- To be some place that feels familiar and safe
- To spend quality time with family and/or friends
- To experience intimacy and romance
- To experience different cultures and ways of life
- To visit historical sites and important places in history
- To see natural wonders and important natural sites
- To experience unspoiled nature
- To visit a popular, trendy place
- To experience adventure and excitement
- To experience city life (e.g. nightlife, shopping)
- To participate in a hobby or sport (e.g. golfing, fishing, photographing)
- Other (*specify*) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

7. A. What activities did you and/or your travel party participate in while on this trip?

*Mark all that apply.*

B. Will you and/or your travel party be interested in participating in these activities on future trips? *Circle one answer only.*

<b>Your activities</b>	<b>A</b> Participated in during this trip <i>Mark all that apply</i>	<b>B</b> Interested in on future trips <i>Circle Yes, No or DK (Don't Know)</i>		
Golfing or attending a golfing event	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Shopping for local arts and crafts	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Participating in fine dining	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Attending a festival, fair or exhibition	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Attending or participating in a sporting event (other than golf)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK



Your activities (continued...)	<b>A</b> Participated in during this trip <i>Mark all that apply</i>	<b>B</b> Interested in on future trips <i>Circle Yes, No or DK (Don't Know)</i>		
Participating in soft adventure activities (wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, cycling, hiking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Participating in hard adventure activities (white water rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Visiting a:				
municipal, provincial or national park, or natural area outside a park	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
First Nations attraction or event	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
museum, heritage or historic site	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
art gallery or studio	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
winery	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
family attraction (mini golf, zoo, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
spa	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Other ( <i>specify</i> ) _____	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK

8. How far in advance did you start planning for this trip? *Choose one answer only.*

- Day of departure
- 1-6 days
- 1-2 weeks
- 3-8 weeks
- 9-12 weeks
- 13 weeks+
- Don't know

9. We would like to know the information sources you used to plan your trip before and during your trip. This includes information about where to stay, what route to take, where to eat and/or what to see and do.

A. What information sources did you use **before** your trip? *Mark all that apply.*

B. What are the **three most useful** information sources you used **before** your trip? *Mark top three only.*

C. What information sources did you use **during** your trip? *Mark all that apply.*

Information sources	Before trip		During trip
	A Used before trip ( <i>mark all that apply</i> )	B Most useful information ( <i>mark top 3</i> )	C Used during trip ( <i>mark all that apply</i> )
Past experience/ been there before	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice from friends/relatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1-800-HelloBC or www.HelloBC.com	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet (other than HelloBC website)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel agents, airlines, auto associations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tour operators, tourism-specific businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel guide books, visitor guides and brochures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advertising on TV / newspapers / magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media coverage (e.g. travel articles in newspapers, programs on TV)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visitor Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel / consumer shows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. What were your travel party's **total** expenditures during the trip?

*Please include all purchases, taxes and tips **except long-haul flights**.  
If you pre-paid any items prior to leaving on your trip (e.g. accommodation, tours, etc.), please include these in your estimate.*

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian dollars

11. Approximately what percentage of the total expenditures was attributed to the following categories? Please fill in the appropriate proportions, **excluding long-haul flights**.

<b>Categories</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Accommodation (hotels, motels, lodge, camping/RV fees, etc.)	_____ %
Transportation (short-haul flights within British Columbia, vehicle rental, gas, repairs, ferry, taxi, bus, etc.)	_____ %
Food & beverage (include any taxes and tips paid)	_____ %
Shopping (clothing, gifts, film, books, etc.)	_____ %
Attractions (admission, shows, tours, etc.)	_____ %
Outdoor recreation (park pass, nature guide, etc.)	_____ %
Other entertainment (spa, etc.)	_____ %
Other ( <i>specify</i> ) _____	_____ %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>= 100 %</b>

## About the Merritt Visitor Centre...

*This section asks about your use of the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt on the trip that we interviewed you.*

12. Did you spend any **extra** time in the **Merritt** region **as a result of** the information obtained at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt?

- No
- Yes → How much additional time? \_\_\_\_\_ hours **OR** \_\_\_\_\_ night(s)
- Don't know

13. Did you spend any **extra** time on your trip in **other parts of British Columbia as a result of** the information obtained at the Visitor Centre?

- No
- Yes → How much additional time? \_\_\_\_\_ hours **OR** \_\_\_\_\_ night(s)
- Don't know

14. Will you take another trip in British Columbia **as a result of** the information obtained at the Visitor Centre?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

15. Overall, how well did the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt live up to your original expectations?

- Fell short
- Met
- Exceeded
- Don't know

16. We interviewed you at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt. On this trip, did you visit any other Visitor Centres in British Columbia?

- No
- Yes → Where? Please specify

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17. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt?

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## Your travel experience...

*This section asks about your experiences, activities and impressions of your trip to the Merritt region and British Columbia.*

18. What positive and/or negative images/characteristics come to mind when you think of the **Merritt region** as a vacation destination? *Please list up to three.*

**Positive**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Negative**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

19. During the trip that we interviewed you, did you spend time in the **Merritt region**?

Yes *Go to Q20*

No *Go to Q23*

Don't know *Go to Q23*

20. Please think about the activities you participated in the **Merritt region** during your trip. What percentage of those activities were planned before you arrived in the region? An activity is considered 'planned' if prior to arriving in the region, you had booked it or decided to participate in it. For example, if you participated in 10 activities and had planned 3 of them, your answer to this question would be 30%. *Please fill in the most appropriate response.*

\_\_\_\_\_ %

Don't know

21. Please rate your experience with each component of your trip and your overall travel experience in the **Merritt region**? Choose one answer for each row.

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Don't Know	N/A
Accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to information about Merritt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractions and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation/adventure opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Overall travel experience</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Given your experience traveling in the **Merritt region**, how likely are you to return to the Merritt region for a future leisure trip? Choose one answer only.

- Not likely at all
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely
- Very likely
- Don't know

Please explain why.

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23. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trip in **British Columbia**? Choose one answer only.

- Very dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Don't know

24. Given your experience traveling in **British Columbia** on this trip, how likely are you to take another leisure trip within British Columbia? *Choose one answer only.*

- Not likely at all
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely
- Very likely
- Don't know

Please explain why.

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## About you...

25. Who was in your travel party when you stopped at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt? Please indicate their relationship to you, age and gender. Please start with yourself.

Who? <i>e.g. wife, husband, partner, son daughter, parent, friend...</i>	Age <i>(in years)</i>	Gender <i>(M=Male, F=Female)</i>
<b>1 Myself</b>		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

26. Before taxes, in Canadian dollars, what is your approximate **annual household** income? *Choose one answer only.*

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$64,999
- \$65,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 plus
- Don't know

*Please turn over*

27. Are you willing to participate in future research about your travel patterns and preferences in British Columbia? Participation may involve answering paper-based questionnaires similar to this one or web-based surveys. Your address information will be kept completely confidential and used only for research purposes.

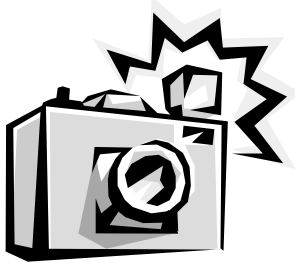
No

Yes → What is your email address?

*Please clearly print your email address.*

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your help!**



All completed surveys will be entered in a draw for a digital camera. The draw will be held in December 2006.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

Tourism British Columbia  
Research Services  
Box 9830, Stn Prov Gov't,  
300- 1803 Douglas Street,  
Victoria, BC Canada V8W 9W5





## **Appendix B - Mailback Questionnaire (Britton Creek)**

***Your trip in British Columbia***  
***What was your experience?***



Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

**Tourism British Columbia**  
**Research Services**  
**Box 9830, Stn Prov Gov't, 300-1803 Douglas Street,**  
**Victoria, BC Canada V8W 9W5**

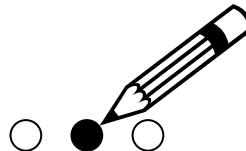
## Your opinions are important...

