

Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting



October 3-4, 2023 | The Forge
Anaconda, MT

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TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 3-4, 2023

This meeting will be offered in person or via Zoom:

In person: The Forge, 100 Union Ave., Anaconda, MT 59711

Zoom: Information on joining the meeting via Zoom can be found [HERE](#).

Persons may address the Tourism Advisory Council via the Zoom virtual meeting or in-person. Persons may address the Council on any matter listed on the agenda. Matters not listed on the agenda may be addressed during the public comment period as indicated on the agenda. Further information related to each agenda item, if any, can be obtained by contacting Rachel Mullen, Tourism Outreach Coordinator, Montana Office of Tourism, Brand MT, P.O. Box 200533, Helena, MT 59620-0533, Phone 406-841-2873, Email rachel.mullen@mt.gov.

AGENDA

All committee meetings and Tourism Advisory Council meetings are open to the public.

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00 | Call to order —Alicia Harvey, Chair
Opening Remarks —Scott Osterman
Roll Call
Introductions
Approval of Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ June 5-6, 2023, TAC Meeting Minutes Changes to the Agenda |
| 10:20 | Public Comment
<i>Please state your name and where you are from. This is the time to comment on matters falling within the purview of the Tourism Advisory Council. There will also be an opportunity for public comment on each agenda item.</i> |
| 10:30 | Committee Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Nominating Committee—Joan E. Kronebusch
<i>Action: Consider a motion to approve nominations</i>▪ Rules & Procedures Committee—Alicia Harvey▪ Marketing Committee—Mike Johnson
<i>Action: Consider a motion to approve audits</i> |
| 11:00 | Brand MT <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ SB 540 Five-Point Strategic Implementation Plan—Jenny Pelej & Jamey Petersen |
| 12:00 | Lunch Break |
| 1:00 | Glacier National Park <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ticketing System—Brandy Burke▪ Glacier National Park Call Center Collaboration—Jim McGowan |
| 2:15 | Break |
| 2:30 | Coraggio Working Group |
| 5:00 | Recess |
| 5:30 | Reception at The Old Works Golf Course |

WEDNESDAY, October 4, 2023

- 8:00 **Call to Order**—Alicia Harvey, Chair
Roll Call
- 8:05 **Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research**
 - Research Project Proposals—Melissa Weddell
- 9:00 **Industry Panel | Updates, Trends, & Concerns**
 - **Mike Johnson, TAC Vice Chair—Moderator**
 - Dax Schieffer, Executive Director, Voices of Montana Tourism
 - Diane Medler, Montana Travel Association
 - Allison Whitmer, Film Commissioner, Montana Film Office
 - Racene Freide, Tourism Matters to Montana
 - Whitney Bergmann, Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association
- 10:00 **Break**
- 10:15 **Brand MT**
 - Marketing Updates and Discussion—Mitch Staley
- 10:45 **Roundtable Discussions**
 - Committee Assignments and Chairs
 - 2025 DMO Plan Meeting Timeline Update
 - Future Board Trainings | Mentor Program
 - Future Tuesday/Wednesday Meetings
 - February 6th, 2024, Virtual
 - June 4-5, 2024, Billings
 - Board Retreat Ideas and Topics
 - October 8-9, 2024, Location TBD
- 12:00 **Adjournment**

The Montana Office of Tourism makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in state government. Persons needing accommodations must notify Rachel Mullen no later than May 26, 2023, to allow adequate time to make needed arrangements. You can call (406) 841-2873, fax (406) 841-2871, or write to the Montana Office of Tourism, PO Box 200533, Helena, MT, 59620 to make your request. Note: Other than the meeting starting time, any time listed is approximate and agenda items may be rearranged. Action may be taken on any item listed on the agenda. Public comment is welcome on all items.

WINTER LODGING TAX REVENUE
JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 2023
REPORT DATE: SEPTEMBER 19 , 2023

Please Note: Revenue collected is 4% of the lodging price. The percentages listed below are affected by rate increases, delinquencies, and other factors. They should not be considered an equal correlation of increase or decrease in the number of travelers.

	2022	2023	%(+ or -)
Central Montana	\$565,272	\$588,473	+4% Higher overall collections
Glacier Country	\$2,895,953	\$2,772,771	-4% Lower overall collections
Missouri River Country	\$87,237	\$87,441	+0% Lower overall collections, delinquencies
Southeast Montana	\$1,041,512	\$1,101,067	+6% Higher overall collections
Southwest Montana	\$894,325	\$1,059,038	+18% Higher overall collections
Yellowstone Country	\$6,207,182	\$5,933,771	-4% Lower overall collections
State	\$11,691,481	\$11,542,561	-1%
<hr/>			
City totals listed are within country totals listed directly above.			
Anaconda	\$37,572	\$39,713	+6% Higher overall collections
Belgrade	\$149,108	\$122,417	-18% Lower overall collections, delinquencies
Big Sky	\$3,789,109	\$3,506,981	-7% Lower overall collections, delinquencies, closed accounts
Billings	\$795,302	\$837,186	+5% Higher overall collections
Bozeman	\$1,044,600	\$1,034,614	-1% Lower overall collections
Butte	\$256,984	\$290,764	+13% Higher overall collections
Columbia Falls	\$15,070	\$15,838	+5% Higher overall collections
Dillon	\$50,458	\$51,538	+2% Higher overall collections
Gardiner	\$52,045	\$45,786	-12% Lower overall collections, delinquencies, closed accounts
Glendive	\$32,979	\$37,590	+14% Higher overall collections
Great Falls	\$349,868	\$377,246	+8% Higher overall collections
Havre	\$32,268	\$30,124	-7% Lower overall collections, delinquencies
Helena	\$263,383	\$317,009	+20% Higher overall collections
Kalispell	\$217,119	\$223,580	+3% Higher overall collections
Livingston	\$57,553	\$56,913	-1% Lower overall collections, delinquencies, closed accounts
Miles City	\$62,098	\$49,357	-21% Lower overall collections, delinquencies
Missoula	\$618,874	\$624,165	+1% Higher overall collections
Red Lodge	\$98,375	\$70,991	-28% Lower overall collections, delinquencies, closed accounts
West Yellowstone	\$245,244	\$246,783	+1% Higher overall collections
Whitefish	\$411,586	\$383,180	-7% Lower overall collections, delinquencies, closed accounts

SPRING LODGING TAX REVENUE
APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2023
REPORT DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

Please Note: Revenue collected is 4% of the lodging price. The percentages listed below are affected by rate increases, delinquencies, and other factors. They should not be considered an equal correlation of increase or decrease in the number of travelers.

	2022	2023	%(+ or -)
Central Montana	\$826,231	\$813,513	-2% Lower overall collections
Glacier Country	\$5,084,778	\$4,942,006	-3% Lower overall collections
Missouri River Country	\$154,772	\$160,275	+4% Higher overall collections
Southeast Montana	\$1,837,731	\$1,878,345	+2% Higher overall collections
Southwest Montana	\$1,576,347	\$1,610,464	+2% Higher overall collections
Yellowstone Country	\$4,732,330	\$5,521,749	+17% Higher overall collections
State	\$14,212,190	\$14,926,353	+5%

City totals listed are within country totals listed directly above.

