



TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA
C A N A D A

RESEARCH SERVICES

VALUE OF THE PRINCE GEORGE VISITOR INFO CENTRE 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 Info Centres (VICs) can use to measure the impact of the VIC on traveler behaviour and to determine the economic impact of the VIC. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Prince George Visitor Info Centre (Prince George VIC). Specifically, the study objectives were:

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

A one-location, two-stage survey design was used to examine the study objectives. Two interviewers collected data between July 2 and August 29, 2004 at the Prince George VIC. Travelers were interviewed at the Prince George VIC to obtain information about the typical traveler to the VIC. Travelers were studied during and after their trip. On-site interviews collected information during their trip and a mailback questionnaire collected information from travelers after their trip. The primary purpose of the mailback questionnaire was to compare mid-trip and complete trip perceptions of the VIC impacts on traveler behaviour and to understand travelers' perceptions of the Prince George region and British Columbia after their trip was complete.

- Between July 2 and August 29 of 2004, 638 people were approached at the Prince George VIC, 391 agreed to complete the interview, but 108 were excluded because they were from the Prince George region, resulting in 283 useable surveys.
- At the Prince George VIC, 29% of travelers were from other provinces/territories in Canada, 26% were from Overseas, 25% were from the United States and 20% were from British Columbia.
- Overall, the average party size was 2.3 people and 13% of travel parties had children. Those parties with children had an average of 4.1 people traveling in their group.
- The majority of travelers at the Prince George VIC were traveling for leisure purposes (73%), while fewer were traveling to visit friends and family (20%) or for business (6%).
- The majority of travelers at the Prince George VIC used their own car/truck/motorcycle (68%), 22% traveled in a private RV, 8% by airplane, and the remaining 3% by other modes of transportation (train, bicycle, bus and hitchhiking).
- Over half of the travelers at the Prince George VIC were staying in campgrounds/RV parks (53%) and over a third were staying in hotels/motels/resorts (34%). Fewer were staying with friends and relatives (8%) or in bed-and-breakfast accommodations (6%).

- Overall, travelers at the Prince George VIC planned to spend an average of 33 days away from home, including 14 days in British Columbia and 3 days in the Prince George region.
- Over half of travelers (55%) used the Internet to plan their trip. Other frequently used information sources included brochures and books (37%), VICs (19%), friends, relatives, clubs and other associations (17%), and travel agents, airlines and auto associations (11%).
- The majority (77%) of travelers at the Prince George VIC were very flexible in the activities that they planned to participate in while in the area. Travelers were also very flexible in terms of time, with over half (52%) indicating that they were very flexible with time spent in Prince George and 53% stating that they were very flexible with time spent in British Columbia.
- Travelers were asked about their primary leisure activity in Prince George. Half of travelers indicated that they spent time sightseeing (50%). Visiting friends and family (12%) and hiking/walking (7%) ranked second and third in terms of the number of responses. Less frequently mentioned activities included camping (4%), visiting museums and art galleries (3%), rest and relaxation (3%), dining (3%), golfing (3%), fishing (3%), sporting events and festivals (2%), shopping (2%), bicycling (2%), and industrial tourism (2%).
- Travelers were asked if they had participated in or planned to participate in four specific activities including, visiting a museum, heritage attraction or historic site, participating in nature-based activities, participating in arts and cultural activities and attending a festival or event. Nearly half of the travelers (47%) said that they had visited or planned to visit a museum, heritage attraction or historic site, 46% said that they had participated in nature-based activities. Fewer had participated in arts and cultural activities (23%) or attended a festival or event (12%). All four activities were rated high in terms of importance to trip planning, with nature-based activities receiving the highest rating.
- Nearly all travelers at the Prince George VIC spoke with a Travel Counsellor (98%).
- An overwhelming 99% of travelers responded that the VIC met or exceeded their expectations. Sixty-five percent of travelers indicated that the VIC exceeded their expectations while 35% felt that the VIC met their expectations.
- Only 8% of travelers indicated that they would have liked to have found additional products or services at the Prince George VIC. Their comments referred to improved signage, food and beverages, telephone services, more specific information, and more souvenir sales.
- Travelers at the Prince George VIC spent an average of \$133.16 per party per day. The expenditure varied depending on primary accommodation type, ranging from \$114.71 for those staying in campgrounds/RV parks to \$163.69 for those using hotels/motels/resorts.
- In the summer of 2004, Prince George VIC users spent over \$571,000 in the Prince George region and another \$3.3 million while traveling throughout the rest of the province.

- The Prince George VIC had a positive impact on traveler behaviour. Thirty-one percent of travelers indicated that they learned about a new activity or destination at the VIC. Twelve percent replied that they would stay at least one extra night as a result of the information that they had obtained at the VIC, and 81% said that they would make another trip to British Columbia as a result of the information that they had learned.¹

¹ Additional spending as a result of these findings was calculated and presented in the full study results. These estimates can be obtained from the Prince George Visitor Info Centre.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
METHODS	5
DATA COLLECTION	5
DATA ANALYSIS	6
RESULTS	8
TOURIST CHARACTERISTICS (DEMOGRAPHICS).....	8
TRIP CHARACTERISTICS	10
TRIP PLANNING	13
TRIP FLEXIBILITY	14
TRAVELER ACTIVITIES	16
USE OF THE VIC	17
PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRINCE GEORGE REGION AND BRITISH COLUMBIA	22
EXPENDITURES.....	26
IMPACT OF THE VIC ON TRAVELER BEHAVIOUR.....	27
CONCLUSIONS	31
LIMITATIONS	33
APPLICATIONS	33
APPENDICES	34
APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND INTERVIEWS COMPLETED	35
APPENDIX B – QUESTIONNAIRES	37
APPENDIX C – RESPONSE BIAS TESTING	53
APPENDIX D – CALCULATION OF TOTAL VIC USE	58
APPENDIX E – EXPENDITURES BY ACCOMMODATION TYPE	61
APPENDIX F – OTHER VICS VISITED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA	63
APPENDIX G – COMMENTS REGARDING PRINCE GEORGE VISITOR INFO CENTRE	65

Introduction

Visitor Info Centre Counsellors at British Columbia's 113 Visitor Info Centres (VICs) provided travel counselling and advice to over 1.66 million visitor parties in 2004. In addition, many more travelers used the VICs without actually speaking with a Counsellor. The use of the VICs provides communities with an opportunity to influence the activities and satisfaction of travelers, 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 VICs can use to measure the impact of the VIC on traveler behaviour and to determine the economic impact of the VIC. A pilot project was conducted in 2001 to test the methodology of measuring such impacts. This study at the Prince George VIC in the summer of 2004 was designed using some of the methodology developed in the 2001 pilot project.

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Prince George Visitor Info Centre. Specifically, the study objectives were:

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

Methods

Data Collection

A one-location, two-stage survey design was used to examine the study objectives. Two interviewers collected data between July 2 and August 29, 2004 at the Prince George VIC. The interviewers' schedule varied in order to ensure that different days of the week were covered. Potential respondents were randomly chosen as they exited the Prince George VIC. Respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in the interview and were given a *Super, Natural British Columbia*[®] refrigerator magnet for their time if they agreed to participate. In addition, respondents were asked if they were residents of the Prince George region (anywhere within an hour drive of downtown Prince George) and, if so, were eliminated from the remainder of the interview ensuring that only travelers were interviewed. The interviewers recorded all responses on Palm handheld computers using Technos Entryware.

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

- traveler demographics,
- trip-planning habits,
- primary trip purpose,
- primary destination,
- primary accommodation,
- mode of transportation,
- length of stay in BC and in the Prince George region,

- trip activities in the Prince George region,
- use of the VIC,
- trip flexibility,
- daily trip expenditures,
- perceived impacts of the VIC on the rest of their trip activities,
- satisfaction with the VIC, and
- suggestions to improve the VIC.

In addition, addresses were obtained from those travelers who indicated a willingness to answer a mailback questionnaire upon the completion of their trip. The primary purpose of the mailback questionnaire was to compare mid-trip and complete trip perceptions of the VIC impacts on traveler behaviour and to understand travelers' perceptions of the Prince George region and British Columbia after their trip was complete.

Mailback questionnaires were sent out with a business reply envelope and a British Columbia Magazine in late September 2004. The first mailing was followed by a second mailing of a reminder postcard and a third mailing of just a questionnaire and business reply envelope. Responses were accepted until the end of December, 2004 and there was a 71% response rate. The mailback questionnaire collected a variety of information including (see Appendix B for questionnaire):

- length of stay in the Prince George region and British Columbia,
- primary trip purpose,
- primary destination,
- primary accommodation,
- daily expenditures,
- the VIC's impact on their trip,
- services that were desired but not available at the VIC,
- interest in tour packages,
- positive and negative images of the Prince George region,
- the unique characteristics of the Prince George region as a vacation destination,
- satisfaction with the VIC,
- satisfaction with the Prince George region and British Columbia, and
- the likelihood of returning to the Prince George region and British Columbia.

Similar studies conducted in British Columbia have collected information from travelers at a reference site (where tourists congregate in the community) in addition to the VIC. The purpose of the reference site is to collect information about the typical traveler to the community and build a profile of travelers who are not presently using the VIC. In Prince George, data was not collected at a reference site because a suitable location where tourists congregate could not be identified.

Data Analysis

The study design produced two sets of data that are available for analysis – data from the interview and mailback questionnaires. The respondents and the responses could vary between the interview and mailback questionnaires. The respondents could differ because travelers 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 travelers interviewed on-site.

The responses to similar questions in the interview and mailback questionnaires could vary due to real differences in traveler behaviour (for example, a traveler may have perceived that the VIC had a different impact on their trip when they were interviewed compared to the responses on the mailback questionnaire). A series of significance tests were conducted to assess statistical significance of differences between the two data sets (Appendix C). Results of those tests and several other factors (sample size issues and results from similar studies at other locations) indicated that the interview data was the better source of information when the same or similar questions were asked on both questionnaires. Mailback questionnaire responses were used only when the question was not previously asked in the interview and when sample sizes permitted. Therefore, all results presented in the remainder of this report are from the interview unless otherwise noted.

Results

Between July and August 2004, 638 people were approached at the Prince George VIC, 391 agreed to the interview, but 108 were excluded because they were from the Prince George region, resulting in 283 useable surveys (Table 1).

Table 1. Travelers surveyed at the Prince George VIC.

	Travelers Approached	Agreed to Interview	From Local Community ¹	Useable Traveler Surveys
Prince George VIC	638	391	108	283

1. Residents living in the Prince George region (anywhere within an hour drive of downtown Prince George).

Six respondents (2%) intercepted at the Prince George VIC indicated that they were part of an organized tour group. These cases have been removed from all analysis in an effort to represent the results of independent travelers.

Tourist Characteristics (Demographics)

At the Prince George VIC, over a quarter of travelers were from Other Canada (29%), Overseas (26%) and the United States (25%), while slightly fewer were from British Columbia (20%).

Travelers from provinces outside of British Columbia were mostly from Alberta (53%) or Ontario (26%) while fewer travelers were from Manitoba (8%), Saskatchewan (6%), Quebec (5%), Newfoundland/Labrador (1%) or the Yukon (1%; Figure 1). Travelers from 26 different States were intercepted at the Prince George VIC (Figure 2). Nearly one in ten US travelers were from Washington (10%), California (9%) or Arizona (9%). Most overseas travelers (93%) were European, with over a quarter (26%) from Germany and another 22% from Switzerland (Figure 3). Fewer were from the Netherlands (12%), the United Kingdom (11%), Austria (5%), France (4%), Australia (3%), Belgium (3%), Ireland (3%), Scotland (3%), Barbados (1%), Czech Republic (1%), Italy (1%), Japan (1%), New Zealand (1%) or Russia (1%).

Nearly half of travelers (47%) were over the age of 55 at the Prince George VIC, 41% of travelers were between 35 and 54 years of age and only 13% were under the age of 34 (Table 2). The majority of travelers (72%) had at least a college or technical diploma, with the most frequently stated education category being a university degree (30%). Thirty-eight percent of travelers had annual household incomes above \$65,000. Over a quarter (29%) of those interviewed chose not to respond to the income question.

At the Prince George VIC, the average party size was 2.3 people and only 13% of travel parties had children included in the travel party. Those parties that traveled with children had, on average, 4.1 people traveling in their group.

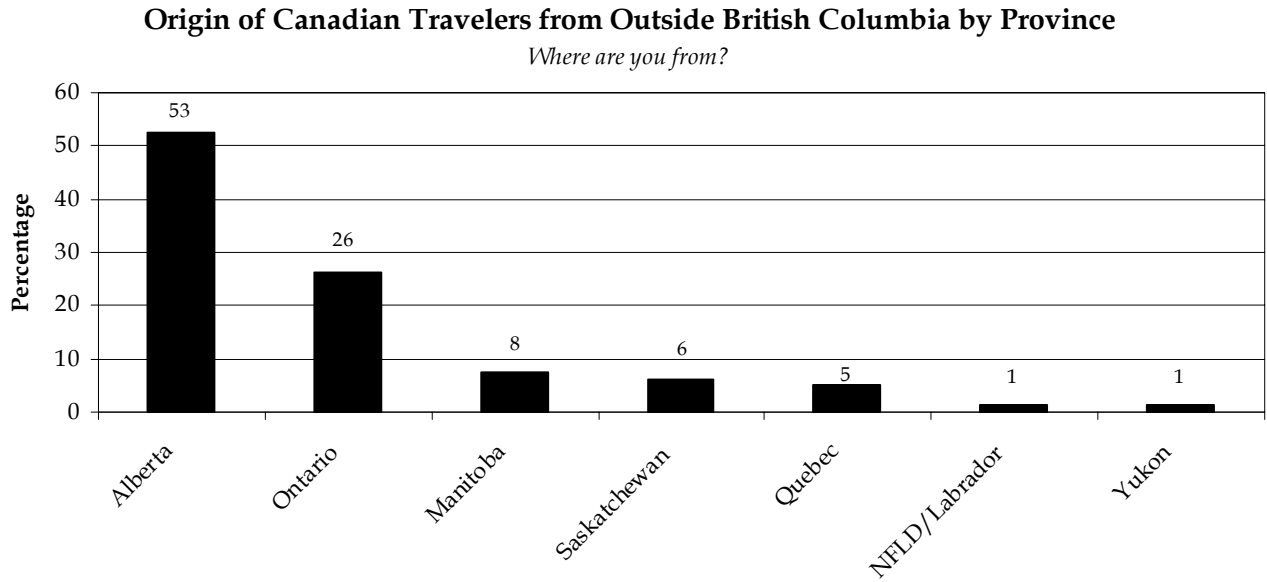


Figure 1. The percentage of travelers from provinces outside of British Columbia at the Prince George VIC (n=80).