*Thank you for participating in this survey. Tourism British Columbia and its partners are working together to better understand your experiences, activities and impressions of your trip to the Merritt region and British Columbia.*

*If you have traveled within British Columbia more than once this year, **please tell us about the trip during which you were asked to participate in this survey.***

*Your responses and personal information will be kept confidential and used only for this survey.*

Please answer the survey questions by shading your answer using a pen or pencil. This will help us process the surveys accurately.



Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:



Tourism British Columbia  
Research Services  
Box 9830, STN PROV GOV'T  
300-1803 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC  
Canada V8W 9W5



If you have any questions, please call  
(toll free) 1-877-877-8811 in North America  
or 1-250-356-5629 from elsewhere.

## About your trip...

*This section asks questions about characteristics of your trip within British Columbia. Please answer all of the following questions with respect to the trip you were on when we interviewed you at the Britton Creek rest stop (the exit just north of the Highway 5 Coquihalla Toll Plaza in British Columbia).*

1. How many days did you spend away from your residence on this trip?

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s) away from residence

2. How many of those days were spent in British Columbia? If you are from British Columbia and you spent your whole vacation within the province, this should be the same as your reply to Question 1.

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s) in British Columbia

3. What was your **primary destination** on this trip? Your primary destination is the place you stayed the longest or the place that immediately comes to mind as your destination when describing your trip. *Choose one answer only.*

- Our primary destination was \_\_\_\_\_
- We had no specific destination – we were touring around

4. When planning this trip, did you and/or your travel party consider other destinations or routes?

- Yes                       No                       Don't know

↳ Where? *Please list up to three.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

5. In general, what made you and/or your travel party choose the destination or route indicated in Question 3?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What was the **main** motivation for taking this trip? Choose **one** answer only.

- To rest, relax and recuperate
- To be some place that feels familiar and safe
- To spend quality time with family and/or friends
- To experience intimacy and romance
- To experience different cultures and ways of life
- To visit historical sites and important places in history
- To see natural wonders and important natural sites
- To experience unspoiled nature
- To visit a popular, trendy place
- To experience adventure and excitement
- To experience city life (e.g. nightlife, shopping)
- To participate in a hobby or sport (e.g. golfing, fishing, photographing)
- Other (*specify*) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

7. A. What activities did you and/or your travel party participate in while on this trip?

*Mark all that apply.*

B. Will you and/or your travel party be interested in participating in these activities on future trips? *Circle one answer only.*

<b>Your activities</b>	<b>A</b> Participated in during this trip <i>Mark all that apply</i>	<b>B</b> Interested in on future trips <i>Circle Yes, No or DK (Don't Know)</i>		
Golfing or attending a golfing event	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Shopping for local arts and crafts	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Participating in fine dining	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Attending a festival, fair or exhibition	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Attending or participating in a sporting event (other than golf)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK

<b>Your activities (continued...)</b>	<b>A</b> Participated in during this trip <i>Mark all that apply</i>	<b>B</b> Interested in on future trips <i>Circle Yes, No or DK (Don't Know)</i>		
Participating in soft adventure activities (wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, cycling, hiking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Participating in hard adventure activities (white water rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Visiting a:				
municipal, provincial or national park, or natural area outside a park	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
First Nations attraction or event	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
museum, heritage or historic site	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
art gallery or studio	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
winery	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
farm, farmers' market, orchard or food processor	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
family attraction (mini golf, zoo, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
spa	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK
Other ( <i>specify</i> ) _____	<input type="radio"/>	YES	NO	DK

8. How far in advance did you start planning for this trip? *Choose one answer only.*

- Day of departure
- 1-6 days
- 1-2 weeks
- 3-8 weeks
- 9-12 weeks
- 13 weeks+
- Don't know

9. We would like to know the information sources you used to plan your trip before and during your trip. This includes information about where to stay, what route to take, where to eat and/or what to see and do.

A. What information sources did you use **before** your trip? *Mark all that apply.*

B. What are the **three most useful** information sources you used **before** your trip? *Mark top three only.*

C. What information sources did you use **during** your trip? *Mark all that apply.*

Information sources	Before trip		During trip
	A Used before trip ( <i>mark all that apply</i> )	B Most useful information ( <i>mark top 3</i> )	C Used during trip ( <i>mark all that apply</i> )
Past experience/ been there before	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice from friends/relatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1-800-HelloBC or www.HelloBC.com	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet (other than HelloBC website)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel agents, airlines, auto associations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tour operators, tourism- specific businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel guide books, visitor guides and brochures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advertising on TV / newspapers / magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media coverage (e.g. travel articles in newspapers, programs on TV)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visitor Centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Travel / consumer shows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. What were your travel party's **total** expenditures during the trip?

*Please include all purchases, taxes and tips **except long-haul flights**.  
If you pre-paid any items prior to leaving on your trip (e.g. accommodation, tours, etc.), please include these in your estimate.*

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian dollars

11. Approximately what percentage of the total expenditures was attributed to the following categories? Please fill in the appropriate proportions, **excluding long-haul flights**.

Categories	% of total
Accommodation (hotels, motels, lodge, camping/RV fees, etc.)	_____ %
Transportation (short-haul flights within British Columbia, vehicle rental, gas, repairs, ferry, taxi, bus, etc.)	_____ %
Food & beverage (include any taxes and tips paid)	_____ %
Shopping (clothing, gifts, film, books, etc.)	_____ %
Attractions (admission, shows, tours, etc.)	_____ %
Outdoor recreation (park pass, nature guide, etc.)	_____ %
Other entertainment (spa, etc.)	_____ %
Other ( <i>specify</i> ) _____	_____ %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>= 100 %</b>

*Please turn over*



## About the Merritt Visitor Centre...

*This section asks about the use of the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt on the trip that we interviewed you.*

12. Did you visit the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt on this trip?

- No Go to Q14
- Yes Go to Q13
- Don't know Go to Q15

13. Overall, how well did the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt live up to your original expectations?

- Fell short
  - Met
  - Exceeded
  - Don't know
- } → Go to Q15

14. Please let us know why you didn't visit the British Columbia Centre at Merritt?

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15. On this trip, did you visit other Visitor Centres in British Columbia?

- No
- Yes → Where? Please specify

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## Your travel experience...

16. What positive and/or negative images/characteristics come to mind when you think of the **Merritt region** as a vacation destination? *Please list up to three.*

Positive	Negative
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

17. During the trip that we interviewed you, did you spend time in the **Merritt region**?

Yes *Go to Q18*       No *Go to Q21*       Don't know *Go to Q21*

18. Please think about the activities you participated in the **Merritt region** during your trip. What percentage of those activities were planned before you arrived in the region? An activity is considered 'planned' if prior to arriving in the region, you had booked it or decided to participate in it. For example, if you participated in 10 activities and had planned 3 of them, your answer to this question would be 30%.

\_\_\_\_\_ %       Don't know

19. Please rate your experience with each component of your trip and your overall travel experience in the **Merritt region**? *Choose one answer for each row.*

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Don't Know	N/A
Accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to information about Merritt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractions and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation/adventure opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Overall travel experience</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Given your experience traveling in the **Merritt region**, how likely are you to return to the Merritt region for a future leisure trip? *Choose one answer only.*

- Not likely at all
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely
- Very likely
- Don't know



→ Please explain why.

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---

---

21. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trip in **British Columbia**? *Choose one answer only.*

- Very dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Don't know

22. Given your experience traveling in **British Columbia** on this trip, how likely are you to take another leisure trip within British Columbia? *Choose one answer only.*

- Not likely at all
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Likely
- Very likely
- Don't know



→ Please explain why.

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## About you...

23. Who was in your travel party when we interviewed you at the Britton Creek rest stop? Please indicate their relationship to you, age and gender. Please start with yourself.

