



# Traveler Conversion Study

## Report of Results

July 2009

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# 1. Introduction

Purpose & Background of the Study  
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## Purpose of the Study

- ▶ The primary purpose of this Conversion Study is to measure the effectiveness and return on investment (ROI) of the paid advertising placed by the International Selkirk Loop, Inc. (ISL), based on the percentage of people who responded to ISL advertising by requesting a Selkirk Loop Travel Guide, and then “converting” into visitors.
- ▶ Additionally, this study measures effectiveness of publicity the ISL received.
- ▶ Another key purpose of the Study is to learn more about the demographics, activities, planning, and travel habits of those people who inquired about, and visited, the Selkirk Loop.
- ▶ Note: This study reflects data only about people who inquired to ISL, not ALL travelers to the Selkirk Loop.

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## Study Background

- ▶ In 2008, the ISL placed ads in U.S. and Canadian consumer travel magazines, and then tracked the inquiries received as a result of those ads. The ad placements are listed on the next page.
- ▶ Additionally, the Selkirk Loop was featured in a number of magazine and newspaper articles, and on web sites such as the America's Byways, provincial and state tourism web sites, etc. In particular, Highways magazine (circulation 956,000) published a 6-page feature article about the International Selkirk Loop.
- ▶ The ISL also markets its web site via search engines and links to other web sites.
- ▶ This study analyzed results of inquiries received from all of the above sources.
- ▶ Note: This study excludes people who responded to ISL advertising by visiting the web site, but found what they needed without requesting a Travel Guide.

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## 2008 Selkirk Loop Ad Placements

Magazine	Issue	Size	Circ'n	Cost (CAN)	Cost (US)
Sunset Magazine*	May, wkends	1/6 pg	50,000	\$ 1,355	\$ 1,330
Sunset Magazine	April	1/6 pg	325,000	\$ 2,443	\$ 2,398
Vacation Country Travel Guide (ID)**	May	5"	50,000	\$ 528	\$ 520
Vacation Country Travel Guide (BC)**	May	5"	50,000	\$ 528	\$ 520
UK Bird Watching Magazine**	Spring	Logo	5,000	\$ 1,016	\$ 1,000
Travel 50 & Beyond	April	1/6 pg	500,000	\$ 1,703	\$ 1,700
Travel 50 & Beyond*	Summer	1/6 pg	500,000	\$ 1,703	\$ 1,700
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>1,480,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,276</b>	<b>\$ 9,168</b>
Cost per 1,000 (CPM)				\$ 6.27	\$ 6.19

\* These placements were complimentary to ISL due to errors made. The cost shown is the ad value had it been purchased.

\*\* Inquiries from these sources were not tracked separately.

**Note:** Sunset and Travel 50 & Beyond ad placements included a complimentary listing on the magazines' reader service cards. Inquiries generated from the reader service cards

▶ 6 were forwarded from the magazine to the ISL Operations Director for fulfillment.

## 2008 Selkirk Loop Publicity

- ▶ In 2008, ISL received publicity valued at more than \$228,780.

	Issue	Size	Circ'n	Value (CAN)	Value (US)
Vacation Country Travel Guide (ID)	March	1/3 pg	50,000	\$ 1,018	\$ 1,039
Vacation Country Travel Guide (WA)	March	1 pg	50,000	\$ 3,054	\$ 3,117
Vacation Country Travel Guide (BC)	March	1/3 pg	50,000	\$ 1,018	\$ 1,039
Express Lane (Express Jet)	May	1 pg	n/a	-	-
Birdwatching Magazine (UK)	May	1/4 pg	50,000	\$ 1,029	\$ 1,010
Highways Magazine (Good Sam Club)	June	6 pgs	955,967	\$ 146,744	\$ 147,600
National Geographic Adventure Mag.	Jun/Jul	1 pg	1,200,000	\$ 75,917	\$ 76,360
Rand McNally Road Atlas CA/US	Jun/Jul	2 pgs	n/a	-	-
Vistas (America's Byways)	Nov/Dec	1/4 pg	4,700	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>2,360,667</b>	<b>\$ 228,780</b>	<b>\$ 230,165</b>

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## Inquiries Generated

- ▶ ISL received 4,013 requests for information (inquiries) from January through December 2008.

Source	Web	Phone	Reader Service	Total
Sunset	51	11	514	576
Travel 50 & Beyond	32	20	2,103	2,155
Highways Magazine	204	11	-	215
Magazine or newspaper article	121	2	-	123
Website	345	3	-	348
Word of mouth	169	14	-	183
Other	312	101	-	413
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2,617</b>	<b>4,013</b>

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- ▶ 65% of the inquiries came via reader service cards, 31% via the web site, and 4% via the toll-free phone number.

- ▶ Of the 4,013 inquiries, 82% were from US inquirers, 4% from Canadian, and 14% from other countries.

## Cost Per Inquiry Generated

	# of inquiries	Cost (CAN)	Cost (US)	Cost per Inquiry (CAN)	Cost per Inquiry (US)
Sunset ad	576	\$ 3,798	\$ 3,728	\$ 6.59	\$ 6.47
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	2,155	\$ 3,405	\$ 3,400	\$ 1.58	\$ 1.58
Highways Mag. article*	215	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	2,731	\$ 7,204	\$ 7,128	\$ 2.64	\$ 2.61

\* Not included in the Total.

- ▶ Of the inquiries made, 2,731 requests were directly traceable to the ad placements listed above.
- ▶ Note that this does not include people who used the ISL web site to seek information, found what they needed, and did not request a Selkirk Loop Travel Guide.
- ▶ Based on the number of inquiries generated by each ad, Sunset had a higher Cost Per Inquiry (CPI) than Travel 50 & Beyond.

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## Survey Methodology

- ▶ This study surveyed people who requested Selkirk Loop information in 2008. The survey was conducted online (web-based) from June 13 to July 8, 2009.
- ▶ When requesting ISL information, one-third of the inquirers provided email addresses. Those who provided email addresses were sent a survey invitation via email; and those who did not were sent an invitation via post card.
- ▶ This report is based on 447 surveys completed by respondents who were contacted via email (24% response rate) and those contacted via post card (5% response rate).
- ▶ The sample was designed to achieve plus or minus 4.4% at the 95% Confidence Level. The criteria used for statistical significance was p less than or equal to .05.

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## Definitions

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Definitions used in this report are the following:

- ▶ **VISITORS:** People who requested information about the Selkirk Loop in 2008, and then came for a trip in 2008-09.
- ▶ **INQUIRERS:** People who requested Selkirk Loop information in 2008, but did not come (at least not yet).
- ▶ **CURRENCY:** Unless otherwise noted, dollar amounts reported are in Canadian dollars. An average of the exchange rates over the course of the time most respondents reported traveling was used for converting spending data to Canadian dollars. The average exchange rate used was \$1.035 U.S. dollars to \$1.00 Canadian.
- ▶ **“n” COUNTS:** Charts and graphs in this report include “n” counts, which indicate the number of respondents included in that particular survey result.

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## Definitions (cont'd)

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- ▶ **GROSS CONVERSION RATE**, expressed as a percentage, refers to the number of people who inquired to ISL and subsequently “converted” into Visitors (i.e., they came for a trip). They may have made the decision to come to the Selkirk Loop either before or after requesting and receiving the ISL information.
- ▶ **NET CONVERSION RATE** is a subset of the Gross Conversion Rate. It includes only those who made the decision to travel to the Selkirk Loop **AFTER** receiving the Selkirk Loop information that was mailed to them.
- ▶ **STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE** means the difference observed would be the same (within the margin of error) 95 times out of 100, and is thus not due to chance.

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## 2. Key Findings (Executive Summary)

Return on Investment (ROI)  
Description of Respondents  
Satisfaction & Expenditures

Future Potential  
Marketing

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### Key Findings: Return on Investment (ROI)

- ▶ The economic impact of ISL's \$7,204 trackable advertising investment yielded estimated expenditures of \$62,000 (conservatively) to \$236,000 (optimistically) from visitors who requested a travel guide in response to the advertising.
- ▶ The ROI is \$8.50-\$33.00 spent by Loop visitors for every \$1 invested by ISL in advertising.
- ▶ As in the 2006 study, sources other than paid advertising, including publicity, had a higher conversion rate and ROI.
- ▶ The gross conversion rate overall was 21.4%, ranging from 5.4% (Travel 50 & Beyond) to 57% (All Other Sources).
- ▶ The Highways article (free) had a net conversion rate of 19.4%, versus 1.6% for the Sunset ad and 2.1% for the Travel 50 ad.
- ▶ The Sunset net ROI in 2006 was \$75, compared to \$4.59 in 2008. However, Sunset visitors made significantly more trips to the Loop (3.3) in past 5 years than all other Visitors (1.7), suggesting that many of 2008 Sunset Visitors were repeat visitors.

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## Key Findings: Return on Investment (ROI) cont'd.