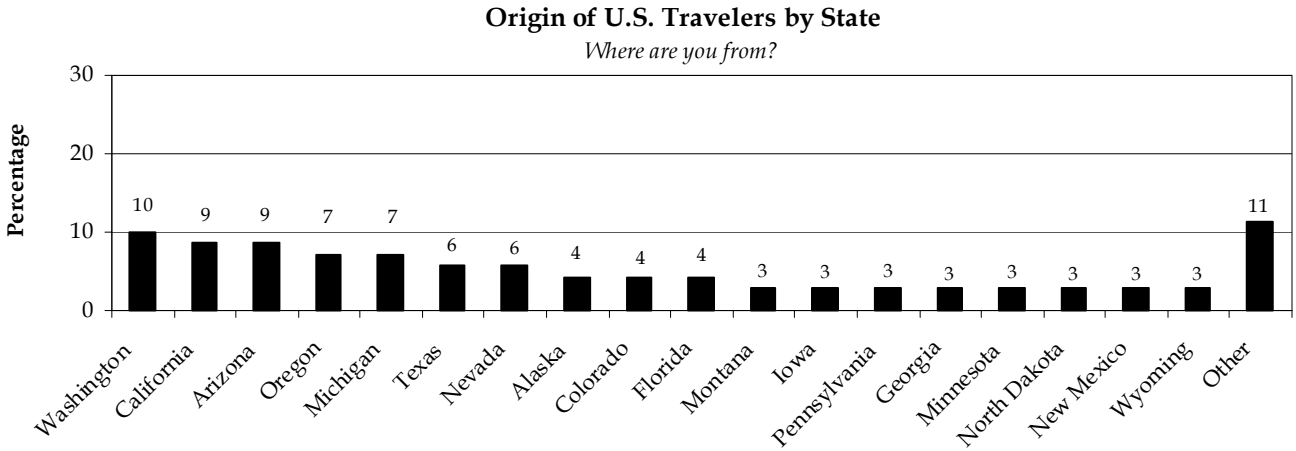


Figure 2. The percentage of US travelers from each state at the Prince George VIC (n=70). Other includes Illinois, Alabama, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin.

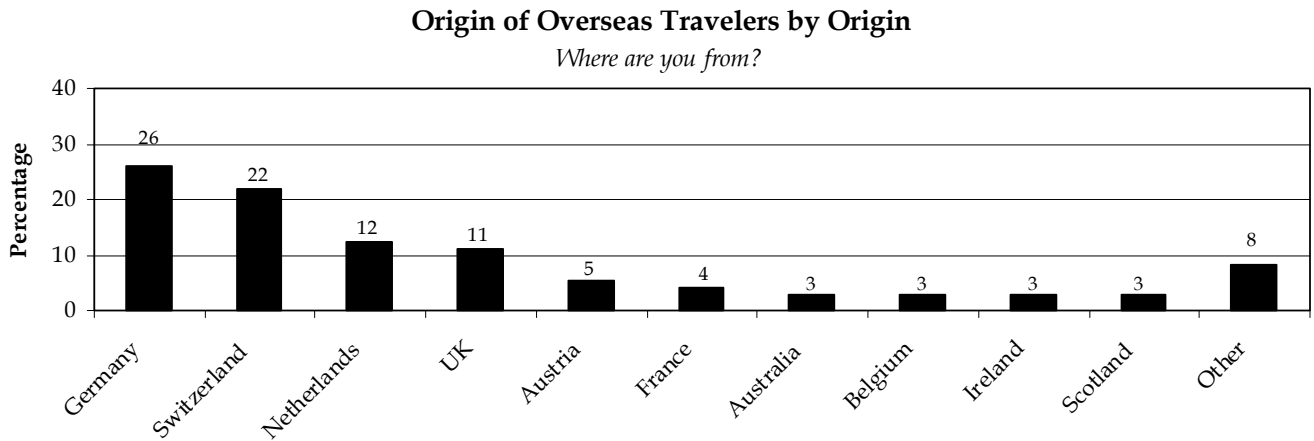


Figure 3. The percentage of travelers from each overseas country at the Prince George VIC (n=73). Other includes Barbados, Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, New Zealand and Russia.

Table 2. Traveler demographics at the Prince George VIC.

	Prince George VIC	
	Number of Responses ¹	Percentage of Responses
Origin		
British Columbia	54	19.5%
US	70	25.3%
Overseas	73	26.4%
Other Canada	80	28.9%
Age²		
Under 24 Years	7	2.9%
25-34 Years	23	9.6%
35-44 Years	38	15.9%
45-54 Years	59	24.7%
55-64 Years	65	27.2%
65 Years or Older	47	19.7%
Education²		
Less Than High School	4	1.7%
High School	37	15.4%
Some Technical, College or University	27	11.3%
College of Technical Diploma	65	27.1%
University Degree	73	30.4%
Masters or a PhD Degree	34	14.2%
Income²		
Less than \$25,000	11	4.7%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	15	6.4%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	52	22.2%
\$65,000 to \$99,999	58	24.8%
\$100,000 or More	30	12.8%
Don't Know/No Response	68	29.1%
Party Size²		
Average Party Size-Total	241	2.30
Average Party Size-Parties without children	210	2.03
Proportion with Children	31	12.9%
Average Party Size-Parties with children	31	4.10

1. The total number of responses does not always equal the number of useable surveys presented in Table 1 because some respondents did not complete the full interview.

2. Business travelers were not asked these questions and therefore were excluded from this analysis.

Trip Characteristics

The majority of travelers at the Prince George VIC were traveling for leisure purposes (73%) while fewer were traveling to visit friends and family (20%) or for business (6%; Table 3).

The majority of those visiting the Prince George VIC were using their own car/truck/motorcycle (68%) as their primary mode of transportation, while a further 22% were traveling in a private RV. Eight percent were traveling by airplane. Fewer visitors were traveling by train (1%), bicycle (1%) or bus (less than 1%).

Over half of travelers were staying in campgrounds/RV parks (53%) and over a third (34%) were staying in hotels/motels/resorts. Fewer were staying with friends and relatives (8%) or in bed-and-breakfast accommodations (6%).

Table 3. The primary trip purpose, mode of transportation and primary accommodations of travelers at the Prince George VIC.

	Percentage of Responses (n=269)
Primary Trip Purpose	
Leisure	73.2%
Visiting Friends & Family	20.1%
Work/Business Activity	5.6%
Other ¹	1.1%
Mode of Transportation	
Private Car/Truck/Motorcycle	67.7%
Private RV	21.6%
Airplane	8.2%
Train	1.1%
Bicycle	0.7%
Bus	0.4%
Other ²	0.4%
Primary Accommodations³	
Hotel/Motel/Resort	33.5%
Campground/RV Park	52.8%
Friends and Relatives	7.7%
B&B	5.6%
Other ⁴	0.4%

1. Other primary trip purposes included moving (n=2) and checking the train (n=1).

2. Other transportation included hitchhiking (n=1).

3. Business travelers were not included in this analysis because they were not asked about primary accommodation.

4. Other primary accommodation included a nursing home (n=1).

Travelers were asked about their primary destination. Forty-four percent of travelers had a destination somewhere within British Columbia, 30% were touring with no particular primary destination and 27% indicated their destination was outside British Columbia. Seventeen percent (17%) of all travelers indicated that their primary destination was Prince George.

Of the 44% of travelers who were visiting destinations within British Columbia, the majority were traveling to Northern British Columbia (64%). The remainder were traveling to other regions including Vancouver, Coast and Mountains (14%), Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (9%), Kootenay Rockies (6%), Vancouver Island (4%) and the Thompson Okanagan (3%).

Of the 27% of travelers who indicated their destination was outside British Columbia, over half were traveling to Alaska (54%), 15% to the Yukon Territory, 13% to Alberta, 9% to other Canadian provinces/territories, and 7% to US states other than Alaska.

On the mailback questionnaire, travelers were asked if it was their first trip to Prince George. A total of 63% of respondents indicated that it was their first trip. Of those who had been to the area previously (37%), more than half made between one and three previous trips (58%) while the remaining 42% had made more than four previous trips to Prince George.

Overall, travelers at the Prince George VIC planned to spend an average of 33 days away from home, including 14 days in British Columbia and 3 days in Prince George (Figure 3). Visitors from the US and Overseas were on longer trips and were planning to spend more days traveling in British Columbia than travelers from Other Canada or BC.

Average Days Spent Away From Home and in British Columbia by Travelers at the Prince George VIC

*How many days will you be away from home?
How many of those days will be spent in British Columbia?
How many of those days will be spent in Prince George?*

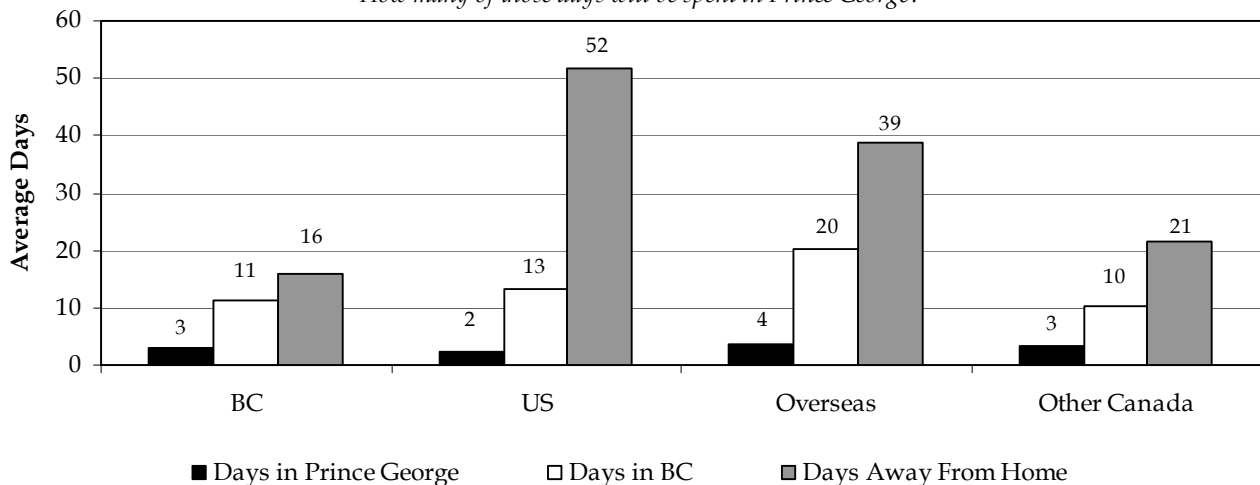


Figure 3. The average number of days spent away from home and in British Columbia by traveler origin at the Prince George VIC (n=246 (Away from home), n=248 (Days in BC), n=175 (Prince George region)). The number of days in BC and the number of days away from home are significantly different at the p=0.05 level based on the origin of travelers.

Trip Planning

Travelers were asked how far in advance they started planning their trip. Results indicate that the large majority of trips conducted by travelers to the Prince George VIC were not spontaneous, as 83% planned their trip more than three weeks in advance (Table 4). Over half of the travelers at the Prince George VIC spent more than two months planning their trip (55%).

Table 4. Trip planning horizons for travelers at the Prince George VIC.

Trip Planning Horizons	Percentage of Respondents (n=245)
During The Trip	4.1%
Day of Departure	2.9%
1-6 Days	4.5%
1-2 Weeks	5.7%
3-8 Weeks	27.8%
9-12 Weeks	16.3%
13+ Weeks	38.8%
Total	100.0%

Travelers were asked what information sources they used to plan their trip. Over half (55%) used the Internet to plan their trip (Figure 4). Other frequently used information sources included Brochures and Books (37%); VICs (19%); Friends, Relatives, Clubs and other Associations (17%); and Travel Agents, Airlines and Autoclubs (11%). Less frequently used information sources included prior knowledge (5%), Tourism British Columbia (5%), Tour Operators/Tourism Specific Businesses (2%) and print/TV advertising (1%). One percent of travelers listed other information sources, specifically a map, a backpacking magazine and a seminar. A very small proportion of travelers (less than 1%) said that they did not use any information sources to plan their trip.

Percentage of Travelers Using Each Information Source

What information sources did you use to plan your trip?

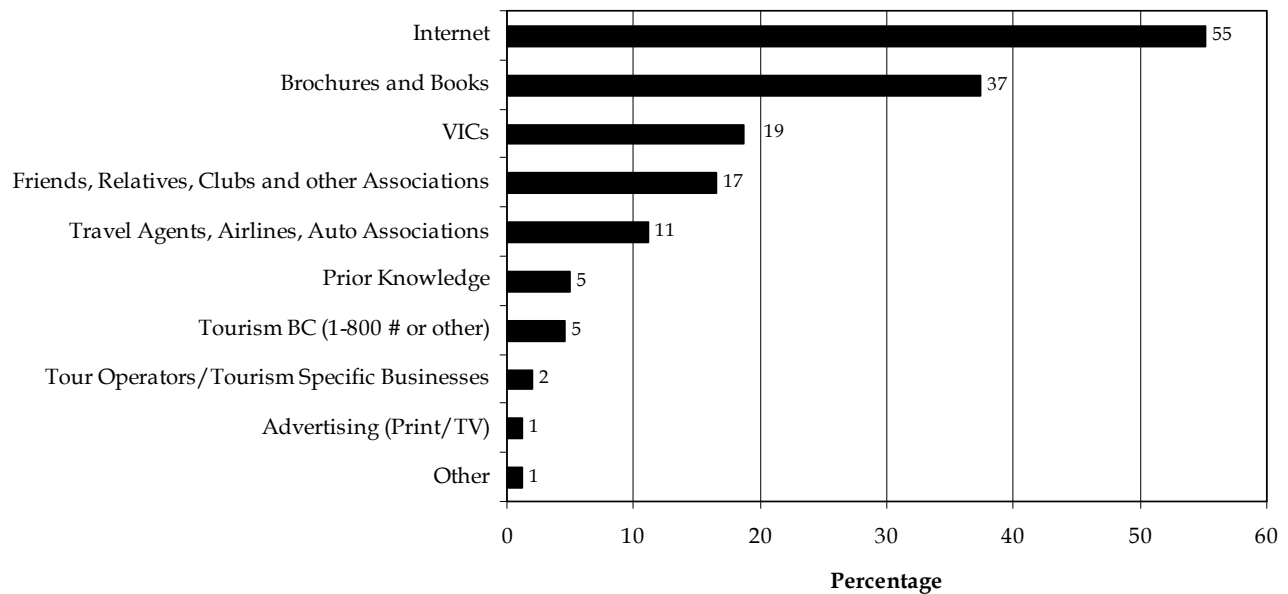


Figure 4. The percentage of travelers using each information source for trip planning at the Prince George VIC (n=241). Percentages add to more than 100% because travelers could use more than one information source for planning their trip. Travelers who stated that they used no information sources (n=1) or who stated 'Don't Know' (n=4) were excluded from the analysis.

Trip Flexibility

Travelers were asked about their flexibility in terms of:

- the activities they would participate in,
- the amount of time they could spend in the Prince George region, and
- the amount of time that they could spend in British Columbia.

The majority of travelers (77%) at the Prince George VIC were very flexible in the activities that they planned to participate in while in the area (Figure 5). In addition, over half of the travelers were very flexible with the amount of time that they could spend in the Prince George region (52%; Figure 6) and in British Columbia (53%; Figure 7).

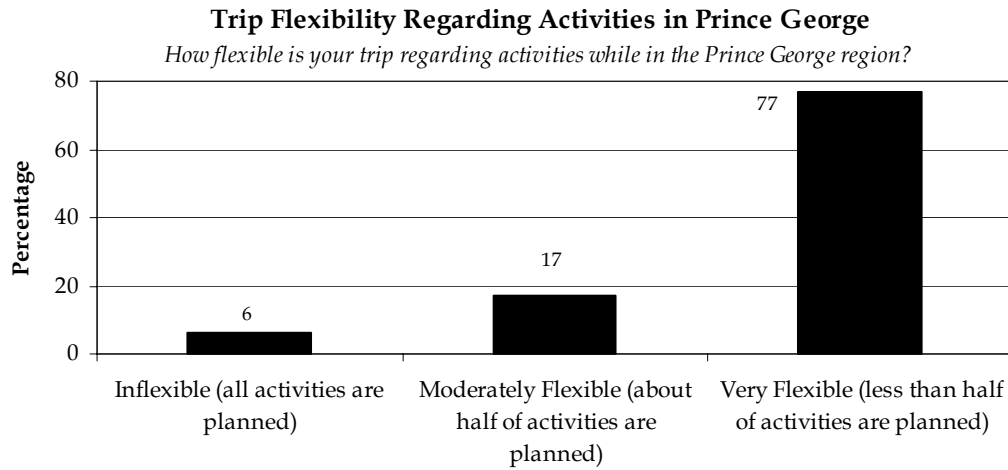


Figure 5. Travelers rating of trip flexibility regarding activities in the Prince George region for travelers at the Prince George VIC (n=245). Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=1).