Who? <i>e.g. wife, husband, partner, son daughter, parent, friend...</i>	Age <i>(in years)</i>	Gender <i>(M=Male, F=Female)</i>
1 <b>Myself</b>		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

24. Before taxes, in Canadian dollars, what is your approximate **annual household** income? *Choose one answer only.*

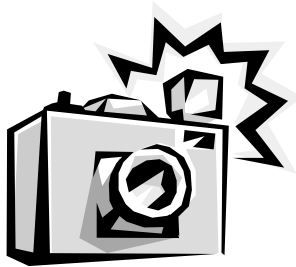
- Less than \$25,000  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999  
 \$50,000 to \$64,999  
 \$65,000 to \$99,999  
 \$100,000 plus  
 Don't know

25. Are you willing to participate in future research about your travel patterns and preferences in British Columbia? Participation may involve answering paper-based questionnaires similar to this one or web-based surveys. Your address information will be kept completely confidential and used only for research purposes.

- No  
 Yes → What is your email address?  
*Please clearly print your email address.*

\_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your help!**



All completed surveys will be entered in a draw for a digital camera. The draw will be held in December 2006.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

Tourism British Columbia  
Research Services  
Box 9830, Stn Prov Gov't,  
300- 1803 Douglas Street,  
Victoria, BC Canada V8W 9W5



## **Appendix C - Response Bias Testing**

## **Response Bias Testing**

### **Methods**

The study design produced four sets of data that are available for analysis - the interview questionnaires at each location (interview Merritt VC and interview Britton Creek) and the mailback questionnaires (mailback Merritt VC and mailback Britton Creek). At the Merritt VC, the respondents and the responses could vary between the interview and mailback questionnaires. The respondents could differ because travellers could drop out of the study by not agreeing to complete the mailback questionnaire or by not completing the mailback questionnaire if they had agreed to complete it. Both instances could cause the mailback questionnaire results to be unrepresentative of travellers interviewed (non-response bias).

A series of tests were conducted to assess the mailback questionnaires' representativeness or, in other words, if the mailback questionnaire results portray the actual population of travellers interviewed.

Representativeness was assessed by:

1. Comparing demographics, trip and traveller characteristics between those who agreed and did not agree to complete the mailback questionnaire (Tables A3, A4).
2. Comparing demographics, trip and traveller characteristics between those who responded and those who did not respond to the mailback questionnaire (Tables A3, A4).

Responses to similar questions in the interview and mailback questionnaires could vary due to real differences in traveller behaviour (for example, a traveller may have perceived that the VC had a different impact on their trip when they were interviewed compared to the responses on the mailback questionnaire). Therefore a series of questions were asked in the same way on both the interview and mailback questionnaire. Differences between responses to the two questionnaires were assessed by comparing responses to key questions that were asked in both the interview and on the mailback questionnaire (Tables A5, A6).

### **Results**

#### **Differences in Respondents who Agreed or Did Not Agree to Mailback**

- At the Merritt VC, there were very few differences between respondents who agreed to participate with those who did not agree to participate in the mailback questionnaire.
- Respondents from the Merritt VC who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire were more likely to be female and spent more time away from home compared to those who did not agree to the mailback questionnaire.
- Respondents from the Merritt VC who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire were more likely to indicate that they would spend extra time in the Merritt region and in other parts of British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the Merritt VC compared to those who did not agree to the mailback questionnaire.
- At Britton Creek, respondents who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire spent more time away from home and in British Columbia compared to those who did not agree to the mailback questionnaire.

### **Differences in Respondents that Returned/Did Not Return the Mailback Questionnaire**

- At the Merritt VC, there was only one notable difference between respondents who did and did not respond to the mailback questionnaire. Respondents who completed the mailback questionnaire were older compared to those who did not complete the mailback questionnaire.
- At Britton Creek, respondents who completed the mailback questionnaire were older and were less likely to be travelling with children. In addition, they spent more days in British Columbia and had a lower daily expenditure compared to those who did not complete the mailback questionnaire.

### **Differences in Interview/Mailback Responses**

- Overall, responses to the mailback survey were fairly consistent with those given during the interview at both locations.
- At the Merritt VC, respondents had lower daily expenditures in the mailback survey than in the interview.
- Additional differences between the data sets were seen at the Merritt VC in how respondents answered the questions about the impact of the Visitor Centre.
- A higher proportion of respondents said that they spent extra time in the rest of British Columbia as a result of the Merritt VC in the mailback survey than in the interview.
- A considerably higher proportion of respondents said that they would take another trip to/in British Columbia as a result of the Merritt VC in the mailback survey than in the interview.
- At Britton Creek, the only difference seen was that mailback respondents had notably lower daily expenditures than in the interview.

### **Conclusions**

- Overall, few differences existed between those who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire and those who did not.
- Mailback responses are generally representative of the population that was interviewed.
- Most of the variables tested did not indicate significant difference between the mailback questionnaire and interview results.
- Responses to the questions regarding the impact of the VC were different in the mailback questionnaire than in the interview with fewer affirmative responses recorded in the interview.



Table A3. A summary of the comparisons between those that agreed to the mailback questionnaire and those that did not, those that did and did not respond to the mailback questionnaire and between the interview and mailback responses for the Merritt VC.

Merritt VC	✓ Indicates a Practical Difference		
	Agreed to Mailback <sup>1</sup>	Mailback Responses (Non-Response Bias)	Interview/Mailback Responses
Origin	N	N	n/a
Gender	✓	N	N
Age	N	✓	N
Party Size	N	N	N
Parties With Children	N	N	✓
Education	N	N	n/a
Days Away from Home	✓	N	N
Days in British Columbia	N	N	N
Days in Merritt	N	N	n/a
Daily Expenditure <sup>2</sup>	N	N	✓
Learn About New Activities	N	N	n/a
Extra Time in Region	✓	N	N
Extra Time in Other Parts of BC	✓	N	✓
Take Another Trip To/In BC	N	N	✓

1. Represents only people that agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire.

2. Expenditure comparisons only include those that could answer the question in the interview. Those that started their trip on the day of the interview and those that did not answer the question were excluded. The top and bottom 2% of responses were trimmed.

Table A4. A summary of the comparisons between those that agreed to the mailback questionnaire and those that did not, those that did and did not respond to the mailback questionnaire and between the interview and mailback responses for Britton Creek.

Britton Creek	✓ Indicates a Practical Difference		
	Agreed to Mailback <sup>1</sup>	Mailback Responses (Non-Response Bias)	Interview/Mailback Responses
Origin	N	N	n/a
Gender	N	N	N
Age	N	✓	N
Party Size	N	N	N
Parties With Children	N	✓	N
Education	N	N	n/a
Days Away from Home	✓	N	N
Days in BC	✓	✓	N
Daily Expenditure <sup>2</sup>	N	✓	✓

1. Represents only people that agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire.

2. Expenditure comparisons only include those that could answer the question in the interview. Those that started their trip on the day of the interview and those that did not answer the question were excluded. The top and bottom 2% of responses were trimmed.

Table A5. A summary of differences in data between the interview and mailback questionnaire at the Merritt VC.

Concept/Questions	Trip Characteristics Results		Practical Difference?
	Interview	Mailback	
Mean Days Away From Home	9.33	9.58	N
Mean Days In BC	6.55	7.21	N
Mean Daily Expenditure	168.73	151.99	✓
Mean Party Size	2.29	2.61	N
Age - Under 24 Years	1.4%	0.4%	N
Age - 25-34 Years	7.6%	2.8%	N
Age - 35-44 Years	17.4%	15.2%	N
Age - 45-54 Years	25.3%	26.3%	N
Age - 55-64 Years	24.8%	28.6%	N
Age - 65 Years or Older	23.6%	26.7%	N
Gender - Male	47.3%	44.0%	N
Gender - Female	52.7%	56.0%	N
Primary Destination - Study Area	7.7%	3.9%	N
Parties with Children	15.2%	23.0%	N
Extra Time in Region	7.3%	13.6%	N
Extra Time in Other Parts of BC	5.8%	16.2%	✓
Take Another Trip To/In BC	21.2%	45.5%	✓

Table A6. A summary of differences in data between the interview and mailback questionnaire at Britton Creek.

