

# **Welcome Cyclists Network**



## **Excerpt from June 2013 Network Participants Tool Kit & Registration Information**

**For More Information**  
**Phone: 416-827-2774 or 1-866-701-2774**  
**Email: [information@welcomecyclists.ca](mailto:information@welcomecyclists.ca)**  
**[www.welcomecyclists.ca](http://www.welcomecyclists.ca)**

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# Why Welcome Cyclists?

## Cycle Tourism: International

Tourism is the biggest industry worldwide. Although tourism receipts may fluctuate in response to economic conditions, the growth in cycle tourism increases yearly. The economic impact of growing a successful cycle tourism industry has been documented worldwide.

- It is estimated there are 2.295 billion cycle tourism trips taken in Europe annually. The economic value of these trips taken by both domestic and international travellers is €44 billion per annum (approx. CDN\$59 M). The number of cycle overnight tourists is 20.4 million, with spending at approximately account for €9 billion (approx. CDN\$12 M).<sup>i</sup>
- Switzerland mobility estimates that cycling and human powered use of the Swiss trail systems generated 145 million Swiss Francs (approx. CDN\$158 M) in 2011.<sup>ii</sup>
- Netherlands reports 2.5 million overnight stays yearly are made by cycle tourists who spend €90 million annually (approx. CDN\$120 M).<sup>iii</sup>
- New Zealand has allocated NZ\$50 million (approx. CDN\$43 M) to trail development in 2009, in order to stimulate economic development and create jobs in cycle tourism sector – estimated to be worth NZ\$72 million a year (approx. CDN\$62 M).<sup>iv</sup>
- USA cycling tourists account for USD\$46.9 billion annually on meals, transportation, lodging, gifts and entertainment during bike trips and tours.<sup>v</sup>
- In Maine, cycling infrastructure investment began in 1991. Ten years later, it was estimated that cycle tourism related activities added USD\$66 million annually to the economy.<sup>vi</sup>

## Case Studies

There are a number of successful networks of businesses and organizations that provide services to cycle tourists worldwide. The majority of these established networks provide a fee-based service for members who meet a minimum set of criteria, highlighting their cycle friendly services and amenities.

- **Bett+Bike, Germany:** Developed in the mid 1990s, it now has over 5,000 members. Many members are centred near the Danube River, the most popular cycling route in the world, attracting 1.5 million cyclists a year. [www.bettundbike.de](http://www.bettundbike.de)
- **Cyclists Welcome, Czech Republic:** The Czech Republic offers a network modelled after its German counterpart. This network has an advanced website with many useful features for trip planning. [www.cyklistevitani.cz](http://www.cyklistevitani.cz) or [www.cyclistswelcome.eu](http://www.cyclistswelcome.eu)
- **In CANADA: Bienvenue cyclistes!, Quebec:** With over 450 accommodation members in 2010, this network is administered by Vélo Québec, which also coordinates La Route Verte. [www.routeverte.com](http://www.routeverte.com)

## **Cycle Tourism: Canada**

Participation in cycling is on the increase across Canada, as more people recognize the potential of this activity as a healthy, fun and green transportation option. As consumers make this shift, cycling becomes more mainstream and is incorporated into everyday living. Making use of the bicycle as a sustainable form of transportation – to commute to work and to access holiday destinations – is becoming increasingly prevalent in Canada.

Many provinces are already experiencing positive growth in the cycle tourism sector. Examples include:

- 10.1% of Canadian adults went cycling while on a trip.<sup>vii</sup>
- In Quebec, spending by cycle tourists on La Route Verte – 5000 km of interconnected trails province-wide – is estimated at over \$134 million annually, not including spending within the bicycle trade.<sup>viii</sup>
- Mountain biking activities in British Columbia's Whistler/Squamish/North Shore were valued at \$10.3 M in spending by bikers from outside the areas, in 2006.<sup>ix</sup>
- Figures show Canadian bicycle sales grew 14% between 2008 and 2009, according to the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada.<sup>x</sup>

## **Cycle Tourism: Ontario**

The cycle tourism sector in Ontario is growing and is well positioned to experience continued growth in the coming years. Both the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and regional tourism agencies are recognizing the potential in cycle tourism, prioritizing it as a key market segment. Already, many businesses and services are experiencing growth due to an increase in sales to cycle tourists.

- Ontario has approximately 200 off-road cycling trails – included are 13,000 km of cycling trails, 5,000 km of which are off-road cycling trails.<sup>xi</sup>
- Ontario residents have a relatively high propensity to cycle while on vacations, at 8.8%.<sup>xii</sup>
- Ontario has 330 independent bike retailers, increasing by 80 new stores in the past 5 years.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Toronto residents represent a large potential market, with 54% indicating that they cycle.
- Key motivations of Toronto cyclists when touring are to experience new and natural destinations and pursue physical activity. Bike lanes and paved off-road trails are preferred.<sup>xiv</sup>
- Websites, emails, and friends and family were determined at the top three marketing channels to distribute cycle tourism information.<sup>xv</sup>
- In Summer 2013, the Lake Erie Waterfront Trail between Windsor and Niagara will be launched, creating a new 620 km route connecting to the already existing 720 km+ Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail.
- 82% of the 2011 eastern Ontario Vélo Quebec Grand Tour participants discovered Ontario as a cycling destination, 81% plan to return.<sup>xvi</sup>