- ▶ The 2006 overall conversion rate was 35%. Analysis of the 2008 rate (21%) to understand the change from 2006 revealed the following:
  - ▶ The conversion rates (gross and net) for the All Other Sources groups were nearly unchanged from 2006 to 2008.
  - ▶ The discrepancy occurs among the ad placements: in 2006 the gross conversion rates ranged from 21% to 33% (versus 5% to 11% in 2008).
  - ▶ Both 2008 ad placements included reader service response cards. When examined separately, conversion rates among reader service inquirers is much lower (5%) in 2008 than it was in 2006 (20%) suggesting those inquiries have become even less efficient.
- ▶ More than 1-in-5 people (21%) who requested information about the Loop actually visited; 10% decided to visit the Loop only after they received the information. Overall, a total of 59% of Visitors either decided to come or lengthened their stay after receiving (and as a result of) the ISL information they requested.

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## Key Findings: Description of Respondents

- ▶ Most Visitors were employed, college-educated empty nester couples with incomes over \$60,000, a demographic consistent with the advertising/media targets used by ISL.
- ▶ Reflecting the ad placements made by ISL, the vast majority of respondents (96%) were from the US.
- ▶ More Visitors came from California (18%) than in 2006 (8%). And the majority of Inquirers (56%) were from states outside the Northwest, suggesting that for many travelers the distance to the Loop may not be a deterrent.
- ▶ More than half of the Visitors (54%) made their ISL trips during the off-peak months of April-June and Sept.-Oct.
- ▶ Most Visitors enjoyed passive activities: sightseeing, wildlife viewing, photography, shopping, and history/culture.
- ▶ However, compared to 2006, more Visitors are engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking (43% of Visitors). And more Visitors are coming to the Loop with outdoor recreation as their primary trip purpose (12%) than in 2006 (7%).

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## Key Findings: Satisfaction & Expenditures

- ▶ 73% of Visitors are Likely to return, which is very positive considering few (9%) traveled the Loop to visit friends/family.
- ▶ The satisfaction rating of 4.3 (out of 5) is impressive: people enjoyed their trips enough that they are planning to return.
- ▶ Visitor expenditures ranged from \$267/day (Highways magazine) to \$490/day (All Other Sources), for a gross economic impact of more than \$1.4 million (including those who responded to ISL ads and those who inquired to ISL from other sources).
- ▶ Visitor expenditures have decreased since the 2006 study. Total per day expenditures were \$516 in 2006 and were \$427 in 2008, with Entertainment seeing the largest decrease of 50% (except among Sunset visitors). Note: Visitor expenditure estimates have not been adjusted for inflation.
- ▶ High fuel prices in 2008 likely affected travel and spending, consistent with national trends.

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## Key Findings: Satisfaction & Expenditures (cont'd.)

- ▶ Average daily Lodging expenditures decreased overall from \$132 in 2006 to \$102, as some Visitors sought less expensive lodging (staying with friends/family, in campgrounds, or in RV parks).
- ▶ However, more Visitors (7%) stayed in rental condos or homes than in 2006 (1%). This may explain in part why 19% of Visitors stayed 7 or more nights (compared to 8%) in 2006.
- ▶ Sunset Visitors spent the most per day for Lodging (\$131) and Travel 50 Visitors the least (\$49).
- ▶ The web site Vacation Rentals By Owner (VRBO.com) was cited by visitors who used the internet to plan their ISL trips.
- ▶ Visitors spent only half as much on Entertainment, perhaps seeking less expensive alternatives such as outdoor recreation.
- ▶ The Loop's target customers appeared to continue traveling despite the economy - the distance traveled and length of stay in 2008 both increased among Visitors compared to 2006.

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## Key Findings: Future Potential

- ▶ Affordability did not appear to be a major barrier: a question about reasons for not visiting the Loop included the answer option “Could not afford,” but the number of respondents who cited this reason was essentially the same as it was in 2006 (12%).
- ▶ However, transportation costs were noted as reasons for not visiting: Cost of fuel (18%) and Cost of air travel (10%) were cited more often than in 2006 (15%, 5% respectively).
- ▶ Nonetheless, respondents still traveled: 36% of Inquirers visited another location, compared to 29% in 2006, and fewer (36%) had no time for a trip (43%).
- ▶ Respondents who did not travel to the Selkirk Loop indicated a high level of interest, or stated that they plan to come in the future.
- ▶ 83% of all respondents indicated they are likely to travel to the Loop within the next 2 years. Of those, 89% are interested in visiting David Thompson attractions.

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## Key Findings: Marketing

- ▶ 80% of Visitors used the internet to plan their trips to the Loop. The most popular travel sites were the Selkirk Loop, Provincial/State tourism, and RV/camping web sites.
- ▶ Review web sites like TripAdvisor.com, Destination reviews, and Hotel/Attraction reviews also were used to plan ISL trips.
- ▶ High repeat visitation and satisfaction levels among Loop visitors indicates potential for effective web 2.0 and relationship marketing strategies.
- ▶ 56% of Visitors plan their trips less than 4 months in advance. The decrease in effectiveness of reader service, and increase in respondents who indicate they did not receive the Loop materials, may be due in part to the delay in the reader service-mail-fulfillment process.
- ▶ Opportunities to leverage Loop marketing include Top 10 Scenic Drives, David Thompson events, and the 2010 Olympics.

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## 3. Sources of Respondents

Inquiry Tracking & Source Codes  
Inquiry Sources of Respondents  
Source Recall

Advertising/Promotion Recall

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### Inquiry Tracking & Source Codes

- ▶ ISL tracks inquiries in 3 ways: web site Travel Guide order form, toll-free phone calls, and reader service reply cards.
- ▶ The source of each web inquiry was coded by the respondent at the time of their inquiry. However, separate codes for two of the ad media sources (Vacation Country and UK Bird Watching) were not available for selection on the web request form and thus were not tracked.
- ▶ The source of phone inquiries were coded only if the inquirer provided source information to the ISL staff or in their recorded message.
- ▶ All 2008 inquirers were invited to participate in the on-line survey.

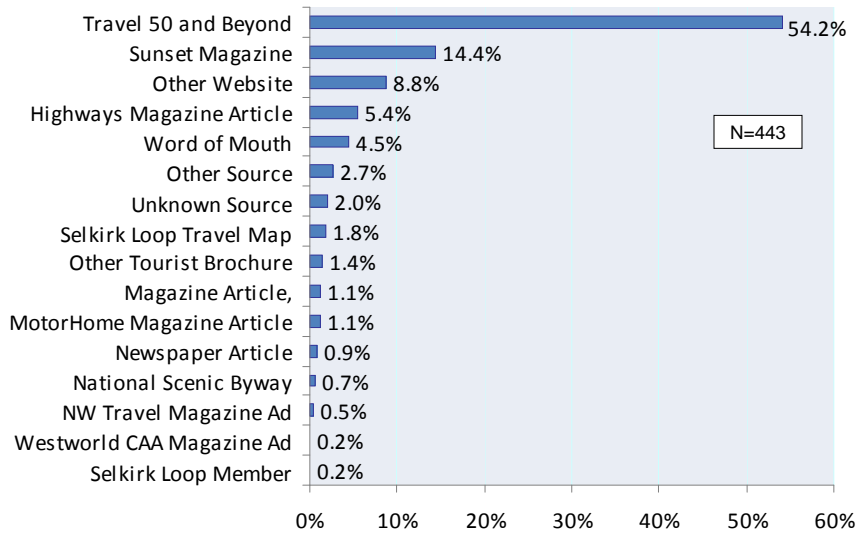
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## Inquiry Source Codes, cont'd

- ▶ Data in this report have been weighted to correct for disproportionate representations of respondents due to the following:
  - ▶ The Reader Service sources (Sunset Magazine and Travel 50 & Beyond) represented 65% of inquiries, and were under-represented with only a 5% response rate.
  - ▶ Other sources (particularly those received via the web site) were over-represented compared to the inquiry proportions.
- ▶ Most Reader Service respondents received their invitation to participate in the survey by post card and did not receive any reminders. Respondents who received invitations via e-mail were reminded several times to participate, likely increasing this group's participation rate.

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## Inquiry Sources of Survey Respondents



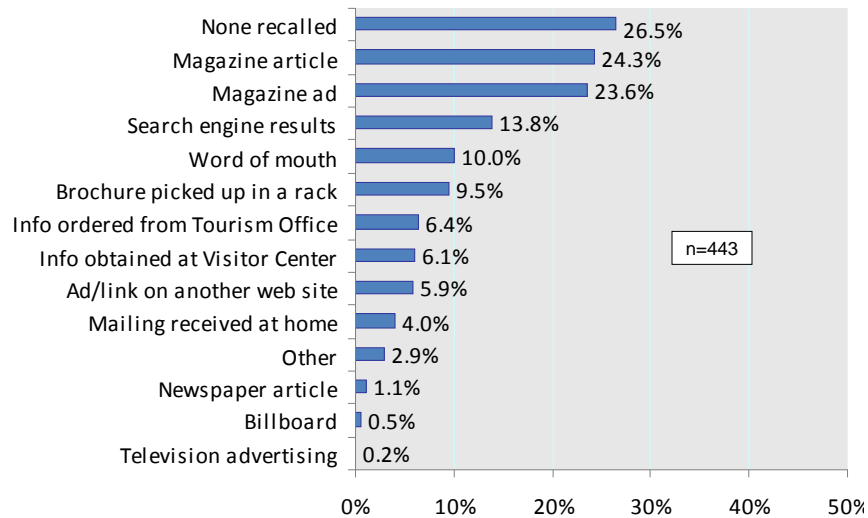
▶ 24

## Source Recall of Respondents

- ▶ Respondents were asked if they recalled seeing any advertising or promotion about the Selkirk Loop prior to requesting information (the original inquiry was received 6-18 months prior to the survey).
- ▶ 26.5% of respondents did not recall any advertising or promotion.
- ▶ The most frequent media recalled were Magazine Article, Magazine Ad, Search Engine Results, and Brochure (see chart, next page).
  - ▶ The responses Information Ordered from Tourism Office (6%) and Mailing Received at Home (4%) are likely to be subsets of other media.
- ▶ While respondent recall is not perfect, Radio and Billboard were choices that only 3 respondents selected. These were in error, as ISL does not use radio or billboard advertising (these options were included in the survey to test recall accuracy).

