

# Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, (VIVC) Comox Valley Annual Report – 2018

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## Introduction

2018 continued to show an increase in Visitor numbers with 21,228 total Visitor Parties up 11%, which included a new mobile Downtown Comox Ambassador Program, compared to 20,099 total Visitor Parties for 2017. Europeans still represent the third highest Visitor Origin to visit the centre with BC residents coming in 1<sup>st</sup>. TripAdvisor reviews continue to show a high level of guest satisfaction.

## Visitor Statistics

Visitor parties are defined as any group travelling together regardless of the number of people, while visitor numbers are the total number of individuals who came into the Centre. True visitor parties are what would be considered as “tourists” – visitor parties from outside of the Comox Valley area.

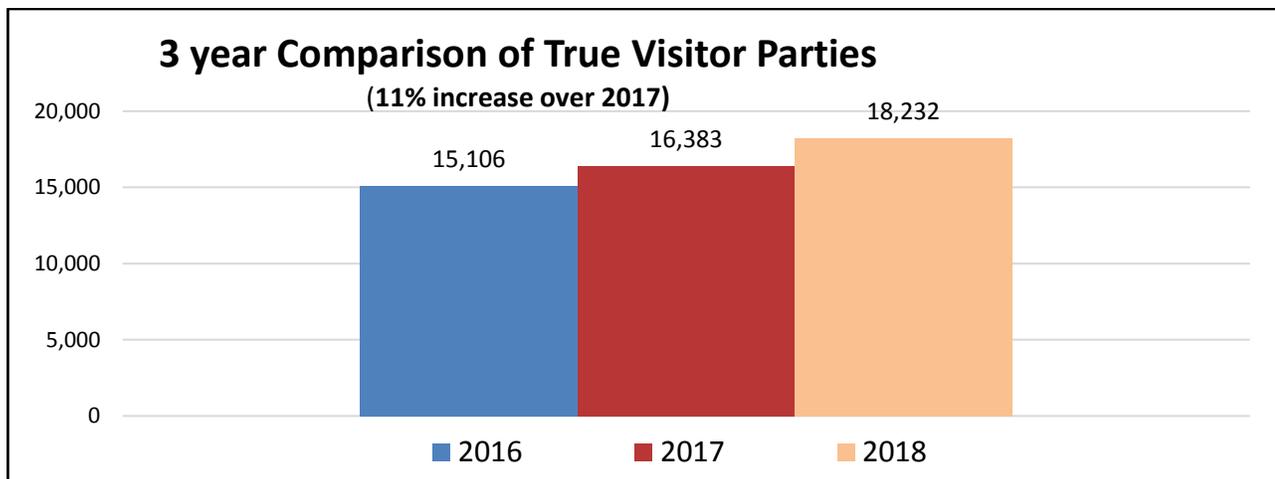
The following chart shows a comparison of statistics between 2017 and 2018:

Statistics	2017	2018	% Change
Total Visitor Parties	20099	21228	11%
Local Parties	3716	2996	-19%
True Visitor Parties	16383	18232	11%
Visitor Numbers	30680	32992	7%

