



# BC TRAVEL SURVEY REPORT 2015

UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER DEMAND FOR GREEN TRAVEL IN BC

Survey and report completed by



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## INTRODUCTION

GreenStep Solutions Inc. has created this report to summarize the results from the 2015 BC Travel Survey, a five-question online survey that ran over a six-week period from July 29 to September 8, 2015. The purpose of the survey was to understand to what degree people that travel to and within British Columbia care about tourism businesses' green programs or certifications, and whether they used this information to make purchasing decisions.

British Columbia's Tourism Strategy aims to see a growth within the tourism industry by 5% by 2016<sup>1</sup> and adventure and eco-tourism experiences are among the unique "products" that will help the province achieve this growth. With a growing tourism industry, consumer trends are pointing towards sustainable and ethical purchasing habits.

BC Tourism operators have expressed interest in understanding to what degree BC residents and visitors (who are their potential customers) are looking for tourism businesses that operate in a sustainable way. And if travellers want to stay with and experience companies with green policies and programs, what do they need to do about it.

<sup>1</sup> BC Government Tourism Strategy, *Gaining the Edge: A Five-year Strategy for Tourism in British Columbia*  
[http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/tourismstrategy/documents/MJTI\\_TourismStrategyReport\\_FNL.pdf](http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/tourismstrategy/documents/MJTI_TourismStrategyReport_FNL.pdf)



During the summer of 2015, people travelling to or within BC were invited to participate in a short, five questions survey. The questions pertained to whether a company's environmental commitments were valuable in helping them make their travel decisions. There were some international responses to the survey, however, the majority of participants were from Canada.

Results showed overwhelming support for environmentally focused companies.

**76%**

*Care about green*

Seventy-six percent (76%) of participants surveyed sometimes or always considered a company's green program or logo when deciding to stay, experience, or purchase with a BC tourism business.

**89%**

*Think it should be  
third-party verified*

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of participants felt, in varying degrees, it was important to have third-party verification of the companies green intentions and have occasionally used this information to make their decision.

**92%**

*Will spend more  
for green business*

A whopping ninety-two percent (92%) of participants are willing to pay 1% to 10% more to support BC tourism companies reach their sustainability goals.

A growing number of travellers are considering BC tourism organizations' with an environmental focus when booking their travel plans and travellers are willing to spend more to help encourage the development of this industry trend. Promotion of green initiatives and support from third-party certification programs will help with the growth of sustainable tourism in BC.



## METHODOLOGY

The online survey, containing five questions, asked travellers to take five minutes to complete the survey for a chance to win a BC Travel Prize Package valued at over \$500. The prize package consisted of a family pack of admission tickets to Vancouver Aquarium, a Whistler tour for two from Landsea Tours & Adventures, a gift basket from Planet Bee Honey Farm and Meadery, a one-night stay at Kelowna Inn & Suites and a one-night stay at The Lakeside Resort in Oliver.

The results of this study are based on 765 respondents over a six-week period of time. 94 responses were obtained from visitor centers in Kelowna, Vernon, Kimberley and Nelson, BC between July 27 and August 25, 2015. 125 responses were obtained in person at Vancouver and Okanagan events and on the street between August 4 and 21, 2015. 75 clicked on the survey after reading the Green Tourism Canada newsletter in August. The remaining 471 responses were through Facebook posts and paid advertisements (maximum of \$10 per day).

The Facebook advertisement was aimed at anyone over the age of 19 who resides in BC and Alberta to keep the focus local. The ad prompted people who love BC to take the short survey for a chance to win a BC Travel Package. Table 1.0 shows the people reached, engaged and post clicks for the three Facebook advertisements. Out of a total of 1095 post clicks, 471 or forty-three percent (43%) actually took the survey.

Table 1.0 Facebook analytics for survey advertisements

Date	28-Jul	29-Jul	11-Aug
People Reached	15245	846	31661
Engagement (number of likes, comments and shares)	65	40	701
Post Clicks	171	30	894

Figure 1.0 shows the image used to entice people through Facebook to take the survey.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Travel is not typically an impulse purchase – for many, a trip to British Columbia, or exploring within BC, is potentially the trip of a lifetime. Inspired to visit many destinations, consumers go through a complex planning and purchase process to narrow the list of potential destinations, gather information, make a decision, and finally purchase a vacation.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 765 survey respondents, 638 provided their contact information to enter the prize draw. The following information is based upon their information. The majority of respondents (86%) were from Canada, however there is some international representation. Four (0.5%) respondents were from United States and three (0.4%) were from Australia. There was one respondent (0.1%) each from Austria, UK and Maldives, and two each (0.3%) from the Netherlands and Germany. 116 participants (15.2%) did not answer this question, (see Table 1.1 below).