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## Advertising/Promotion Recall



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## 4. Conversion Rate, ROI, & Information Influence

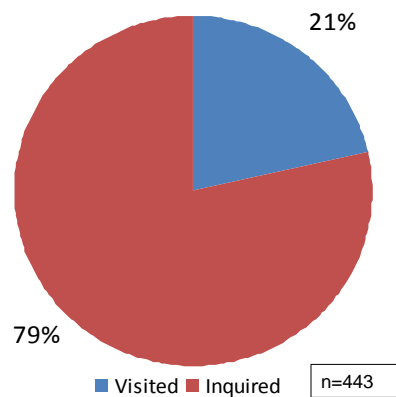
Gross & Net Conversion Rates  
Conversion by Source & Trips Generated  
Visitor Spending

Gross & Net Economic Impact  
ROI & Information Influence

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## Gross Conversion Rate

Slightly more than one-fifth of people who requested information (21%) “converted” to Visitors (they traveled to or through the Selkirk Loop within the past 18 months).



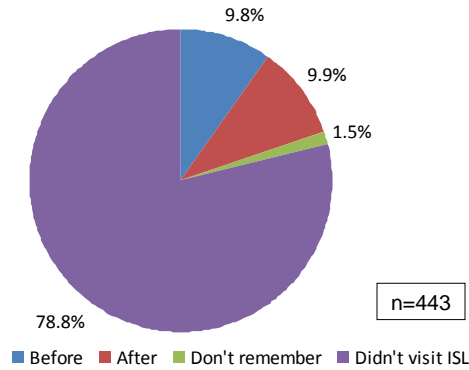
▶ Interpret cautiously, many limitations exist:

- ▶ Surveys always include a level of sampling and non-sampling error (margin of error).
- ▶ Passive visitors may have observed the advertising or used the web site, but did not request further information, and therefore are not included in the survey results.
- ▶ Some people are planning to visit in the future.

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## Net Conversion Rate

- ▶ “Net” rate attempts to measure the actual influence of advertising and travel info on inquirers’ decision to make a trip.
- ▶ Visitors were asked whether they decided to travel to the Selkirk Loop Before or After they requested ISL information.
- ▶ Net Conversion rate: 9.9% of all people who requested information made the decision after they requested it.



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## Conversion by Source

Source	Gross Conversion	Net Conversion	n counts
Sunset ad	10.9%	1.6%	64
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	5.4%	2.1%	240
Highways mag. article	40.3%	19.4%	24
All other sources	57.0%	28.7%	115
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>443</b>

- ▶ When the conversion rate by media source was analyzed, the highest conversion rates came from All Other Sources (see pg. 24 for list), compared to the ad placements and publicity.
- ▶ Gross conversion rates for Ad sources: 11% for Sunset, 5% for Travel 50 & Beyond; versus 40% for Highways Magazine article.
- ▶ Travel 50 had a slightly higher Net conversion rate (2.1%) than Sunset (1.6%); both were much lower than Highways (19%).

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## Total Trips Generated

- ▶ ISL received 4,013 requests for information via the Web, Toll-Free phone number, or Reader Service in 2008; and those requests generated an estimated 859 trips (21% of inquirers “converted” to visitors, which is a very positive number).
- ▶ Cautions:
  - ▶ Tracking and coding of inquiries is known to be prone to error.
  - ▶ All Other Sources has a higher conversion rate than ads.
  - ▶ Net conversion rates are based on smaller sample sizes (n counts).

	# of inquiries	Gross Conversion	Gross # Trips Generated	Net Conversion	Net # Trips Generated
Sunset ad	576	10.9%	63	1.6%	9
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	2,155	5.4%	116	2.1%	45
Highways mag. article	215	40.3%	87	19.4%	42
All other sources	1,067	57.0%	608	28.7%	306
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,013</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>397</b>

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## Visitor Spending (per day)

	Average spent (all)	Average spent (spenders)	% who spent \$0	High \$ amount	Low \$ amount
Lodging	\$ 102	\$ 125	19%	\$ 776	\$ 10
Meals, food, groceries	\$ 82	\$ 83	1%	\$ 518	\$ 10
Admission, costs at attractions, parks	\$ 22	\$ 34	35%	\$ 248	\$ 2
Entertainment	\$ 15	\$ 38	61%	\$ 104	\$ 5
Shopping	\$ 66	\$ 82	19%	\$ 1,035	\$ 10
Transportation (rental car, gas, taxis)	\$ 89	\$ 104	15%	\$ 2,070	\$ 5
Miscellaneous	\$ 52	\$ 68	24%	\$ 1,035	\$ 5

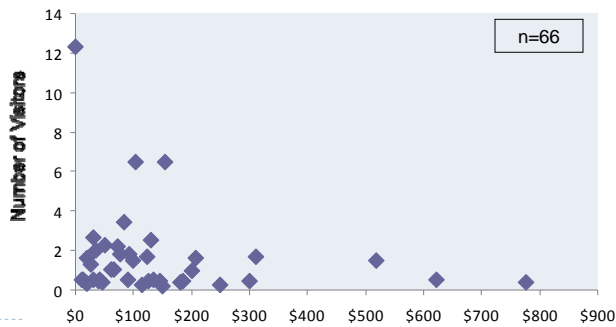
- ▶ Average spent (all): respondents who answered \$0.00 spent, excludes those who did not answer.
- ▶ Average spent (spenders): excludes those who answered \$0.00, and those who did not answer.
- ▶ % who spent \$0: of respondents who answered the question, this is the percent who did not spend any money in the given category.
- ▶ Nearly all Visitors (99%) spent money on meals/food.
- ▶ More money was spent on Lodging than on other items.
- ▶ Fewer Visitors spent money on Lodging (79%) than in 2006 (94%).

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## Lodging Expenditures

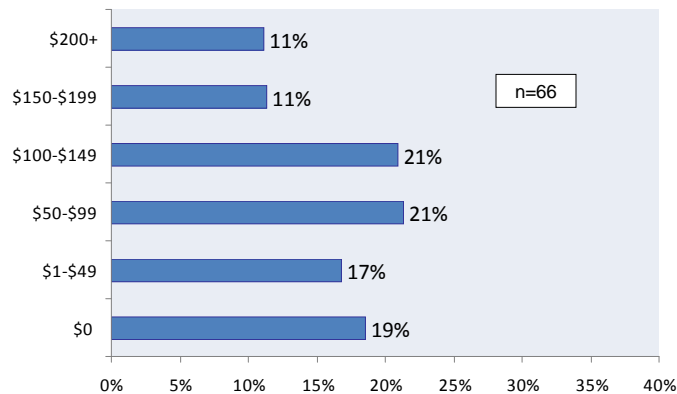
- ▶ The graph below shows the amount spent per day on lodging by Visitors. Each dot represents the number of visitors who spent the corresponding amount of money, ranging from \$0 to \$776.
- ▶ 22% of Visitors spent \$150+ per day.



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## Lodging (cont'd)

- ▶ Those who did not pay for Lodging (19%) tended to stay with family/friends, and those who spent less than \$50 per day primarily were RVers and campers.
- ▶ 43% spent \$100 or more.



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## Expenditures by Media Source

	Sunset ad	Travel 50 & Beyond ad	Highways Mag. article	All other sources	TOTAL
Lodging	\$ 131	\$ 49	\$ 51	\$ 116	\$ 102
Meals/food/groceries	\$ 51	\$ 81	\$ 51	\$ 87	\$ 82
Admission	\$ 44	\$ 15	\$ 18	\$ 23	\$ 22
Entertainment	\$ 54	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 19	\$ 15
Shopping	\$ 32	\$ 95	\$ 42	\$ 67	\$ 66
Transportation	\$ 18	\$ 11	\$ 81	\$ 111	\$ 89
Misc.	\$ 39	\$ 20	\$ 22	\$ 67	\$ 52
<b>Total per day expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 370</b>	<b>\$ 272</b>	<b>\$ 267</b>	<b>\$ 490</b>	<b>\$ 427</b>
# Days	5.2	3.6	4.9	3.7	3.9
TOTAL	\$ 1,937	\$ 985	\$ 1,297	\$ 1,805	\$ 1,665
n counts	1-5	9-11	2-4	27-56	37-72

- ▶ Per day expenditures varied by source: All other sources Visitors spent the most (\$490); Highways Visitors spent much less (\$267).
- ▶ Travel 50 and Highways Visitors spent less than half of others on Lodging and Entertainment. Travel 50 Visitors spent more on Shopping (\$95) than others.