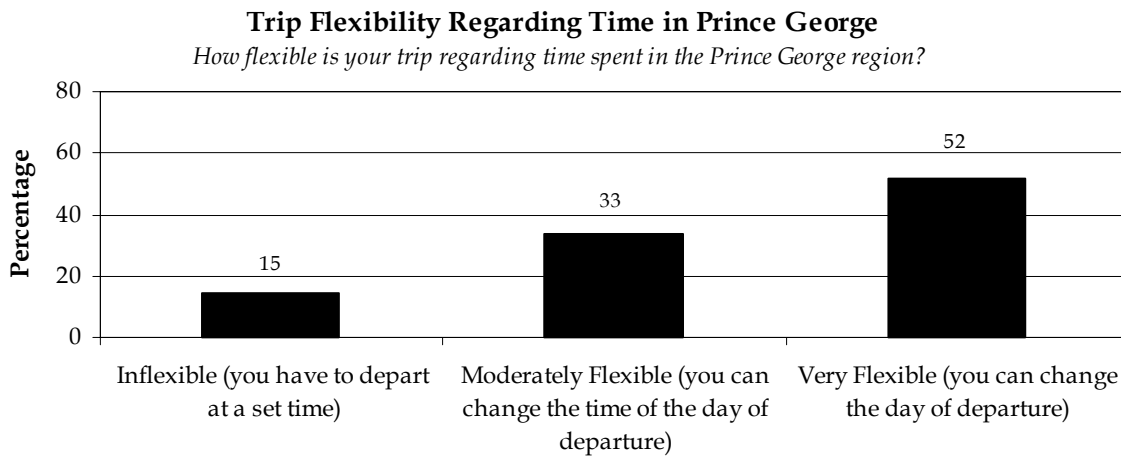


Figure 6. Travelers rating of trip flexibility regarding the time in Prince George for travelers at the Prince George VIC (n=245). Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=1).

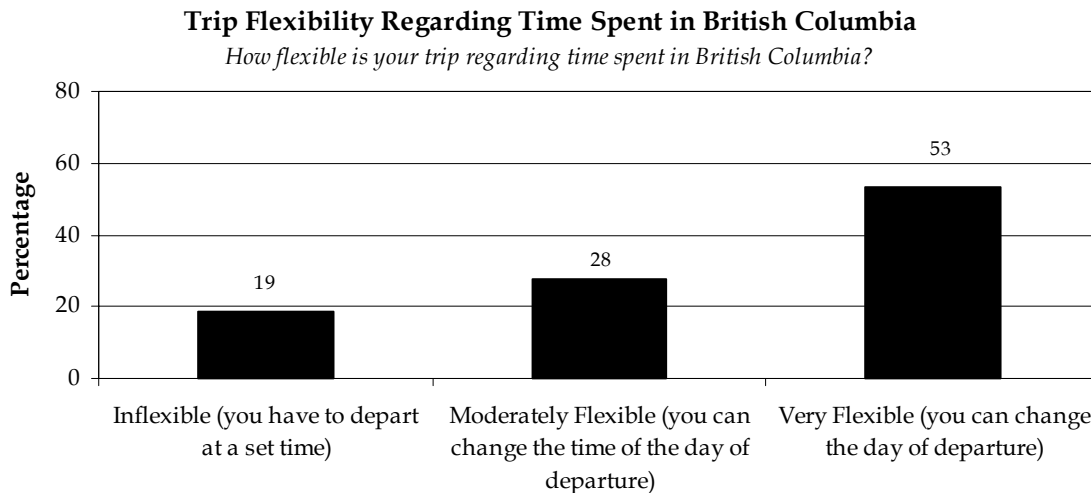


Figure 7. Travelers rating of trip flexibility regarding time spent in British Columbia for travelers at the Prince George VIC (n=240). Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=4).

Traveler Activities

Travelers were asked about their primary leisure activities while in Prince George (Table 5). A small proportion (4%) said that they had no primary leisure activity or that their primary leisure activity was unknown. Of those who had a primary leisure activity in Prince George, nearly half (50%) identified sightseeing as their primary activity. Visiting friends and family (12%) and hiking/walking (7%) ranked second and third in terms of the number of responses. Less frequently mentioned activities included camping (4%), visiting museums and art galleries (3%), rest and relaxation (3%), dining (3%), golfing (3%), fishing (3%), sporting events and festivals (2%), shopping (2%), bicycling (2%), and industrial tourism (2%). Four percent of travelers mentioned other primary leisure activities including wildlife viewing, the Northern Lights, mineral prospecting, and photography.

Table 5. Primary leisure activities¹ in the Prince George region of travelers at the Prince George VIC.

Primary Activity in Prince George	Percentage of Respondents (n=155)
Sightseeing/touring	49.7
Visiting friends & family	12.3
Hiking/walking	7.1
Camping	3.9
Visiting museums & art galleries	3.2
Rest & relaxation	3.2
Dining/eating/drinking	3.2
Golfing	3.2
Fishing	2.6
Sporting events & festivals	1.9
Shopping	1.9
Bicycling	1.9
Industrial tourism ²	1.9
Other ³	3.9

1. Respondents who said that they had no primary leisure activity or an unknown primary leisure activity were removed from the analysis (n=6).

2. Industrial tourism includes activities such as visiting pulp and paper mills.

3. Other primary leisure activities includes wildlife viewing (n=1), Northern Lights viewing (n=1), mineral prospecting (n=1) and photography (n=1).

In addition, travelers were asked if they had participated in or planned to participate in four specific activities: nature-based activities; arts and cultural activities; visiting a museum, heritage attraction or historic site; and attending a festival or event (Figure 8). Nearly half of the travelers said that they had visited or planned to visit a museum, heritage attraction or historic site (47%) or had participated in nature-based activities (46%). Fewer had participated in arts and cultural activities (23%) or attended a festival or event (12%).

Only those travelers that indicated they would participate in a particular activity were asked how important that activity was in planning their current trip. Activities were then compared based on the percentage of travelers that rated them as important or very important (Figure 8). While all four

activities were rated high in terms of importance, nature-based activities had the highest importance rating, with 58% of participants indicating that these activities were important or very important in planning their trip. Visits to museums, heritage attractions or historic sites (46%) and participation in arts and cultural activities (44%) were seen as important or very important by nearly half of the respondents. About a third of travelers (35%) rated festivals and events as important or very important in terms of their trip planning.

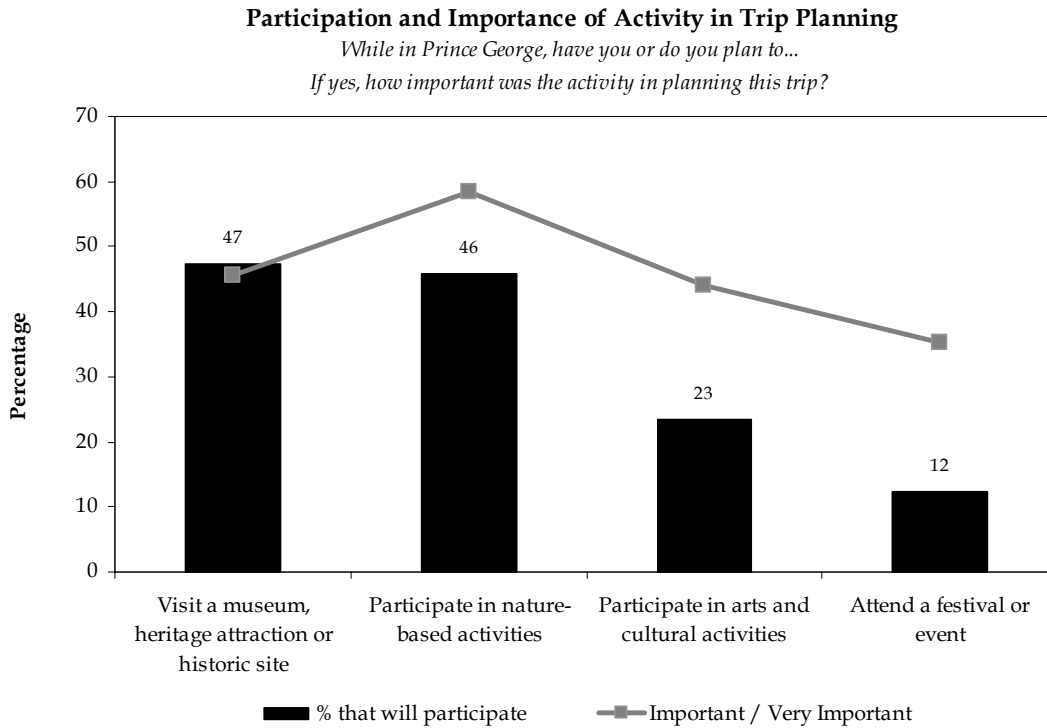


Figure 8. The activities that travelers planned to participate in while in the Prince George region and their importance to planning the current trip for travelers at the Prince George VIC. Travelers that responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis.

Use of the VIC

Travelers stopped at the Prince George VIC for a variety of reasons (Figure 9). The most common reasons given were for a map (43%), attractions information (38%), route information (31%), or camping/accommodation information (17%). Fewer travelers stopped for outdoor recreation information (5%). Very few travelers said that they stopped to use the washrooms (2%), for BC Ferries information (2%), to view artwork/artisans (2%), to use the Internet or the telephone (2%), to learn about local services (2%) such as public showers, walk-in medical clinics, sani-stations and oil-change businesses, for Alaska Marine Highway information (1%), to take a break from travel (1%), or to purchase souvenirs (1%). Less than 1% of travelers mentioned stopping for refreshments or for BC Ferries reservations. Four percent of travelers gave other reasons for stopping, half of which stopped out of general interest. Other reasons (4%) included to arrange a tour, to take a photograph, to talk to other tourists, to get forest fire information and to find out about antique stores.

Respondents were also asked what type of information they obtained at the VIC (Figure 10). Maps were the most common piece of information received, as indicated by 47% of respondents, followed by route information (38%), attraction information (38%), and camping/accommodation information

(22%). Fewer travelers obtained information about outdoor recreation activities (6%), BC Ferries (2%), or local services (2%). One percent or less obtained event information, Alaska Highway information, Via Rail information, souvenirs, or BC Ferries reservations. Four percent of travelers mentioned other items including art, use of the Internet, talking with other visitors, and obtaining information on restaurants, National Parks, and forest fires. Only 1% of travelers said that they did not obtain anything from the VIC.

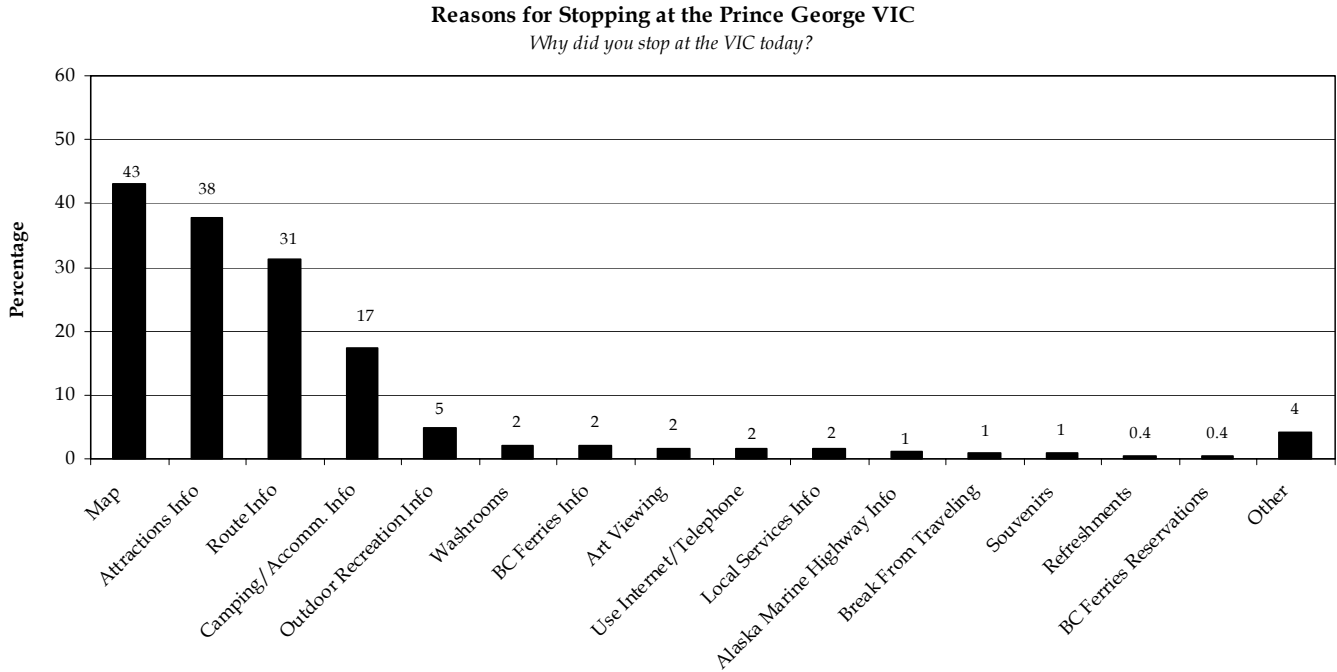


Figure 9. The reasons why travelers stopped at the Prince George VIC (n=246). The total number of responses exceeds 100% because respondents could give more than one reply.

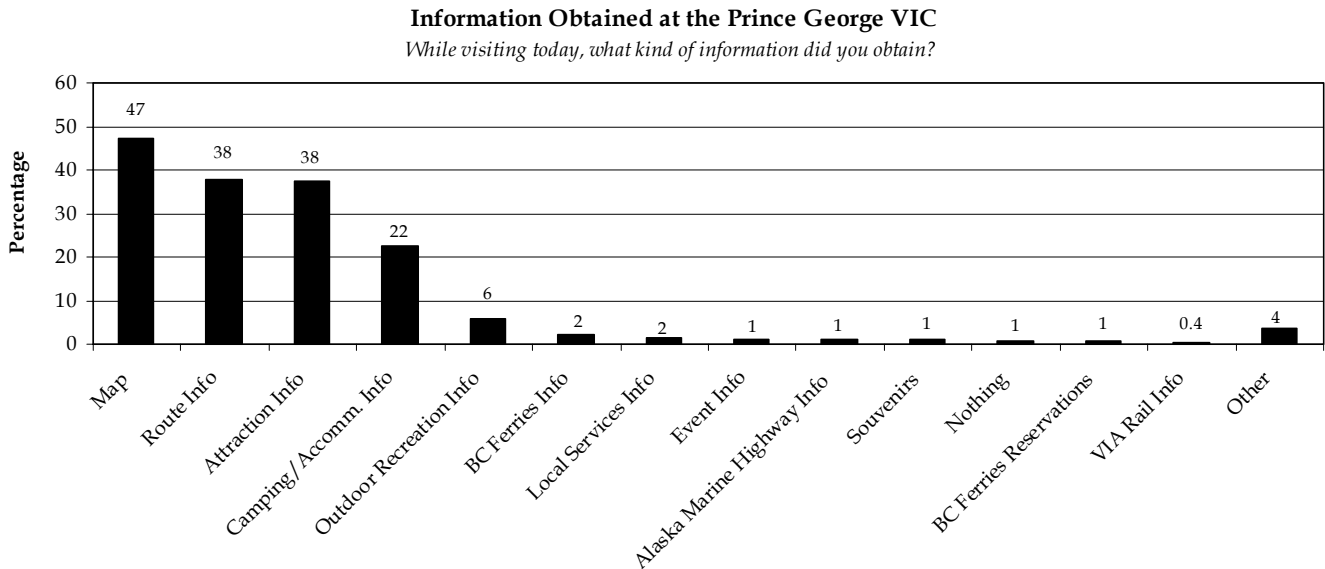


Figure 10. The information obtained by travelers at the Prince George VIC (n=245). The total number of responses exceeds 100% because respondents could give more than one reply.