Anaconda	\$49,108	\$53,704	+9% Higher overall collections
Belgrade	\$186,205	\$140,224	-25% Higher overall collections
Big Sky	\$632,467	\$767,237	+21% Higher overall collections
Billings	\$1,285,374	\$1,258,660	-2% Lower overall collections
Bozeman	\$1,335,708	\$1,393,977	+4% Higher overall collections
Butte	\$448,457	\$449,403	+0%
Columbia Falls	\$63,071	\$57,022	-10% Lower overall collections
Dillon	\$90,395	\$94,425	+4% Higher overall collections
Gardiner	\$134,926	\$202,837	+50% Higher overall collections
Glendive	\$71,120	\$69,103	-3% Lower overall collections
Great Falls	\$476,447	\$477,017	+0%
Havre	\$51,132	\$43,178	-16% Lower overall collections
Helena	\$435,051	\$458,022	+5% Higher overall collections
Kalispell	\$470,100	\$446,289	-5% Lower overall collections
Livingston	\$139,396	\$152,196	+9% Higher overall collections
Miles City	\$112,900	\$133,511	+18% Higher overall collections
Missoula	\$1,198,343	\$1,220,094	+2% Higher overall collections
Red Lodge	\$67,193	\$92,277	+37% Higher overall collections
West Yellowstone	\$865,213	\$1,062,859	+23% Higher overall collections
Whitefish	\$515,472	\$480,899	-7% Lower overall collections

Strategic Plan

Brand MT

July 2023

Brand MT

Mission - To preserve and promote the genuine character of Montana while partnering to achieve a sustainable economic future for all

Vision - Residents and visitors enjoying Montana at its best

Values – Collaboration, Integrity, Accountability, Sustainability, Objectivity, Excellence and innovation, Resiliency, Love for Montana

Goal 1: Rural Tourism Development

Objective:

- Provide structure for partnerships to work together to stabilize economies through diversification.

Strategies:

1. Use resiliency plans as a tool to prioritize this work
2. Increase tourism to existing (film included) assets
3. Identify pilot communities and reservations to develop infrastructure for future tourism and business growth including:
 - a. services (restaurants & lodging)
 - b. water/sewer infrastructure
 - c. transportation options (air travel, train, car rental, bus)
 - d. recreation assets
 - i. trails
 - ii. campgrounds
4. Support unstable economies with emergency response funds for fires, floods and other natural/uncontrollable events.
5. Foster internal and external relationships through engagement with Tourism Regions and DMOs (includes travel)
6. Support asset identification, tourism readiness, and development



Goal 1: General Workplan		
Task	Description	Lead
Main Street Integration	Integrate Main St as a qualifier for community readiness for Pilot Community Program. Focus on engaging communities within next tier of readiness to join Main St program.	OOT
Resiliency Grants	Integrate \$1.5 million in federal dollars available into funding of Pilot Community Program for FY24 to invest in overlapping priorities.	OOT
Emergency Grants	Develop a multi-function program that reserves budget to respond to natural disasters between July and Dec each year, and a secondary grant launched after Dec for emergency services support (fire, police, etc) with any unused natural disaster funds.	OOT
Economic Impact Event Grants	A limited funding opportunity for a maximum of \$25,000 for event-based activities to create economic impact in rural communities, tribal communities, and for communities in the shoulder-seasons of the year. Tiers off level of funding. Intent is for event to become resilient/self-sustaining (example \$25K year 1; \$12,500 year 2, etc.)	OOT
Agritourism Grants	Agricultural Events (up to \$15,000): Support a new (less than 5 years in existence) agricultural event that highlights a Montana agricultural product and results in an economic impact to the tourism region of the state. Grants would be reduced annually to promote sustainability of the event.	OOT
Pilot Community Investment Program	Apply criteria to identify up to 7 communities (1 per tourism region; 1 tribal entity eligible) to align destination and community development through investment in place-based expansion of tourism assets and products that diversify and stabilize local economies	OOT

Goal 2:
**Dispersal of
Visitors to
Rural Areas**

Objective:

- Get people out of most populated areas for visitation and relocation

Strategies:

1. In-state movement
2. Film
3. Tribal
4. Out of state marketing

Goal 2: General Workplan		
Task	Description	Lead
Optimize partnerships	Diversify partnerships, especially in pilot communities. Strengthen and integrate relationship with MT Indigenous Tourism Alliance.	OOT
Rural Film Development	Target support for rural story lines. Scout and prioritize rural film locations. Weight scoring for rural film grant applications.	MFO
Rural Marketing	Focus marketing strategies (in-state, out of state, tribal and international) on rural areas.	Marketing
Tourism Asset Analysis	Through resiliency plan and supplemental means, identify asset gaps and strengths.	Marketing/OOT
Made in Montana	Leverage product familiarity and popularity to drive awareness of visitation to rural locations. Integrate and coordinate media buys with larger marketing campaign.	Made in Montana
Optimize marketing support services to the benefit of rural Montana	Select and train vendors who have expertise and reach to best benefit rural areas and strategies, including: content gathering/storage/sharing (WebDam); Contact Center; Agency of Record and marketing services contractors; subscriptions and marketing tools, Research and branding; Web development and administration; publications.	Marketing
Optimize planning timelines and approvals internally and with DMOs	Coordinate timing of DMO and state marketing planning so that we are leveraging themes and cobranding toward common goals. Will require marketing planning 12 months in advance. Additionally, work with TAC to adjust timing of DMO plan review and approvals to align with DOC and end of fiscal year timelines for contract renewals.	Brand MT Leadership

Goal 3: **Create
and Enhance
Rural
Awareness/
Promotion**

Objective:

- Get people to know and stop

Strategies:

1. Made-in-Montana promotions
2. Film development and features
3. Tribal tourism development and promotion

Goal 3: General Workplan		
Task	Description	Lead
Wayfinding grant	Per statute, funding is designated for wayfinding grants. Awards for wayfinding projects will need to be tied to grants associated with Main Street program or another community plan.	OOT and Community MT
Rural Content Development	Identify and initiate cooperative and efficient means to rapidly procure content to promote rural Montana. This includes content needed to build out web presence for rural MT (visitmt.com, etc.)	Marketing
Rural Marketing	Supplement/support strategies within Goal 2; rural specific publications.	Marketing
Transportation Awareness Plan	Create awareness of existing transportation options to and around rural MT. Additionally, develop improved transportation options, in coordination with pilot community program.	Marketing and OOT
Regional Development/Technical Assistance Conference(s)	Host series of regional conferences to educate and engage diverse stakeholders on rural tourism development.	OOT

Goal 4: **Create a sustainable media manufacturing industry in Montana**

Objective:

- Create sustainability in film industry year-round.

Strategies:

1. Big Sky Film Grants
2. More in-state workforce with focus on rural and tribal
3. More high dollar projects
4. Promote and certify MEDIA Tax credit.
5. Promote Montana as a year-round location.
6. Legitimize Montana's level of professionalism in the industry.