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## Gross Economic Impact

	# Inquiries	Gross Conversion	Trips Generated	Expenditures	Economic Impact
Sunset ad	576	10.9%	63	\$ 1,937	\$ 122,031
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	2,155	5.4%	116	\$ 985	\$ 114,260
Highways mag. article	215	40.3%	87	\$ 1,297	\$ 112,379
All other sources	1,067	57.0%	608	\$ 1,805	\$ 1,097,440
TOTAL	4,013	21.4%	859	\$ 1,665	\$ 1,430,235

- ▶ Gross estimates likely overstate the impact of advertising, because some Visitors already had decided to visit before receiving ISL information.
- ▶ Best case scenario: Total expenditures generated by ISL inquiries were \$1,430,235.
- ▶ All Other Sources generated the greatest economic impact compared to the ad placements (\$1,097,440), but may have included the other ad placements (UK Bird Watching and Vacation Country Travel Guide).
- ▶ Of the ad placements tracked, Sunset generated the greatest economic impact (\$122,031).

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## Net Economic Impact

	# Inquiries	Net Conversion	Trips Generated	Expenditures	Economic Impact
Sunset ad	576	1.6%	9	\$ 1,937	\$ 17,433
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	2,155	2.1%	45	\$ 985	\$ 44,325
Highways mag. article	215	19.4%	42	\$ 1,297	\$ 54,098
All other sources	1,067	28.7%	306	\$ 1,805	\$ 552,330
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,013</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>\$ 1,665</b>	<b>\$ 661,005</b>

- ▶ Net estimates likely understate the impact of advertising (some Visitors extend their stays as a result of the ISL information, but this is not captured by the net estimates).
- ▶ Worst case scenario: Total expenditures generated by ISL inquiries was \$661,000.
- ▶ Highways Magazine generated the greatest net economic impact (\$54,098) among media sources measured.

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## Gross ROI

	Economic Impact	Cost	ROI
Sunset ad	\$122,031	\$3,798	\$32.13
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	\$114,260	\$3,405	\$33.55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$236,291</b>	<b>\$7,203</b>	<b>\$32.80</b>

- ▶ Figures above are calculated in Canadian dollars.
- ▶ Travel 50 produced a higher return on investment: \$33.55 generated for every \$1 spent.
- ▶ Sunset ROI in 2006 was \$92.45, compared to \$32.13 in 2008.
- ▶ Best Case Scenario: Overall, ISL advertising efforts generated \$33 for every \$1 spent.

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## Net ROI

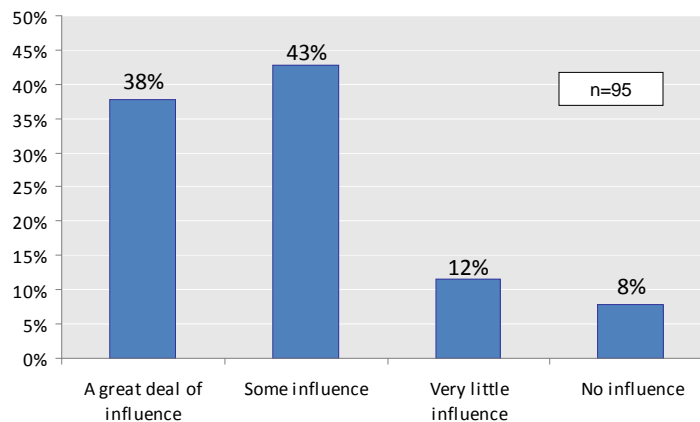
	Economic Impact	Cost	ROI
Sunset ad	\$ 17,433	\$ 3,798	\$ 4.59
Travel 50 & Beyond ad	\$ 44,325	\$ 3,405	\$ 13.02
TOTAL	\$ 61,758	\$ 7,204	\$ 8.57

- ▶ Figures above are calculated in Canadian dollars.
- ▶ Result: Overall, ISL advertising efforts generated \$8.57 for every \$1 spent.
- ▶ Conservatively, Travel 50 generated \$13 for every advertising dollar spent, while Sunset only generated \$4.59 for every advertising dollar spent.
- ▶ The Sunset net ROI in 2006 was \$74.84, suggesting that in 2008 Sunset inquiries may be more repeat visitors.

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## Information Influence

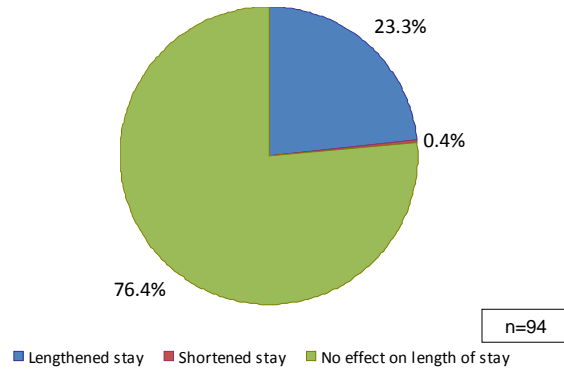
- ▶ Most Visitors (81%) indicated that the Selkirk Loop information they requested influenced their travel decisions.



▶ 40

## Information Influence

- ▶ Nearly one-quarter of Visitors (23%) lengthened their stay as a result of the ISL information.
- ▶ 76% said the information had no influence on their length of stay.



▶ 41

## Information Influence Summary

- ▶ The information provided by ISL influenced the travel plans of most Visitors (81%).
- ▶ Nearly half of Visitors (47%) said they decided to visit the ISL only after receiving the information.
- ▶ One-fifth of Visitors (23%) said they lengthened their stay as a result of the ISL information.
- ▶ **Overall, a total of 59% of Visitors either decided to come or lengthened their stay after receiving (and as a result of) the ISL information they requested.**

▶ 42



## 5. Demographics

Description of Respondents  
 Number of Kids  
 Age, Income, Employment

Visitation Patterns  
 Visitor Origins

43

## Demographics

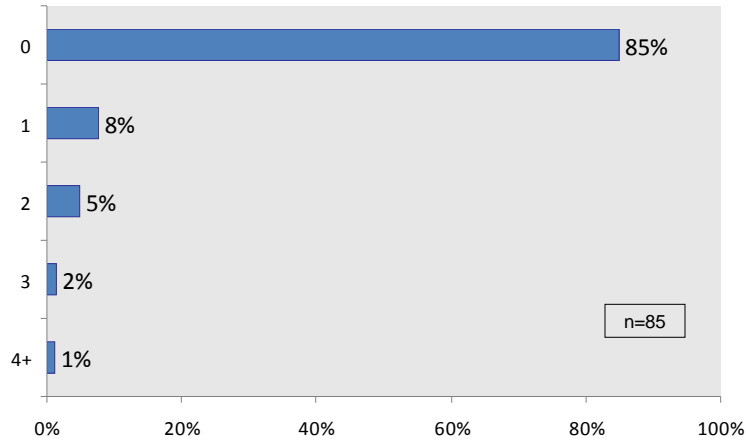
- ▶ “Visitors” and “Inquirers” differ only slightly.
- ▶ Visitors are younger than Inquirers (this difference is statistically significant).
- ▶ The demographics are not surprising based on the media used by ISL.

	Visitor n=95	Inquirer n=348
Percent Married	83%	79%
Percent Male	51%	56%
Average age	58	62
Avg. Household size	2.04	2.06
Avg. Number of kids at home	0.28	0.13
Percent College grad/post grad	73%	63%
Percent Employed	52%	38%

▶ 44

## Number of Kids

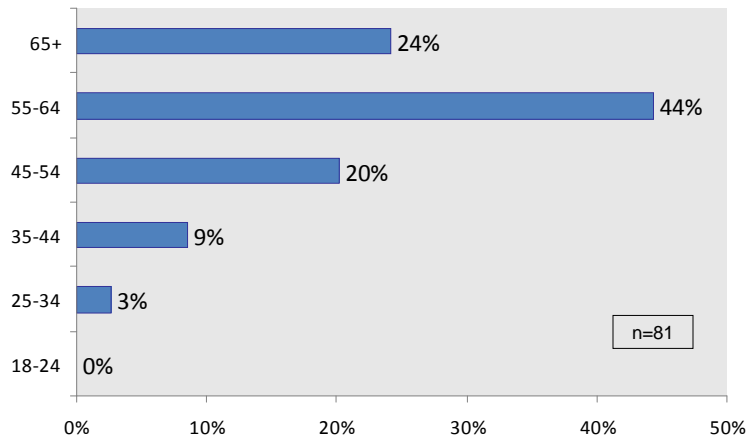
- ▶ Most Visitors (85%) had no children living at home.