Figure 1.1 Demographics of survey respondents



Table 1.1 Demographics of survey respondents

Country	Responses	Percentage
Australia	3	0.4%
Austria	1	0.1%
Canada	635	83%
Germany	2	0.3%
Maldives	1	0.1%
Netherlands	2	0.3%
UK	1	0.1%
USA	4	0.5%
Did Not Answer	116	15.2%
Total	765	100%



Of the 635 participants from Canada, the majority were from BC (77%) and Alberta (19%).

Figure 1.2 Demographics of Canadian respondents

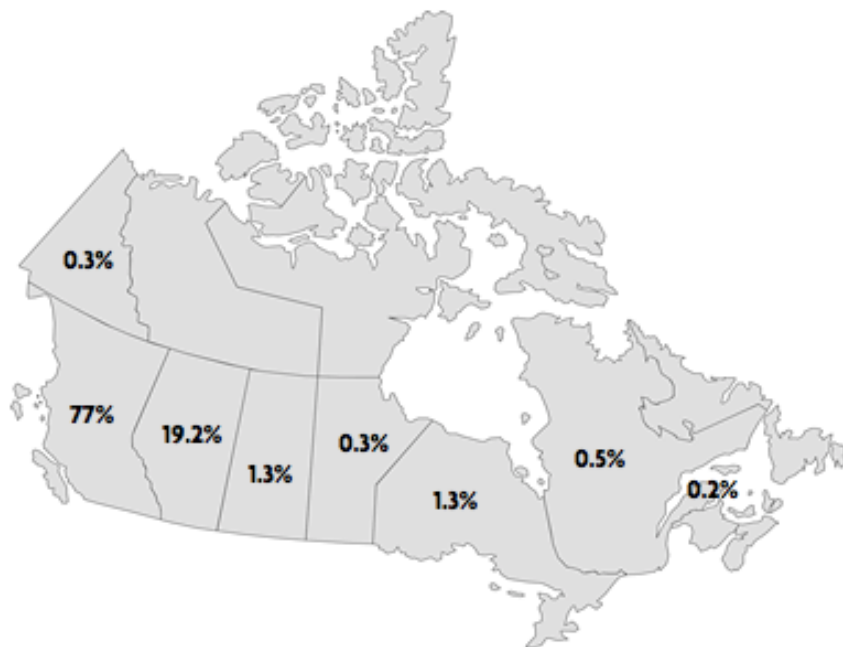


Table 1.2 Demographics of Canadian respondents

Response	Number	Percent
British Columbia	489	77.0%
Alberta	122	19.2%
Ontario	8	1.3%
Saskatchewan	8	1.3%
Quebec	3	0.5%
Manitoba	2	0.3%
Yukon	2	0.3%
Nova Scotia	1	0.2%
Total	635	100.1%





## RESULTS

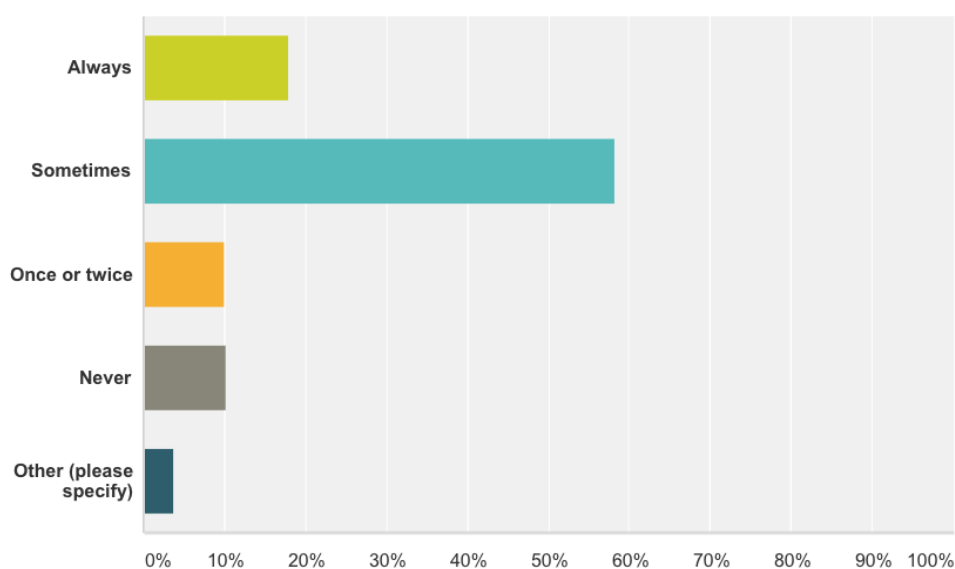
### Survey Question 1: Consideration of company's green logo or program for travel planning