Concept/Questions	Trip Characteristics Results		Practical Difference?
	Interview	Mailback	
Mean Days Away From Home	8.84	9.68	N
Mean Days In BC	6.01	6.90	N
Mean Daily Expenditure	173.98	149.31	✓
Mean Party Size	2.34	2.58	N
Age - Under 24 Years	2.0%	0.4%	N
Age - 25-34 Years	8.1%	5.1%	N
Age - 35-44 Years	19.0%	14.0%	N
Age - 45-54 Years	25.6%	27.8%	N
Age - 55-64 Years	23.5%	25.9%	N
Age - 65 Years or Older	21.8%	26.7%	N
Gender - Male	53.6%	48.6%	N
Gender - Female	46.4%	51.4%	N
Primary Destination - Study Area	5.3%	5.5%	N
Parties with Children	19.1%	21.6%	N

**Appendix D - Other VCs Visited**

Table A7. Location of other VCs visited by mailback survey respondents.

Location of Other VC Visited <sup>1</sup>	Number of Responses	Location of Other VC Visited	Number of Responses
100 Mile House	2	Jasper*	6
Abbotsford	5	Kamloops	13
Shuswap Park*	1	Kananaskis*	1
Banff*	9	Kaslo, BC	1
BC/Alberta border*	1	Kelowna	34
Britton Creek*	7	Kicking Horse Mountain*	1
Cache Creek	1	Kimberly	4
Campbell River	2	Lake Louise*	3
Castlegar	2	Langley	2
Chase	4	Lillooet	3
Chemainus	3	Logan Lake	1
Chilliwack	6	Long Beach*	1
Clearwater	8	Lytton	1
Columbia Ice Fields*	1	Medicine Hat, AB*	1
Coquihalla	4	Merritt	2
Courtenay / Comox	6	Mount Robson	17
Creston	1	Nakusp	2
Douglas Border Crossing*	1	Nanaimo	2
Duncan	2	Nelson	7
Enderby	1	New Westminster Quay	1
Fernie	1	Okanagan*	4
Ferry*	2	Oliver	1
Field*	16	Osoyoos	4
Finn Creek, picnic*	1	Pacific Rim National Park*	2
Fort Langley	3	Parksville	6
Fort Nelson	2	Peachland	4
Fort St John	1	Penticton	10
Frank Slide*	1	Port Alberni	1
Gibsons	2	Powell River	1
Glacier Provincial Park*	5	Prince George	3
Golden	11	Princeton	2
Hope	18	Qualicum Beach	6
Invermere	1	Queen Charlotte Islands	1

Location of Other VC Visited <sup>1</sup>	Number of Responses	Location of Other VC Visited	Number of Responses
Quesnel	2	Thermal Spa*	1
Radium Hot Springs	2	Tofino	6
Regina, SK*	1	Ucleulet	5
Revelstoke	6	Valemount	1
Rogers Pass*	7	Vancouver	17
Salmo*	1	Vancouver Island*	4
Salmon Arm	7	Vernon	14
Scotch Creek*	1	Victoria	22
Sechelt	1	Waterton Nat Park*	1
Sicamous	1	Wells Grey*	1
Sidney	2	Westbank	2
Sooke	1	Whistler	9
Squamish	1	White Rock	3
Summerland	6	Williams Lake	1
Sun Peaks*	1	Yoho National Park*	3
Terry Fox Visitor Centers*	1		

1. The locations marked with a \* are not part of the official British Columbia VC network but are listed here because they were mentioned by respondents.

## **Appendix E – Amenities/Services at the New 2008 Provincial Visitor Centre**

Comments have been corrected for spelling but not for grammar.

Comments are grouped into a number of general categories including washroom facilities/features, snacks/refreshments/restaurants, children's play area, grassy/sheltered surrounding area, parking, amenities of the new building, information services, gas station, building structure, maps/displays, additional merchandise/services, hours of operation, signage/directions, local arts and crafts, pet friendly features, accommodation, staff, ATM/currency exchange, walking/hiking trails, museums, casinos, golf, and other general comments.

A new Provincial Visitor Centre will be built on this site in 2008. The new centre will offer services including trip planning, information counselling, reservations, ticketing, retail, and food and beverage sales. What additional amenities and services would you like to see at the new Centre?

Where provided, number in brackets indicates the number of total responses for a certain item.

**Washrooms Facilities/Features:**

- 24 hr washrooms (15)
- Baby change station (2)
- Bathrooms after hours
- Bathrooms in winter
- Better & cleaner bathrooms
- Better & more bathrooms with toilet seat covers
- Better & more washrooms
- Better & more women's washrooms
- Better bathrooms (38)
- Better bathrooms longer winter hours
- Better sewer system
- Better signage to restrooms (3)
- Better washrooms (inside center)
- Better washrooms in winter
- Better washrooms with change tables
- Big clean washroom
- Bigger & better washrooms (2)
- Bigger & more bathrooms
- Bigger 24 hour washrooms
- Bigger and more female washrooms
- Bigger more cleaner washrooms Feng Sui bathrooms
- Bigger more washrooms (3)
- Bigger restroom for women
- Bigger toilet stalls
- Bigger washrooms (26)
- Bigger women's bathroom
- Cleaner washrooms (7)
- Cleaner washrooms more washrooms
- Good washrooms
- Handicap accessible washrooms more
- Handicap washrooms
- Improved washrooms more and larger



- Indoor washrooms (13)
- Indoor washrooms better mirrors
- Larger and more 24hr washrooms
- Larger and more washrooms (6)
- Larger bathroom stalls
- Larger bathrooms cleaned more frequently
- Larger better washrooms
- Larger cleaner touchless washrooms
- Larger washrooms (9)
- Larger washrooms more child friendly washrooms
- Longer hours for washrooms (3)
- More & better washrooms (3)
- More bathrooms for women
- More bigger washrooms
- More cleaner washrooms
- More hand dryers
- More indoor washrooms
- More ladies washrooms (7)
- More larger washrooms (3)
- More restrooms better
- More toilets and sinks
- More washrooms (86)
- Motion sensor paper towel holders in bathrooms
- Nicer & more washrooms
- Nicer washrooms (7)
- Paper towels in restrooms (12)
- Paper towels instead of air dryers
- Pay showers (2)
- Pay toilets if necessary
- Permanent washrooms
- Showers (12)
- Touchless faucets warm water
- Touchless washrooms (2)
- Washrooms (7)
- Washrooms at night
- Washrooms checked frequently
- Washrooms in winter
- Washrooms more add on to existing building
- Washrooms open all winter

- Washrooms year round
- Wider washroom cubicles
- Year round 24 hr washrooms

**Snacks / Refreshments / Restaurants:**

- Affordable snacks
- Beer garden
- Better cafe
- Better cantina or restaurant
- Better coffee (3)
- Better coffee place
- Better coffee shop
- Better food (6)
- Better food service (2)
- Bigger coffee place
- Bigger eating area (2)
- Bigger food services with more staff
- Bigger restaurant
- Bigger snack place
- Bigger snacks
- Bistro
- Cafe or restaurant (4)
- Cafeteria (13)
- Cafeteria style dining i.e. more food choices
- Coffee by donation
- Coffee free
- Coffee machine
- Coffee shop (12)
- Coffee shop indoors
- Coffee shop or dairy queen
- Coffee shop or restaurant
- Covered snack area
- Different food setup different
- Diner or cafe
- Dining room
- Donation coffee
- Food
- Food closer to info centre
- Free beer

