



## RESEARCH, PLANNING & EVALUATION

# **GOLDEN MOUNTAIN BIKE VISITOR STUDY 2011 RESULTS**

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Research, Planning & Evaluation  
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## Acknowledgements

The 2011 Golden Mountain Bike Visitor Study was a comprehensive survey of mountain bike travellers to Golden between July 1 and September 5, 2011.

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a profile of mountain bikers who visited Golden, in terms of traveller and trip characteristics.

Travellers were interviewed at trailheads while mountain biking on one of the four trail networks in Golden (Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, Moonraker at Cedar Lake, Mount 7 at Reflection Lake, and CBT Mainline Trail at Columbia Bridge). In addition, a few surveys were conducted at the Selkirk Top Rotary and the Town Campground. Interviewers collected information from travellers during their trip. A follow-up questionnaire collected information from travellers after their trip. The purpose of the follow-up questionnaire was to gather information about trip motivations, planning, experiences and activities, and to understand travellers' perceptions of the Golden area and British Columbia upon trip completion.

- Between July 1 and September 5, 2011, 740 people were approached at various mountain bike trails in Golden. Of those, 707 agreed to complete the interview. However, 115 of these individuals had previously completed the survey and were not invited to participate a second time. Among those intercepted, 185 were excluded as they were from the local area and had completed a shorter version of the survey, and four business travellers were also excluded, resulting in 403 useable non-resident surveys.
- Sixty-one percent of intercepted mountain bike travellers agreed to complete a follow-up survey (mailback or online) and 52% of these completed their survey by November 13, 2011, resulting in 128 useable surveys for analysis.
- Overall, almost one-fifth (19%) of Golden mountain bike travellers were from British Columbia, while three-quarters (75%) were from other parts of Canada (Table 4). The majority (91%) of Canadian mountain bike travellers from provinces other than British Columbia were from Alberta.
- United States (US) mountain bike travellers surveyed represented a fraction (3%) of mountain bike travellers to Golden.
- The remainder (4%) of the mountain bike travellers surveyed were from other countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark and Germany.
- Nearly half (46%) of the mountain bike travellers who were interviewed for this study were between the ages of 25 and 34, followed by a quarter (26%) between the ages of the 35 to 44, and over a tenth (14%) who were under the age of 24.
- Mountain bike travellers were well educated, as about half had an undergraduate (40%) or a Masters/PhD degree (10%). Another fifth (22%) had completed a college or technical diploma.

- Respondents were asked about their annual household income. Approximately one in seven (15%) preferred not to share this information. Of those who responded, half (50%) had household incomes of at least \$100,000 annually, including a quarter (26%) with stated household incomes of over \$150,000.
- Almost two-fifths (39%) of respondents were members of a mountain biking or a trails society/club.
- The majority (96%) of travellers indicated that the primary purpose of their trip was leisure.
- Almost all (98%) mountain bike travellers used cars, trucks, or motorcycles as their primary mode of transportation.
- Over a third (36%) of overnight mountain bike travellers reported using a campground or RV park as their primary form of accommodation. Another fifth (22%) spent one or more nights in a hotel/motel, a sixth (16%) stayed at a resort and a tenth (10%) stayed with friends or relatives.
- Over a fifth (21%) of mountain bike travellers indicated they were touring with no specific destination. For most travellers with a primary destination, that destination was within British Columbia (77%) and for over two-thirds (71%), it was Golden.
- On average, travellers spent 7 days away from home, 6 days in British Columbia and 3 days in the Golden area.
- Among these mountain bike travellers, international travellers reported the longest trip duration, averaging 29 days away from home, followed by US travellers (17 days), travellers from other Canadian provinces (17 days), British Columbia (7 days) and Alberta (5 days). International travellers reported the longest trip duration in British Columbia (17 days), followed by US travellers (15 days), other Canadians (13 days), British Columbians (6 days) and Albertans (4 days). US mountain bike travellers spent the most time in Golden (8 days), followed by those from international locations (4 days), from other Canadian provinces (4 days), British Columbia (3 days) and Alberta (3 days).
- Over one-fifth (22%) of respondents were travelling with children. Travel party sizes for those travelling with children were substantially larger than for those without children (4.3 travellers per travel party with children vs. 2.6 travellers per travel party without children).
- Travellers were asked about their trip planning behaviour in the follow-up survey. Almost three-fifths (55%) of mountain bike travellers reported spending less than three weeks planning their trip, most commonly (28%) planning 1-6 days in advance of the trip.
- Almost three-fifths (55%) of the respondents indicated that, independent of cost or budget, their first consideration in trip planning was the notion of a mountain bike trip, followed at a later stage by a search for a suitable destination.