Participants were asked if they considered a company's green program or logo when deciding to stay, experience or make a purchase with a BC tourism company. Seventy-six percent (76%) of participants sometimes or always consider a company's green logo or program. Ten percent (10%) have once or twice, while the remaining 10% of respondents have never considered a company's green programs or logos when making decisions on their travelling plans.

Table 2.1 Results of survey question 1: Do you consider a company's green logo or program when deciding to stay, experience or make a purchase with a BC tourism company?

Response	Number responded	Percent of total
Always	137	18%
Sometimes	446	58%
Once or twice	76	10%
Never	78	10%
Other	28	4%

Figure 2.1 Results of Survey Question 1: Do you consider a company's green logo or program when deciding to stay, experience or make a purchase with a BC tourism company?





## Survey Question 2: Third-party verification

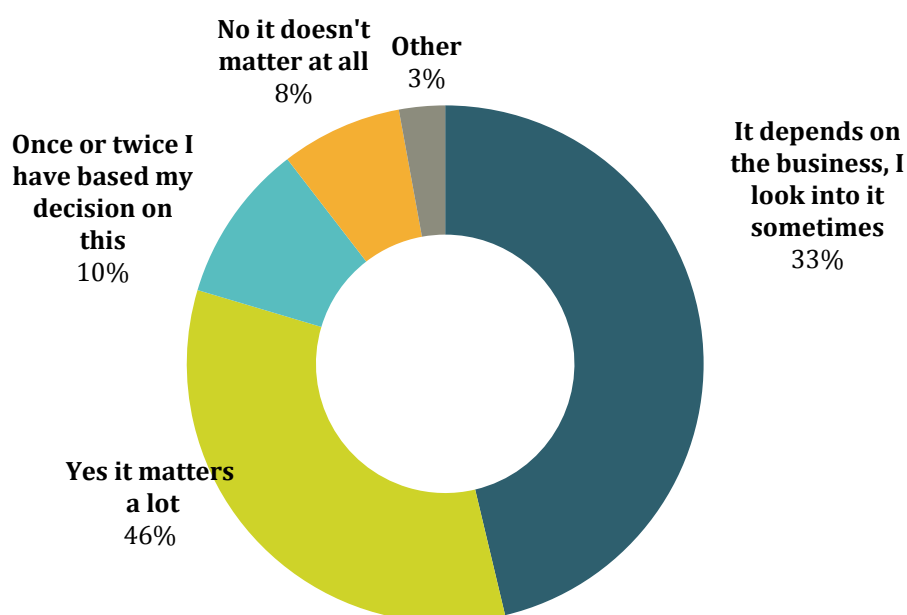
The majority of survey respondents do care whether a company uses a third-party verified certification.

The question asked: “Do you think it matters if a company has been verified by a third-party?” Out of the 89% of participants who considered third party involvement, 46% felt it mattered a lot to their travel plan decision-making. 33% stated it mattered depending on the company they were looking into, 10% only considered it once or twice and 8% percent never took third-party involvement into consideration while travel planning.

Table 2.2 Responses to survey question 2: Do you think it matters if a company has been verified by a third-party?

Responses	Number responded	Percent of total
Yes it matters a lot	354	46%
It depends on the business, I look into it sometimes	255	33%
Once or twice I have based my decision on this	76	10%
No it doesn't matter at all	58	8%
Other (please specify)	22	3%

Figure 2.1 Responses to question 2: Do you think it matters if a tourism company has been verified by a third-party?