- Free coffee & maps (like in the states)
- Free water
- Fresh drinking water
- Fresh food
- Fresh fruit
- Fruit stand (3)
- Good cafe
- Good coffee (3)
- Good coffee shop indoors
- Good quality coffee e.g. Tim Hortons or Starbucks
- Good restaurant (2)
- Harder icecream
- Health food available
- Healthy lunch choices
- Hot food
- Indoor cafe
- Indoor coffee
- Indoor coffee shop (3)
- Indoor sit down cafe
- Inside cafe
- Inside snack bar (2)
- Irish pub
- Liquor store
- Local restaurants
- More east Indian food
- More food (6)
- More food selection (6)
- More food services
- More fruit
- More functional dining area
- More ice cream selection
- More selection at snack bar
- More snack options (3)
- More snacks (4)
- Nice coffee bar
- Nice place to eat
- Nice restaurant
- Outdoor cafe
- Permanent coffee shop indoors

- Pub (5)
- Refreshments in building
- Restaurant (127)
- Restaurant or cafe (2)
- Restaurant or cafe or pub
- Restaurant or more food
- Restaurant year round
- Sheltered dining
- Sit down cafe (3)
- Sit down coffee shop (2)
- Sit down indoor cafe
- Sit down restaurant (4)
- Starbucks (3)
- Starbucks or better cafe
- Stronger coffee (2)
- Tea house
- Tim Hortons (8)
- Variety of food
- Vegetarian food
- Wine shop
- Year-round food services (2)

**Children's Play Area:**

- Activities for children
- Children's & babies' swing set (or playground)
- Grassy play area for kids
- Kid friendly
- Kids activity area
- Kids area (2)
- Kids park
- More kid friendly
- Outdoor stage with children's acts
- Petting zoo
- Play area for kids (5)
- Play park
- Playground (43)
- Recreation playground
- Spray park for kids

- Sprinkle park
- Wading pool
- Water park (2)

**Grassy/Sheltered Surrounding Area:**

- Christmas lights on trees during the season
- Better landscaping (2)
- Bigger park area
- Bigger shaded picnic area
- Grass (4)
- Grassier picnic areas
- Grassy area (6)
- Grassy waking area
- Keep picnic tables
- Like barrier
- More benches
- More grass and trees
- More greenery
- More park
- More picnic area with shade
- More picnic space (2)
- More picnic tables (2)
- More rain shelter
- More shade (7)
- More shade & grass
- More shade for picnic area
- More shaded picnic tables
- More shelter
- More sheltered picnic area (3)
- More trees (3)
- More trees as windblock
- More wind shelter
- Park
- Park area
- Picnic areas (2)
- RV park picnic space
- Shade (2)
- Shady
- Water park

- Wind shelters (3)
- Windblocks

**Parking:**

- Better parking (4)
- Better parking for large units
- Better RV parking
- Better signage for parking
- Bigger parking area (2)
- Bigger parking lot
- Bigger RV parking space
- Extra parking
- Handicap parking (2)
- More parking (34)
- More RV parking (8)
- Motorhome parking
- Parking by washrooms
- RV park
- RV pullthrough parking

**Amenities of the Building:**

- Bee traps
- Better facilities
- Better seating area
- Bigger stalls
- Comfortable seating
- Commercial development
- Concession in building
- Easier access to building (no gravel paths)
- Electrical hookups
- Email access
- Everything in 1 building
- Free internet access
- Handicap access
- Hot tub
- Ice machine
- Indoor lounge
- Indoor sit-
- Inside seating

- Internet access (13)
- Larger gift shop
- Lounge area with TV/VCR
- More seating
- More seating with views
- More tables (4)
- Nice sitting area
- Pharmacy & aspirin
- Phone in shelter
- Phone signage
- Power for RV's
- Printer available
- RV dump site
- RV hookup
- Space for local artists to have stalls
- View
- Water feature
- Water for RV trailers
- Water fountains (3)
- Wheelchair access (3)
- Wireless internet

**Information Services:**

- Access to info
- Audio visual centre
- Better info on B&B's
- Better regional info
- Campsite info
- Cleaning chart
- Elevation info
- Fewer adds in magazines
- First Nations tourism brochure
- Forestry or Gov to answer Q's
- Historical info
- Historical videos
- Historical videos on display
- History of area (2)
- History of BC
- History of Merritt mining farming & reserves

- History of Nicola Valley
- Info on campground vacancies
- Info on local attractions
- Interpretive center with local info
- Magazines
- More animal info
- More clear information
- More coverage in winter
- More focus on info
- More free flyers
- More historical info on area
- More info boards (2)
- More info boards outside
- More info on all BC gearing up for Olympics
- More info on little towns
- More info on nature
- More local info
- More Merritt info (2)
- More provincial info
- More regional & geological info
- More regional focus
- Museum style information
- Nature hikes info
- Newspapers
- Promote music fest
- Real estate prices
- Self guided tours
- Statistics of visitors
- Update road conditions more regularly
- Video and audio presentations
- Video info
- Video playing of area & attractions
- Weather station
- Wildlife nature ecology

**Gas Station:**

- Gas station (42)
- Fuel & vehicle facility
- Service center



**Building Structure:**

- Add on to the original building
- Bigger (2)
- Bigger building
- Fireplace
- Flags
- Larger (2)
- Leave it way it is
- Log building (6)
- Log cabin style
- Lots of windows
- Music piped in
- Not just native
- Raised counters
- Same building
- Same building used as cafe
- Same log style building
- Same red roof
- Same style building (2)
- Swimming pool

**Maps / Displays:**

- A display of physical features of the region
- Better selection of maps
- Big map
- Big wall map
- Free BC maps (3)
- Free coffee & maps (like in the States)
- Free maps (4)
- Free province maps
- Kamloops maps
- Large outdoor map
- Large wall map of BC
- Lots of regional maps
- Maps of states
- More camping info on maps
- More interpretive nature info (like pine beetle display)
- More maps of province
- More regional environmental displays

- Outdoor maps
- Vancouver, Victoria maps
- Wildlife display

**Additional Merchandise/Services:**

- Cycle tools provided
- Honey stand
- Indoor water sales
- Less shopping stuff
- Modern clothes
- More historical gifts
- More merchandise
- More selection
- More souvenirs
- More variety of merchandise
- Newer CDs
- Newspapers for sale
- Not on retail
- Souvenirs for pets
- Bookstore
- Bumper stickers for Merritt or BC
- Emphasis that we offer reservations
- Fishing licenses
- Larger gift selection
- Massage services
- Sell fishing license
- Stamps for sale
- Swimming shorts for sale

**Hours of Operation:**

- 24 hour service (5)
- Always open
- Extended hours (2)
- Longer hours (6)
- Open in winter
- Longer hours for evening travelers
- Longer winter hours (4)
- Open later & open in winter

**Signage/Directions:**

- Better access from Kelowna side
- Better highway signs
- Better road access....no lights he mentioned...like a freeway exit/entrance ramp and take out the traffic lights
- Better road signage (3)
- Better road signs to centre
- Better signs
- Highway signage
- More in advance signage
- More signs marking hiking trail
- More signs off highway
- Signage
- Signs further back telling you what lane to be in
- Signs in different languages
- Would like turnoffs to be marked better

**Local Arts and Crafts:**

- Art ideas in area
- Display of local artists
- Local art and crafts
- Local artwork
- Local crafts (2)
- Local merchandise (arts and crafts)
- More pictures
- Native artwork
- Merritt merchandise
- More art
- More artwork
- More local art
- More local arts & crafts
- More local gift options
- More native art

**Pet Friendly Features:**

- Dog area/run
- Dog park (5)
- Dog trails
- Dog walking (3)

- Fenced in dog park
- Off leash dog area fenced in
- Pet facilities
- Water station for dogs
- Dog friendly picnic spaces
- Dog off- leash area

**Accommodation:**

- Alphabetical accommodation guides
- Camping
- Camping area
- Camping space
- Motel (2)
- Accommodation
- Campground
- Hotel
- Lodging
- Overnight sleeping options

**Staff:**

- More personnel
- Multilingual
- Better trained counsellors
- French info counsellors
- French speaking info counsellors
- More info counsellors
- More info counselling
- Tour guides

**ATM/Currency Exchange:**

- ATM (5)
- Money changer
- American currency exchange

**Hiking/Walking Trails:**

- Trails (2)
- Hiking trails (2)
- Walking trails (3)

**Museums:**

- Museum (2)
- Museum of valley
- Museum open
- Museum or historical site

**Golf:**

- Driving range
- Golf course (2)
- Golf

**Casino:**

- Casino (2)

**Other General Comments:**

- Better addresses
- Biking info
- Down area
- Easy recreation
- Horseback riding
- Horseback tours
- Misters
- More advertising
- People in
- Shooting range
- Tennis
- More highway stops between cities
- More rest areas along highway
- More rest stops on highway
- Stop between Merritt & Kelowna
- Train link

## **Appendix F - Comments from Merritt VC Mailback Survey**

Comments are typed exactly as they appear in the mailback surveys - sentences were not corrected for spelling and grammar.