- Past experience (73%), advice from friends and relatives (40%), mountain biking related websites (33%), mountain bike related media (28%), other internet sites (20%) and the Tourism Golden website (18%) were the top information sources used by mountain bike travellers before their trip.
- The three information sources travellers used and found most useful before their trip were experience gleaned from previous visits to Golden (57%), advice from friends and relatives (37%) and mountain biking related websites (28%).
- Previous visits to Golden (43%), and advice from friends/relatives (26%) were the information sources used most often during the trip by these travellers. Also reported to be important, but less frequently used, were information sources such as visitor guides and brochures (22%), mountain biking related websites (15%) and visitor centres (10%).
- Travellers were asked about the leisure activities they participated in during the trip in addition to mountain biking. The top three activities mentioned were visiting a municipal, provincial or national park or natural area outside a park (37%), fine dining (31%) and hiking (28%).
- Respondents were also asked about the activities they participated in while in the Golden area (in addition to mountain biking). The most frequently selected activities for travellers included visiting a municipal, provincial or national park, or a natural area outside a park (29%), fine dining (27%), hiking (27%), attending or participating in a sporting event (other than golf) (27%) and shopping for local arts and crafts (19%).
- Over four-fifths (85%) of mountain bike travellers intended to ride their bikes for three or fewer days in the Golden area during the trip on which they were interviewed.
- On average, travellers spent an average of just over 5 hours a day on their mountain bikes (median = 5.5 hours) during the trip on which they were interviewed.
- Based on responses from the follow-up survey, the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort network was the most popular, as over four-fifths (82%) of respondents reported riding it during their visit. Over a third (35%) reported riding Mount 7, while a third (31%) rode the Moonraker Trail.
- Over four-fifths (81%) of mountain bikers were riding their own personal bikes at the time they were interviewed.
- Between July 1 and September 5, almost half (50%) of respondents visited Golden only once and all of them participated in mountain biking during this single visit. The others (51%) visited Golden on multiple occasions and, on average, biked during four repeat visits to Golden between July 1 and September 5.
- Over a fifth (21%) of mountain bike travellers reported that at least one member of their travel party would not be mountain biking on the trip.

- Similar to travel party size, the average rider party size also increased when children were present (3.2 riders per rider party with children vs. 2.7 riders per rider party without children).
- Six percent of all mountain bike traveller riding parties included at least one local resident.
- Travellers were asked about the importance of mountain biking in their decision to visit Golden. A majority (94%) of respondents stated that mountain biking was either a very important factor (19%, rating of 7-9 on a 10-point scale) or the single most important factor (75%, rating of 10 on a 10-point scale).
- When asked how they first learned about Golden as a place to mountain bike, over two-fifths (42%) of respondents credited their family and friends, almost a third (30%) learned about Golden's mountain biking offerings through the mountain bike community and a fifth (19%) cited personal experience.
- In order to identify areas where Golden is currently meeting and/or exceeding consumer expectations, mountain bike travellers were asked about their satisfaction and perceived importance for various factors, including mountain bike trails/riding aspects, community offerings and other aspects. On every aspect, Golden met travellers' expectations.
- When asked about the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with their mountain bike experience in Golden, almost all travellers indicated they were satisfied (72%, very satisfied; 20%, somewhat satisfied).
- Seven-eighths (87%) of mountain bike travellers indicated they were likely to return to the Golden area to mountain bike in the next 12 months (75% very likely to return and 12% somewhat likely to return).
- The vast majority (94%) of mountain bike travellers were very likely to recommend Golden as a place to mountain bike to their friends and family.
- New mountain biking related features and services respondents would like to see included longer/additional trails (24% of the total responses; 49% of the total respondents), additional services and amenities (15% of responses; 30% of respondents), better trail maintenance (8% of responses; 15% of respondents), bike park structures or practice areas (5% of responses; 11% of respondents), additional bike shops (5% of responses; 10% of respondents), bike related events (5% of responses; 10% of respondents), easier trails for less skilled riders (5% of responses; 10% of respondents), additional and/or better transportation options (5% of responses; 10% of respondents) and better signage (5% of responses; 10% of respondents).
- Over two-fifths (43%) of the travellers reported mountain biking at locations other than the one at which they were intercepted. The most frequently mentioned locations included Whistler, Canmore, Panorama, other trails in the study area, Fernie, Invermere, Revelstoke, Kamloops, Sun Peaks and Vernon.