\*2018 includes Ambassador Outreach numbers which were not included in 2017

## True Visitor Parties

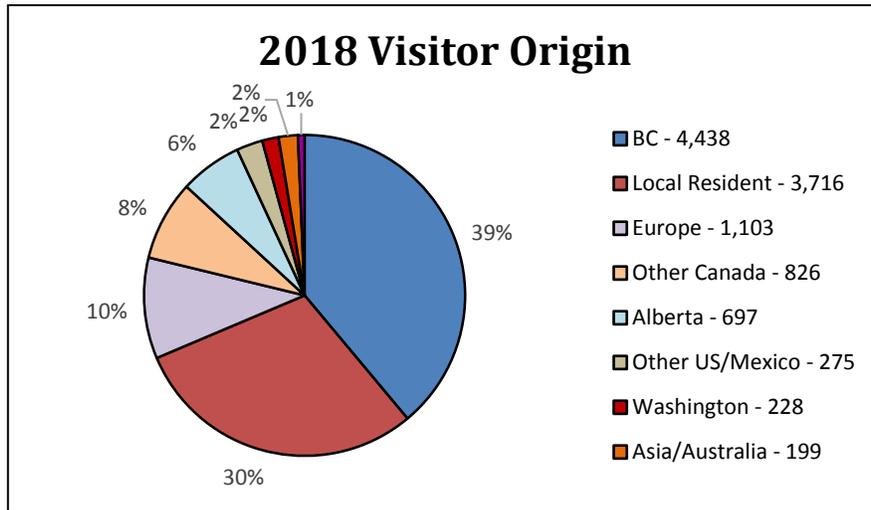
The number of local parties was down over last year from 3,716 to 2,996 showing a decrease of 19% in 2018 while the visitation from true visitors has increased by 11%. The following chart shows 3 year comparison, and subsequently, the 11% increase in true visitor numbers from 2017 VS 2018:



## Visitor Origin

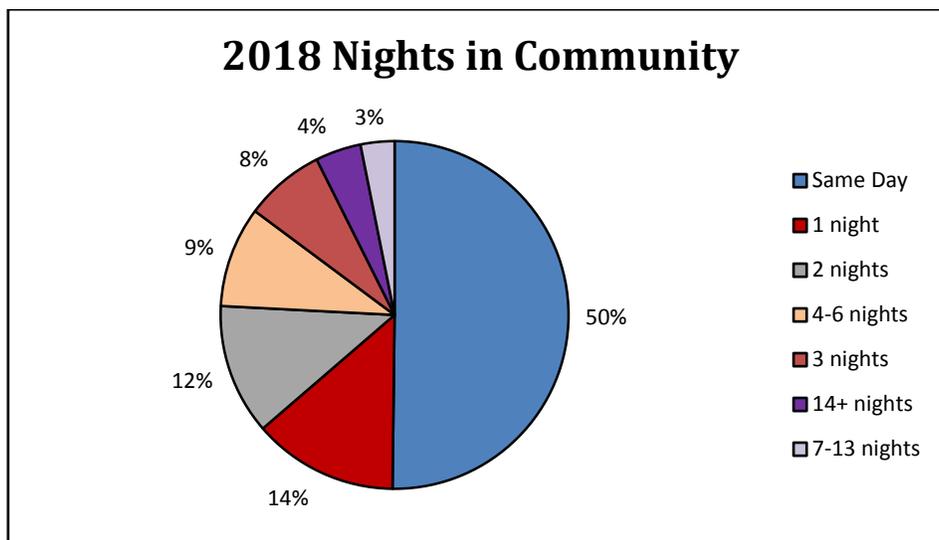
The following chart shows BC residents continue to represent the slightly higher number of visitors (39%). It also shows strong support for the Visitor Centre and the Comox Valley. This is in line with the increase of BC residents vacationing

within the province. The next highest percentages of visitors are those from the local Comox Valley Region (30%). This holds true that many local residents bring out-of-town guests to get information for their stay or just to browse the grounds and exhibition gallery. Europe is, once again, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest Visitor Origin into the centre (10%). You can see the breakdown of visitors by origin shown in the chart below:

