

DESTINATION GREATER
VICTORIA

**DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA MARKS WORLD TOURISM DAY WITH
BIOSPHERE MILESTONE**

10 DGV members now Biosphere Certified – a first for any destination in North America

VICTORIA, B.C. (September 27, 2023) – It has been six months since Destination Greater Victoria (DGV) and its members celebrated receiving the Responsible Tourism Institute's (RTI) prestigious Biosphere Certification, making Greater Victoria the first urban destination in Canada and the United States to join an elite group of tourism destinations worldwide recognized for their commitment to principles of environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, equity and social responsibility. On World Tourism Day, DGV is celebrating another "first". With 10 DGV member companies now Biosphere Certified, Greater Victoria is the first destination in North America to reach this milestone.

"This milestone is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our members and our commitment to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and responsible destination," said Paul Nursey, Destination Greater Victoria CEO. "Becoming the first destination in North America with 10 Biosphere Certified members reflects our collective efforts and commitment to the communities and visitors we serve. We hope to inspire others to follow suit and work towards a more responsible and sustainable tourism industry for the benefit of our planet and future generations."

The theme for World Tourism Day 2023, "Tourism and Green Investment," resonates with DGV's vision to be internationally recognized as a leader in sustainable tourism development, ensuring Greater Victoria remains one of the top destinations in the world. This theme aligns with DGV's ongoing commitment to guide its members towards achieving Biosphere Certification, as it underscores the need for targeted investments in sustainable tourism practices. These investments serve as the bedrock for long-term prosperity, creating opportunities for local communities, both now and for generations to come.

DGV's Biosphere Certified members are leaders in the tourism industry, showcasing exceptional commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. For example, Certified hotels feature dedicated herb and vegetable gardens as well as beehive gardens, emphasizing locally sourced food options. Certified marine wildlife tour companies actively monitor carbon emissions, invest in habitat preservation through carbon offset projects, and prioritize wildlife conservation through fuel-efficient engines and low underwater-noise technologies. Additionally, DGV members participating in the Biosphere program prioritize accessibility, local suppliers, robust recycling, reutilization and composting measures, exemplifying their dedication to creating a more sustainable, inclusive, and responsible destination for all.

"This milestone showcases that destinations are stepping up, implementing innovative practices, and redefining their commitment to a more sustainable future, showing that sustainability is no longer a mere trend; it has evolved into a resounding demand from conscientious travellers worldwide," said Patricio Azcárate, Secretary General of the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI). "We are proud to see how the travel industry is embracing positive change, and we're excited to continue supporting destinations on this journey."

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In addition to 10 Biosphere Certified members, DGV has 28 members that have signed on to the program and achieved Biosphere Committed status. To attain the esteemed Certified member status, participants must develop an annual action plan that demonstrates ongoing improvement aligned with the UN SDGs. This rigorous approach ensures that Certified members consistently raise the bar for sustainability, driving positive change in communities and beyond.

As climate change accelerates, a growing number of travellers seek sustainable and eco-friendly options that align with their values. The Biosphere Certification not only sets Greater Victoria apart from other Canadian and international destinations but also establishes a new gold standard for destination management organizations, embodying the core principles of environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, equity, and social responsibility. DGV has also been honoured with a Global Impact Award from Destinations International further distinguishing Greater Victoria as a leading destination committed to sustainability and community values.

Biosphere Certified Members: Chateau Victoria Hotel & Suites, Eagle Wing Tours, Fairmont Empress, Huntingdon Manor Hotel, Inn at Laurel Point, Oak Bay Beach Hotel, Oswego Hotel, Pendray Inn and Tea House, Prince of Whales, The Parkside Hotel & Spa.

The Biosphere Certification, conferred by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), stands as a global leader in sustainability certification tools as it is the only certification that aligns with the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development along with its 169 goals and 17 SDGs. This innovative platform empowers organizations to define, organize and celebrate their ongoing sustainability initiatives, ensuring a dynamic approach to sustainability stewardship. The Biosphere methodology also enables real-time tracking of sustainable practices, presented in a tailored and easily comprehensible language. This empowers consumers to access and comprehend this vital information easily, providing them with the opportunity to make more informed and eco-conscious consumption choices.

Destination Greater Victoria's Biosphere Certified and Committed members form a dynamic force for positive environmental and social impact. With 41 DGV members already onboard in various stages of commitment and certification, DGV is on track to reach its goal of welcoming 60 members into the Biosphere community by the end of the year. Learn more about Destination Greater Victoria's Biosphere journey [here](#).

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About Destination Greater Victoria: Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing and management organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria. For more information, visit the Destination Greater Victoria [website](#).

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