Goal 4: General Workplan		
Task	Description	Lead
Workforce Development	Development of Native Americans and veterans (SB 14). Support workforce pipeline/apprentice programs	MFO
Outreach, partnerships and sponsorships	Outreach on MEDIA tax credit; Film Festival sponsorships; participate with partner organizations (Director’s Guild, AFCL, etc); advocacy encouraging rural filmmaker applications to the grant program	MFO
Scout and promote for rural productions	Target seasonal and rural storylines/commercials; promote value of landscape (ads, out of state festivals)	MFO
Relaunch of Big Sky Film Grant	Grant Application bonus for rural locations; Grant Application and award geography tracking	MFO

Goal 5: Make Brand MT programs more efficient

Objective:

- Promote responsible management of public funds and processes.

Strategies:

1. Streamline operations
2. Improve internal communications to be able to foster more collaboration within the division
3. Understanding the strengths of staff and direct those talents to meet the overall division goals while also seeking to minimize areas of weakness.
4. Provide accurate and timely information
5. Transparency
6. Improve budget procedures and how staff interacts with budget

Goal 5: General Workplan

Task	Description	Lead
Standard Operating Procedures	Programs lead on developing operating procedures (i.e checklists) to ensure all contracts, letters, all other documents representing the agency, and internal accounting documents are in final format, with no errors and in correct templates, to lessen the work and time that is needed for approvals. Additionally, supervisors will work with staff to develop SOPs for each position and/or program. Restructure and align positions with goals, strengths, and functions as needed.	Brand MT leadership
Budgeting and metrics management	Fully utilize all budgets as approved by each program and collate the identified metrics for that usage. Manage and correct any budgeting issues on a minimum monthly basis.	Brand MT leadership
Tracking and transparency	Adopt project management and budgeting tool for marketing (possibly for OOT as well). Single metric tracking tool (i.e. Salesforce) used uniformly across all programs and updated monthly at minimum.	Brand MT leadership
Cross integration and team growth	Provide accurate and timely information internally via: Weekly Office of Tourism Meetings to discuss updates and strategy; Bi-weekly joint meetings with OTT and Marketing to collaborate. Provide structure for cross planning and execution between the Office of Tourism and Marketing. Provide needed staff training.	Brand MT leadership
Customer Service and communication	Provide accurate and timely information externally via: Monthly TAC and Commerce leadership meetings; Monthly Brand MT meetings for updates; Friday Flash; Tourism Partner Call – 6 times per year; Made in Montana monthly e-blast. Connect citizens and visitors with the subject matter experts that can most effectively respond to the inquiry.	Brand MT leadership

Appendix A

Purposeful Strategic Planning for Community Implementation of Rural Development Pilot Project:

Ideally, elements of this will already exist and be available to partners to review and utilize to maximize the investment of funds, human capital, time and other resources. Regional Resiliency Plan, MEDA Assessments, Capital Improvement Plan, Growth Policies, etc. should be used. Technical assistance and tools will be provided by state partners to ensure success.

1. Define the Vision: Clearly articulate the desired outcome of the project in alignment with the community's needs and aspirations. Engage stakeholders to establish a shared vision for the project.
2. Stakeholder Analysis: Identify and engage key stakeholders, including community members, local government representatives, businesses, and relevant organizations. Understand their perspectives, needs, and concerns regarding the project.
3. Assess Community Needs and Gaps: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the community's current infrastructure needs and identify any existing gaps or deficiencies. This assessment should encompass transportation, utilities, public spaces, communication networks, and other relevant areas.
4. SMART Goals Development: Formulate Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals that address the identified community needs and gaps. Each goal should be clear, quantifiable, realistic, and time-bound.

Appendix A - continued

Examples of SMART Goals:

- a. Increase public transportation accessibility by implementing a new bus route that connects underserved/under visited neighborhoods/sites within two years, resulting in a 20% increase in ridership.
- b. Improve water and sanitation infrastructure by upgrading aging pipes and expanding sewage treatment capacity, reducing water leakages by 30% within three years.
- c. Enhance digital connectivity by providing high-speed internet access to 95% of businesses in the community within five years.
- d. Create safe and inclusive public spaces by constructing three new parks equipped with recreational facilities and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities within five years.

5. Resource Assessment and Allocation: Identify the necessary resources (financial, human, technical) to implement the project. Evaluate the availability of resources within the community and explore potential partnerships or funding sources to fill any gaps.
6. Risk Assessment and Mitigation: Identify potential risks and challenges that may hinder the successful implementation of the project. Develop strategies to mitigate these risks, such as contingency plans, alternative approaches, or stakeholder engagement initiatives.
7. Implementation Plan: Create a detailed plan outlining the steps, timeline, responsible parties, and monitoring mechanisms for executing the project. Ensure that the plan reflects the SMART goals, addresses community needs, and integrates feedback from stakeholders.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of the project and evaluate its impact on the community. Regularly collect data, measure key performance indicators, and seek feedback from stakeholders to track progress and make necessary adjustments.
9. Communication and Engagement Strategy: Develop a comprehensive communication plan to keep the community informed about the project's progress, milestones, and benefits. Foster meaningful engagement with stakeholders through regular updates, public consultations, and opportunities for input and collaboration.
10. Sustainability and Long-term Maintenance: Consider the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure project by identifying strategies for ongoing maintenance, operation, and funding. Explore options for community involvement and ownership to ensure the project's longevity.

By following these steps and incorporating SMART goals into the strategic planning process, the community can effectively implement a project that addresses their needs and contributes to their overall well-being, asset development and return on investment.

Appendix B

Cohort 1	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35
Community Glacier Region	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community SWMT	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community Central	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community SEMT	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community Missouri River	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community Yellowstone	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
Community Tribal	\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000							
	\$1,750,000											
Cohort 2	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35
Community 1		\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000						
Community 2		\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000						
Community 3		\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000						
Community 4		\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000						
		\$8,000,000										
Cohort 3	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35
Community 1			\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000					
Community 2			\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000					
			\$9,750,000									
Cohort 4	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33	FY34	FY35
Communtiy 1				\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000				
Communtiy 2				\$250,000	1,000,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$250,000				
				\$9,000,000								



Visitor Use Management
Public Affairs Specialist

Brandy Burke

Status Pages and GNP Updates

Glacier National Park Notifications
Trail Updates



Sign up to receive live trail updates & be the first to know trail closures and postings!

TEXT GNPTRAILS TO 333111

Introducing Glacier National Park Notifications
Trail Updates



Sign up to receive live trail updates & be the first to know trail closures and postings!