- Charity fundraising are most popular type of cycling event in Ontario.<sup>xvii</sup> It is estimated there were 32 charity rides in 2012, attracting over 40,000 cyclists, raising \$30 million.<sup>xviii</sup>

## **Economic Impact**

- In 2010, 2 million Canadian visitors (including Ontarian visitors) participated in cycling activities while travelling in Ontario, an increase of 25% from 2009.<sup>xix</sup>
- \$391 million was spent by these Canadian (including Ontarian) cycle tourists in Ontario, an increase of 18% from 2009.
- 436,000 Canadian (including Ontarian) cycle tourists cycled in the following four areas in 2010: Toronto CMA (223K); Ottawa CMA (110K); St. Catharines–Niagara CMA (84K); and Windsor CMA (21K). The spending of these cycle tourists contributed \$104 million to the economy in 2010.
- Participants on the annual eight-day Great Waterfront Trail Adventure – 720 km+ along Lake Ontario’s shoreline – spend approximately \$73,000 on accommodations & food, above nightly camping and 3 meals included in registration.<sup>xx</sup>
- One-day cyclo-cross event held in Perth, Ontario, in 2010, generated approximately \$11,000 of direct spending within the community.<sup>xxi</sup>
- 42% of the 2,800 riders that participated in the Blue Mountain Centurion Cycling event in 2012 had visited the area at least once prior to the event to train. The average spend per rider on event weekend was \$331.<sup>xxii</sup>
- 2012’s Crank the Shield mountain biking race brought 250 people over three days to Sir Sam’s Ski and Bikes in the Haliburton Highlands, spending an estimated \$100,000 in the area.<sup>xxiii</sup>
- Cycle tourists staying one or more nights in Niagara spend on average \$148, excluding accommodation. Calculated within this figure is food and beverage accounting for 61% of spending, retail purchases including wineries 27%, and attractions 12%. In this study, 68% of cycle tourists stayed one night; 18% two nights, and 14% three or more nights.<sup>xxiv</sup>
- The Bike Train Initiative has transported a growing number of cycle tourists to destinations across Ontario. These cyclists spent an estimated \$84,000 in the Niagara Region in 2009.<sup>xxv</sup>
- GO Transit estimates 1,000 of its 42,000 passengers transported in 2009 (its first year of weekend service between Toronto and Niagara Falls) were cyclists.
- Domestique Café Cyclo Sportif in Dundas serves up to 500 cyclists per summer weekend.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- Windsor Eats Wine Trail Rides generate approximately \$10,000 in local spending on each 5-6 hour sold out tour.<sup>xxvii</sup>

## **Industry and Trends**

### **Industry in Transition**

- With fluctuating tourism receipts and recent challenges Ontario's tourism industry, individual businesses are looking for new opportunities and a competitive edge, reaching out to new market segments. Cycle tourism fits the bill.

### **Tourists' Needs and Wants Changing**

- The growing "green-shift" in consumers' mindsets is driving the demand for more sustainable products and choices in Ontario and beyond.
- Many more consumers are looking for active, outdoor-focused adventure vacations.
- Bike sales show a 21% increase of hybrid bike purchases, a small 4% increase in road bikes, and a 9% increase in mountain bike sales.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- Ontario's strong domestic market continues to be the anchor for the province's tourism industry.
- Ontario is its own largest tourist market, accounting for 73% of overnight visitors.<sup>xxix</sup>
- Quebec is Ontario's second largest market, and the USA is its third.<sup>xxx</sup>
- Travelling within the province and "stay-cations" are increasingly popular.
- Cycle tourism in Ontario is poised for growth.

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- <sup>ii</sup> Switzerland Mobility Foundation. *La Suisse à vélo: Résultat des comptages de 2011 Résumé*. 2011. [www.schweizmobil.org/web/schweizmobil/en/downloads/erfolgskontrolle/zaehlanlagen\\_VL.html](http://www.schweizmobil.org/web/schweizmobil/en/downloads/erfolgskontrolle/zaehlanlagen_VL.html)
- <sup>iii</sup> Eric Nijland. *Cycle Tourism in Holland: Netherlands Cycling Platform*. Ontario Cycle Tourism Forum presentation. January 2009.
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- <sup>viii</sup> *Bicycling in Quebec in 2010*. Vélo Québec, May 2011. [www.velo.qc.ca/en/publications](http://www.velo.qc.ca/en/publications)
- <sup>ix</sup> Tourism British Columbia, *Mountain Biking Tourism*. 2008. [www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/mbtguide08\\_web.pdf](http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/mbtguide08_web.pdf)
- <sup>x</sup> Bicycle Trade Association of Canada. *2009 Annual Bike Sales Report*.  
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- <sup>xi</sup> Marlaire Koehler, Executive Director, Waterfront Regeneration Trust. Complete Streets Forum Presentation. April 2010.
- <sup>xii</sup> TAMS, Travel Activities and Motivations Survey. 2006.  
[www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/ravel\\_activities/index.html](http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/ravel_activities/index.html)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Martin McDonald, Live to Play Sports Group Inc. Presentation at the 2013 Ontario Cycle Tourism Forum.  
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<sup>xxiv</sup> Transportation Options. *Economic Impact of Cycle Tourism: Niagara Region and Greenbelt Areas*. Summer 2010.

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