▶ 45

## Age

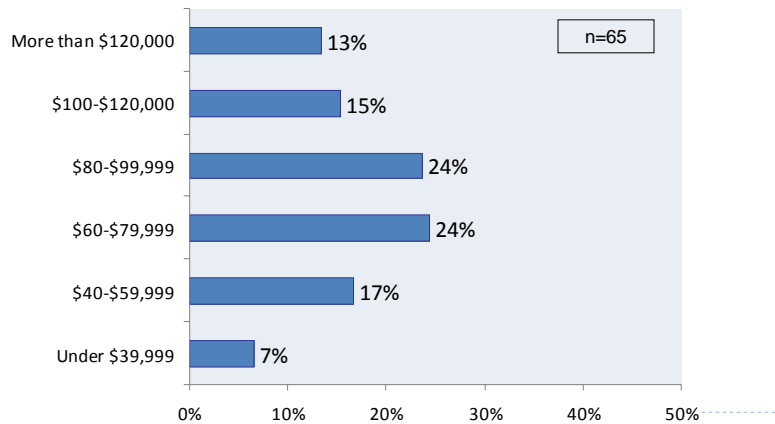
- ▶ The average age of Visitors was 58.



▶ 46

## Income of U.S. Visitors

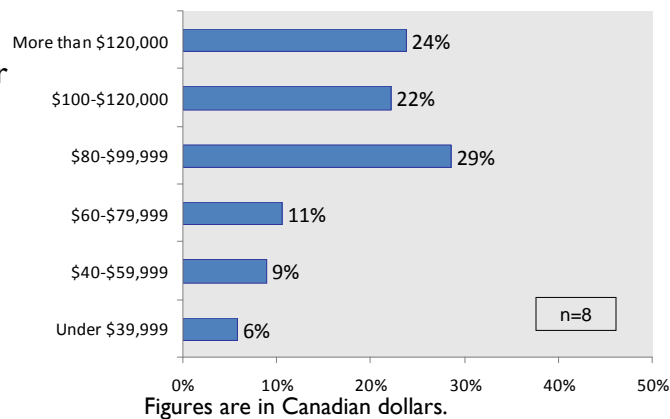
- ▶ Income figures assume that U.S. respondents reported income in U.S. dollars.
- ▶ Graph shows income for U.S. Visitors.



▶ 47

## Income of Canadian Visitors

- ▶ Income figures assume that Canadian respondents reported income in Canadian dollars.
- ▶ Graph shows income for Canadian Visitors.



▶ 48



## Employment Status

- ▶ 53% of Visitors are employed (employed/self-employed) compared to only 38% of Inquirers.
- ▶ More Inquirers (55%) are retired.

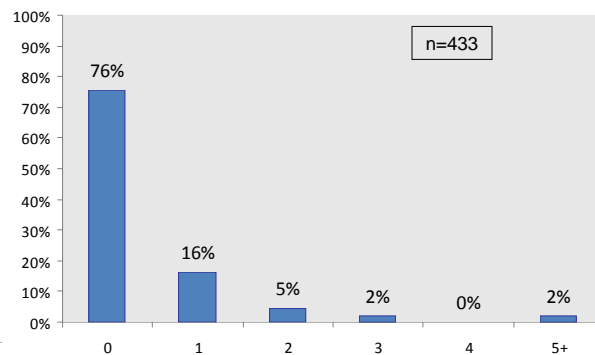
	Visitor	Inquirer
Employed	40%	30%
Self-Employed	13%	8%
Out of work	0%	2%
Homemaker	1%	3%
Student	0%	0%
Retired	47%	55%
Unable to work	0%	2%

n=424

▶ 49

## Previous Visits

- ▶ More than three-quarters of all respondents (76%) have not been to the Selkirk Loop in the past 5 years.
- ▶ 25% of all respondents have made more than one trip to the Loop in the past 5 years; however, the average number of trips made by Visitors was 1.8 and is significantly more than Inquirers (0.08).



▶ 50

## Reasons for Not Visiting the Loop

Reason	n=339	
	2008 Percent	2006 Percent
Visited another location instead	36%	29%
No time for a trip	36%	43%
Cost of fuel	18%	15%
Did not receive information about ISL	14%	8%
Could not afford a trip, other financial issue	12%	13%
Cost of air travel	10%	5%
Personal or family illness, problem	9%	15%
Planning or considering future visit	6%	4%
Concern about internat'l border crossing	5%	6%
Prefer a location closer to home	4%	5%
Other reason	3%	10%
Travel companion(s) cancelled, postponed	1%	-

- ▶ Note that border crossing was not a major concern, but high transportation costs in 2008 did have an impact.

▶ 51

## Other Destinations of Respondents

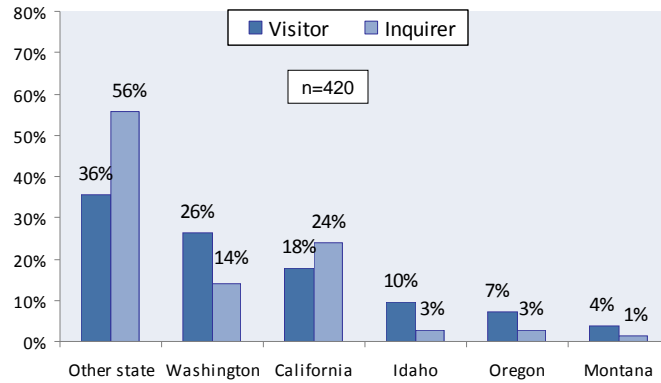
- ▶ Destinations of respondents who took a vacation someplace other than the Loop during the past year (200+ mi/330+ km):

SW states	29.9%	Indonesia	3.2%
CA	21.5%	Germany/Austria	3.1%
SE states	20.9%	MT	3.0%
Alaska/Hawaii	20.0%	Middle East	2.9%
OR	16.3%	Alberta	2.6%
MW states	16.3%	South Africa	2.6%
NE states	15.8%	Ontario	2.4%
WA	12.5%	Spain/Portugal	2.3%
Mexico	11.9%	Baltic countries	2.3%
Caribbean	10.1%	UK	2.0%
South America	7.6%	Asia	2.0%
B.C. (other areas)	7.4%	France	1.7%
Europe, other	4.1%	Scotland/Ireland	1.7%
WY	3.7%	Canada, non-specific	1.2%
ID (other areas)	3.6%	Russia	0.2%
Italy	3.5%		

n=361

▶ 52

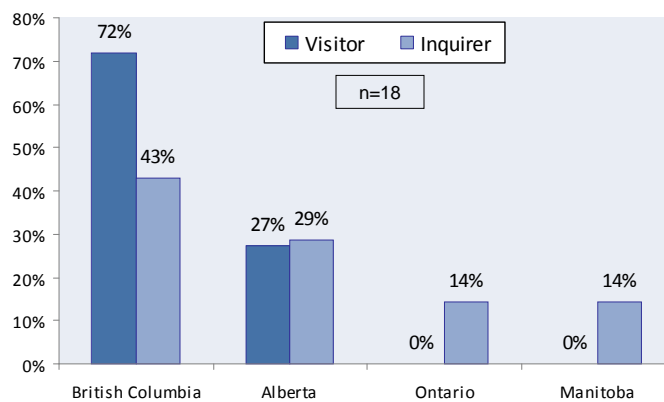
## Origins of U.S. Respondents



- ▶ 96% of respondents are from the U.S., 4% from Canada.
- ▶ Top states of origin were U.S. Pacific NW and California.
- ▶ 38 Other U.S. states were mentioned as origins, including 8 in the West, 10 in the Midwest, 6 in the East/New England, and 14 in the South/Southeast.

▶ 53

## Origins of Canadians



- ▶ Most Canadian Visitors (72%) were from B.C.
- ▶ No (0%) Canadian Visitors and few Inquirers were from Ontario or Manitoba.

▶ 54



## 7. Visitor Trip Info

Trip Purpose  
 Destinations & Seasons  
 Trip Planning & Activities

Accommodations & Length of Stay  
 Satisfaction & Repeat Visitation

55

## Visitor Trip Purpose

- ▶ Many Visitors traveled primarily to sightsee/relax/escape (44%), or to see a new place (16%).
- ▶ 12% said their primary purpose was for recreation/outdoor activities, compared to 7% in 2006.

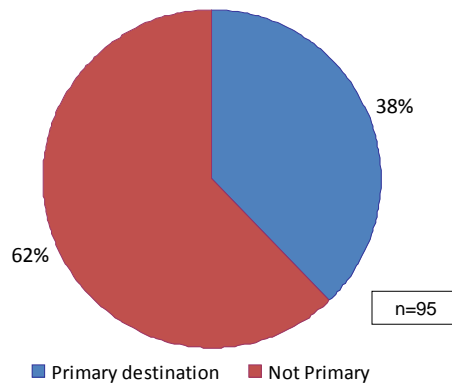
	2008	2006
Sightseeing, relaxation, escape	44%	40%
Someplace we had never been	16%	17%
Recreation, outdoor activities	12%	7%
Visit family/friends, wedding, reunion	9%	12%
Passing through on way elsewhere	9%	10%
Other reason	6%	5%
Business, conference, or convention	2%	2%
Festival or event	1%	1%
Visit historical sites/museums	1%	4%
Medical reasons	1%	-

n=93

▶ 56

## Trip Destination

- ▶ More than one-third (38%) of Visitors said ISL was their primary vacation destination.
- ▶ None of the Travel 50 & Beyond respondents who visited said the Loop was their primary destination.