Comments are grouped into the general categories of staff friendly and helpful, suggestions/need for improvement, not enough or poor services, enjoyed activities and services and other.

*Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience at the British Columbia Visitor Centre at Merritt?*

### **Staff Friendly And Helpful**

- The people were very friendly. Coin operated showers would be appreciated.
- Friendly knowledgeable folks there.
- Very courteous reception agent, a definite asset to the centre. Since you have all the information for visitors at the centre when they stop. Would it not be a good line to offer a gas coupon as incentive to motorists in the province. This would be a great advertising point. The method of the offer would have to be possibly for those stations in the area of the centre. But I am sure this could be worked out to advantage.
- Courteous, friendly, well informed staff
- Good stopping place between Vancouver and Kelowna. Also important to have them for those not familiar with areas; friendly staff always.
- Very pleasant and helpful staff.
- Very helpful, knowledgeable and friendly.
- Staff was very pleasant.
- Staff were very helpful and pleasant. A restaurant there would be an asset.
- Very helpful staff and well stocked shop and good picnic area.
- Very friendly, clean.
- Very friendly staff just gave us a lift in our spirits and helped us to smile!
- The staff are very pleasant and helpful. I bought some cards there with pictures by the artist Sue Coleman. They are very attractive and they include north west coast aboriginal designs.
- The staff was very well informed, friendly and helpful and courteous (and very patient with some other visitors that were very demanding).
- Very helpful and very pleasant staff.
- The attendants and shop keepers were most pleasant and co-operative.
- The help was friendly and helpful. The site and setting very pleasant. Well equipped. A sense of excitement (some are dull).
- Excellent friendly service, nice facility, well laid out & clean.
- Very friendly, helpful staff
- Upgrade the bathroom, friendly helpful, knowledgeable staff.
- The centre staff were very helpful & friendly.
- Young lady was very polite & positive.
- Very friendly staff & we love the log building. Will miss it when it is removed.
- Warmly welcomed & treated with exceptional courtesy
- Staff always attentive & friendly
- Very friendly
- Friendly & helpful staff
- Very helpful.
- All persons throughout our trip were polite and very helpful.

- Appreciate the courtesy.
- Staff were very obliging and courteous.
- The staff was helpful and courteous; very helpful.
- The staff was very helpful and knew about the Provincial Park we stay in from personal experience.
- Very accommodating staff.
- Very friendly and well maintained.
- The staff was very helpful and friendly.
- Very pleasant staff.
- People were friendly; we stopped here as we parted from our other family and went to Peachland to visit friends. Nice to stop & have ice cream & say goodbye.
- Friendly staff, infor re, ferry service to Vancouver Island. I would like to see more natural history info available at the Merritt location. Sign posts to named mountains, history of the two 'rocks' outside the main entrance. (ie, what are they, and where from ?) I know there are info boards and they are great, but there could be more.
- Excellent staff in store
- They were very pleasant
- Very friendly, was a nice hot day.
- The staff were very friendly and available to assist us.
- Employees friendly
- Very friendly and clean.
- The staff was very friendly and helpful. Facilities were clean!
- People were friendly
- Extremely helpful & polite staff, good infor availability.
- Friendly staff
- Exceptionally pleasant staff.
- We didn't require any information as we knew our destination well and could not spend any extra time in Merritt or other regions of BC. The staff was available and ready to help should we have required it. Very friendly.
- Have visited this centre several times since it was opened; great people, great information, lots of local handouts re: golf, museum, current happenings, etc.
- Very friendly and knowledgeable staff.
- Thank you for your helpfulness, kindness, friendliness. We stop there frequently.
- Very friendly, personal, helpful, clean. Highly recommended to others!
- Very helpful and friendly.
- The attendance at the gift shop were very friendly, but the washrooms could stand more improvement.
- The girl I spoke with was very pleasant and helpful.
- Good staff.
- Employees were friendly & most helpful.
- Nice people
- The staff are always courteous & helpful. Interesting to hear that this very necessary stop will be improved.



- Extremely helpful staff. Will definitely visit Visitor Centres on next trip.
- Very friendly staff, relaxed atmosphere.
- Courteous and helpful staff
- Very friendly approach and quite knowledgeable people.
- Everyone at the centre was most helpful.
- Student assistants were friendly & helpful, please improve washroom situations.
- The people that worked there were helpful and friendly.
- Everyone was very friendly.
- The ladies were very friendly! We were just passing through the region.
- Very convenient stops. Extremely helpful people. Lots of room to park and hiking, rails nearby. We enjoyed our fridge magnet and 'Beautiful BC' magazine. Hope to spend more time in your beautiful valley in future trips. Could use more bathrooms for busy times, bus passengers.
- The people (staff) are always friendly and very helpful.
- Clean & nice people working there.
- Very nice desk staff. Answered all our questions and gave maps of region.
- The staff were very, very helpful.
- Very knowledgeable and friendly staff. Definite improvement over previous stops there.
- Staff were pleasant and helpful.
- Very helpful and friendly staff.
- Friendly sales personnel. Nice display of various products.
- We were nicely treated.
- Courteous & friendly service.
- Very friendly & informative.
- People were very nice, very helpful, bathroom & eating facilities were rustic, but matched the area.
- People were very friendly & courteous, place was very clean.
- Very helpful staff.
- Your representatives were very courteous and helpful.
- The agent at the centre was extremely helpful, friendly and patient.
- Very friendly and courteous staff.
- Staff always helpful. Appreciate the bathrooms and food.
- Pleasant - not pushy to make a sale
- Pleasant staff

### **Suggestions/Need for Improvement**

- Please enlarge the women's washroom stalls.
- Need better food outlets.
- Would like to see better washroom facilities. No touch entrance, taps and towels (paper).
- A native interpretive centre behind visitor centre would be very interesting. We would Consider spending more time in Merritt if there was such. How about lodging in the teepee as part of experience, that would be so fantastic!