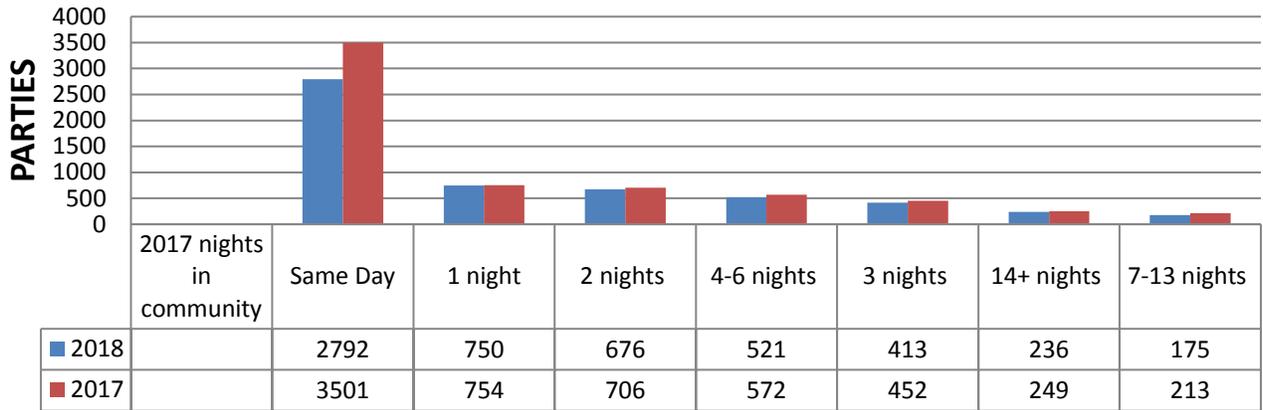


### Nights in Community

Other information about the parties who visited the Centre is shown in the charts below. The following chart shows the number of nights spent in the local community by visitor party. It is typical in visitor centres across BC that the largest group (50% provincially), are same day visitors. These are visitors who are passing through the area and have not spent a night locally. As with all visitors, counsellors work diligently to create a positive first impression and encourage longer stays and repeat visits. In 2018, 1 night and 2 night stays have decreased slightly to 750 and 676 parties, from 754 and 706 respectively, in 2017 correlating with the slight drop in visitors to the Island.

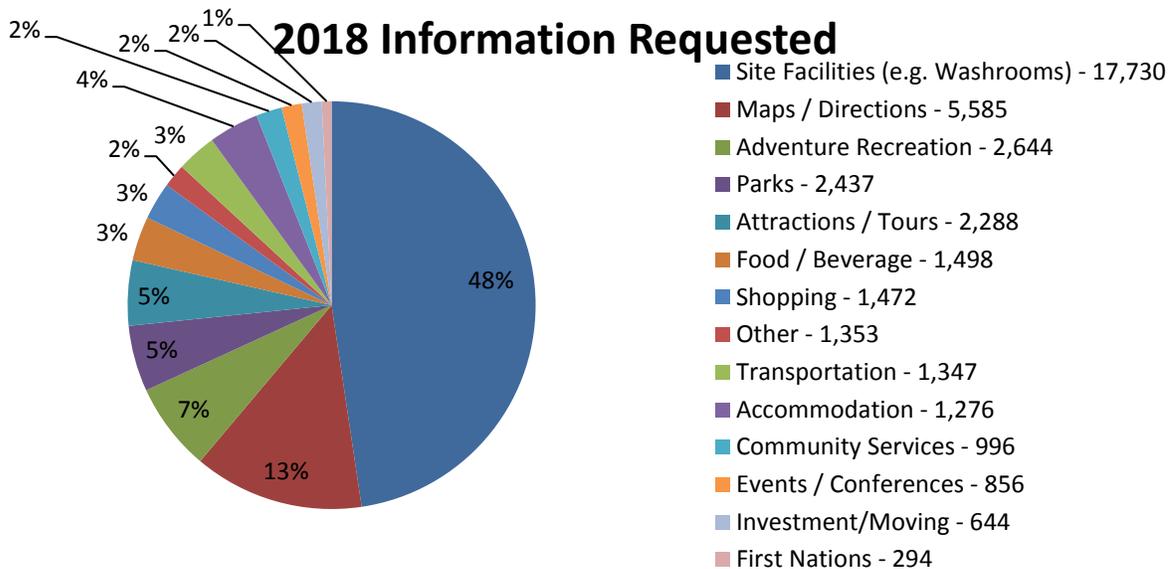


## Nights in Community - % Change Comparitive from 2017 to 2018



### Information Requested

The following chart shows information requested by visitor party in 2018. It should be noted that most parties request more than one type of information, so although site facilities is the highest category, it is likely that after these visitors located and used the facility required, they also asked questions from other categories. When washroom facilities are not taken into account, the highest category of information requested is Maps and Directions, in age of hand held devices and online booking and mapping tools.