TEXT GNPTRAILS TO 333111

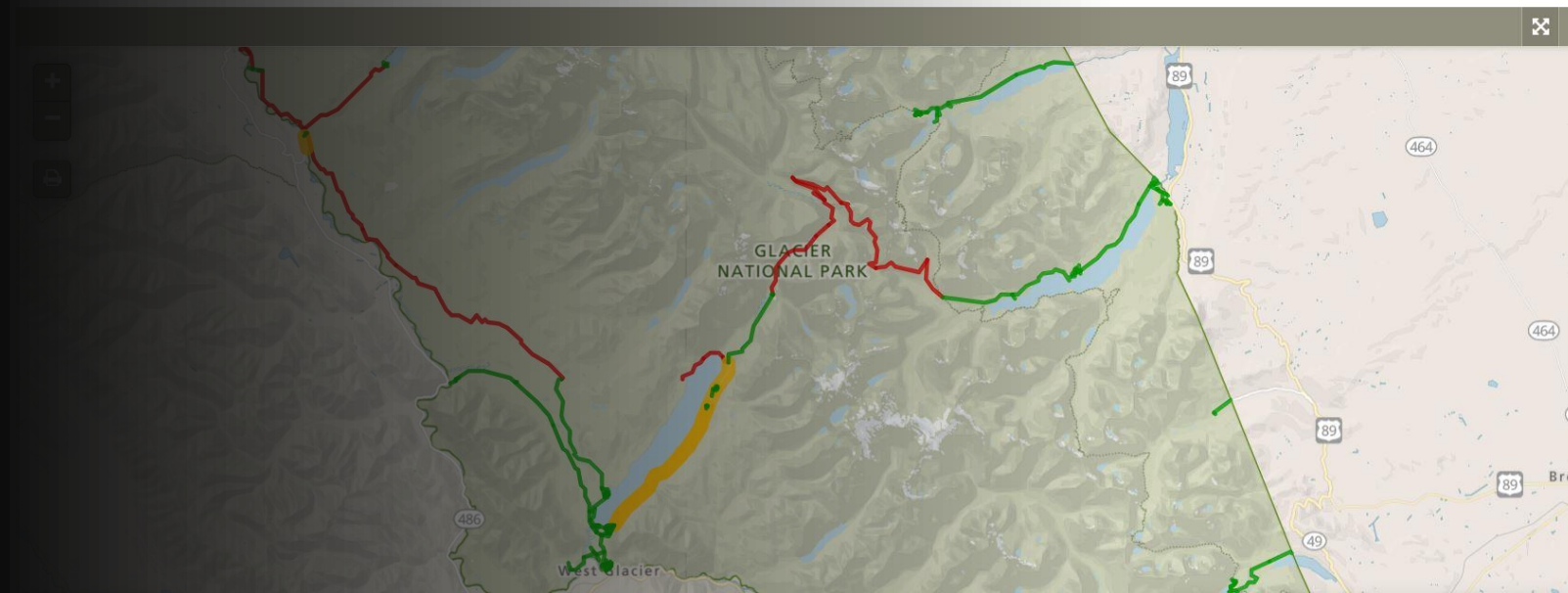
Introducing Glacier National Park Notifications
Campground



Sign up to receive live updates & be the first to know when a campground is open or closed!

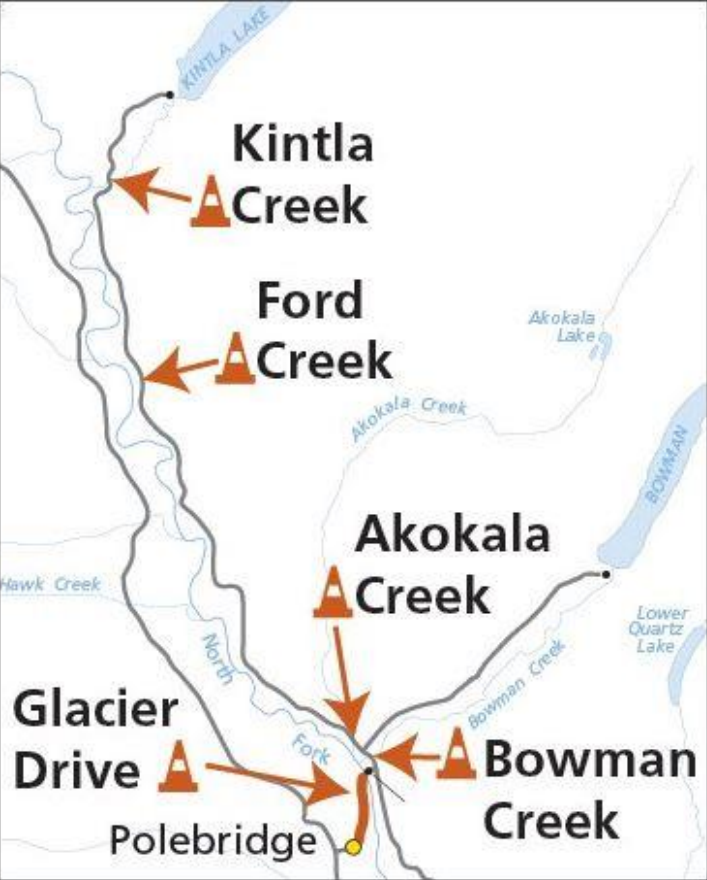
TEXT GNPCGS TO 333111

Road, Hiker/Biker, and Plow Status

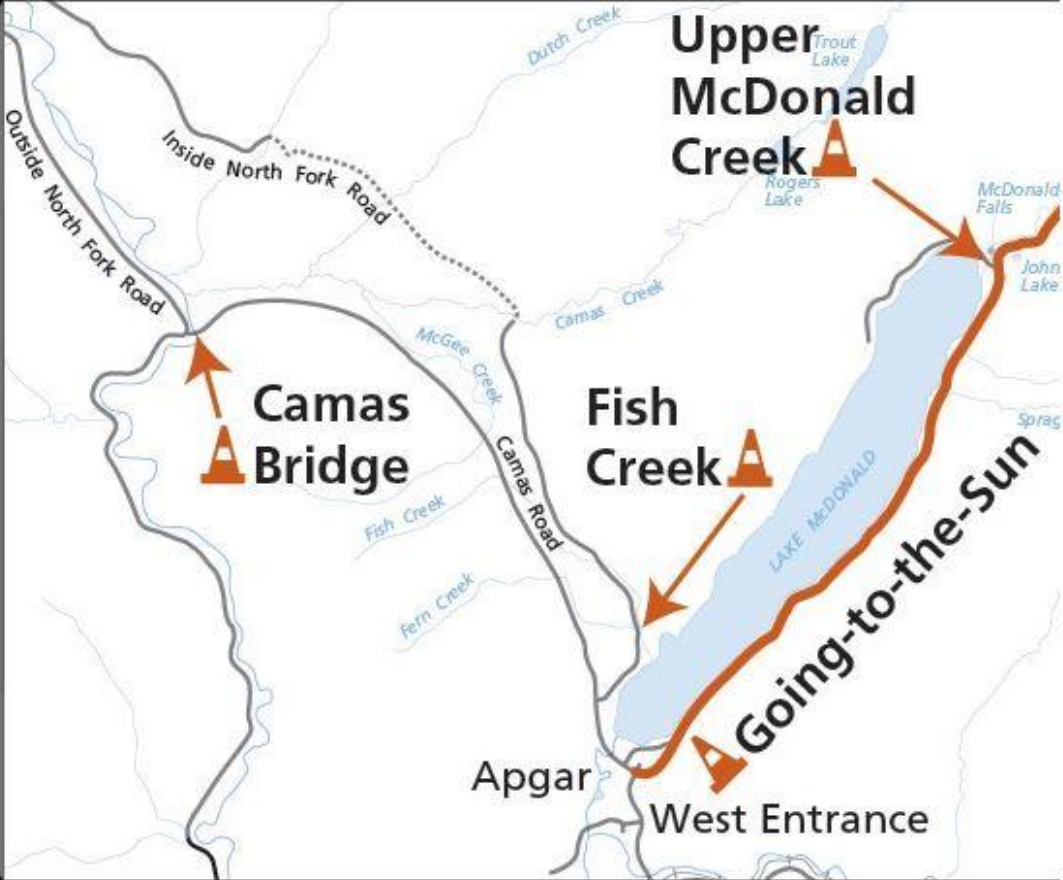


Road Construction and Infrastructure Project Work

Glacier National Park 2023 Major Construction Areas



North Fork



West Glacier

Visitor Use Management Communication

Crown of the Continent

A showcase of melting glaciers, alpine meadows, carved valleys, and spectacular lakes. With over 700 miles of trails, Glacier is a paradise for adventurous visitors seeking wilderness steeped in human history. Relive the days of old through historic chalets, lodges, and the famous Going-to-the-Sun Road.