The responses to “Other” (3%) ranged from, “no, green is too expensive” to “this doesn’t apply to me because I stay with relatives when I travel, but I will consider it in the future”. Additional “Other” comments also expressed that although they don’t make their purchasing decisions based on a company’s green programs, they are glad to read about it when they check into their room.



### Survey Question 3: Willingness to spend more for third-party certification

Participants were asked if they would be willing to spend a little extra for a stay or experience to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals. Out of 765 respondents, 92% percent said yes, they would spend a little bit extra.

Figure 3.1 Responses to survey question 3 Would you be willing to spend a little bit extra for your stay or experience to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals?

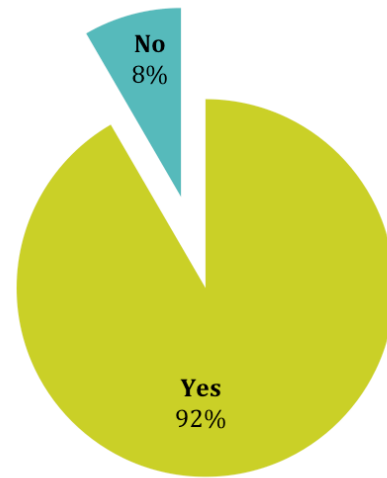


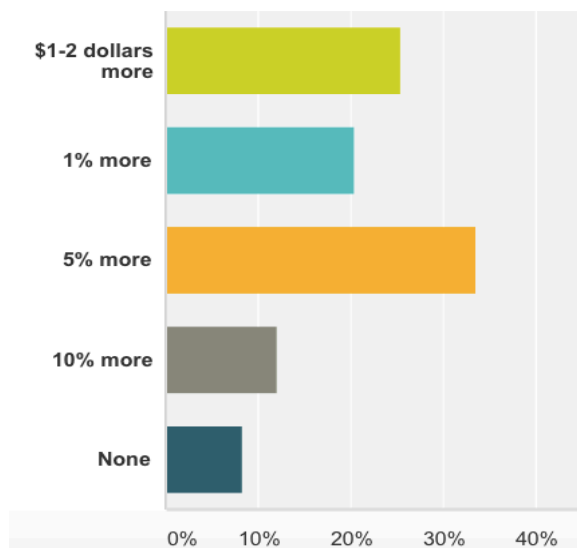
Table 3.2 Response to survey question 3: Would you be willing to spend a little bit extra for your stay or experience to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals?

Answer	Number	Percentage
\$1-2 dollars more	195	25%
1% more	156	20%
5% more	257	34%
10% more	93	12%
None	64	8%

Out of the 765 participants, 25% said they would pay one to two dollars more, 20% would spend an additional one percent, 34% are willing to spend up to 5% more for green travel services and 12% would spend up to 10% more to help support tourism sustainability goals., Only 8% of participants are not willing to spend more money to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals.

Figure 3.2 Response to survey question 3: Would you be willing to spend a little bit

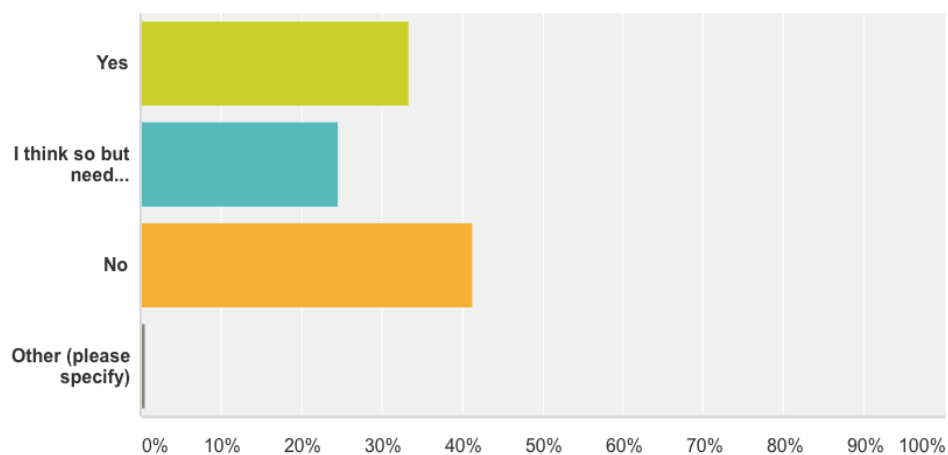
extra for your stay or experience to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals?