Of the three major communities in the Comox Valley, Courtenay is the most inquired about City.

	2017
Courtenay	2494
Cumberland	2032
Comox	1881

	2018
Courtenay	2535
Comox	2081
Cumberland	1562

## Activity and Event Bookings

The following list is the activities and events on Vancouver Island bookable in 2018 by the VIVC:

49 North Helicopters	Horne Lake Caves
Adrenaline Zipline Tours	Hotel Ski Packages
Amped Rides	Lady Rose Marine Services
Ambassador Transportation	Manatee Holdings (Hatchery Tour)
BC Salmon Farmers Association	Mt. Washington (lift tickets)
BC ferries Northern Routes	Pacific Pro Dive & Marine Adventures
Comox Harbour Charters	Royal BC Museum
Fanny Bay Oysters	West Coast Water Sports
Harbour Air	

## Summary

The statistics and revenues show that the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre continues to fulfill its role of improving the economic benefit of tourism to the area by promoting longer stays and return visits to prospective visitors and those who have come into the Centre.

The team at the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre (VIVC) found success, being the point of sale place for visitors and locals alike as they were able to buy VIVC marketing options in the centre, on their website, in the printed guide and other marketing tools in Comox Valley Visitor Services Marketing Program (CVVSMP). This continued initiative and focus saw more sales in racking and Boardroom bookings. The Visitor Centre is also working more closely with local Artisans and Artists to showcase their work in the gift shop on a consignment basis.

The VIVC outreached significantly more in 2018 as compared to previous years with their Mobile Visitor Centre. This outreaching initiative was about extending the regions Visitor Servicing assistance & support beyond the doors of the Centres traditional brick and mortar location and bringing the services of the visitor centre to the visitor. It was to be proactive in providing Visitor Centre tools, resources and booking capacity at key events and conferences to drive increased visitation to regional attractions, businesses, as well as bookings and sales. The VIVC Staff were able to provide the same level of visitor engagement & quality service, as with the staff running the Visitor Centre. Further, staff were able to bring brochures and other collateral to have in the mobile rack, providing stakeholders additional exposure and providing more useful take away tools for the visitors. With the launch of the Ambassador Program in Comox in collaboration with the Comox BIA, attending meet and greets at 19 Wing for newly posted families, a booth at the CV Farmers' Market, CVEX and Nautical Days, BC Seafood Festival along with our outreach during the winter on Mount Washington. The online booking system launched in 2017, continues to be very successful. Rezgo allows suppliers to receive instant confirmation of their products and services being booked through the VIVC, allows the customer to book as they plan their trips online and enables the entire VIVC team to generate efficient reports. Visitor Centre staff continue to work with local operators to expand tours offered via Rezgo to Visitors.

## TripAdvisor Reviews

The Visitor Centre has expanded its presence on TripAdvisor by responding to Visitor inquiries about the Comox Valley during their trip planning stages. Below is sample of reviews, and samples of inquires that come from Visitors, from the VIVC TripAdvisor page. This shows that the Centre is continuing to surpass visitor expectations and is leaving them with a memorable impression of their time spent at the VIVC and encourages them to visit the Comox Valley:

Here is a sample of questions answered via TripAdvisor.



VIVC-CV  
Comox Valley, Cana...

Level 5 Contributor

491 posts

### 4. Re: Trip to Vancouver Island in July 2019

Save

Feb. 17, 2019, 3:14 p.m.

Hi William, It's Glenn here from the [Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#) in the [Comox Valley](#).

As cbaarch mentioned our area is a good fit for what you are seeking. We have a scenic oceanfront setting surrounded by mountains, beaches and paths to chill on, excellent local food and craft beer, a lively arts and music scene and most importantly for you perhaps, lots of peace and quiet. There are many opportunities for easy walks along the water or in the forest...very rejuvenating.