Vehicle Reservations



Do I need a vehicle reservation? ›

All vehicle reservation information is available here.

Glacier National Park Vehicle Reservation System Communication Toolkit

Glacier National Park has a variety of resources to aid in the understanding of the vehicle reservation system. Download and share the free graphics. The resources are on our [Glacier National Park website](#).



2023 Glacier National Park Vehicle Reservation Postcard
This resource highlights key information for visitors regarding Glacier National Park's vehicle reservation system.

Benefits include:

- Vehicle Reservation
- Map/Location/Directions
- Glacier National Park Reservation
- Entrance Fee

Directions: Designed for poster size (11x17). Print double-sided using the short edge and cut at fold.



2023 Glacier National Park Vehicle Reservation Sign Card
This resource highlights key information for visitors regarding Glacier National Park's vehicle reservation system.

Benefits include:

- Vehicle Reservation
- Map/Location/Directions
- Glacier National Park Reservation
- Entrance Fee

Directions: Designed for poster size (11x17). Print double-sided using the long edge and cut at fold.



2023 Glacier National Park Vehicle Reservation Sign Card
This resource highlights key information for visitors regarding Glacier National Park's vehicle reservation system.

Benefits include:













- Vehicle Reservation
- Map/Location/Directions
- Glacier National Park Reservation


Directions: Designed for poster size (11x17). Print and fold the three panels. This sign is the only one to be placed on the back of the sign.


Brought to you by RECREATION.gov [Log In / Sign Up](#)

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Enter the number of passes you would like to purchase from the available choices below:

Glacier Annual Pass 	 0 
\$70	
Private Vehicle Pass 	 0 
\$35* / \$25**	
Motorcycle Pass 	 0 
\$30* / \$20**	
Pedestrian / Cyclist Pass 	 0 
\$20* / \$15**	

 Need to Know



[Close](#)

Testing and Development

Book your vehicle reservation before you buy a pass!

A vehicle reservation is required to visit Glacier from 6 AM to 3 PM MT during peak visitation hours

Areas that require a vehicle reservation:

- Going-to-the-Sun Road  May 26th - September 10th
- North Fork  May 26th - September 10th
- Many Glacier  July 1st - September 10th
- Two Medicine  July 1st - September 10th

[Book Reservation Now](#)

[Show Available Passes](#)

All visitors MUST have



Entrance Pass

Required for all visitors*

[Buy pass](#)

* May not apply in some cases. See details below.

Comment Period

2024 Visitor Use Management Strategy

1,374 Correspondences

48 States Represented, 55% Montana

Report and comments will be made public soon.

What's happening in 2024?

We are currently reviewing feedback from an open comment period which ended on September 30th. Public input will help inform potential strategies for summer 2024 visitor use strategies. Information about summer 2024 will be shared later this fall after we have heard from the public.

Find out more about these efforts here: [2024 Visitor Use Management Strategy - Glacier National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

Visitor Use Management at Glacier National Park

[Glacier National Park » Visitor Use Management at Glacier National Park](#)

[» Document List](#)

Dear Friends,

We need your input to help shape visitor access to Glacier National Park. The National Park Service mission calls for us to provide the best possible visitor experiences while preserving the resources that make Glacier special. Our mission has gotten more complex due to growth in visitation and change in the park's landscape. This means that more people are exploring and connecting with the park, but it also means more crowding and congestion and difficulty providing timely emergency response. We need your input to help shape visitor access to Glacier National Park's resources such as iconic wildlife, tribal connections, the scenic

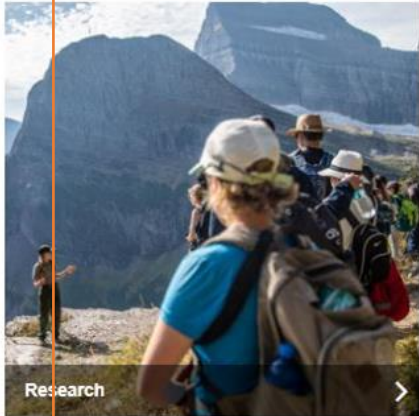
Visitor Use Management

Glacier National Park is an iconic part of our nation's shared natural and cultural heritage. To protect Glacier's outstanding resources, park managers monitor a variety of factors such as ecosystem changes, infrastructure, and visitor use. Visitor use management entails measuring how visitor activities impact the park's landscapes, animals, plants, and history. It also includes asking our visiting public for comments to understand their needs and expectations. Along with university researchers, private-sector consultants, and park neighbors, we research and create management plans that will hopefully allow visitors to enjoy this special place, now and into the future.

While we understand some visitors and stakeholders are concerned of proposed changes that might affect their park experience, we want all Glacier enthusiasts to know we are listening. Park managers will continue to ask for public input as we move forward, creating a park that reflects visitor needs while protecting the natural and cultural resources of this iconic place.

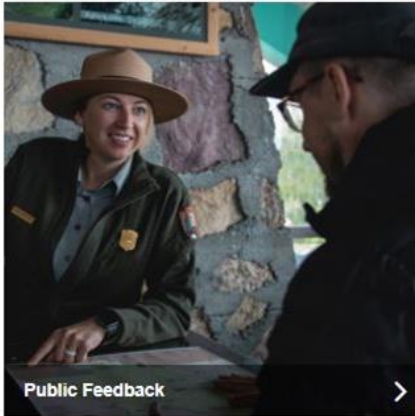
Find out more about visitor use management and explore how our work helps keep Glacier spectacular today and forever.

LEARN ABOUT VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT



Research

Explore research we do to understand how visitors enjoy the park and how recreation affects Glacier's resources.



Public Feedback

Learn more about feedback the park has received and how the public can participate in feedback.



2024 Visitor Use Management Strategy

Interested in what Glacier National Park is doing in 2024? Click here to learn about how decisions will be made for visitor access in 2024.