▶ 57

## Loop Places Visited

Sandpoint, Idaho	76%
Bonnars Ferry, Idaho	60%
Priest Lake, Idaho	50%
Nelson, BC	49%
Kootenay Lake Free Ferry	43%
Creston, BC	40%
Newport, Washington	32%
Metaline Falls, Washington	30%
Colville, Washington	26%
Clark Fork, Idaho	22%
Ainsworth Hot Springs, BC	20%
Ione, Washington	19%
Kaslo, BC	19%
Castlegar, BC	17%
Artisans of Crawford Bay, BC	17%
Salmo, BC	11%
Trail, BC	9%
Chewelah, Washington	9%
Rossland, BC	4%
Silverwood Theme Park	3%
Other	2%

- ▶ At least half of Visitors went to Sandpoint, Bonners Ferry, and/or Priest Lake.
- ▶ On average, Visitors visited 4.2 places on the Loop and 1.3 places located on Super Side Trips.
- ▶ Only 3% visited Silverwood Theme Park (not surprising since ISL ad placements reflect primary target of empty nest, off-peak season travelers).

n=86

▶ 58

## Overnight Stays

- ▶ Respondents were asked where they stayed overnight during their ISL trip.
- ▶ Sandpoint (30%), Nelson (25%), Spokane (21%), and Coeur d'Alene (18%) are important gateway cities for the Loop.
- ▶ On average, Visitors stayed overnight at 1.3 places on the Loop. One-third (33%) stayed at Super Side Trip locations, and 57% stayed at one of the other listed locations.

\* Others mentioned: Kalispell, MT; Balfour, BC; Blanchard, ID; Christina Lake, BC; Glacier Nat'l Park; Gray Creek, BC; Kimberly, BC; Blaine, WA; Hope, ID; Nakusp, BC; New Denver, BC; Passmore, BC; Ymir, BC; Winthrop, WA.

▶ 59

n=83

Sandpoint, Idaho	29.9%
Nelson, BC	24.8%
Spokane, Washington	20.5%
Other*	20.0%
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho	18.0%
Priest Lake, Idaho	16.4%
Creston, BC	15.5%
Bonnars Ferry, Idaho	12.3%
Colville, Washington	8.2%
East Shore Kootenay Lake, BC	8.0%
Newport, Washington	8.0%
Metaline Falls, Washington	7.7%
Kaslo, BC	7.4%
Castlegar, BC	6.4%
Ainsworth Hot Springs, BC	3.7%
Ione, Washington	3.1%
Cranbrook, BC	2.4%
Clark Fork, Idaho	2.1%
Trail, BC	1.9%
Priest River, Idaho	1.7%
Salmo, BC	1.7%
Troy, Montana	1.2%
Chewelah, Washington	1.0%
Rossland, BC	0.6%

## Other Places Visited

- ▶ Most ISL Visitors (73%) also visited other places on their trip.
- ▶ More than half (55%) of those who visited other places went to Coeur d'Alene.
- ▶ On average, Visitors visited 3 other US locations on their trip; 84% visited other Canadian locations.
- ▶ The Selkirk Loop is one of the Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies. Many Visitors also traveled to other Top 10 destinations on their trip.

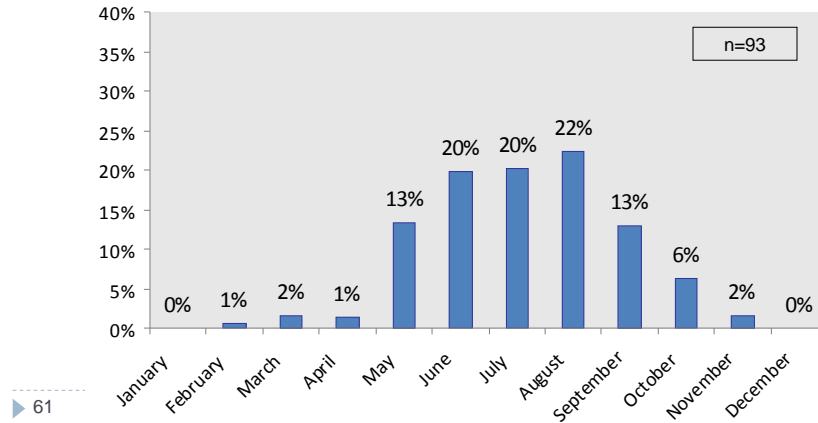
▶ 60

n=69

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho	55%
Idaho (other parts)	48%
Spokane, Washington	37%
Washington	37%
Montana (other parts)	35%
Glacier National Park, Montana	24%
Banff/Jasper, Lake Louise, Alberta	23%
Oregon	21%
Canada (other parts)	19%
Seattle, Washington	15%
Waterton Lakes National Park, Canada	11%
Columbia Gorge, Washington/Oregon	11%
California	9%
Victoria, BC	9%
Calgary, Alberta	8%
Cranbrook, BC	7%
Vancouver, BC	6%
Hells Canyon National Recreation Area	5%
OTHER	1%
Yellowstone National Park	1%

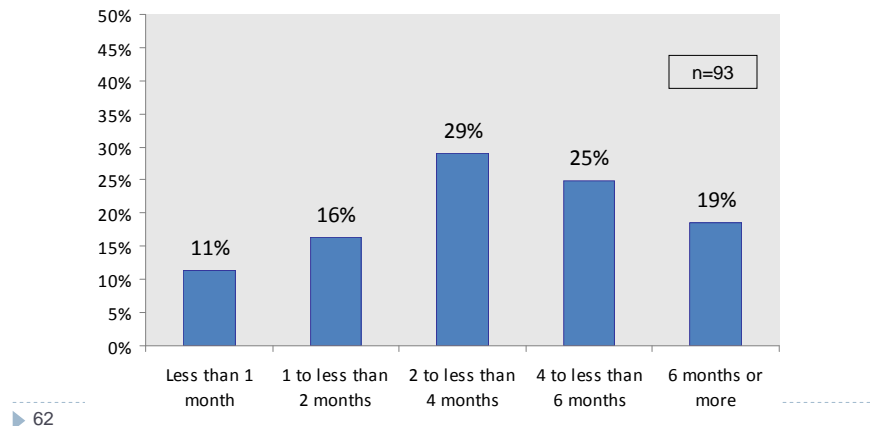
## Season of Visit

- ▶ 75% visited in 2008, 19% in 2009 (inquiries from 2008).
- ▶ 42% visited in July and August.
- ▶ 54% visited in Apr-June and Sept-Oct (target is off-peak).



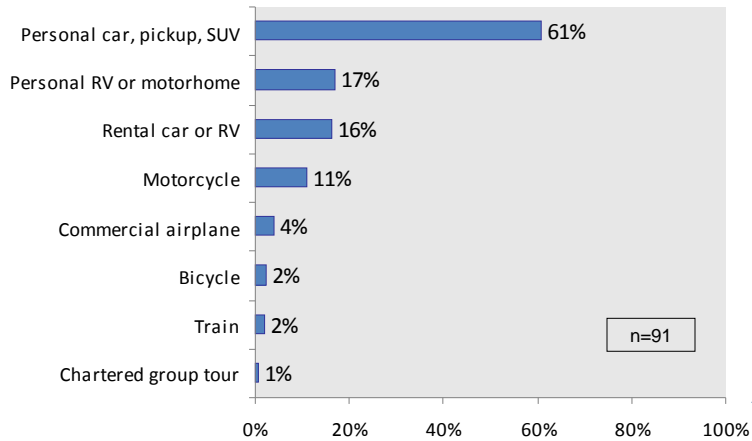
## Trip Planning

- ▶ 1-in-4 Visitors (27%) planned their trip less than 2 months in advance, and half (54%) planned their trip 2-6 months in advance.
- ▶ 11% spent less than one month planning, versus 24% in 2006.



## Forms of Transportation Used

- ▶ The majority of Visitors (61%) traveled to and around the Loop by personal car/pickup/SUV.
- ▶ 17% used RV or motorhome, compared to 11% in 2006.



▶ 63

## Activities of Visitors

- ▶ Most Visitors (96%) were sightseeing.
- ▶ Hiking, Bicycling, Birding, and Golfing increased from 2006; History/culture and Shopping decreased.
- ▶ 'Other' activities mentioned (each by one respondent): canoeing, kayaking, dog sledding, snowshoeing.