Nearly all travelers at the Prince George VIC spoke with a Counsellor (98%; Table 6). There was little variance between origin categories, with high proportions of travelers from all residence categories speaking with a counsellor.

Table 6. The percentage of travelers who spoke with a Counsellor at the Prince George VIC by traveler origin.

Traveler Origin	Percentage that Spoke with a Counsellor ¹	
	Yes (n=237)	No (n=6)
BC	93.0%	7.0%
US	100.0%	0.0%
Overseas	96.9%	3.1%
Other Canada	98.6%	1.4%
Total	97.5%	2.5%

1. Sample sizes were not sufficient to test statistical differences.

Counsellors at the Prince George VIC record the number of parties that they speak with throughout each day. This number was divided by the proportion of travelers who responded that they had spoken with a Counsellor to determine an estimate of 2,118 parties (excluding locals) that used the Prince George VIC between July and August 2004. This estimate is approximately 2% more than the 2,076 parties that the VIC staff recorded as speaking with a Counsellor during the same time period.

Travelers were asked, “Overall, how well did the VIC meet your expectations?” Almost all travelers (99%) responded that the VIC met or exceeded their expectations (Table 7). The majority of travelers (65%) indicated that the VIC exceeded their expectations while 35% felt that the VIC met their expectations. Less than one percent (n=2) of all travelers felt that the VIC fell short of their expectations.

More travelers from the US (76%) indicated that the Prince George VIC exceeded their expectations, than those from Other Canada (65%), BC (63%) and Overseas (55%). Travelers that spoke with a Counsellor were more likely to say that the VIC exceeded their expectations. Travelers that were visiting friends and family (67%) were slightly more likely than leisure travelers (64%) to give the VIC the highest rating. Due to small sample sizes, the statistical significance of these differences can not be measured.

Travelers at the Prince George VIC were also asked why the VIC fell short, met or exceeded their expectations. The majority of travelers (68%) felt that the VIC provided good information, with many also commenting about the friendly (48%) and helpful staff (41%; Figure 11). Over a quarter of travelers (28%) mentioned the nice building/area. Fewer made comments about good access (13%) or cleanliness (2%). Three percent of travelers provided other positive comments, half of which referred to the artwork at the VIC. Only two travelers said that the VIC fell short of their expectations – one commented on poor signage and the other on poor location.

Table 7. The proportion of travelers who felt the Prince George VIC fell short, met or exceeded their expectations by traveler origin, those that did or did not speak with a Counsellor, and primary trip purpose.

	Percentage of Travelers who Felt the Prince George VIC Fell Short, Met, or Exceeded Their Expectations ¹		
	Fell Short (n=2)	Met (n=83)	Exceeded (n=155)
Overall	0.8%	34.6%	64.6%
Origin			
BC	2.3%	34.9%	62.8%
US	0.0%	24.2%	75.8%
Overseas	1.6%	43.8%	54.7%
Other Canada	0.0%	35.2%	64.8%
Spoke with a Counsellor			
Yes	0.9%	33.6%	65.5%
No ²	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%
Primary Purpose³			
Leisure	0.5%	35.9%	63.6%
Visit friends & family	1.9%	30.8%	67.3%

1. Excludes 2 'Don't Know/No Response' responses.

2. Low sample sizes (n=5).

3. Excludes 1 'Don't Know/No Response' responses and 3 'other' responses (n=4).

Reasons Why Travelers Felt the Prince George VIC Met or Exceeded Their Expectations

How did the VIC exceed or meet your expectations?

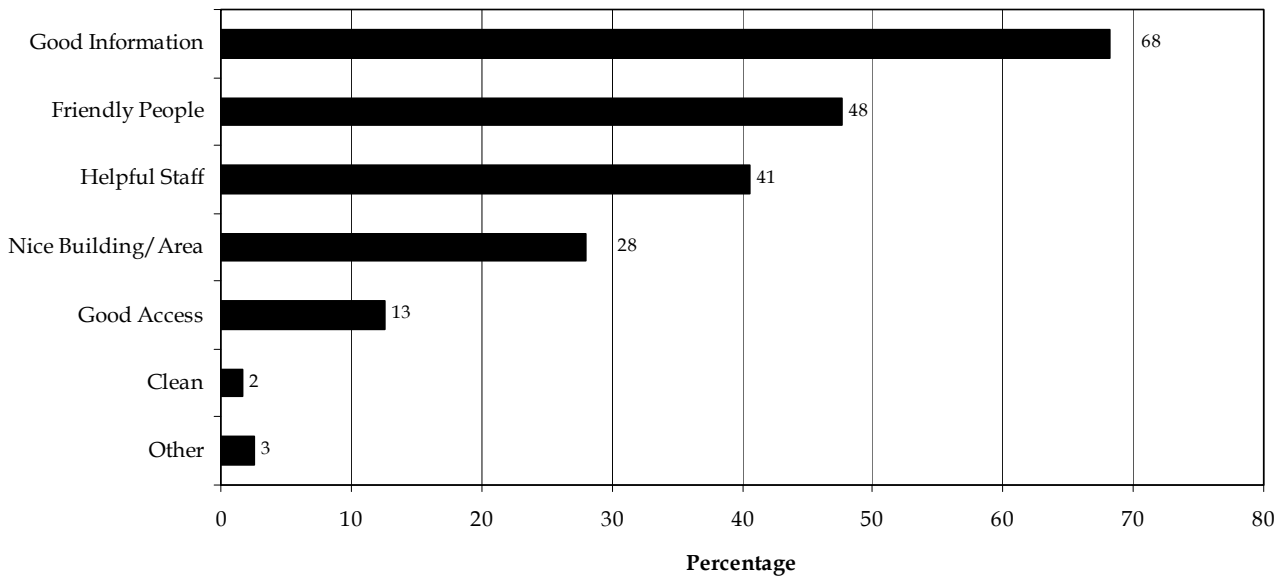


Figure 11. The reasons why travelers felt the Prince George VIC met or exceeded their expectations (n=239).

Respondents were asked, "Were there any products and/or services that were not currently available at the Prince George VIC that you would have liked to have found?" Only 8% of respondents indicated that they

would have liked to have found additional products and/or services. Of these travelers, over a quarter (26%) mentioned better signage, 21% suggested the provision of food and beverages (particularly coffee, popcorn and vending machines), 21% would have like to have found telephone services, 16% wanted more specific information (suggestions included lists of available accommodation, information about antique stores and weather updates), and 11% suggested souvenir sales (suggestions included postcards, pins and t-shirts). Other products and/or services that travelers mentioned included RV parking, use of the Internet, and digital camera plug-ins.

Travelers were asked if they were aware that accommodation booking services were offered at some VICs throughout the province and about their likelihood of using such a service. Forty-three percent of travelers at the Prince George VIC were aware that they could book accommodation at some Visitor Info Centres throughout British Columbia. Nineteen percent of travelers indicated that it was either likely or very likely that they would make future accommodation bookings at a VIC (Figure 12). Over a quarter of travelers (27%) indicated that they were ‘somewhat likely’ to make future bookings at a VIC.

Likelihood of Booking Accommodation at a Visitor Info Centre

In the future, how likely are you to book your accommodations at a Visitor Info Centre?

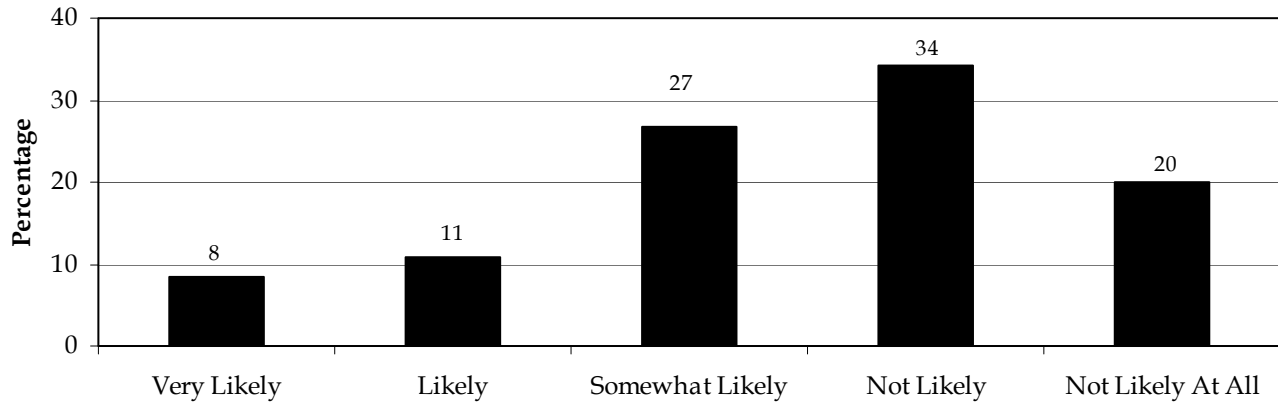


Figure 12. The likelihood of travelers making future accommodation bookings at a Visitor Info Centre (n=240). Travelers who responded ‘Don’t Know’ were excluded from this analysis (n=2).

In the mailback questionnaire, travelers at the Prince George VIC were asked if they had visited any other VICs in British Columbia. Of the 63 travelers asked, nearly seven out of ten (69%) indicated that they had visited another VIC. Of those who stopped at other VICs in British Columbia, half (50%) visited two or more VICs and 30% stopped at three or more. The locations of the other VICs visited were diverse, and are listed in Appendix F.

Additionally, mailback respondents were asked if, as a result of their experience at the Prince George VIC, they would stop to visit another VIC in British Columbia. The vast majority of respondents indicated that they were very likely (68%) or likely (27%) to visit other VICs as a result of their stop at the Prince George VIC.

Perceptions of the Prince George Region and British Columbia

In the mailback questionnaire, travelers were asked "What positive and/or negative images come to mind when you think of the Prince George region as a vacation destination?" Positive and negative image questions were asked to obtain an understanding of what travelers perceive the Prince George region to be doing right and what the Prince George region can work on in terms of attracting and keeping travelers in the region. Overall, respondents had nearly twice as many positive responses (115) than negative (61) of the region. Positive responses were dominated by the natural beauty of the Prince George region (21% of positive responses; Figure 13), followed by the friendly people (18%), the local attractions and activities (16%), and the shopping / services available in Prince George (8%).

Ten Most Frequent Positive Images of the Prince George Region

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

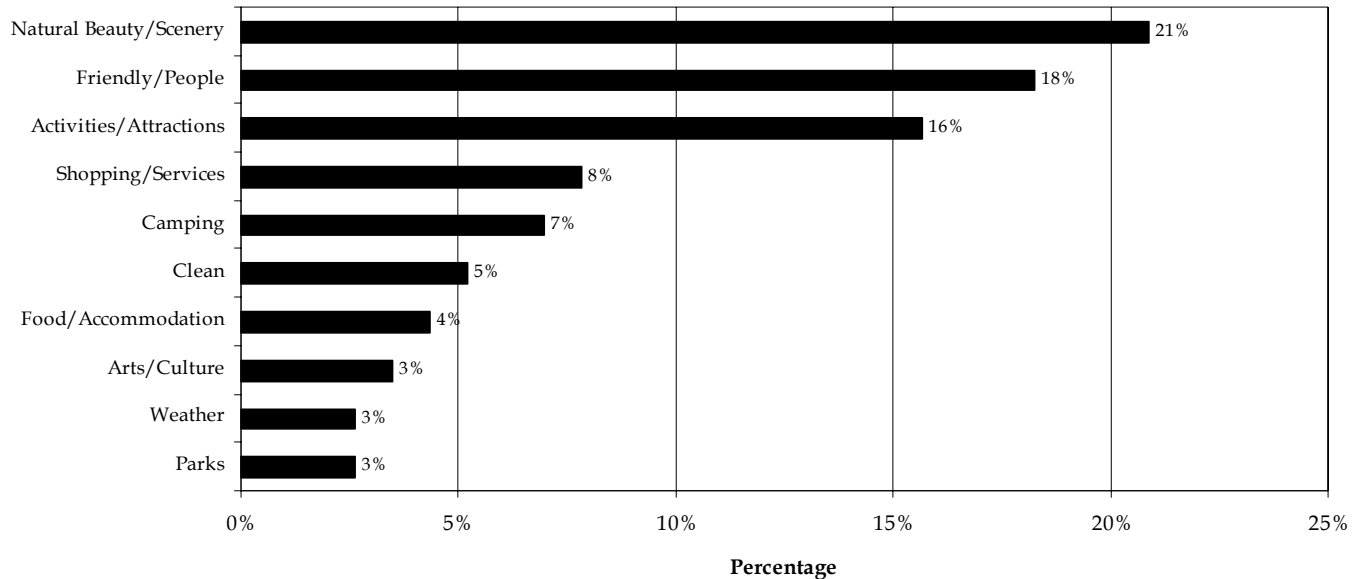


Figure 13. The most frequent positive images respondents had of the Prince George region. At the Prince George VIC, 46 respondents replied with 115 positive images.

The negative images respondents mentioned were that the pulp mill and/or its smell (19%), the lack of attractions or services (18%), the run down/dirty/unattractive downtown area (16%), the business/traffic in the city (9%) and a feeling that the crime rate was high/concern for personal safety (9%; Figure 14).

Ten Most Frequent Negative Images of the Prince George Region

What negative images come to mind when you think of the Prince George Region as a vacation destination?