Visitor Use Management Webpages

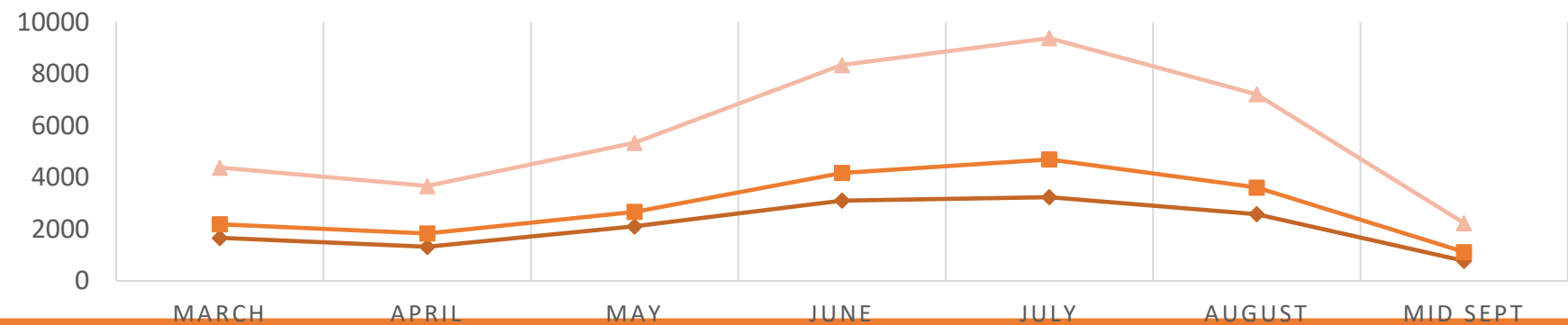
Call Center

Calendar Year Monthly Comparison-Calls Answered

Month	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (Draft)	2021	2022	2023
January	530	575	308	84	806	640	811	201
February	573	376	297	421	772	626	724	291
March	782	574	437	502	577	1307	508	2189
April	1124	496	657	800	57	1804	89	1832
May	1440	1025	1479	1393	848	1176	90	2668
June	1951	2696	1934	1694	2260	1330	142	4174
July	2290	2518	2572	2184	2613	757	593	4696
August	2640	3003	3274	2033	2235	1149	484	3607
September	1690	1711	1616	1445	1737	1041	348	mid 1113
October	461	346	724	471	600	592	282	
November	366	218	232	229	233	347	251	
December	265	181	186	274	295	412	225	
Total	14112	13719	13716	11530	13033	11181	4547	19658