- A variety of characteristics were identified as unique to Golden, including the quality/organization of the trails (32% of the total responses; 78% of the total respondents), diversity and type of trails available to mountain bikers (11% of responses; 26% of respondents), trail access (9% responses; 23% of respondents), quiet/uncrowded (8% of responses; 20% of respondents) and the KHMR/Mount 7 trails (7% of responses; 16% of respondents).
- Positive images or characteristics of Golden were: an abundance of things to do (12% of the total responses; 33% of the total respondents), its scenic beauty (11% of responses; 30% of respondents), uncrowded/relaxed atmosphere (9% of responses; 22% of respondents), trail quality (8% of responses; 20% of respondents), nature (8% of responses; 20% of respondents) and trail accessibility (7% of responses; 18% of respondents).
- Negative images or characteristics of Golden included: unappealing town appearance (13% of responses; 27% of respondents), limited amenities/food options (13% of responses; 26% of respondents), distance/accessibility (11% of responses; 22% of respondents), cost (10% of responses; 21% of respondents), limited operating hours/lack of night life (10% of responses; 21% of respondents) and trail quality/maintenance (9% of responses; 18% of respondents).
- Respondents were asked which mountain bike vacation destination inside British Columbia they would most likely consider for a future mountain bike vacation. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents indicated that they would consider Whistler for a future mountain bike vacation. Another fifth (18%) mentioned Fernie and a sixth (14%) indicated they would consider visiting Golden/Kicking Horse on their next mountain bike vacation.
- Respondents were also asked which mountain bike vacation destination outside British Columbia they would most likely consider for a future mountain bike vacation. Moab, Utah (19%), Canmore, Alberta (18%) and elsewhere in Alberta (17%) were the destinations respondents were most likely to visit on their next mountain bike vacation outside British Columbia.
- Mountain bike travellers who considered a mountain bike vacation destination outside of British Columbia compared Golden with similar destinations outside of British Columbia (excluding Canmore, other destinations in Alberta and Moab) and felt that Golden had better performance in terms of overall trip cost (net difference of +28%), ease of getting to destination (net difference of +23%), difficulty of terrain/trails (net difference of +21%) and availability of other outdoor activities (net difference of +9%). Golden was not assessed as favourably with respect to the overall number of trails (net difference of -25%), weather (net difference of -23%), bike friendly amenities (net difference of -11%), reputation (net difference of -11%) and variety of terrain/trails (net difference of -7%).

- In a head-to-head comparison with Canmore, mountain bike travellers who considered a mountain bike vacation destination outside of British Columbia found Golden to be better in terms of the variety of terrain/trails (net difference of +40%), difficulty of terrain/trails (net difference of +40%), the overall number of trails (net difference of +40%), reputation (net difference of +30%) and weather (net difference of +15%). Golden was not assessed as favourably as Canmore with respect to ease of getting to destination (net difference of -70%), availability of other outdoor activities (net difference of -15%), bike friendly amenities (net difference of -15%) and overall trip cost (net difference of -10%).
- In a head-to-head comparison with other destinations in Alberta (excluding Canmore), mountain bike travellers who considered a mountain bike vacation destination outside of British Columbia found Golden to be better in terms of difficulty of terrain/trails (net difference of +58%), the overall number of trails (net difference of +53%), reputation (net difference of +47%), weather (net difference of +21%), the variety of terrain/trails (net difference of +16%), availability of other outdoor activities (net difference of +16%) and bike friendly amenities (net difference of +11%). Golden was not assessed as favourably as these other Alberta destinations (excluding Canmore) with respect to ease of getting to destination (net difference of -68%) and overall trip cost (net difference of -63%).
- In a head-to-head comparison with Moab, Utah, mountain bike travellers who considered a mountain bike vacation destination outside of British Columbia found Golden to be better in terms of overall cost of trip (net difference of +86%), ease of getting to destination (net difference of +86%) and availability of other outdoor activities (net difference of +14%). However, Golden was considered to underperform Moab with respect to reputation (net difference of -62%), bike friendly amenities (net difference of -38%), weather (net difference of -29%), variety of terrain and trails (net difference of -29%), number of trails (net difference of -29%) and difficulty of terrain/trails (net difference of -14%).
- Travellers were also asked about their satisfaction with their trip in British Columbia. The majority of travellers stated they were either very satisfied (75%) or somewhat satisfied (14%) with their trip.
- Nearly all mountain bike travellers who were asked about their likelihood of taking another trip in British Columbia in the next two years indicated that they were very likely (91%), likely (4%) or somewhat likely (4%) to do so.
- Of those who indicated they were likely to take another trip to British Columbia in the next two years, nearly all respondents also indicated they were likely to mountain bike while on another trip in British Columbia (91%, very likely; 7%, likely; 2%, somewhat likely).
- Of those who indicated that they were likely to mountain bike while on another trip to British Columbia in the next two years, all (100%) respondents indicated mountain biking would likely be their main motivation for their trip.
- Overall, mountain bike travellers reported an average spending of \$231.38 per party per day and \$87.19 per person per day during their trip.



- When asked about the type of mountain biking they normally participate in, almost seven-eighths (85%) of mountain bike travellers reported participating in downhill biking. Two-thirds (66%) participated in cross-country/all mountain type of mountain biking, a third (31%) participated in freeriding, while a smaller proportion participated in bike skills/dirt jumping (17%).
- The vast majority of travellers were experienced mountain bikers. A third (32%) were at the intermediate level and still learning, two-fifths (39%) were at the advanced level, and almost a quarter (23%) considered themselves to be expert bikers.
- Over four-fifths (84%) of mountain bike travellers reported taking at least one overnight trip for the purpose of mountain biking in the previous 12 months. On average, respondents had taken over 6 overnight mountain biking trips during this period.
- Travellers were asked about the number and types of bikes they currently owned. Over two-fifths (45%) owned 4 or more bikes, a fifth (21%) owned 3 bikes and a similar proportion (21%) owned 2 bikes. Over seven-eighths (88%) of mountain bike travellers owned full suspension mountain bikes. Next in popularity were hardtail mountain bikes (50%) and road bikes (32%).