- We travel to Vernon frequently and almost always stop at the visitors centre for a break. It's a busy place and certainly needs upgrading; washroom, etc.
- Needed somewhere nice inside to have refreshment (tea/coffee etc.)
- Better washrooms/more B&B choice.
- Needs a beer store.
- Washrooms need upgrading and expanding. Food choices need expanding, need more parking for large vehicle, campers etc.
- Washrooms inadequate for number of visitors; picnic tables very much appreciated.
- The washroom facilities need upgrading and expanding.
- We stop there on all our trips to Summerland. The women's bathroom needs attention, but we always enjoy an ice cream & a stretch.
- Visited again late July, more tables & shade umbrella's.
- As everyone knows, the washrooms are archaic & grossly inadequate. Desperately new ones needed, nice picnic area & a nice tea house.
- Yes! Merritt is a lovely area; we have passed through often & stopped on occasion to see the area. Eat etc, however the visitor centre is lacking in the area. Especially related to bathroom facilities & areas to get good refreshments i.e., good coffee etc.
- I do wish BC would make free travel maps available to tourist. It would make travel & future planning more convenient.
- It would be nice to have fruit or sandwiches available close by.
- It needs a small proper coffee shop.
- Bathrooms need improving, cleaner, indoors would be preferred.
- I have been through in the winter and would have liked access to washrooms.
- It would be nice if there was indoor eating facility.
- Availability of drinks and food would be an asset; coffee, lunch etc.
- Should have proper eating facilities as we were hoping to have a good lunch and all we got was fast food not very good either.
- Should be open on weekends in winter.
- You have the space so use it for more picnic tables or seating for nicer relaxing break from driving.
- You need a fast food restaurant; Tim Hortons, McDonalds, Wendy's.
- It would be interesting to have agents who speak French.
- It needs more women's rest room/toilets.
- A coffee shop & nice restroom would be great.
- Needs more and better washrooms.
- Frequently travel to Kelowna. The Merritt Centre could be open extended hours during the summer.
- Need more parking.
- More parking.
- Need more washrooms.
- Usually use the Merritt centre as a rest stop. Need more bathroom stalls, better picnic area, ie, more tables and more shade. Bigger snack bar that's open year round.
- Build a gas station nearby

- More ladies washrooms would be nice, as there often seems to be a long line-up.
- Needs more washrooms (for ladies).
- A very historical place should not be changed.
- Would really like to see a 'sit down' cafeteria or eatery of some sort. (indoor), (soup, sandwiches, coffee)
- We always stop here. It is excellent, but it can be very cold outside and we like to enjoy our coffee inside when it is cold and to stay warm.
- It may be a good idea to add some food outlets around it.
- Need new one; not large enough for RV parking. Washrooms below standard, restaurant needed.
- A Tim Hortons or a Starbucks coffee shop would be a great asset.
- It was a very hot day; it would be nice to have more shade trees and some water attractions for children, wading pool, fountain, recirculating stream type of items.
- More parking, open longer hours.
- A restaurant would be appreciated as a stop over for hungry tourists.
- Fast food, we expected local produce & fruit available.
- The young woman was excellent. Need more washrooms and a coffee shop. BC and your highways are beautiful.
- The bathroom facility is inadequate in heavy summer times. A restaurant facility.
- Need more Washrooms.
- I feel they need better places that sell food & snacks, what they do have are very expensive. We went & found a more reasonably priced place to get our snacks, etc.
- It should be opened 24 hours with someone there.
- Would like to see a lounge area with televisions, open late hours. Need improved bathroom facilities for this busy location.
- More parking and restroom space seems necessary in the summer.
- My only concern would be the shortage of restroom facilities.
- Need more female washrooms!
- More parking would be nice; food stand is convenient.
- Very hot in Merritt during the summer, shades, air conditioner would be nice.
- More parking would be nice.
- Bathroom facilities need a major overhaul.
- More bathrooms!! Women's!! More picnic tables and more parking.
- Need a gas station.
- More washrooms.
- More food options would be good.
- Glad there is portables there as ladies washrooms not enough, especially when busses come in. Have coffee and snack bar.
- More washrooms would be helpful.
- Need more bathroom and restaurants.
- Provide more shade areas, ie larger trees, more seating with sun protection (but not too claustrophobic, ie open space), a lath house or wooden arbour with slats provides good protection.
- Waiting patiently for improved and larger ladies washrooms and covered/enclosed coffee shop.

- More eating facilities.
- Restroom stop; the kids wanted to get out and go for a walk, which we all did, but it would be great to have a few small trails or a playground somewhere to burn some energy. We would have stayed longer and not made such a quick stop.
- Clean it up, plant trees more. Get rid of this as a bus stop. Get rid of the junk food concession and the trashy sign site. Keep this place natural; people go to Merritt to eat.
- Lack of parking for trailers.
- The centre could use a more upscale eating facility with healthy snacks such as, small salads, fruit, good coffee, etc. (the centre is somewhat provincial at present)
- Perhaps more and possibly only local art/crafts, etc or at least Canadian.
- Better food and bathrooms (I know you are not in the food business). Clean, many, did I mention clean bathrooms? It would be so appreciated.
- Need to reno washrooms, gas station so that you don't need to go into town of Merritt.

### **Not Enough Or Poor Services**

- The washrooms are very busy anytime I've been there.
- Needs better washrooms and parking.
- Toilets were not functioning; a very important feature. Consultants were very helpful.
- Lacks the essentials in medicine like for motion sickness, etc.
- Toilet facilities are not sufficient
- The only reason it fell short was because of the washrooms. Stalls too small, signage not big enough/obvious enough.
- Washrooms and refreshments could be much improved.
- Women's restroom too small, every public women's facility needs to be 2 x as large as the men's. A family facility would also be helpful.
- Women's washroom, where is the motion sensor, paper towels. Do you know how many women are lined up to use the facilities & all we have is a hot air dryer, ridiculous.
- The staff at Kimberly tried to sell us a BC Tourism Map for more than the list price (\$1.00 more!). We were rather offended and we didn't buy it. We bought a Rand McNally Map later and probably spent more \$! Plus, the staff were abrupt and rather rude.
- More info on some of the small towns, eg. Barriere etc. and can be in a single style flyer rather than a magazine of the area that didn't have much to say and was thrown out, what a waste of all our provincial money.
- The sewage system needs work. The odour wafting over the picnic table were an unfortunate contrast to the beauty of the setting.
- Toilet stalls are too small (and I am petit in stature) and there are not enough of them.
- Not sufficient parking for large RV's. Eating facilities could be improved.
- Poor washroom facilities
- Difficult to find, when down hill, no grass or good walkways.
- Poor washroom facilities, poor picnic facilities.
- Not enough washrooms.
- Not enough washrooms, area was very dirty.

- The bathrooms were overcrowded. RV parking was not well marked or well laid out.
- Toilets always busy.
- Needs more & better bathrooms, restroom was very unpleasant.
- The washroom was filthy.
- Cheap knock-off First Nation's art work instead of local artists work. Typical tourist stuff.
- There should be more informed staff re: backgrounds. We ended up on a forestry road. Suggested by staff; expected a better quality road. Lucky we had 4-wheel drive.
- Centre was not comfortable; no shade, no grass areas, limited picnic seating. Staff was very friendly and informative.
- Coming home from Kelowna we took wrong exit, very poor signs to direct to Vancouver.
- We were very disappointed in coffee bar. Would have been nice to sit down to a lunch deli. Coffee was terrible, needs Starbucks.
- Shortage of washroom.
- Parking was a problem.
- Restrooms were terrible, food choices were limited.
- There is a need for water availability outside, ie, for animals, dogs, horses. Many of us use this area as a rest area when transporting horses. Also use it as a rest, walk break when not transporting horses.
- The restrooms are appalling and insufficient space. Tour buses and many travellers make a pit stop there and there are just not enough facilities and they are poorly maintained!
- On our way from Kelowna to Harrison Hot Springs, we stopped at the Visitor Centre for a coffee. We went into the centre where a coffee sign was displayed and was told at the other building, a small hut, where we had to stand till other visitors moved from a small wooden table.
- Called in for coffee - could not get any!
- Information that used to be free of charge now had to be purchased (map of Provincial Parks).

### **Enjoyed Activities And Services**

- Good info.
- Convenient as we lived in Kelowna.
- Very friendly survey-taker.
- Liked the expanded gift shop choices and gifts. Son loved the new book for our trip.
- Researcher was very friendly.
- It met my needs for a rest stop i.e.) washroom, coffee, fresh air.
- Best visitor centre that we have visited in Western Canada.
- Very neat and well kept grounds. Enjoy stopping here to have our picnic lunch.
- Well supplied with information, staff were good!
- Used the food concession, excellent staff.
- Nice and Clean
- This is a regular stop on the way to Okanagan to relax mid-trip w/coffee & ice-cream and hotdog.
- A very pleasant experience
- Always stop there for break before Coquitlam to Vancouver. Always clean, easy to access & good employees.