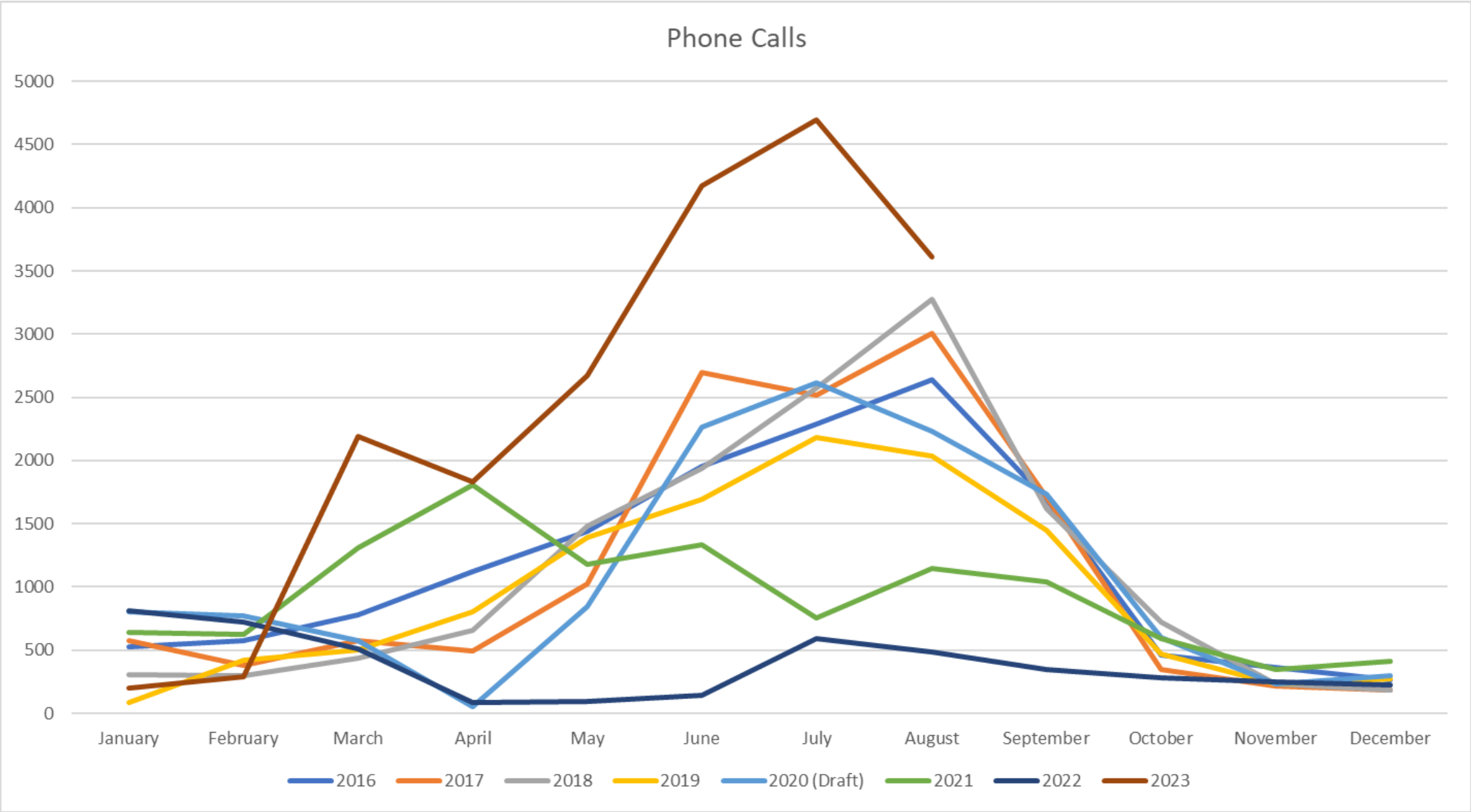
Since Opening of Call Center Line

ANSWERED PHONE CALLS

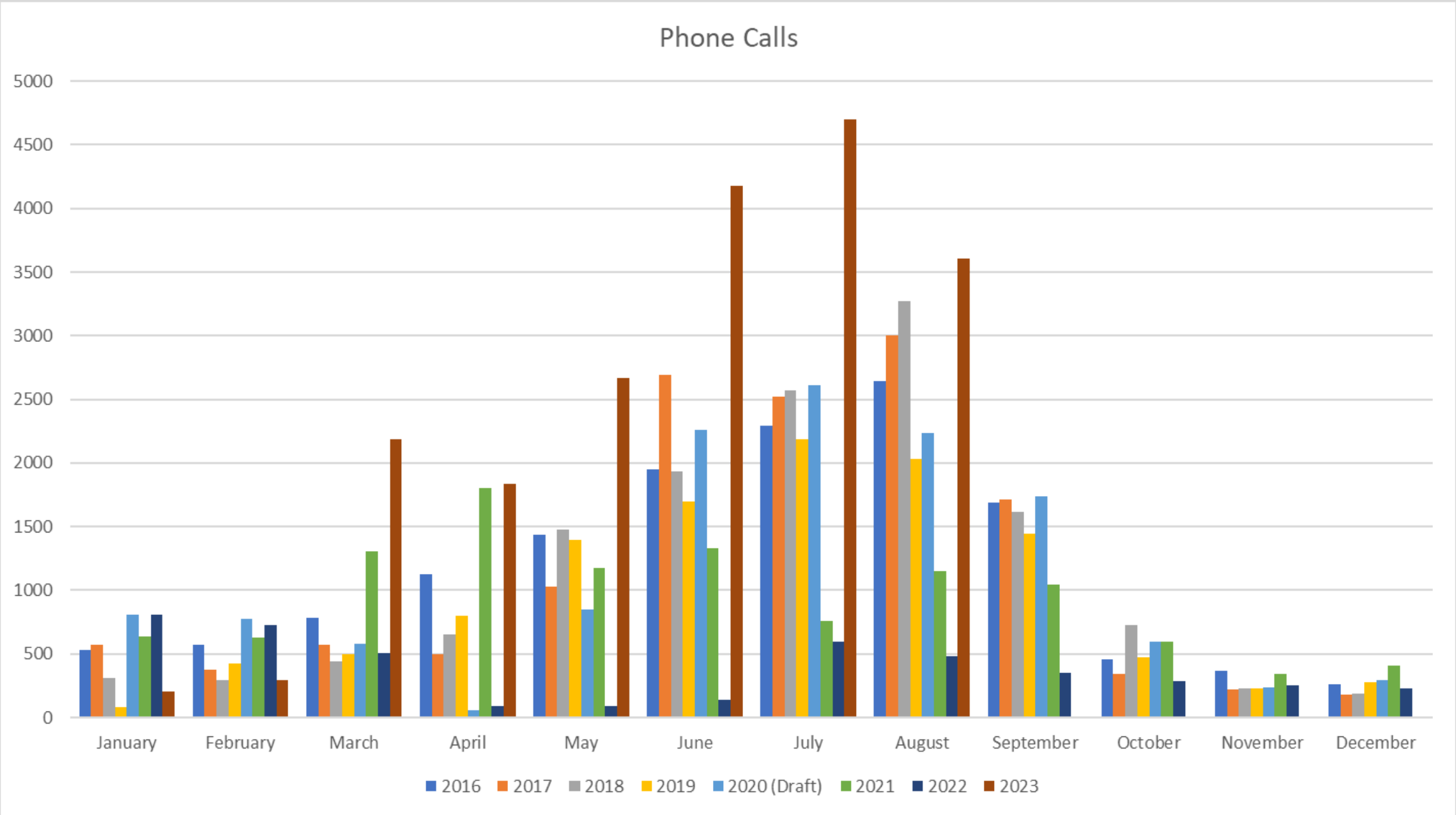


Month (2023)	CC Calls Received	CC Calls Answered	CC Calls Abandoned	CC Average Wait	CC Average Call Duration	CC Average Abandon	Front Desk Answered	Total Answered
March	2149	1656	328(15%)	3:50	4:25	1:52	533	2189
April	1948	1313	218(11%)	2:24	4:08	1:15	519	1832
May	2510	2103	349 (13%)	2:21	3:18	2:11	565	2668
June	3613	3104	506(14%)	2:10	2:50	1:45	1070	4174
July	3835	3235	485(12.6%)	2:19	2:48	1:55	1461	4696
August	2871	2581	284	1:43	2:18		1026	3607
September (mid month)	897	770	52	0:50	1:35	1:03	343	1113

Calendar Year Monthly Comparison-Answered Calls



Calendar Year Monthly Comparison-Answered Calls



Windfall + Glacier National Park Conservancy

Vehicle Reservation Helpline Partnership

WINDFALLINC

25
YEARS



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
CONSERVANCY

Goals of the Vehicle Reservation Helpline (VRH)

W

PHASE ONE:

Start helpline plan and launch a new inbound contact center strategy.

1.

Support the Glacier National Park frontline communications staff.

2.

Work closely with the communications team and leadership at Glacier National Park to build a reliable and consistent customer care support plan.

3.

Provide inbound inquiry-based customer service assistance.

4.

Seek to clarify and troubleshoot visitor questions and concerns around the program.

5.

Windfall launched the program in late February 2023.



Immediate Takeaways

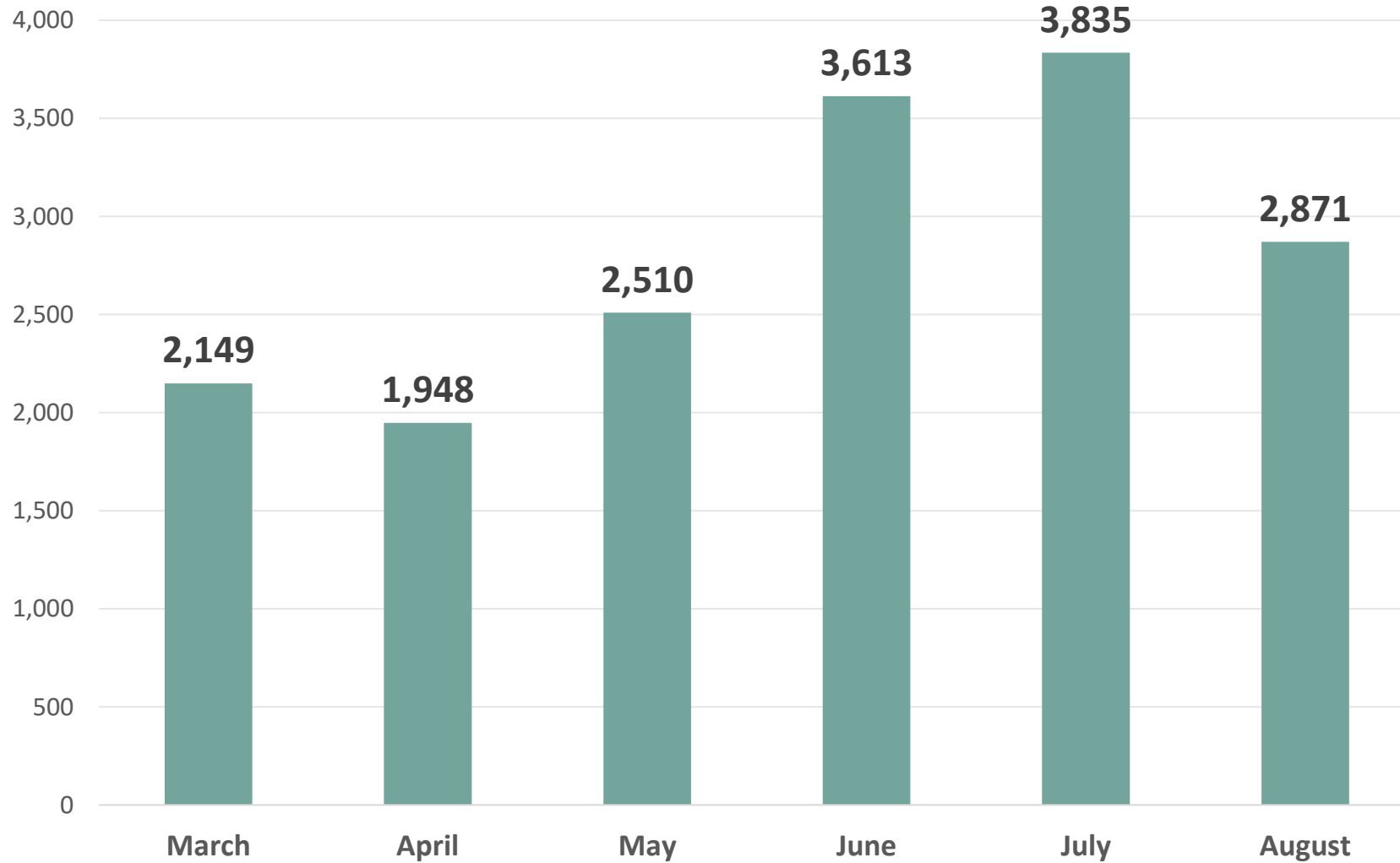
1. Call volume was much higher than anticipated as was the need of these callers for much wider tourism customer service assistance.
2. Additional staff was going to have to be budgeted to support the helpline to make it useful and effective (short wait times and sympathetic contact center associates).
3. The quality engagement of these potential visitors through the contact center could and really was making a positive impact on that park/consumer relationship and could actually protect and retain trip plans to Montana, benefiting everyone.
4. Offering travel information helped defuse frustrated callers. They were excited by the opportunity to receive additional travel planning assistance. It was key that our team offered help navigating the vehicle reservations and encouraged potential visitors to keep their travel plans even in the face of uncertainty and frustration.