Here are a few suggestions for private accommodations that would be quiet and peaceful with self catering:

[Oceanfront](#) with a relaxed,friendly style is Copes Islander Bed and Breakfast. Their Sea Lion suite is spacious and has a fully-equipped kitchen. It faces east to the sunrise with views of the Coast Mountains on the mainland on a clear day.:

[bbvancouverisland-bc.com/accommodations.html](http://bbvancouverisland-bc.com/accommodations.html)

Near the ocean front walkway at Point Holmes and only 5 minutes from [Comox](#) is the Red Roof Inn. Nice patio to enjoy the garden or sit out for a meal.

<http://comoxshorttermrental.com/about-us/>

A bit larger with a beautiful pool in a rural setting near [Courtenay](#) is Le Pause B&B. The pictures say it all:

<https://lapausebb.com/>

We look forward to welcoming you to the Island!

Happy travels!



VIVC-CV  
Comox Valley, Cana...

Level 5 Contributor

491 posts

## 16. Re: Comox Valley or Sunshine Coast?

Save

Mar. 31, 2019, 5:02 p.m.

Hi Catherine,

It's Glenn here from the [Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#) in the [Comox Valley](#).

So glad to hear you and you family will be coming up for a visit in August. As the others have said, there is a lot to do for families in our area and you can be as active or inactive as you like and still enjoy it. Here are a few activities to consider:

Wildlife/whale watching tour:

<https://biganimalencounters.com/>

<http://www.adventurequestcanada.com/>

How about an afternoon at the speedway for go carting or monster truck rides:

[saratogaracing.ca/go-kart-monster-truck/](http://saratogaracing.ca/go-kart-monster-truck/)

As mentioned the paleontology museum in [Courtenay](#) is a great attraction at which you can see this:

<https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/courtenay...>

They also do family fossil tours to the local rivers...a great way to learn about natural history and get outside. The kids get to keep what they find.

There are a number of easily-accessible waterfalls that would fall into the "short hike " category:

<https://...>

August is a great month to be on the water. The kids might enjoy a lake paddle in a kayak or maybe a stand up paddle lesson:

<https://www.westcoastwatersports.ca/>

The longest zip line on Vancouver Island will be opening this summer. Or if this is a bit extreme you could just ride the chairlift to the top of Mount Washington for a short hike to see the sweeping ocean and mountain views. The slopes are the home of the endangered Vancouver Island Marmot and it's fun to watch for them as you ride up the lift:

<https://...mt-washington-ziptour.html>

Another educational and affordable family excursion is a cave exploration tour in Home Lake Provincial Park. You can choose from 1-4 hour tours or do your own self-guided one:

<https://hornelake.com/cave-tours/>

If the weather is no suitable for being outdoors, there is always an escape room adventure:



## 17. Re: Comox Valley or Sunshine Coast?

Save

Apr. 3, 2019, 4:03 a.m.

Wow fab replies thank you so much. Lots to check out there!

Catherine R  
Bingley, United...

Level **1** Contributor

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[Report inappropriate content](#)

5 posts

2 reviews

## Reviews;

### Excellent business meeting place



I had a business meeting here with people coming from different parts of Vancouver Island. It was excellent! The place was plowed (outside) and spotless (inside). They had coffee ready for us and their equipment (computer, projector, speakers) was easy to use with a staff member ready to help us in case we needed to. WiFi available. I would recommend this setting for your business meeting.

### Helpful staff in an impressive centre



The Visitor Centre is also part museum, with extremely well-laid out displays and dioramas, which adds much interest to the location. The staff are knowledgeable, personable and very helpful, and there is a comprehensive gift shop. As a bonus, there is even a Snow Bird jet plane at the entrance! Washrooms very clean. Definitely worth a stop even if you don't need any particular help.

### One of the top three visitors centres we have visited in North America.



The center is modern, airy and bright with plenty of parking spaces. There is a great exhibits section, don't miss it! There are stationary computers for use or ample seating and tables if you prefer to use your tablet or phone. The staff are second to none; knowledgeable and very helpful, printing out maps and giving personal recommendations and advice. Couldn't have been better!