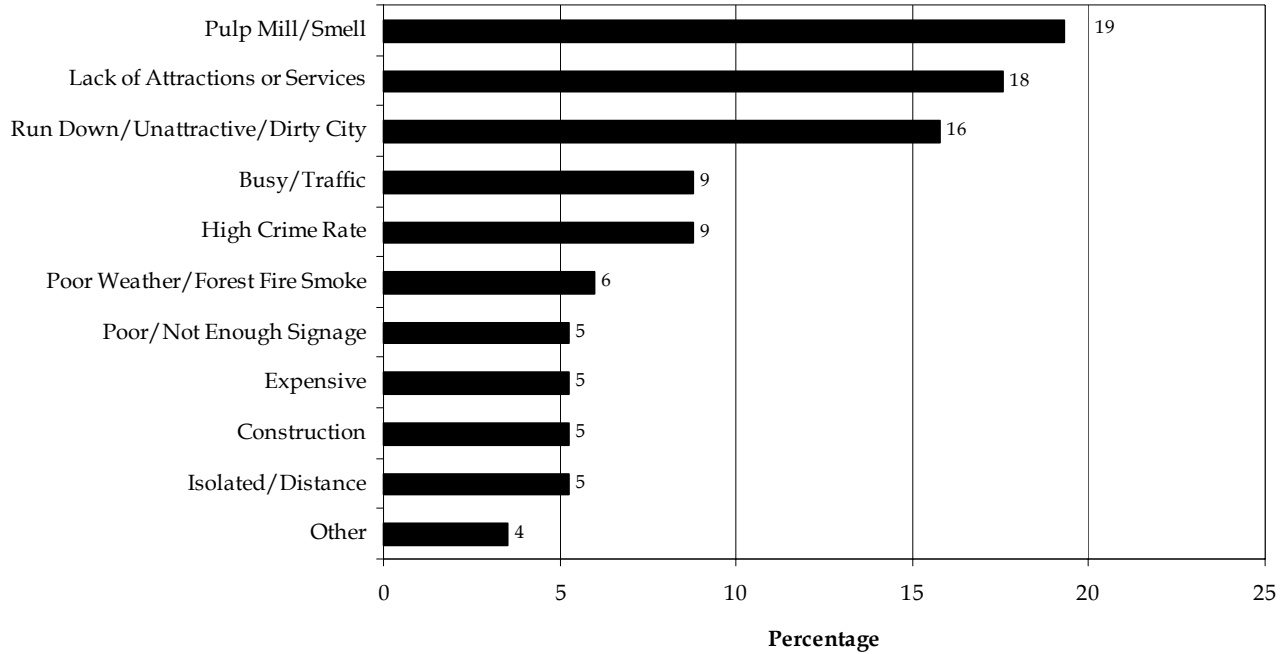


Figure 14. The most frequent negative images respondents had of the Prince George region. At the Prince George VIC, 35 respondents replied with 57 negative images.

In addition to asking about the positive and negative images of the Prince George region, travelers were asked about the unique characteristics of the Prince George region as a vacation destination on the mailback questionnaire. Unique characteristics of the Prince George region can be used to attract more travelers to the area. A variety of characteristics were identified as unique to the area by respondents (Figure 15). The most common was the geographic location of Prince George (19%), as it served as a gateway to either the Alaska Highway or other destinations in Northern British Columbia. Other unique characteristics mentioned included outdoor activities (13%), the scenery (10%), local attractions (10%), and the area’s lakes (9%).

Ten Most Frequent Unique Characteristics of the Prince George Area

What are the unique characteristics of the Prince George area as a vacation destination?

Unique characteristics are those that make the Prince George area different from other destinations

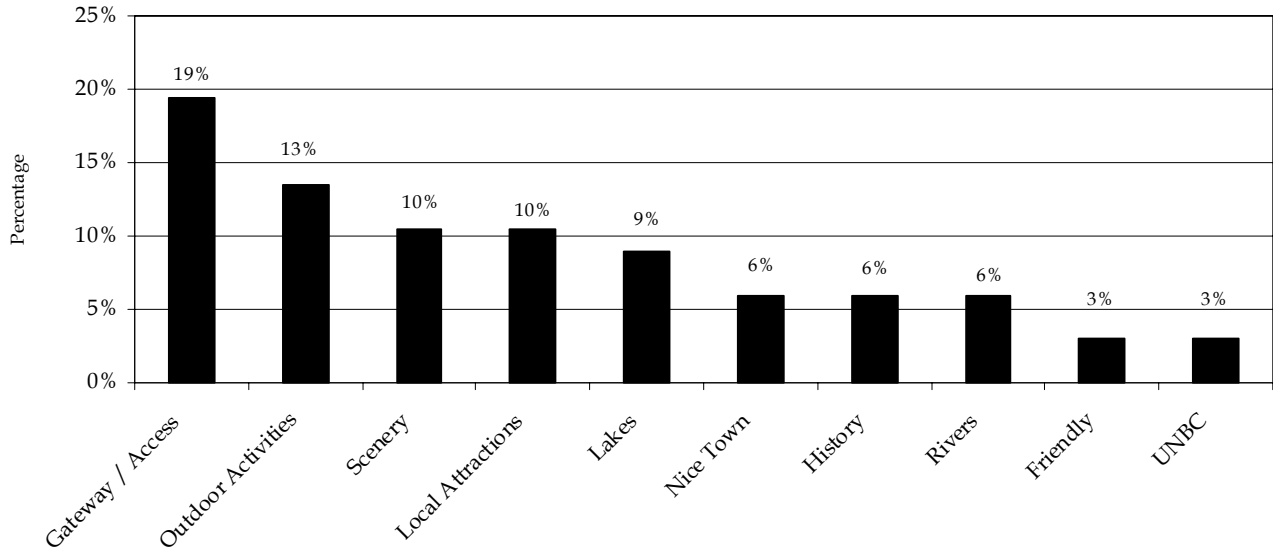


Figure 15. The ten most frequently mentioned unique characteristics of the Prince George region. At the Prince George VIC, 34 respondents replied with 67 characteristics.

Respondents to the mailback questionnaire were asked about their satisfaction with their trip to the Prince George region and British Columbia (Figures 16 and 17). Eighty-four percent of travelers were either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their experience in the Prince George region. Trip satisfaction was even higher when travelers were asked about their experience in all of British Columbia, with 98% of respondents reporting that they were either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied'.

Satisfaction With Trip to Prince George Region

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your trip to the Prince George region?

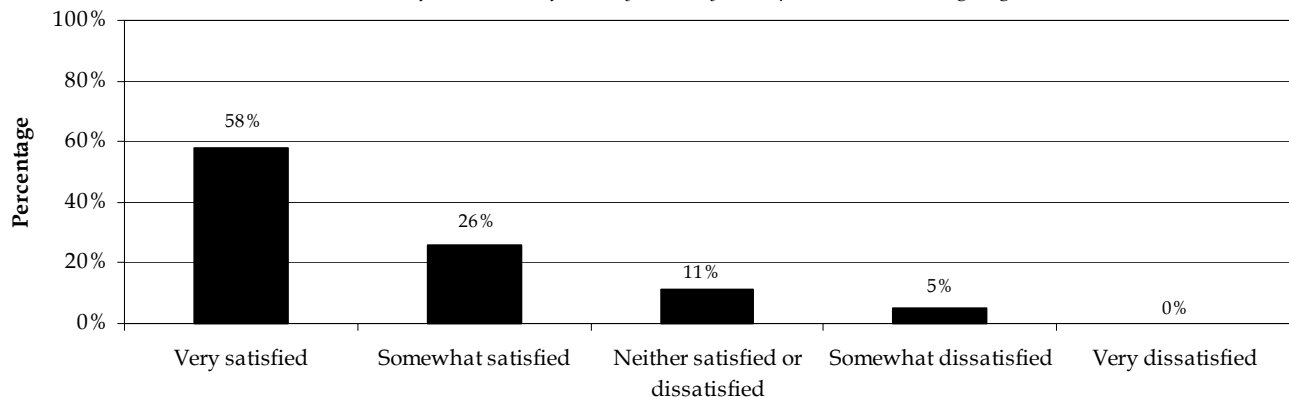


Figure 16. The Prince George region satisfaction for travelers at the Prince George VIC. Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=62).

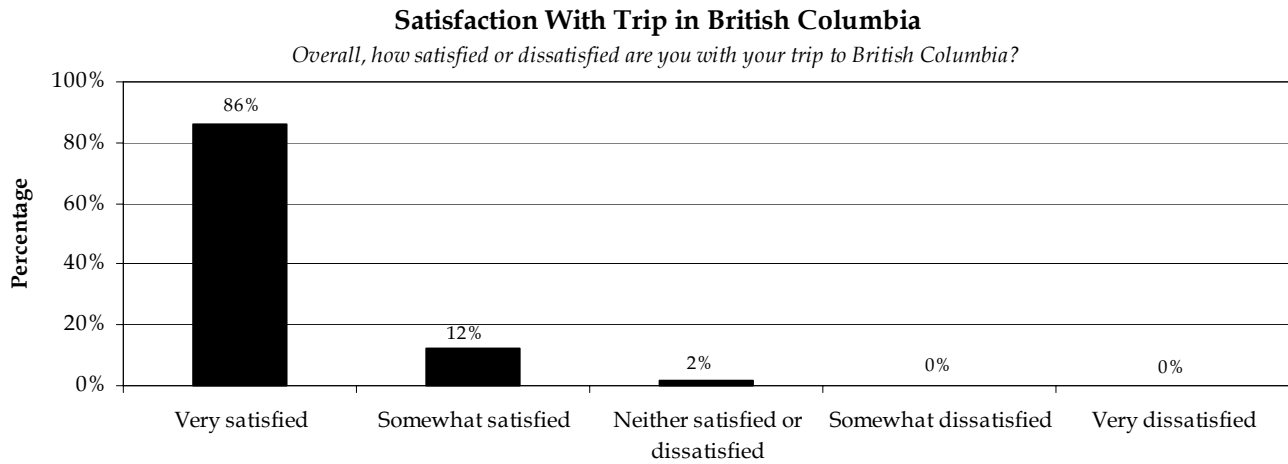


Figure 17. British Columbia trip satisfaction for travelers at the Prince George VIC. Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=58).

Travelers responding to the mailback survey at the Prince George VIC were asked their likelihood of returning to the Prince George region and the province of British Columbia on a leisure trip (Figures 18 and 19). A total of 63% of travelers indicated that they were either 'very likely' or 'likely' to return to the Prince George region on a leisure trip. A larger proportion of travelers indicated they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to take another trip to or within British Columbia (92%).

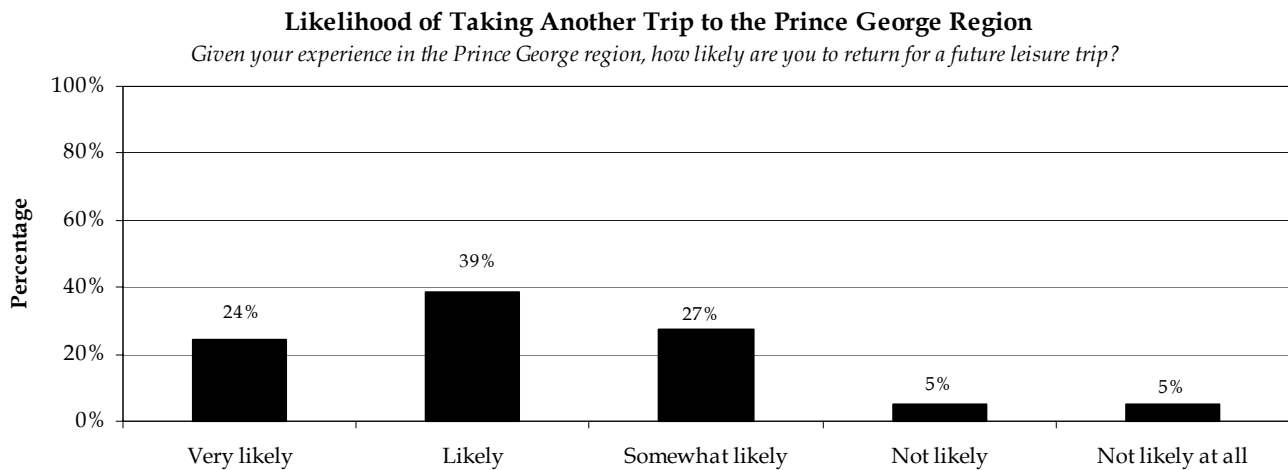


Figure 18. The likelihood for travelers at the Prince George VIC to make another leisure trip to the Prince George region. Travelers who responded 'Don't Know' were excluded from this analysis (n=62).

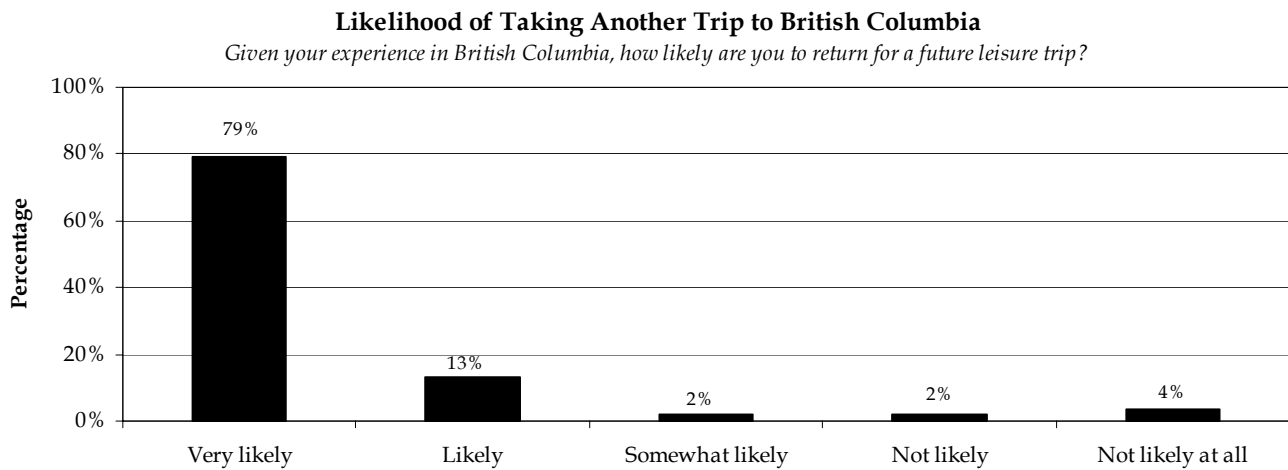


Figure 19. The likelihood for travelers at the Prince George VIC to make another leisure trip to British Columbia. Travelers who responded ‘Don’t Know’ were excluded from this analysis (n=53).

On the mailback questionnaire, travelers were asked if an organized tour package would be of interest. Of the 58 responses, 17% replied they were interested in an organized tour package, 71% said they were not interested and 12% didn’t know.

Expenditures

Travelers were asked, “In Canadian dollars, what were your travel party’s total expenditures yesterday, including accommodations?” Travelers at the Prince George VIC spent an average of \$133.16 per day (Table 8). Spending patterns varied only slightly depending on the origin of the traveler, with Overseas travelers having the highest average daily expenditure at \$138.80. There was, however, a significant difference in expenditures when broken down by primary accommodation type, which ranged from \$114.71 for those staying in campgrounds/RV Parks to \$163.69 for those using hotels/motels/resorts (see Appendix E for expenditure by accommodation category details).

Table 8. The average daily expenditures of travelers at the Prince George VIC.

\$ CDN Daily Expenditures*	Average Per Party Daily Expenditure (n=215)¹
British Columbia	\$126.97
US	\$130.50
Overseas	\$138.80
Other Canada	\$134.17
Total²	\$133.16

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

1. 3.3% (n=8) of travelers began trip on the day of the interview and therefore did not have a response, 5.7% (n=14) DK/NR. Business travelers were not included in this analysis.
2. Not statistically different at the 0.05 level when comparing expenditure data by origin.

In the summer of 2004, Prince George VIC users expended nearly \$571,000 in the Prince George region and over \$3.3 million on their trip throughout the rest of the province (Table 9). These figures do not represent the economic impact of the VIC but rather the total expenditures of travelers to the Prince George region and in the rest of the province while on the trip during which they were interviewed at the Prince George VIC.

Table 9. Estimated expenditures of travelers who visited the Prince George VIC.