## Survey Question 4: Engagement with Green Tourism Canada

When asked if participants have heard of Green Tourism Canada, 33% said yes and 41% had not, while 25% thought they had but needed clarification.

Figure 4.1 Response to Survey question 4: Have you heard of Green Tourism Canada Certification?



Respondents were not provided with an explanation of Green Tourism Canada, however they were shown the web address upon completing the report to view if they were interested in learning more.

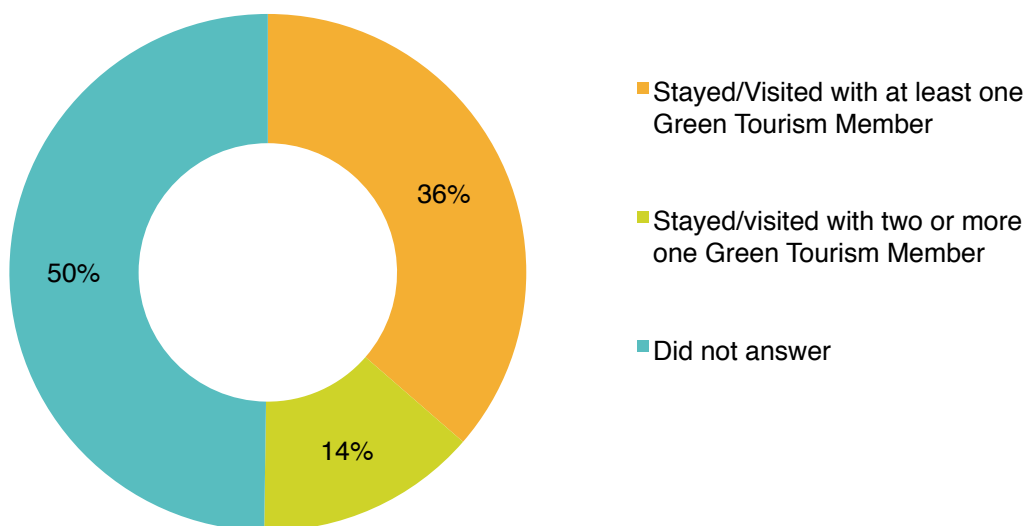


## Survey Question 5: Which Green Tourism businesses are participants visiting

Participants were asked if they have stayed with or visited a Green Tourism member and made that choice because of their commitment to sustainability. They were asked to choose up to six different Green Tourism member businesses that they had visited in the past. Of the 765 participants, 331 participants (43%) filled out this section of the survey while the remaining 434 (57%) skipped it. Participants were able to choose from Green Tourism members in the following categories: accommodations, attractions, tour operators, and wineries & distilleries. For a complete list of our members, see Appendix B.

Of the participants who had previously stayed or visited a Green Tourism business, 323 had stayed or visited at least one company, while 123 (16% of total participants) respondents chose two or more businesses.

Figure 5.1 Response to survey question 5: Number of participants stayed with or visited Green Tourism members



## Who were the most visited Green Tourism Businesses noted in the survey?

The full results of the businesses chosen are shown in appendix B. The top two from each category are shown below.

### Most visited accommodation member

- **Westin Bayshore in Vancouver (9%) - SILVER**
- **Best Western Plus Kelowna Hotel & Suites (7%) - GOLD**

**THE WESTIN**  
BAYSHORE  
Vancouver



Kelowna Hotel & Suites

### Most visited attraction member

- **Vancouver Aquarium (13%) - GOLD**
- **Capilano Suspension Bridge (11%) - GOLD**



**CAPILANO**  
SUSPENSION BRIDGE PARK

### Most visited winery, brewery, distillery member

- **Summerhill Pyramid Winery (9%) - GOLD**
- **Burrowing Owl Estate Winery (6%) - GOLD**



**SUMMERHILL**  
PYRAMID WINERY  
*Celebrate Nature's Perfection*

**BURROWING OWL**  
estate winery

*Responses to Question 5 is in Appendix B*



## SUMMARY

So to answer the initial question, YES, BC travellers are, in fact, using a tourism businesses' green programs as a reference point to help them make their purchasing decisions when planning a trip in BC. That trusted third-party certified logo becomes a shiny green beacon, pointing consumers toward the decisions they can feel good about.