- Clean washrooms, friendly food vendor
- Very polite young lady that did interview.
- Clean washrooms, friendly staff, excellent merchandise.
- The concessions are a good idea.
- Clean facility, helpful staff.
- We always stop there, easy to access, clean bathrooms, spacious. Good info outside (tree Id's very good) snacks available.
- A good place to stop and take a break. Sometimes interesting things to look at (& even buy)
- Pleasant experience
- Good information on area attractions was available.
- Very nice and lots of info.
- We always stop there for a pit stop, we buy ice cream.
- This is a regular and welcome stop, any time we travel from our home in Kelowna to the coast; to use washroom facilities, picnic table, etc.
- I find it a very interesting place and visit when we go through.
- Excellent idea and pleasant stop.
- Friendly, clean.
- The young ladies that took the survey were delightful/not pushy at all.
- The girl who interviewed was very polite and respectful.
- We always take a rest stop there and we are looking forward to improved food service.
- Go there often. Excellent all around. Toilets, hosts, shopping, food.
- We go to the Okanogan often and always stop at Merritt. Great place for bathroom break and snacks.
- Pleasant girls doing the survey.
- I was surprised at how pleasant the location was. Eg 1) picnic tables, 2) concessions, 3) great view.
- Great to stop & eat, use washroom, get info. A total package stop, plus excellent helpful staff.
- We really enjoyed the view and the information boards. The one about pine beetles was great.
- The interviewers were very friendly and a pleasure to meet.
- We always get good information and excellent service at the visitor centre.
- It is always a pleasure to stop at the visitor centre in Merritt.
- Just stopped to stretch our legs and restrooms.
- The young woman was very friendly and pleasant in her request for interview. It was hot and windy so we kept on our time short as there was not shaded area to eat our lunch.
- Good stop; friendly staff at center. Washrooms? Not too clean, too small for summer traffic.
- Telling us about road conditions along our route was outstanding!!!
- Ice Cream!
- It was fine.
- We stopped to get accommodation guide, as we cancelled reserved hotel and wanted to find new one at Sicamous. Very helpful people.
- Clean, friendly, a rest stop on a familiar highway corridor.

- We stop there every time we go to the coast, really glad it's there. Would love to have an exercise path around the area.
- We always use the visitor centre, as a rest stop when travelling to the Okanagan region.
- It is a good location for washroom facilities.
- Like the use of facilities/snack bar as a travel stop.
- We love stopping at Merritt. The toilet facilities should be upgraded; paper towels instead of a blower, few more lunch places at the centre.
- The visitor centre is good place to have several cars meet and to have lunch.
- We have stopped at the Centre over 10 times as we have gone back to Alberta and Saskatchewan. Also stopped there when we were in Regina visiting our daughter in Victoria.
- Very nice well kept.
- It's a nice place to stop.
- Clean bathroom, friendly staff.
- Very pleased there were accommodation guides for BC available; very difficult to find when you live in Alberta. Disappointed Field's Info Centre mainly focused on Alberta.
- It met all my expectations and needs.
- We usually use this stop as a washroom stop, on our way to Kelowna. Open washrooms are important.
- We were given directions to the splash park which enhanced our trip.
- Books on CD are great we bought three there. It is the perfect spot to get them.
- We always stop here; rest and snack. Would love to see a full service restaurant.
- Always an interesting stop even though we have been there many times. Staff always courteous and helpful.
- Appreciated the book selection. Bought three.
- Great location with restrooms. Would be nice to have dog walking area. Very helpful staff.
- It's a great place to meet family and friends on our way to different destinations. The washrooms are very welcome.
- Excellent reply to our question re: directions to a lake.
- For a change the washroom was clean.
- We enjoyed the stop, rest rooms available, food available.
- We frequently stop there as a washroom break. It was clean, thanks.
- The young lady who interviewed us was very polite & very informative.
- Adequate restrooms and snacks available
- This is set in a great spot overlooking the valley. It's always very busy when I've stopped there. I really appreciate the clean facilities. I'd love to see a great restaurant there and a place to walk my dog.
- Clean, friendly. Interviewers were very pleasant!
- Good place to stretch-out, walk, talk, eat, study props.
- Thank you for the use of your fax machine.
- I love it, great stopping to rest, visit washrooms and check out info that might interest you.
- I have found them very helpful on previous visits to the area.

- It was very pleasant, we stop every year to have lunch on the way (each way) usually meeting other relatives on their trip too. Would like to see more covered area in case of rain, otherwise no complaints only satisfaction with visitor centre.
- Very pleasant, helpful, informative.
- Great place to stop for coffee & rest, I love the building and location.
- Facility was very clean & staff friendly & helpful.
- Had interesting chats with other visitors who had stopped in. A bear had been sighted just minutes before our arrival (apparently this was not common in recent years). View from the centre was lovely and the centre itself had lots of info & gift ideas, and friendly workers.
- Very informative and all very kind.
- It was pleasant.
- Nice facilities, friendly staff.
- Cold ice cream on a hot day, friendly staff.
- Nice picnic tables
- The visitor centre is always a welcome pleasant stop going north or south, always courteous and clean.
- I received help on route planning at Merritt. Great service.
- Very pleasant and efficient interviewer.
- The ladies washroom was very clean. I always appreciate that. The young woman who was doing the survey was very pleasant.
- I'm glad the centre is there for helping us. The people were very friendly and informative.
- Young researcher was very personable and polished, even though it was very cold.
- Washrooms were adequate and plans for new centre, apparently include more & better facilities.
- Nice half way stop if you're going to Kelowna or Kamloops. I would like to see a better/healthier choice of foods/snacks.
- First impression, it was clean and organized. Well informed persons at the booth.
- I like the Merritt centre; there are always line-up for the bathrooms.
- It was a great experience.
- The centre is well situated with easy access. Clean facilities, staff cheerful, helpful employees. Good variety of gift.
- Always pleasant to stop and rest at this location.
- It's a good rest & break point, Vancouver to Vernon.
- Great place to stop. We were able to get lots of very helpful information.
- I stop everytime I go to and return from the Lower Mainland. It is clean and the employees are friendly. It is also an attractive, clean place to break up my trips.
- Love the scenery. Please remember to keep it close to the same.

### **Other**

- On our return trip I was disappointed to find it was closed.
- Had a great time the whole week. Love BC
- Used purely as stop over point between Delta & Kelowna
- It is a pleasant break from driving.



- Previous visit to visitor centre resulted in 2 day stay in Merritt 4 years previous.
- We are glad you plan to update this center, especially the bathrooms.
- At a very good place to reach visitors coming on 3 highways.
- We enjoy travel in BC.
- We had a difficult time locating the Provincial parks in the Blue River region with the maps we received.
- I didn't go inside the centre but next time I will! Would like to find out about cabin rentals at local lakes.
- We like to stop in everytime we go to Vancouver and surroundings and island.
- We found out that it was the Canadian town for country.
- I was born and raised in BC, now living in Alberta; I go back and forth frequently.
- It's always one of my favourite places to shop for their BC clothing line.
- We were looking for a petrol stop, looked more like a shop than a visitor centre.
- We used the Coquihalla as the shortest route from Kelowna to the coast. The detour north to the Merritt area was a waste of time and gas.
- It's a welcome break after driving from Vancouver.
- Always stop on our way to coast and on our way home.
- It quite often is our short break, to get out, stretch our legs before travelling future.
- It's always been a pit stop on our way to the Okanagan.
- Good choice for location.
- For us, Merritt is a stopping place between Kelowna and Vancouver.
- We stopped for the washroom; they said if we participated in the survey we would receive a subscription to BC magazine.
- Although the trip was an obligation, I always try to make the trip to the Rockies each year.
- It was very windy; we talked to about 3-4 people, they were very nice.
- The 'No' answers imply a 'negative'. However time on our visit was limited and any future trips will be to the eastern region.