July 2-August 29, 2004 ^{1,2}	Prince George VIC
Estimated Total VIC parties for July and August 2004	2,118
Average Daily Expenditures	\$133.16
Estimated Total Expenditures in Prince George by VIC Users	\$571,486
Estimated Total Expenditures outside of Prince George by VIC Users	\$3,320,778
Estimated Total Expenditures in British Columbia by VIC Users	\$3,892,264

1. For details on the methods used to calculate the numbers, please see Appendix D.

2. Does not include residents of the Prince George region.

Impact of the VIC on Traveler Behaviour

Travelers were asked four questions to gauge how the Prince George VIC impacted their trip. They were:

1. *While at the centre today, did you learn about any activities, places or attractions that you were not previously aware of?*
2. *What were those activities and when will you participate in them? On this trip or on a future trip?*
3. *On this trip do you feel you will stay an extra night or nights in British Columbia as a result of stopping at the VIC?*
4. *Do you think you will make another trip in British Columbia in the future as a result of the information you obtained at this VIC?*

Responses to this question indicate that the Prince George VIC had a positive impact on traveler behaviour. Thirty-one percent of travelers indicated that they learned about one or more new activities, places or attractions while at the VIC. Twelve percent replied that they would stay at least one extra night as a result of the information that they had obtained, and 81% said that they would make another trip to British Columbia as a result of the information that they had learned (Figure 20).

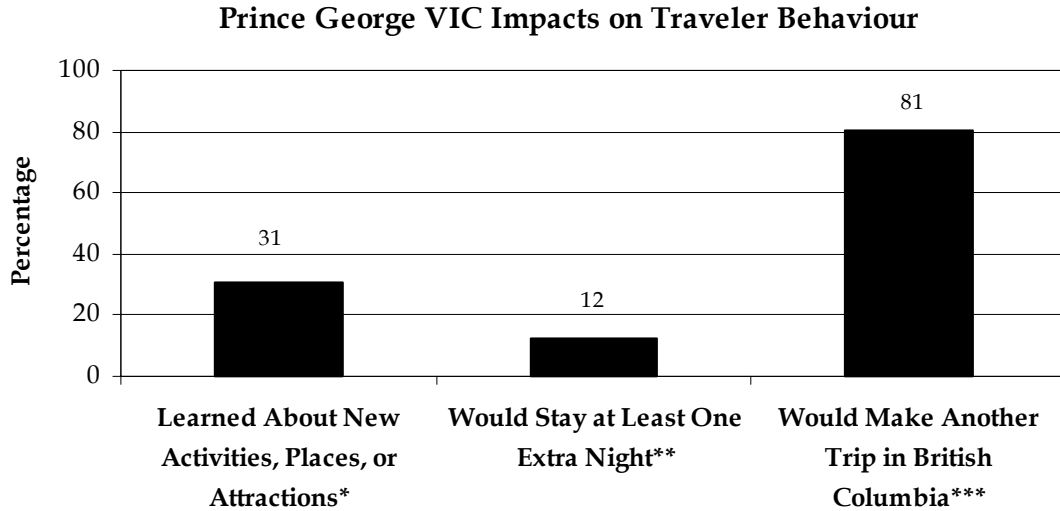


Figure 20. The proportion of travelers (n=242) at the Prince George VIC who learned about new activities, places or attractions, stayed at least one extra night or would make another trip to British Columbia as a direct result of the Prince George VIC. *Don't Know/No Response =13 (5.4%) **Don't Know/No Response=23 (9.6%) ***Don't Know/No Response=18 (7.4%).

Those travelers who indicated they would stay extra time or would make another trip to British Columbia as a direct result of the VIC were used to calculate the economic impact of the Prince George VIC. ²

A number of trip and traveler characteristics could influence the impact of the VIC on traveler behaviour. Characteristics like traveler origin, speaking with a VIC Counsellor, primary trip purpose, flexibility in activities participated in while in the Prince George region, flexibility in the time spent in the Prince George region, or the time spent in British Columbia were examined to understand if they influenced the impact of the Prince George VIC (Table 11). Traveler origin influenced whether travelers would stay an extra night, with US travelers the most likely to stay an extra night as a result of the information they obtained. Results showed that travelers who spoke to a Counsellor were more likely to learn about new activities, to stay an extra night or to make another trip to British Columbia, however, small sample size did not permit statistical testing of this characteristic.

Flexibility in terms of time spent in Prince George and time spent in British Columbia impacted whether travelers would stay an extra night as a result of the information they obtained. In both cases, travelers who were very flexible were the most likely to say that they would stay an extra night. Primary trip purpose and time flexibility with respect to activities in Prince George did not influence traveler behaviour in terms of impacts from the VIC.

² Economic impact estimates can be obtained from the Prince George Visitor Info Centre.

Table 10. The impact of the Prince George VIC on traveler behaviour by traveler origin, travelers who did and did not speak with a Counsellor, primary trip purpose and flexibility.

	Percentage of Travelers who:		
	Learned About New Activities, Places or Attraction ²	Would Stay an Extra Night or Nights ³	Would Make Another Trip ⁴
Origin			
British Columbia	34.9%	5.0%	83.7%
US	41.3%	19.0%	77.8%
Overseas	23.4%	6.3%	76.6%
Other Canada	25.0%	15.3%	84.7%
Spoke With A Counsellor			
Yes	31.4%	12.4%	81.4%
No	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Primary Trip Purpose¹			
Leisure	30.3%	13.0%	79.5%
Visiting Friends & Family	30.2%	7.8%	83.0%
Flexibility with Activities			
Inflexible (all activities are planned)	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%
Moderately Flexible (about half of activities are planned)	33.3%	11.9%	90.5%
Very Flexible (less than half of activities are planned)	31.1%	13.3%	78.1%
Time Flexibility in the Prince George region			
Inflexible (you have to depart at a set time)	26.5%	2.9%	82.4%
Moderately Flexible (you can change the time of the day of departure)	36.6%	7.5%	85.4%
Very Flexible (you can change the day of departure)	28.0%	17.7%	76.8%
Time Flexibility in British Columbia			
Inflexible (you have to depart at a set time)	36.4%	0.0%	86.4%
Moderately Flexible (you can change the time of the day of departure)	28.4%	10.4%	85.1%
Very Flexible (you can change the day of departure)	29.4%	17.7%	75.4%

1. Business travelers were not asked these impact questions.

2. Not statistically different at the 0.05 level for any of the characteristics, however, sample size issues did not permit statistical testing of spoke with a counsellor. In order to achieve minimum expected counts for testing statistical significance, DK/NR responses were removed and, for primary trip purpose, the other category (n=3) was removed from the analysis.

3. Statistically different at the 0.05 level for origin, time flexibility in Prince George and time flexibility in BC. Sample size issues did not permit statistical testing of spoke with a counsellor. In order to achieve minimum expected counts for testing statistical significance, DK/NR responses were removed and, for primary trip purpose, the other category (n=3) was removed from the analysis.

4. Not statistically different at the 0.05 level for any of the characteristics, however, sample size issues did not permit statistical testing of spoke with a counsellor. In order to achieve minimum expected counts for testing statistical significance, DK/NR responses were removed and, for primary trip purpose, the other category (n=3) was removed from the analysis.

Travelers at the Prince George VIC learned about a variety of new activities (Table 11). A total of 78 new activities were learned about at the VIC, with 81% of travelers indicating that they planned to participate in these activities. Most of the travelers who said that they would participate in new activities planned to do

so on their current trip (91%). Of those who were participating in the new activities on their current trip, 12% indicated that they would spend extra time on the trip to complete the activity. The top ten new activities that travelers learned about included museums; parks/trails/natural areas; local amenities such as shops, restaurants, churches, the library, the aquatic centre and the university; lakes/rivers/fishing locations; other destinations/routes in British Columbia; special events; Huble Homestead Heritage Site; local attractions in general; campgrounds; and family amusement attractions. Travelers also reported learning about accommodations, golf courses, native art galleries and the Forests for the World Lookout.

Table 11. The proportion of travelers who learned about each new activity, the proportion who would participate in that new activity, when they would participate in those activities, the proportion of travelers who would spend extra time in the Prince George region to do that activity and the average number of extra hours spent participating in that activity.

Top Ten New Activities That Travelers Learned About	% Of All New Activities (n=78)	% That Will Participate	Timeline For Participation (Percentage of Total for each) ¹			% That Will Spend Extra Time ¹	Average Hrs. Spent On Each Activity ^{1,2}
			Sometime on this trip	On a future trip	Unsure		
Museums	23.1%	83.3%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	3.5
Parks/trails/natural areas	17.9%	92.3%	91.7%	0.0%	8.3%	9.1%	4.0
Local amenities (i.e. shops, restaurants, church, library, aquatic centre, university, etc.)	12.8%	90.0%	88.9%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	NA
Lakes/rivers/fishing locations	6.4%	50.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	NA
Other BC destinations/routes	6.4%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA
Special events	5.1%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA
Huble Homestead Heritage Site	5.1%	100.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	NA
Local attractions (general)	5.1%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	5.0
Campgrounds	3.8%	66.7%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	6.0
Family amusement attractions	3.8%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA

1. Caution is advised when interpreting due to small sample sizes.

2. Average hours spent on the activity (of those who indicated that they would participate).

Conclusions

1. Travelers who stopped at the Prince George VIC:

- Were most likely to be over the age of 45 (72%),
- Were likely to have attained at least a college or technical diploma (72%),
- Were predominantly medium to high income earners (60% > \$50,000 annual household income)
- Were most likely to be traveling without children (77%).

Trip characteristics of travelers at the Prince George VIC showed that:

- The primary trip purpose was leisure (73%), followed by visiting friends and family (20%),
- A private motor vehicle was the primary mode of transportation for the majority of travelers (68%),
- Campgrounds/RV Parks were the primary accommodation type for over half of the travelers (53%), followed by hotel/motel/resorts (34%),
- The majority of travelers (66%) were spending time in the Prince George region as opposed to just passing through and 17% indicated that Prince George was their primary destination,
- The average time spent in the Prince George region was three days,
- The Internet was the most common source of information for trip planning,
- The majority of travelers were very flexible in terms of their activities in Prince George, their time in the community and their time in British Columbia.

2. The profile of travelers at the Prince George VIC can be applied:

- To ensure that the current information provided to VIC users reflects the needs of travelers using the VIC. For example, is there enough information at the Prince George VIC about campgrounds?
- To design a marketing plan to attract travelers who do not currently use the VIC. For example, a plan could be designed to encourage visitors who are in the Prince George region visiting friends and relatives to visit the Prince George VIC.

3. The profile of travelers at the Prince George VIC can be used for business planning and management of new and existing tourism businesses in the Prince George region. The data presented in this report provides details of the type of clients new tourism businesses in the region can expect and characteristics, interests and trip flexibility of potential clients who could be attracted through marketing (brochures, etc.) at the Prince George VIC.

4. Nearly all travelers at the Prince George VIC spoke with a VIC Counsellor (98%) and the majority (65%) said that the VIC exceeded their expectations. Reasons that the VIC met or exceeded expectations included the provision of good information as well as the availability of friendly, helpful staff.

5. The Prince George VIC had a positive impact on traveler behaviour. Thirty-one percent of travelers learned about new activities/places/attractions, 12% reported that they would stay at least one additional night and 81% would make another trip in British Columbia as a direct result of the information they obtained at the Prince George VIC. Future research should be conducted to determine what percentage of travelers who said they would return actually do return as a result of the information obtained.

6. The proportion of travelers who said that they learned about new activities, would stay an extra night or would make another trip to British Columbia as a result of the information obtained at the VIC was consistently larger for those travelers who had spoken to a VIC Counsellor. This finding highlights the importance of having a Counsellor available at all times to help travelers.

Limitations

1. These results are representative of travelers who stopped at the Prince George VIC during July and August of 2004. The results do not represent the impact of the Prince George VIC for the whole year. Applying these results to the remaining months in the year could over estimate the impact of the VIC because the study was completed during the peak tourism period. In addition, trip and traveler characteristics of travelers at other times of the year could differ from those interviewed during the study period.
2. These results are representative of the impact the Prince George VIC had on travelers who did not live in the Prince George region. This study did not explore the impacts that the Prince George VIC had on travelers calling or emailing for information prior to their visit to the area. In addition, it did not describe the benefits that local residents receive from the Prince George VIC or the benefits of local residents collecting information for their non-resident guests.
3. Results from similar studies at other VICs have differed substantially from those presented here and therefore the results presented here cannot be applied to other Visitor Info Centres.
4. Results presented do not represent the full range of analysis that can be completed with the data collected. Please contact Krista Morten, Research Services Tourism British Columbia (Krista.Morten@tourismbc.com) for more information on obtaining custom reports using this data. For example, a profile of travelers visiting friends and family versus those that were traveling for leisure could be developed.

Applications

An estimate of 2,118 parties visited the Prince George VIC in July and August 2004. A number of percentages have been produced in the pages of this report that can be applied to the total number of parties.

Example

If a user of this report wanted to know how many parties at the Prince George VIC were traveling by RV between July 2 and August 29, 2004 the following calculation could be done:

2,118 parties * 0.209 (percentage of travelers using an RV) = 443 parties with RVs used the Prince George VIC between July 2 and August 29, 2004.

Appendices

Appendix A - Interviewer schedule and interviews completed

Appendix B - Questionnaires

Appendix C - Response bias testing

Appendix D - Calculation of total VIC use

Appendix E - Expenditures by accommodation type

Appendix F - Other VICs visited in British Columbia

Appendix G - Comments regarding the Prince George VIC

Appendix A - Interview Schedule and Interviews Completed

Table A1. The day and number of travelers approached, the number who agreed to the interview, the number of residents, number of refusals and the number of tourists interviewed at the Prince George VIC during the study period.

	Prince George VIC				
	Number of People Approached	Agree to Interview-YES	Refusals	Number of Residents	Tourists
July 2	15	9	6	1	8
July 3	14	11	3	2	9
July 7	32	21	11	6	15
July 9	19	13	6	2	11
July 12	26	13	13	9	4
July 14	21	16	5	3	13
July 16	26	12	14	5	7
July 17	19	11	8	3	8
July 18	13	7	6	2	5
July 22	18	17	1	9	8
July 23	12	8	4	2	6
July 24	18	10	8	0	10
July 25	3	3	0	1	2
July 27	15	8	7	1	7
July 28	16	11	5	3	8
July 31	13	7	6	3	4
Aug 2	10	6	4	2	4
Aug 3	27	14	13	8	6
Aug 4	26	19	7	7	12
Aug 7	25	16	9	5	11
Aug 8	23	13	10	4	9
Aug 9	20	15	5	4	11
Aug 12	22	13	9	1	12
Aug 13	29	16	13	5	11
Aug 14	25	16	9	3	13
Aug 17	18	10	8	2	8
Aug 18	22	13	9	2	11
Aug 19	22	10	12	1	9
Aug 22	14	4	10	2	2
Aug 23	14	7	7	0	7
Aug 24	27	16	11	3	13
Aug 27	18	12	6	5	7
Aug 28	13	11	2	2	9
Aug 29	3	3	0	0	3
Total	638	391	247	108	283

Appendix B – Questionnaires

Interview Questions (Prince George VIC)

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name _____ and I'm conducting a survey on behalf of Tourism BC. We want to ask you about your trip to the Prince George region and your experiences in British Columbia. Can I please speak with someone in your party that is knowledgeable about your trip planning and expenditures?

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.**

Are you a resident of the Prince George region? *To clarify, we mean anywhere within an hour drive of downtown Prince George.*

NO YES *Thanks for agreeing to participate, in this study we are only interested in visitors from outside the Prince George region*

Are you part of an organized tour group?

NO YES

Where are you from? **Prov.** _____ **State** _____ **Country (Overseas)** _____

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

What is the **primary** purpose of your trip to British Columbia? Is it for Leisure, Visiting Friends and Family or Business?