	2008	2006
Sightseeing, scenic driving	96%	93%
Wildlife viewing	53%	58%
Photography	45%	47%
Hiking	43%	30%
Riding the free Kootenay Lake ferry	39%	48%
Shopping	32%	41%
History/culture	26%	37%
Visiting artisans, craftsmen	24%	27%
Camping	24%	28%
Bird watching	21%	18%
Hot springs	16%	-
Attend event or festival	14%	11%
Bicycling	11%	4%
Motorcycling	11%	15%
Boating	9%	5%
Golfing	8%	6%
Wine tasting	6%	-
Fishing	4%	9%
Other	4%	7%
Riding the tour train	4%	1%
Horseback riding	3%	1%
Cross Country Skiing	1%	0%
Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding	1%	0%
Snowmobiling	1%	0%
Waterskiing	1%	0%

n=91

▶ 64



## Accommodations Used

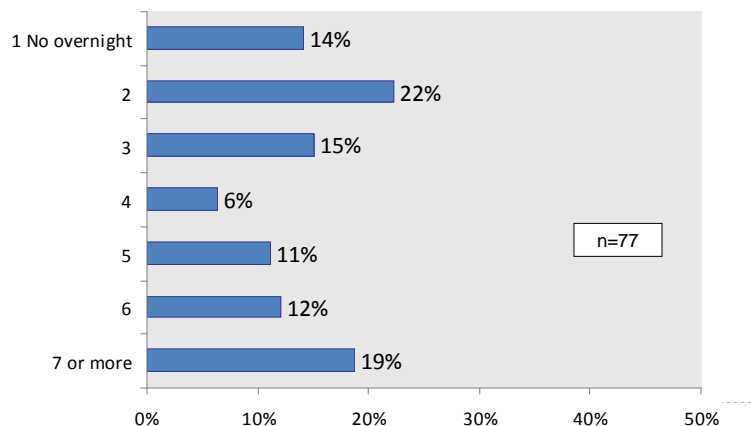
- ▶ Nearly half of Visitors (48%) stayed in a hotel or motel, though fewer than in 2006 (59%).
- ▶ Instead more stayed at campgrounds, RV parks, friend/relatives' homes or vacation rental condo/home.
- ▶ Percents add to more than 100% because respondents could chose multiple answers.

n=86	2008 Percent	2006 Percent
Hotel or Motel	48%	59%
Campground	19%	16%
RV park	17%	12%
Friends/relatives' home	15%	11%
Bed & Breakfast	9%	10%
Rental condo or home	7%	1%
Resort	6%	7%
Other	2%	-
My vacation/2nd home	1%	1%
Guest ranch	1%	1%

▶ 65

## Length of Stay

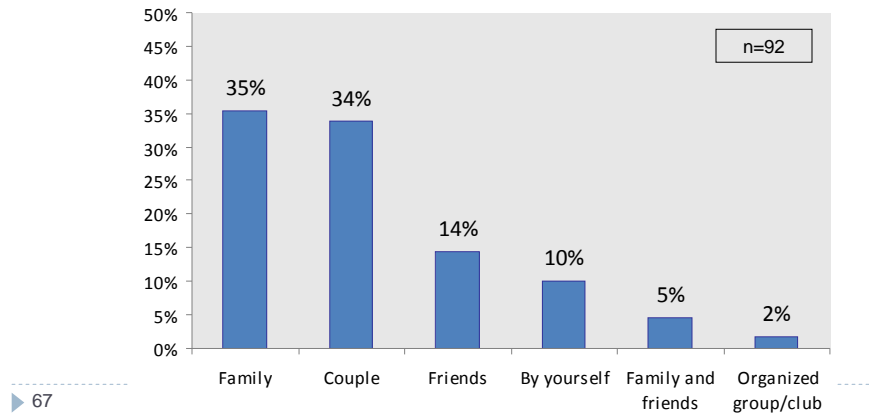
- ▶ Nearly one-in-five (19%) stayed 7 or more days.
- ▶ On average, Visitors traveled the Loop for 3.9 days.
- ▶ Only 14% were day-trip visitors.



▶ 66

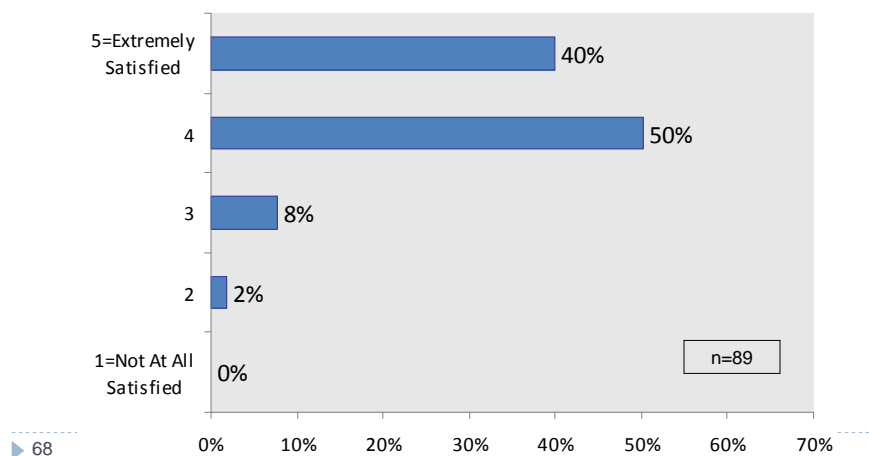
## Travel Party Composition

- ▶ Average number of Adults in travel party = 2.5.
- ▶ Average number of Children in travel party = 0.3.
- ▶ Even those traveling with family (“Family;” “Family and friends”) only averaged 0.73 children in the their travel parties.



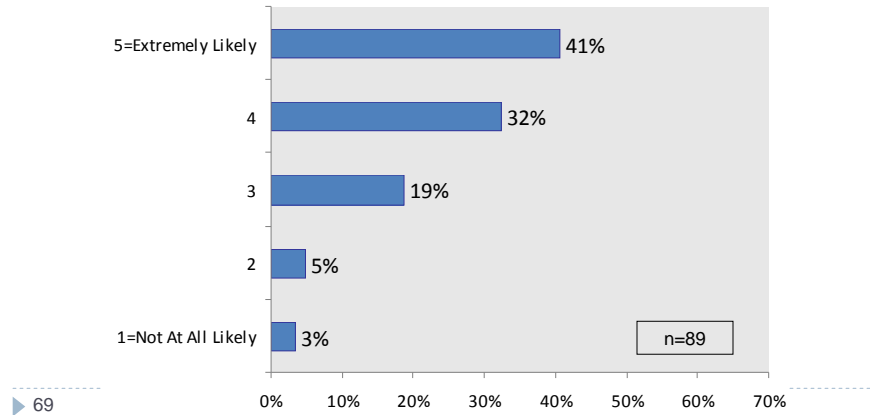
## Trip Satisfaction

- ▶ 90% of Visitors were satisfied with their trip.
- ▶ Average satisfaction rating = 4.3



## Repeat Visits

- ▶ 41% of Visitors say they are Extremely Likely to take another ISL trip.
- ▶ Only 8% indicate they are not likely to visit again.



## 8. General Marketing Information

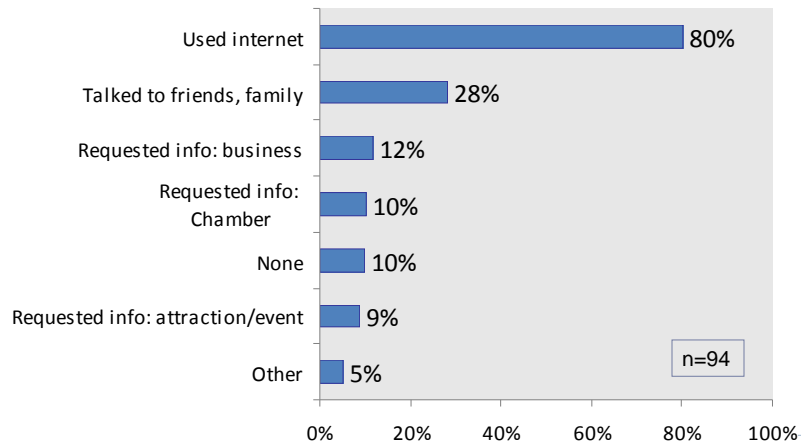
Trip Planning Methods & Web Resources  
Future Visits & Conversion  
Respondent Comments

David Thompson Bicentennial

70

## Trip Planning Methods

- ▶ The Majority of Visitors (80%) used the internet to plan their trip to the Selkirk Loop.



▶ 71

## Web Resources Used

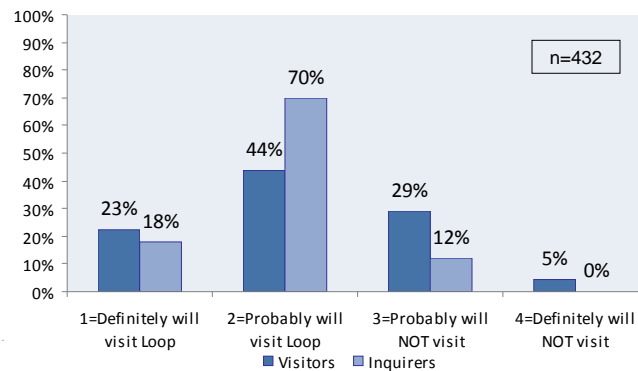
- ▶ Most Visitors (82%) used the ISL website.
- ▶ Half (52%) also used Provincial/State tourism websites.
- ▶ Review sites are important sources.
- ▶ Other web sites included: AAA, B&B sites, Wildlife Mgmt Center, hotwire.com, Vacation Rental By Owner (VRBO.com), Google maps, Yahoo Groups.