Green Tourism Canada will soon be releasing a second report that compares these findings of travellers to BC with national and international research around the demand for green tourism.

So as a tourism business, what do you need to do about this?

If you haven't already, it's time to get started on your sustainability journey. Getting help from a third-party verified program can help you get on the right track from the start, and get the expertise and advice you need so you can stay focused on running your business. A third-party verified certification such as Green Tourism can enhance your business in many ways. The Green Tourism program provides expert guidance to tourism businesses, helping them to tell their green story and create a sustainability action plan, while saving money. Once certified, you will be come part of the Green Tourism community, and enjoy opportunities to learn from experts about things like saving energy, reducing waste and marketing your green initiatives. You will also learn from other Green Tourism members who have implemented green actions, as well as Green Network partners who have solutions that can help you green your business even further.

And the great thing is, it doesn't matter where you currently are on your sustainability journey, Travellers just want to know you're getting started, and are willing to help you get there. You don't need to be the brightest Gold for travellers to trust you, as long as you have a plan and you're taking steps to achieve it, while maintaining transparency along the way.

Learn more about Green Tourism Canada at [www.greentourismcanada.ca](http://www.greentourismcanada.ca)





## APPENDIX A

### **BC Tourism Survey - Enter to Win a BC Travel Package Valued at \$500**

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete our survey.

You will be asked to answer 5 questions. At the end of the survey you will have the opportunity to enter a random draw for a BC travel package, valued at \$500.

The draw will take place September 8, 10:00 am PST and the winner will be notified by email.

#### **1. Do you consider a company's green program or logo when deciding to stay, experience or make a purchase with a BC tourism company?**

**\* required**

- Always
- Sometimes
- Once or twice
- Never
- Other (please specify)

#### **2. Do you think it matters if a tourism company has been verified by a third party? (i.e. an outside organization has assessed the company in person or remotely to make sure they are doing all the green things they say they are doing)**

**\* required**

- Yes it matters a lot
- It depends on the business, I look into it sometimes
- Once or twice I have made my decision based on this
- No it doesn't matter at all
- Other (please specify)

#### **3. Would you be willing to spend a little bit extra for your stay or experience to help a tourism business reach their sustainability goals?**

**\* required**

- \$1-2 dollars more
- 1% more
- 5% more
- 10% more
- None

#### **4. Have you heard of Green Tourism Canada?**

**\* required**



- Yes
- I think so but need clarification
- No
- Other (please specify)

**5. Which BC Green Tourism Certified businesses have you visited/stayed with, if any? Choose up to six from each drop down menu (List of members in appendix B)**

- ACCOMODATION
- TOUR OPERATORS, ATTRACTIONS, WINERIES, DISTILLERIES

**Your Contact Information**

Enter your contact information to be eligible for the BC travel package valued at \$500. The draw will take place August 28, 10:00 am PST and the winner will be notified by email.

The BC travel package includes accommodation, tours and products from Green Tourism Canada members in BC.

**6. Please enter your contact information to be entered into the draw for a BC travel package valued at \$500.**

1. Name:
2. City/Town:
3. State/Province:
4. Country:
5. Email Address:
6. Phone Number:

**7. Would you like to stay informed by joining our monthly eNewsletter list?**

- Yes
- No

Entry Submitted

Good luck! You will be notified if you are a winner.