LEISURE VISIT FRIENDS & FAMILY WORK/BUSINESS ACTIVITY OTHER _____ DK/NR

What is your primary destination? _____ NONE, TOURING DK/NR

How did you get to the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? Was it by

CAR/TRUCK/MC RV BUS BICYCLE PLANE TRAIN OTHER _____ DK/NR

What day did you leave your residence on this trip? ____/____ month/day

When did you enter British Columbia? ____/____ month/day **(do not ask if from BC)**

What day do you plan to return to your residence? ____/____ month/day

To confirm, you will be gone for a total of _____ days **(include day left and day returning)**

How many of those days will be spent travelling in British Columbia? _____ days

Of those, how much time will be spent in the Prince George region? *By Prince George region, we mean anywhere within an hour drive of downtown Prince George.*

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

Go to Accommodation

If WORK/BUSINESS what is the likelihood that you will return for leisure?

NOT LIKELY AT ALL NOT LIKELY SOMEWHAT LIKELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY DK/NR

If NOT LIKELY AT ALL or NOT LIKELY why not? _____ DK/NR

If SOMEWHAT LIKELY, LIKELY or VERY LIKELY why? _____ DK/NR

That completes the interview for business travelers. Thank-you for participating!

IF NOT JUST PASSING THROUGH, what is your **primary** (most time spent) leisure activity in the Prince George region? _____ NONE DK/NR

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

HOTEL/MOTEL/RESORT B&B CAMPGROUND/RV FRIENDS OR RELATIVES OTHER _____

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

\$ _____ BEGAN TRIP TODAY DK/NR

How flexible is your trip regarding the activities you will participate in while in the Prince George region? Is it

INFLEXIBLE MODERATELY FLEXIBLE VERY FLEXIBLE DK/NR
 (all activities are planned) (about half of activities are planned) (less than half of activities are planned)

How flexible is your trip regarding the amount of time you will spend in the Prince George region? Is it

INFLEXIBLE MODERATELY FLEXIBLE VERY FLEXIBLE DK/NR
 (You have to depart at a set time) (You can change the time of the day for departure) (You can change the day of departure)

How flexible is your trip regarding the amount of time you will spend in the BC? Is it

INFLEXIBLE MODERATELY FLEXIBLE VERY FLEXIBLE DK/NR
 (You have to depart at a set time) (You can change the time of the day for departure) (You can change the day of departure)

IF NOT JUST PASSING THROUGH PRINCE GEORGE, ask activities questions OTHERWISE skip to When Start Planning

While in Prince George, have you or do you plan to: (Circle response)	If YES, How important was that activity in planning this trip? Was it						
	NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPOR-TANT	VERY IMPOR-TANT	DK/ NR	
Participate in nature-based activities (i.e. wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, walking, hiking, cycling, visiting a regional or provincial park, etc.)	NO YES	1	2	3	4	5	9
Participate in arts and cultural activities (i.e. First Nations attractions, theatre, art galleries, artist studios, literary/poetry reading, dance performance, etc.)	NO YES	1	2	3	4	5	9
Visit a museum, heritage attraction or historic site	NO YES	1	2	3	4	5	9
Attend a festival or event	NO YES	1	2	3	4	5	9

How far in advance did you start planning this trip? Was it

DURING THE TRIP DAY OF DEPARTURE 1-6 DAYS 1-2 WEEKS 3-8 WEEKS 9-12 WEEKS 13 WEEKS+ DK/NR

What information sources did you use to plan your trip? **Do not prompt, check all that apply**

INTERNET TRAVEL AGENTS, AIRLINES, AUTO ASSOCIATIONS BROCHURES AND BOOKS VICs MEDIA COVERAGE DK/NR

TOURISM PRINCE GEORGE WEBSITE FRIENDS, RELATIVES, CLUBS AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS TOUR OPERATORS / TOURISM SPECIFIC BUSINESSES ADVERTISING (PRINT/TV) TOURISM BC 1-800 # OR OTHER OTHER _____

NONE

Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your use of the Prince George Visitor Info Centre.

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

- TO OBTAIN A MAP
- TO OBTAIN ROUTE INFORMATION
- TO OBTAIN ATTRACTION INFO
- TO OBTAIN ACCOMMODATION INFO (NOT CAMPING)
- TO OBTAIN CAMPING INFO
- TO OBTAIN OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITY INFORMATION
- TO OBTAIN EVENT INFORMATION
- TO OBTAIN BC FERRIES INFORMATION
- TO MAKE RESERVATIONS ON BC FERRIES
- TO OBTAIN VIA RAIL INFORMATION
- TO BOOK VIA RAIL INFORMATION
- TO OBTAIN INFO ON ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY
- TO USE THE CENTRE'S WASHROOM FACILITIES
- TO TAKE A BREAK FROM TRAVELING AND GET OUT OF VEHICLE
- TO OBTAIN REFRESHMENTS
- OTHER _____
- OTHER _____

While visiting today, what type of information did you obtain? **(Do not prompt-check all that apply)**

- NOTHING
- MAP
- ROUTE INFORMATION
- ATTRACTION INFORMATION
- ACCOMMODATION (EXCLUDING CAMPGROUND) INFORMATION
- CAMPGROUND INFORMATION
- OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITY INFORMATION
- EVENT INFORMATION
- BC FERRIES INFORMATION
- BC FERRIES RESERVATIONS
- VIA RAIL INFORMATION
- VIA RAIL TRAIN TICKETS
- ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY INFO
- DK/NR
- OTHER _____
- OTHER _____
- OTHER _____

While visiting today, did you speak with a Visitor Information Counsellor?

- NO YES DK/NR

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

- NO – Go to extend in BC YES DK/NR

If YES, What were those activities, places or attractions?	Will you participate in them?	IF YES, Will it be sometime on this trip or on a future trip?	IF SOMETIME ON THIS TRIP, Will you stay extra time to complete this activity?	If YES, how many additional hours?
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> SOMETIME ON THIS TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> ON A FUTURE TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> UNSURE <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	____hr
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> SOMETIME ON THIS TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> ON A FUTURE TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> UNSURE <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	____hr
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> SOMETIME ON THIS TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> ON A FUTURE TRIP <input type="checkbox"/> UNSURE <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DK/NR	____hr

Overall, will you extend this trip in British Columbia by staying an extra night or nights as a result of the information obtained at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre?

- NO YES If yes, how many nights _____ DK/NR

Will you make another trip in British Columbia in the future as a result of the information you obtained at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre?

- NO YES DK/NR

Overall, how well did the Prince George Visitor Info Centre live up to your original expectations? Did it EXCEED, MEET OR FALL SHORT of your expectations?

- FELL SHORT MET EXCEEDED DK/NR

How did the VIC exceed, meet, or fall short of your expectations? (*Don't prompt, check all that apply*)

POSITIVE

- HELPFUL STAFF
- GOOD INFORMATION
- FRIENDLY PEOPLE
- GOOD ACCESS
- NICE BUILDING/AREA
- CLEAN
- OTHER _____
- OTHER _____

NEGATIVE

- POOR SIGNAGE
- POOR WASHROOMS
- POOR PARKING
- IMPROVE OUTSIDE AREA
- OTHER _____
- OTHER _____
- DK/NR

Were there any other products and/or services that were not currently available at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre that you would have liked to have found?

- NO YES DK/NR

If yes, what were they? _____, _____, _____.

Are you aware that you can book accommodation at some Info Centres throughout British Columbia?

- NO YES DK/NR

In the future, how likely are you to book your accommodation at a Visitor Info Centre?

- NOT LIKELY AT ALL NOT LIKELY SOMEWHAT LIKELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY DK/NR

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

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

If from Canada or US, what is your postal/zip code? _____

In which of the following age category are you?

- A. UNDER 24 YEARS
- B. 25-34 YEARS
- C. 35-44 YEARS
- D. 45-54 YEARS
- E. 55-64 YEARS
- F. 65 YEARS OR OLDER
- G. DK/NR

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- A. LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL
- B. HIGH SCHOOL
- C. SOME TECHNICAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- D. COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL DIPLOMA
- E. UNIVERSITY DEGREE
- F. MASTERS/PHD DEGREE
- G. OTHER _____
- H. DK/NR

Before taxes, what is your approximate annual household income?

- A. LESS THAN \$25,000
- B. \$25,000 to \$44,999
- C. \$45,000 to \$64,999
- D. \$65,000 to \$99,999
- E. \$100,000 PLUS
- F. DK/NR

Gender of respondent (**Record, don't ask**)

- MALE
- FEMALE

As a follow-up to this interview, we would like to contact you after your trip to inquire how the Visitor Info Centre influenced the rest of your trip in British Columbia. Participation would involve completing one short questionnaire that will be mailed to you. In exchange, we are pleased to offer you one free edition of British Columbia Magazine and a chance to win a digital camera. All contact information will be kept confidential and only used for this study. Would you like to participate?

- NO
- YES

If **YES**-can I get your name and mailing address?

Name:
Mailing Address:
City:
Province/State (<i>If from Overseas or skipped above</i>):
Country (<i>If skipped above</i>):
Postal Code (<i>If from Overseas or skipped above</i>):

Thank-you for participating!

Mailback Questions (Prince George VIC)

The Prince George Visitor Info Centre

Did it change your trip?



Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:

Tourism British Columbia

Research Services

Box 9830, Stn Prov Gov't, 300-1803 Douglas St.

Victoria, BC Canada V8W 9W5



Section 1 - This first section asks questions about characteristics of your trip within British Columbia. Please answer all of the following questions in regard to the trip that we encountered you at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre.

1. How many days did you spend away from home on the trip that we encountered you on? *Fill in the most appropriate response.*

_____ DAY(S) AWAY FROM HOME

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 reply should equal your reply to question 1. *Fill in the most appropriate response.*

_____ DAY(S) IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

3. How many of those days were spent in the Prince George region? By the Prince George region we mean anywhere within an hour drive of downtown Prince George. *Fill in the most appropriate response.*

_____ DAY(S) IN THE PRINCE GEORGE REGION

4. What was the primary purpose of your trip in British Columbia? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. LEISURE
- B. VISIT FRIENDS AND FAMILY
- C. WORK OR BUSINESS ACTIVITY
- D. OTHER *Specify:* _____

5. Was your primary destination within the Prince George region? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES → What was your primary destination within the Prince George region?

- B. NO → What was your primary destination?

- C. DON'T KNOW

6. Was this your first trip to the Prince George region? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES
- B. NO → How many trips have you made in the last 5 years?
Specify: _____ trips
- C. DON'T KNOW

7. Which of the following best describes your **primary** (most often used) type of accommodation while in British Columbia? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. RESORT / HOTEL / MOTEL / BED AND BREAKFAST
- B. CAMPGROUND/RV PARK
- C. FRIENDS OR RELATIVES
- D. OTHER *Specify:* _____

8. We encountered you at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre, on that trip did you visit any other Visitor Info Centres in British Columbia? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES → Where? *Specify:* _____
- B. NO _____
- C. DON'T KNOW _____

Section 2 - This section asks questions about the impact of the Prince George Visitor Info Centre on your trip.

9. Overall, did you extend your trip within British Columbia by staying an extra night or nights as a result of the information obtained at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES → How many additional nights did you spend?
Specify: _____ nights
- B. NO
- C. DON'T KNOW

10a. We want to know about any new activities, attractions, events or destinations that you learned about at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre. On the trip where we interviewed you, did you participate in any additional activities, attractions, events or destinations as a result of the information you received at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES → Go to Q10b and then 10c
- B. NO → Go to Q11
- C. DON'T KNOW → Go to Q11

10b. What were those additional attractions, events or destinations that you learned about at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? *Please list up to three (3) activities.*

- Activity 1 _____
- Activity 2 _____
- Activity 3 _____

- 10c. For each activity listed in question 10b please complete the questions in the table below. Please complete the table below, referring to these three activities.

Activity	Did you lengthen your stay to participate in this activity? <i>Circle YES or No</i>	If YES, how much additional time did you take for this activity? <i>Fill in the appropriate amount of time in hours or days.</i>
1	A. NO → <i>Go to Activity 2</i> B. YES _____ →	_____ HOURS OR _____ DAYS
2	A. NO → <i>Go to Activity 3</i> B. YES _____ →	_____ HOURS OR _____ DAYS
3	A. NO → <i>Go to Q11</i> B. YES _____ →	_____ HOURS OR _____ DAYS

11. Will you take another trip to or within British Columbia as a result of the information that you obtained at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? *Circle the most appropriate response.*
- A. YES
 - B. NO
 - C. DON'T KNOW
12. How useful was the information that you received at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? *Circle the most appropriate response.*
- A. NOT USEFUL AT ALL
 - B. NOT USEFUL
 - C. SOMEWHAT USEFUL
 - D. USEFUL
 - E. VERY USEFUL
 - F. DID NOT RECEIVE ANY INFORMATION
 - G. DON'T KNOW
13. Overall, how well did the Prince George Visitor Info Centre live up to your original expectations? *Circle the most appropriate response.*
- A. FELL SHORT
 - B. MET
 - C. EXCEEDED
 - D. DON'T KNOW

14. Were there any other products and/or services that were not currently available at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre that you would have liked to have found? *Circle the most appropriate response.*

- A. YES _____ → *Specify:* _____
- B. NO _____
- C. DON'T KNOW _____

15. Given your experience at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre, how likely are you to visit other Visitor Info Centres within British Columbia? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. NOT LIKELY AT ALL
- B. NOT LIKELY
- C. SOMEWHAT LIKELY
- D. LIKELY
- E. VERY LIKELY
- F. DON'T KNOW

Section 3 - This section asks questions about your daily expenditures while in British Columbia.

16. On the trip you visited the Prince George Visitor Info Centre, what do you estimate was your travel party's average **DAILY** expenditure while in British Columbia? *Fill in the appropriate amount in Canadian dollars.*

\$ _____ CANADIAN DOLLARS

17. Approximately what percentage of your average daily expenditure (24 hr. period) in British Columbia was attributable to each of the following categories: *Fill in the appropriate proportion.*

- _____ % ACCOMMODATION
 - _____ % TRANSPORTATION
 - _____ % FOOD AND BEVERAGE
 - _____ % SHOPPING
 - _____ % ATTRACTIONS
 - _____ % OUTDOOR RECREATION
 - _____ % OTHER ENTERTAINMENT
 - _____ % OTHER *Specify:* _____
- = 100%**

Section 4 - This section asks questions about the Prince George region as a vacation destination.

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

Positive

Negative

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

19. What are the unique characteristics of the Prince George region as a vacation destination? Unique characteristics are those that make the **Prince George region** different from other destinations. *Please fill in up to three unique characteristics.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

20. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trip to the **Prince George region**? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. VERY DISSATISFIED
- B. SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
- C. NEITHER SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED
- D. SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
- E. VERY SATISFIED
- F. DON'T KNOW

21. Given your experience in the **Prince George region**, how likely are you to return for a future leisure trip? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. NOT LIKELY AT ALL
 - B. NOT LIKELY
 - C. SOMEWHAT LIKELY
 - D. LIKELY
 - E. VERY LIKELY
 - F. DON'T KNOW
- Go to Q24
- Go to Q22

22. On your next trip to the **Prince George region**, would an organized tour package be of interest to you? *Circle the appropriate response.*
- A. YES
 - B. NO
 - C. DON'T KNOW

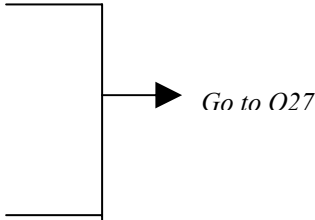
Section 5 - This section asks questions about British Columbia as a vacation destination.

23. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your trip in **British Columbia**? *Circle the appropriate response.*
- A. VERY DISSATISFIED
 - B. SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
 - C. NEITHER SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED
 - D. SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
 - E. VERY SATISFIED
 - F. DON'T KNOW

24. Are you a resident of British Columbia? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. YES → Go to Q26
- B. NO → Go to Q25

25. Given your experience in **British Columbia**, how likely are you to return for a future vacation? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. NOT LIKELY AT ALL
 - B. NOT LIKELY
 - C. SOMEWHAT LIKELY
 - D. LIKELY
 - E. VERY LIKELY
 - F. DON'T KNOW
- 

26. Given your experience traveling in **British Columbia**, how likely are you to decide to take another vacation within British Columbia? *Circle the appropriate response.*

- A. NOT LIKELY AT ALL
- B. NOT LIKELY
- C. SOMEWHAT LIKELY
- D. LIKELY
- E. VERY LIKELY
- F. DON'T KNOW

27. Who was in your travel party when you stopped at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? Please indicate their relationship to you, age and gender. Please start with yourself. *Fill in the appropriate response.*

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 Myself	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____

28. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience at the Prince George Visitor Info Centre? Any comments you have will help improve service at all Visitor Info Centres.

Thank you for your help.

**For your chance to win a digital camera,
please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to**

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

Appendix C - Response Bias Testing

Response Bias Testing

Methods

The study design produced two sets of data that are available for analysis – the interview and mailback questionnaires. The respondents could differ because travelers could drop out of the study by not agreeing to complete the mailback questionnaires 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 travelers 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 travelers interviewed.

Representativeness was assessed by:

1. Comparing demographics, trip and traveler characteristics between those that agreed and did not agree to complete the mailback questionnaire (Tables A2).
2. Comparing demographics, trip and traveler characteristics between those that responded and those that did not respond to the mailback questionnaire (Tables A2).

Responses to similar questions in the interview and mailback questionnaires could vary due to real differences in traveler behaviour (for example, a traveler may have perceived that the VIC 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 (Table A3).

Results

Differences in Respondents that Agreed or Did Not Agree to Mailback

- At the Prince George VIC, there were some differences in those respondents who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire and those who did not agree to participate in the mailback questionnaire.
- Residence category varied statistically between respondents who did or did not agree to participate in the mailback survey. Of those that agreed, 36% were from Other Canada, 36% were US residents, 19% were BC residents and 10% were from Overseas. The proportion of Overseas residents that agreed to the mailback was lower than the proportion of Overseas residents that disagreed (36%). For the other residence categories, the proportion of residents that agreed to the mailback was higher than the proportion of residents that disagreed (27% Other Canada, 20% US and 17% BC).
- Age was also significantly different between the groups, with those who agreed to be contacted being older than those who refused to participate in the mailback. Over a quarter (28%) of those who agreed to be contacted were over the age of 65, whereas only 14% of those who disagreed

were over the age of 65. Likewise, only 8% of those who agreed to be contacted were under the age of 34, whereas 15% of those who disagreed were under the age of 34.

- Average days spent in British Columbia varied statistically between those that agreed and disagreed to the mailback survey, with those that agreed (12.0 days) spending less days on average than those that disagreed (15.6 days).

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

- The differences that arose when comparing those who indicated that they would participate in the mailback survey and those who sent in their responses were relatively minor. The only difference, as outlined in Table A2 was gender, with the mailback being completed equally by men and women. However, men were much more likely to accept the mailback but not complete it.

Differences in Interview/Mailback Responses

- Overall, respondents were quite consistent in their responses between the on-site interview and the mailback survey. There were two questions which were statistically different between the on-site interview and the mailback. The first was whether the VIC met the travelers expectations, with the initial response being that the VIC exceeded expectations (67%, as compared to 31% met expectations), while the mailback response was less positive (49% exceeded, 48% met). Similarly, the initial response to 'will you take another trip to BC on the basis of information you gathered at the VIC was much more positive, with 88% saying that they would, whereas 12% said they would not. On the mailback, 50% said they would, 27% said they would not, and 24% were undecided.

Conclusions

- Some differences existed between those who agreed to participate in the mailback questionnaire and those who did not agree to participate in the mailback questionnaire.
- Mailback responses are generally representative of the population that was interviewed.
- Two questions differed significantly between the interview and the mailback. Fewer travelers indicated the VIC exceeded their expectations and fewer travelers indicated they would return to BC for a future trip on the mailback questionnaire.
- Due to the above factors and to be conservative in estimating economic impacts, the interview data was used to summarise the impact of the Prince George VIC had on travelers. Mailback questionnaire responses were used only when the question was not asked in the interview.
- These results are consistent with similar research conducted by Research Services at other VICs in British Columbia.

Table A2. 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 Prince George VIC.

Prince George VIC	✓ Indicates a Statistically Significant Difference		
	Agreed to Mailback ¹	Mailback Responses (Non-Response Bias)	Interview/Mailback Responses
Residence Category	✓	N	N
Gender	N	✓	N
Age	✓	N	N
Party Size	N	N	N
Parties With Children	N	N	N
Income	N	N	N
Education	N	N	N/A
Met Expectations	N	N	✓
Days Away from Home	N	N	N
Days in BC	N	N	N
Daily Expenditure ²	N	N	N
Learn About New Activities	N	N	N
Overall Extend Trip	N	N	N
Overall, 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 A3. A summary of differences in data between the interview and mailback questionnaire.

Location	Concept/Questions	Trip Characteristics Results		Statistically Significant Difference? ¹
		Interview n=84	Mailback n=63	
Prince George VIC	Mean Days Away From Home	34.2	33.2	N
	Mean Days In BC	15.1	16.1	N
	Primary Purpose-Leisure (%)	76.2	73.0	N
	Primary Purpose-VFR (%)	22.2	19.0	N
	Primary Purpose-Other (%)	1.6	7.9	N
	Primary Accommodations-Hotel (%)	27.0	31.7	N
	Primary Accommodations-Campground (%)	60.3	57.1	N
	Primary Accommodations-Friends & Rel. (%)	9.5	9.5	N
	Primary Accommodations-Other (%)	3.2	1.6	N
	Mean Daily Expenditures	119.44	163.98	N
	VIC Live Up To Expectations-Fell Short (%)	1.6	3.2	Y
	VIC Live Up To Expectations-Met (%)	22.2	47.6	Y
	VIC Live Up To Expectations-Exceeded (%)	74.6	47.6	Y
	VIC Live Up To Expectations-DK/NR (%)	1.6	0.0	Y
	Party Size	2.85	2.25	N
	Parties with Children (%)	14.3	12.7	N
	Learn About New Activities	27.0	38.1	N
	Overall Extend Trip ²	19.5	18.8	N
	Overall, Take Another Trip to/within BC	88.1	49.2	Y

1. Paired sample t-tests were run on variables with ratio level data (mean days from home, mean days in BC, mean daily expenditures and party size) and these results are displayed. Correlation coefficients tests were also run on those variables with ratio level data.

2. Excluding DK/NR

Appendix D - Calculation of Total VIC Use

Calculation of total parties that use the Prince George VIC

1. A proportion of parties that spoke with a Counsellor on each day of the study period was obtained.
2. The number of parties (excluding locals) counted by VIC Counsellors was obtained for that day (daily party counts).
3. The daily party count was divided by the percentage of parties that replied they spoke with a Counsellor to obtain the estimated total daily parties.
4. The estimated total daily parties was averaged for each month and multiplied by the number of days in each month (estimated total monthly parties).
5. The estimated total monthly parties for July and August were summed to obtain total parties.

Table A4. The proportion of parties interviewed that spoke with a Counsellor, Prince George VIC counts of parties counselled and the estimated total daily parties and estimated total monthly parties.

Date	Spoke with a Counsellor	Prince George VIC Daily Party Counts¹	Estimated Total Daily Parties	Estimated Total Monthly Parties
July 2	100.0%	42	42	
July 3	87.5%	48	55	
July 7	100.0%	38	38	
July 9	100.0%	45	45	
July 12	100.0%	21	21	
July 14	100.0%	42	42	
July 16	100.0%	46	46	
July 17	100.0%	35	35	
July 18	100.0%	17	17	
July 22	100.0%	46	46	
July 23	100.0%	30	30	
July 24	100.0%	25	25	
July 25	100.0%	20	20	
July 27	100.0%	36	36	
July 28	100.0%	50	50	
July 31	100.0%	35	35	
July Total		36.0	36.4	1,129
Aug 2	100.0%	31	31	
Aug 3	100.0%	44	44	
Aug 4	90.9%	41	45	
Aug 7	90.0%	21	23	
Aug 8	77.8%	23	30	
Aug 9	90.0%	27	30	
Aug 12	100.0%	38	38	
Aug 13	100.0%	43	43	
Aug 14	100.0%	45	45	
Aug 17	85.7%	31	36	
Aug 18	100.0%	32	32	
Aug 19	100.0%	27	27	
Aug 22	100.0%	11	11	
Aug 23	100.0%	22	22	

Date	Spoke with a Counsellor	Prince George VIC Daily Party Counts¹	Estimated Total Daily Parties	Estimated Total Monthly Parties
Aug 24	100.0%	41	41	
Aug 27	100.0%	25	25	
Aug 28	100.0%	21	21	
Aug 29	66.7%	20	30	
Aug Total		30.2	31.9	989
Total				2,118

1. Excludes local parties.

Appendix E - Expenditures by Accommodation Type

Table A5. Prince George VIC Daily Expenditure¹ by Accommodation Type (statistically significant difference)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
HOTEL/MOTEL/RESORT	70	163.69	67.89	8.11	50.00	350.00
CAMPGROUND/RV PARK	120	114.71	69.77	6.37	5.00	318.00
FRIENDS OR RELATIVES	12	115.08	96.73	27.92	6.00	300.00
BED & BREAKFAST	12	154.58	62.21	17.96	25.00	250.00
TOTAL²	215	133.16	73.62	5.02	5.00	350.00

1. The top and bottom 2% have been trimmed to ensure accuracy of the means.

2. Total includes 1 response in 'other' accommodation category, which was further specified as a nursing home.

Appendix F - Other VICs Visited in British Columbia

Table A6. Location of Other VICs visited by mailback survey respondents

VIC Location	Frequency	VIC Location	Frequency
100 Mile House	1	Nelson	1
Abbotsford	1	Osoyoos	2
Banff*	3	Port Hardy	1
Burns Lake	1	Penticton	1
Campbell River	1	Prince George	2
Columbia Ice Field	1	Prince Rupert	8
Crowsnest Pass*	1	Princeton	1
Dawson Creek	3	Queen Charlotte City	2
Deer Lake*	1	Quesnel	2
Edmonton*	1	Radium	1
Fernie	1	Revelstoke	1
Field*	1	Smithers	5
Ft. St. John	1	Stewart	1
Fort Fraser*	1	Taylor	1
Golden	1	Terrace	2
Grand Forks	1	Tumbler Ridge	1
Hazleton	1	Valemount	1
Hope	1	Vancouver	2
Hudson's Hope	1	Vanderhoof	2
Jasper*	2	Vernon	1
Kamloops	2	Victoria	3
Kelowna	6	Watson Lake*	1
Mackenzie	1	Wells	1
Masset	1	Williams Lake	2
McBride	2	Yoho National Park*	1
Mt Robson	3	Multiple	3
Nanaimo	1		

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

Appendix G - Comments Regarding Prince George Visitor Info Centre

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

Services/Amenities

The Info Centre was great and a step in the right direction as far as tourism goes.

Visually impressive.

We used many Visitor Centres on our trips and were very impressed to find that even small towns had them.

It looks good and feels good and friendly.

We were looking for maps and information when we went to the Visitor Information Centre.

We were very happy that the Info Centre was open Sunday.

Thank you for the magazine.

We were pleased with your parking and building.

It wasn't swamped with visitors when I visited Aug. 7, so I was looked after right away by the friendly staff.

Art work at Centre - wonderful. Easy parking available for RV's.

The P.G. Visitor Centre is beautiful.

The nice thing from the VIC in Pr. George is the art. We've seen 15 VIC in BC but none like Pr. George. Nice art!

We were very impressed with all the Visitors Centres. There was a great deal of information available at no charge. The travel guides we obtain will help us plan future trips.

Very well-run and helpful people. The best we encountered in 2 months of camper travel.

Staff Friendly and Helpful

The staff was very helpful and knowledgeable.

Staff were very friendly.

The lady who interviewed me did so in a professional and positive manner.

They were very helpful. The info we received was helpful in showing us things about the area that we would not otherwise know about. We came home from a trip that far exceeded our original expectations. Thank you!

We found the staff to be very polite and helpful. We were given very good directions to our destination.

The young boy was very polite and friendly. He handled his job duties in a very mature manner.

Staff was very friendly. At the time I encouraged other fellow travellers to go in and would continue to do so in the future. Very positive experience.

Enjoyed your help and kindness very much. Delighted with the carving we purchased from Len Paquette. Enjoyed visiting with him. If we were younger, we would return!

The group were very knowledgeable about their region! This was very helpful!

The student/staff person who interviewed me was extremely courteous and very pleasant.

Staff was very friendly and helpful. Thank you!

Staff was very friendly and helpful.

Staff was very knowledgeable and helpful. Thank you!

We were pleased with your personnel.

The students working there were very helpful!

Really enjoyed speaking with the wood carver at the Info Centre. Enjoyed seeing the craft shop right next to the Prince George Visitors Centre.

Very friendly, very helpful.

The staff were pleasant and quite knowledgeable.

Great staff! Very helpful.

Suggestions/Need for improvement

Difficult to find a parking space.

Info Centre is not as accessible as the former location (intersection of Rts. 97 & 16).

Stay open longer.

The P.G. Visitor Centre is little hard to find. We were not impressed with the quality of information.

We got more info at B.C.M.A., which we visited to get directions to the Visitors Centre. We had several specific questions, which were not answered and the staff seemed less than enthusiastic. We also made a later trip to B.C. and found locating Info Centres to be a problem in many centres. It seems you see the road signs, but the exact entry is not very clear.

The Centre in town is not in an attractive, useful, convenient area. The Centre in Hwy 16 was very difficult to get into – it took us 3 attempts and we ended up in the nearby building site twice!

Difficult to find with signage.

Enjoyed Area

We thoroughly enjoyed our stay. Only mild disappointment being, we didn't spot any elk throughout B.C., but plan to return to see white bears and orcas and elk, of course. Very beautiful country, great people, we felt right at home.

Lots of interest in California among motorcyclists to ride the Alaska highway.

We were really just travelling through and need info about forest fires in Yukon and Alaska. But we enjoyed the wildlife, scenery and camping very much in BC.

Thoroughly enjoyed our stay in your area. We'll be back!

The whole province was beautiful and campgrounds were great!

It was very hard to find signage – not great.

Have BC Rail run passenger trains again from Vancouver to Prince George. This was a great tour – didn't stay long enough in P.G. We have been in almost every province and territory and B.C. is still our favourite. Started coming to B.C. in 1948 and haven't stopped.

Enjoyed the trip to BC.

Not enough or poor services

The main deficiency we found in Prince George was the lack of good restaurants and nearby entertainment other than hiking or outdoor activity; we only had one afternoon there, and couldn't find anything to do. We don't enjoy shopping, love the outdoors, but didn't have enough time to go on a hike that didn't seem too involved.

Enjoyed activities or services

Enjoyed learning about Totem Pole carving.

Visited the Royal Canadian Legion as we are both life members. Had a good time there.

People Friendly

Spent time talking with native wood carver. Found him interesting.

The gentlemen (wood carver) was very interesting about his culture and life.

Nice province, nice people.

Survey - others

Good work with your survey.

Thank you for following up with us.

Doing the survey made us realize how helpful all the Visitors Centres have been.