Selkirk Loop website	82%
Provincial/State tourism website	52%
RV/camping websites	23%
TripAdvisor.com	16%
Hotel chain(s) website	15%
Destination reviews	10%
Hotel/Attraction reviews	9%
Airline websites	7%
Expedia.com	5%
Travelocity.com	5%
Message boards	5%
Hotels.com	4%
Blogs	4%
Priceline.com	3%
Orbitz.com	3%
Kayak.com	2%

▶ 72

## Future Visits & Conversion

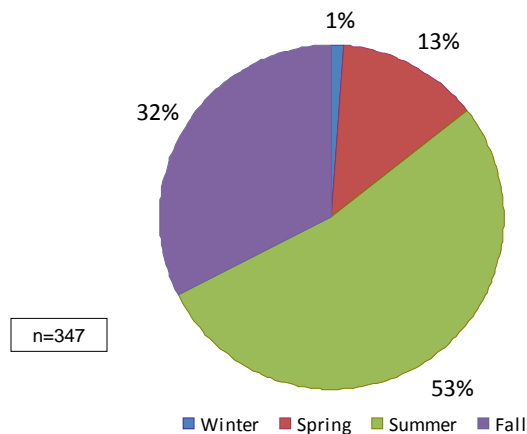
- ▶ Inquirers are significantly more likely to visit in next 2 years (mean=1.9) than Visitors (2.2).
- ▶ Another conversion rate can be calculated by taking 80% of those who said they Definitely Will visit within 2 years plus 20% of those who Probably Will: Future (potential) conversion rate = 28%.



▶ 73

## Season Intending to Visit

- ▶ Of those who say they are likely to visit, the majority (53%) chose Summer as their first choice of season for a visit, followed by Fall (32%) and Spring (13%).



▶ 74

## Respondent Comments

- ▶ 128 respondents provided comments.
- ▶ Counts reported are not weighted.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS (n=54)	
Great trip, positive comments	38
"Loved it," "Quiet, uncluttered," "Felt welcome," "Wonderful wildlife and people," "Saw advertisement, wasn't aware before," "Recommend to friends," "Want to come back"	
ISL didn't meet expectations	10
Disappointed in campground quality and quantity; signage lacking; few places to pull off and look with large motorhome; lack of brand name hotels; not enough public parks for hiking	
Suggestions	3
Emphasize motorcycle travel; need more articles about the Loop	
David Thompson Bicentennial comments	2
David Thompson should be promoted more; we traveled the Loop because of D. Thompson	
Info arrived too late for trip	1

▶ 75

## Respondent Comments (cont'd.)

- ▶ Counts reported are not weighted.
- ▶ Categories are generally ordered by level of interest or intent to travel to ISL.

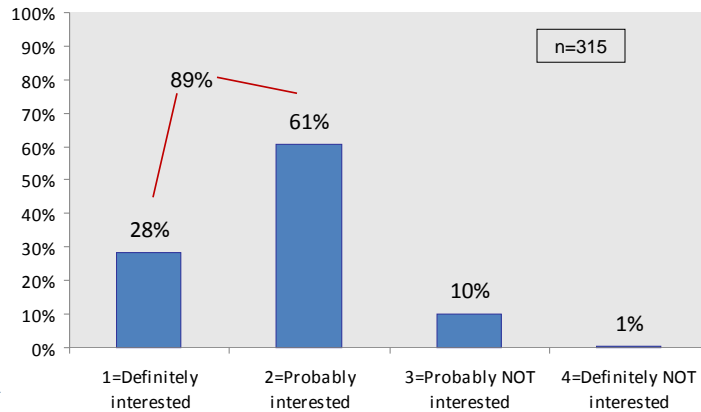
COMMENTS FROM INQUIRERS (n=74)	
Intend to come, very interested/excited	24
"Definitely on our list of places to visit," "Very anxious to see it," "Looking forward to it"	
High Interest linked to past experience in the area	9
Former resident of area, visited Loop years ago, visited area ID/MT/BC/WA before and liked it	
Interested in traveling by motorcycle	5
Interested in visit someday/eventually	4
General positive comments	7
"Looks like a great destination," "Beautiful area," "Sounds interesting"	
Reason for no/reduced interest	4
Gas, distance, time, no passport	
More info needed	10
RV parks, evaluating/selecting lodging, bus tours, train trip, don't know much about Loop yet	
Did not receive ISL information	2

▶ 76

# David Thompson Bicentennial

- ▶ Respondents who said they were likely to visit the Loop within 2 years were asked about their interest in the David Thompson Bicentennial.

- ▶ Average interest was 1.8.



▶ 77

## 9. Implications for Loop Marketing



### Vacation Planning



78

## Markets

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- ▶ Consistent with its target markets, Selkirk Loop visitors are empty-nesters, well-educated, and have above average incomes.
- ▶ They take multiple trips annually to a variety of destinations (in the last 12 months, 84% took a trip of at least 330km/200mi from home, in addition to their Selkirk Loop trip).
- ▶ They live in the Pacific NW and California.
- ▶ They are repeat visitors to the Loop, stay 4+ nights, and are very satisfied with their experience.
- ▶ They use the web to plan their trips, and are likely to share their adventures with friends and family.
- ▶ Loop visitors enjoy sightseeing, hiking, wildlife/bird watching, golf, shopping, and visiting artisans/craftsmen.

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▶ 79

## Markets (cont'd)

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- ▶ **Key existing and potential demographic markets:**
  - ▶ Boomers, couples, groups of friends (couples, girlfriends, buddies) - both working and retired, group tour operators (including van, motorcycle, bicycle, car club groups).
- ▶ **Niche activity markets:**
  - ▶ Scenic drivers, wildlife/bird watchers, photographers, hikers, skiers, golfers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, geotourists, RVers, cultural/event travelers, culinary travelers (wine/beer/food), spa goers, hot springs soakers, home schoolers, anglers.
- ▶ **Geographic markets:**
  - ▶ Vancouver B.C., Calgary, Edmonton ALB, Seattle/Tacoma WA, Portland OR, Spokane WA, Boise ID, Lethbridge ALB.

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▶ 80



## Promotion

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1. Emphasize marketing of ISL web site:
  - ▶ Search engine optimization (SEO), strategic linking, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising
2. Report results and implications of ISL web site analytics to members, with recommended adjustments to strategy.
3. Increase relationship and web 2.0 marketing: e-newsletter, reviews, user-generated content (photos, stories, itineraries), social media sites (YouTube, Facebook, etc.), blogs, packages, booking engine.
4. Consider online pop-up survey to gather feedback about the ISL web site, users, trip planning, travel plans, conversion, info desired (example: survey on [www.yellowstonepark.com](http://www.yellowstonepark.com)).
5. Update list of media sources on web site, adding and removing sources as ad placements and publicity opportunities change.

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▶ 81

## Promotion (cont'd.)

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6. Reformat Travel Guide online as a side-by-side booklet with page turning, and print/download capability in 8.5x11" format, in order to reduce printing/ mailing costs.
  - ▶ Example: <http://www.vacationfun.com/ebrochures/GreaterSandpoint/ibrochure/Idaho.html>.
  - ▶ Send printed Travel Guide via 1st class to those who request rush, or remove the rush option from ISL web site.
7. Increase use of PR/Media Relations to generate publicity and journalist fam trips, in collaboration with provincial/state/ regional marketing efforts, including the Top 10 Scenic Drives.
8. Evaluate use of paid print advertising if budget is limited, since print sources show lower conversion rates (gross and net) than other sources, including publicity sources.

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▶ 82

## Promotion (cont'd.)

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### 9. If paid advertising is used:

- a. Additional analysis could be conducted on the Conversion Study data for better profiling of Inquirers and Visitors by media source to assist with ad placement decisions.
- b. ISL has advertised regularly in Sunset magazine. The data suggests that this reader base has seen the ISL message as most of the Visitors are repeat visitors. By contrast, the Travel 50 Visitors have had very little prior experience with the ISL.
- c. Advertising research indicates that repeat advertising messages in a given source are more effective than single messages in multiple media.
- d. Re-evaluate use of reader service: return does not appear to justify cost of printing, labor, and postage, particularly if information is not received by inquirer within 2-3 weeks of their request.

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▶ 83

## Promotion (cont'd.)

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- e. Consider online advertising, focusing on travel and niche sites based on target markets and activities (RV, airline, online travel agents - OTA, couples, friends, scenic driving, wildlife, motorcycling, hiking, hot springs, etc.).
- f. Participate in regional co-op advertising, such as the Top 10 Scenic Drives, rather than stand-alone ads, in order to leverage dollars and appeal to people who travel multiple destinations.

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▶ 84

## Promotion (cont'd.)

10. Link into 2010 Olympics and David Thompson efforts:
  - a. Promote the Selkirk Loop to Olympics visitors for future travel.
  - b. Promote the Selkirk Loop as a getaway for Vancouver/Victoria residents seeking escape from crowds during Olympics.
  - c. Spring-summer-fall travel in 2010 after the Olympics.
  - d. Winter destination for 2010-11 season.
  - e. Bicentennial destination for events, activities, learning.
11. Consider niche trade shows as member cooperative opportunities.
12. Engage ISL members in Marketing Committee to assist in prioritizing strategies based on budget, and seeking opportunities for co-ops and leveraging with public/private partners.

▶ 85



## Information:

### International Selkirk Loop

P.O. Box 2079  
Creston, B.C. V0B 1G0  
1-888-823-2626  
[info@selkirkloop.org](mailto:info@selkirkloop.org)  
[www.selkirkloop.org](http://www.selkirkloop.org)

Report prepared by:

**The Hingston Roach Group, Inc.**  
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