END OF SURVEY



## APPENDIX B

Table 5.1 Responses to question five

Green Tourism Member accommodation	Number of participants visited each location	Percentage
<b>The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Best Western Plus Kelowna Hotel and Suites, Kelowna</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>7%</b>
Kelowna Inn and Suites, Kelowna	41	5%
Wright's Beach Camp RV Park, Penticton	31	4%
Coast Coal Harbour Hotel, Vancouver	29	4%
Pine Bungalows, Jasper	23	3%
Island Lake Lodge, Fernie	18	2%
Sooke Harbour House, Sooke	18	2%
100 Mile Motel and RV Park, 100 Mile	16	2%
Barefoot Beach Resort, Penticton	16	2%
Glacier House Resort, Revelstoke	15	2%
Kimberley Riverside Campground, Kimberley	14	2%
Cedar House Restaurants and Chalets, Golden	13	2%
Harrison Country Club, Harrison	13	2%
Wood Lake Resort and Marina, Lake Country	13	2%
Surf Junction Campground, Ucluelet-Tofino Hwy	12	2%
The Lakeside Resort, Oliver	12	2%
Strathcona Park Lodge, Campbell River	11	1%
A View to Remember B&B, West Kelowna	10	1%
Nipika Mountain Resort, Invermere	10	1%
Pacific Gateway Hotel at Vancouver Airport	10	1%
West Coast Resorts, Haida Gwaii	10	1%
Beaverfoot Lodge & Resort, Golden	9	1%
Pemberton Valley Lodge, Pemberton	9	1%
Best Western Premier Prestige Oceanfront Resort, Sooke	7	1%
Echo Valley Ranch & Spa, Clinton	6	1%
Canyon Alpine RV Park, Boston Bar	5	1%
Pointhouse at Sergeant Bay, Halfmoon Bay	4	1%
SunLund By-The-Sea, Lund	4	1%
Terracana Ranch & Resort, Valemont	4	1%
Fawn Lake Resort, Lone Butte	3	0%
PineRidge RV Park and Market, Qualicum Beach	3	0%
Bear Claw Lodge, Kispiox	2	0%
Siwash Lake Ranch, 70 Mile	2	0%
Mount Burgess Guesthouse, Field	1	0%
Sasquatch Crossing Eco Lodge, Harrison	0	0%



<b>Green Tourism Member Attractions</b>		
Vancouver Aquarium, Vancouver	<b>103</b>	<b>13%</b>
Capilano Suspension Bridge, Vancouver	<b>82</b>	<b>11%</b>
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Centre	24	<b>3%</b>
Planet Bee Honey Farm & Meadery, Vernon	23	<b>3%</b>
Edgewater Casino, Vancouver	15	<b>2%</b>
<b>Tour Operators</b>		
Victoria Harbour Ferry Co. Victoria	15	<b>2%</b>
Orca Spirit Adventures, Victoria	9	<b>1%</b>
Landsea Tours & Adventure, Vancouver	6	<b>1%</b>
Black Feather Wilderness Adventures, Ontario	5	<b>1%</b>
Sidney Whale Watching, Sidney	5	<b>1%</b>
Kingfisher Wilderness Adventures, Campbell River	4	<b>1%</b>
A 3-Hour Sail, Victoria	3	<b>0%</b>
Campbell River Whale Watching and Adventure Tours	3	<b>0%</b>
Destiny River Adventures, Campbell River	3	<b>0%</b>
Maple Leaf Adventures, Victoria	3	<b>0%</b>
West Coast Wonders, Squamish	3	<b>0%</b>
Xwisten Experience Tours, Lillooet	3	<b>0%</b>
Endless Adventure Wilderness Tours, Nelson	2	<b>0%</b>
Bluewater Adventures, Vancouver	1	<b>0%</b>
Eagle Wing Tours, Victoria	1	<b>0%</b>
Outer Shores Expeditions, Victoria	1	<b>0%</b>
West Coast Expeditions, Courtenay	1	<b>0%</b>
Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours, Revelstoke	0	<b>0%</b>
Ocean Adventures Charter Co. Vancouver	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>Wineries and Distilleries</b>		
Summerhill Pyramid Winery, Kelowna	<b>72</b>	<b>9%</b>
Burrowing Owl Estate Winery, Oliver	<b>49</b>	<b>6%</b>
Dirty Laundry Vineyard, Summerland	37	<b>5%</b>
Okanagan Spirits Distillery, Vernon and Kelowna	28	<b>4%</b>
House of Rose Winery, Kelowna	19	<b>2%</b>
Black Hills Estate Winery, Oliver	14	<b>2%</b>
Andrew Peller Ltd. Kelowna	10	<b>1%</b>
Saxon Winery, Summerland	8	<b>1%</b>
Oliver Twist Estate Winery, Oliver	7	<b>1%</b>
40 Knots Estate Winery, Courtenay	5	<b>1%</b>
Maple Leaf Spirits, Penticton	4	<b>1%</b>