PHASE TWO: Partnership

1. Glacier Country Regional Tourism pledged \$20,000 to assist the helpline in quickly adding much-needed staff.
2. This contribution helped add more staff to the main helpline but also provided access to their contact center team and resources for the long term to forward calls and other applicable inquiries from the VHR for additional tourism support.

Actual GNPC Helpline Call Volume



16,926

Total calls
March-August



Average call duration:
4 minutes



of all callers tracking
from Montana





Next Step

1. Montana's Yellowstone Country pledged an additional \$20,000 to the project to support additional staffing and to boost funds for its contact program to help engage more callers who had questions about park-to-park travel and other interests that were more targeted to travel needs in Yellowstone Country region of Montana.
2. More time to work to extend visitor stays in Montana.



What's Next

1. Windfall will continue to track and report call volume and impact of the program to all the key stakeholders—Glacier National Park Conservancy, Glacier National Park, Glacier Country Regional Tourism and Yellowstone Country—year-round to understand and strategize an optimized customer service strategy.
2. The program originally intended to serve 500-700 calls a month is now prepared and working to handle 3,000-4,000 calls a month as needed.

Thank You

Jim McGowan

windfallstudio.com | 406.529.7909

WINDFALLINC

25
YEARS

Building a Resilient Future

Montana's Tourism Resiliency Planning Project Update

Tourism Advisory Council Meeting
October 3rd, 2023



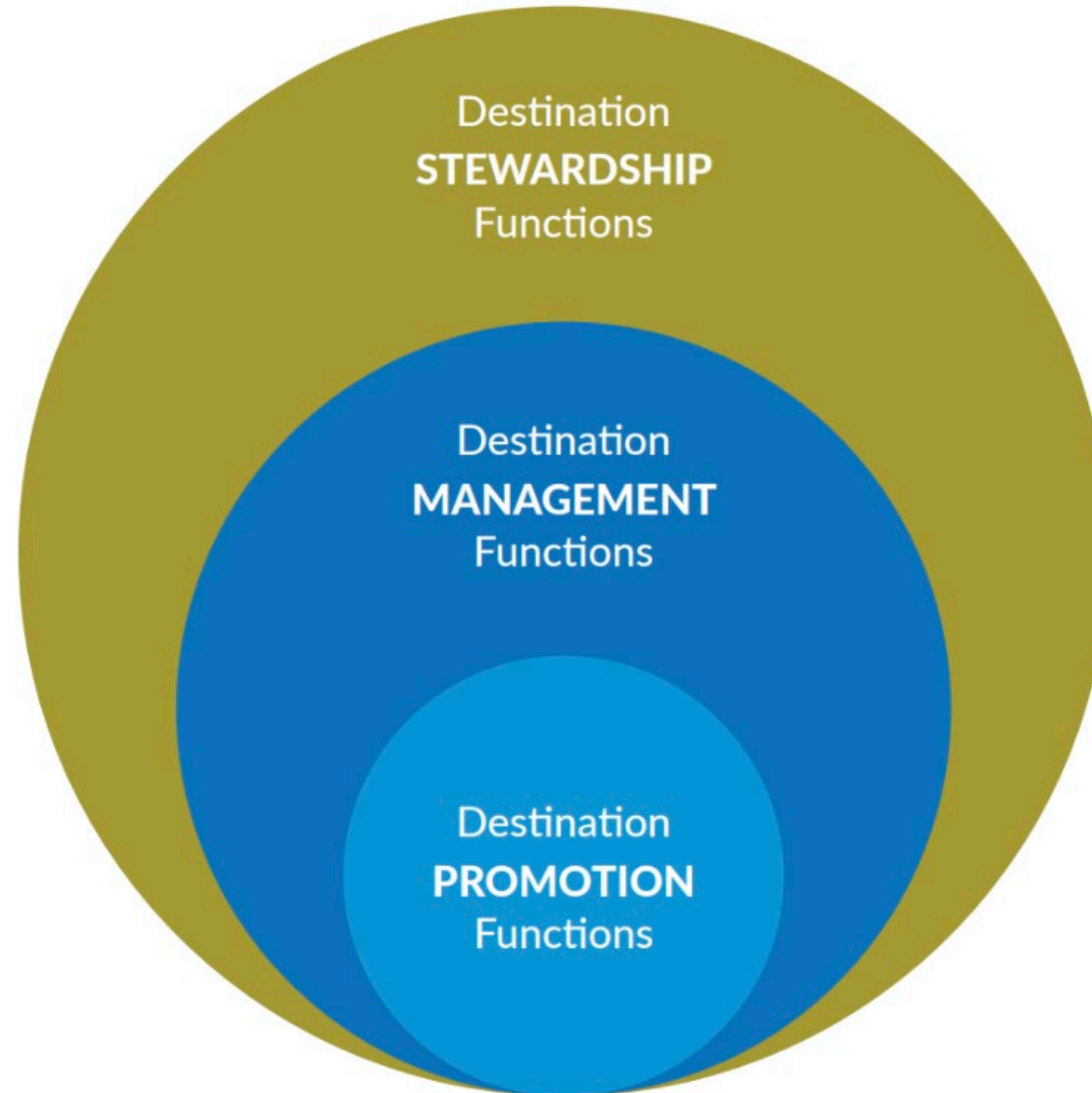
Objectives

- Define resilience planning for Montana
- Provide an overview of the planning process and work to date
- Describe regional research findings
- Discuss regional plans



Defining Resilience

Evolution of Destination Organization Roles



Resilience or Crisis Management?



Resilience is
more like
agility training



How do we systematically build resilience?



LEADERSHIP



STAKEHOLDERS



**MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS**



VISITORS



TEAM/TALENT

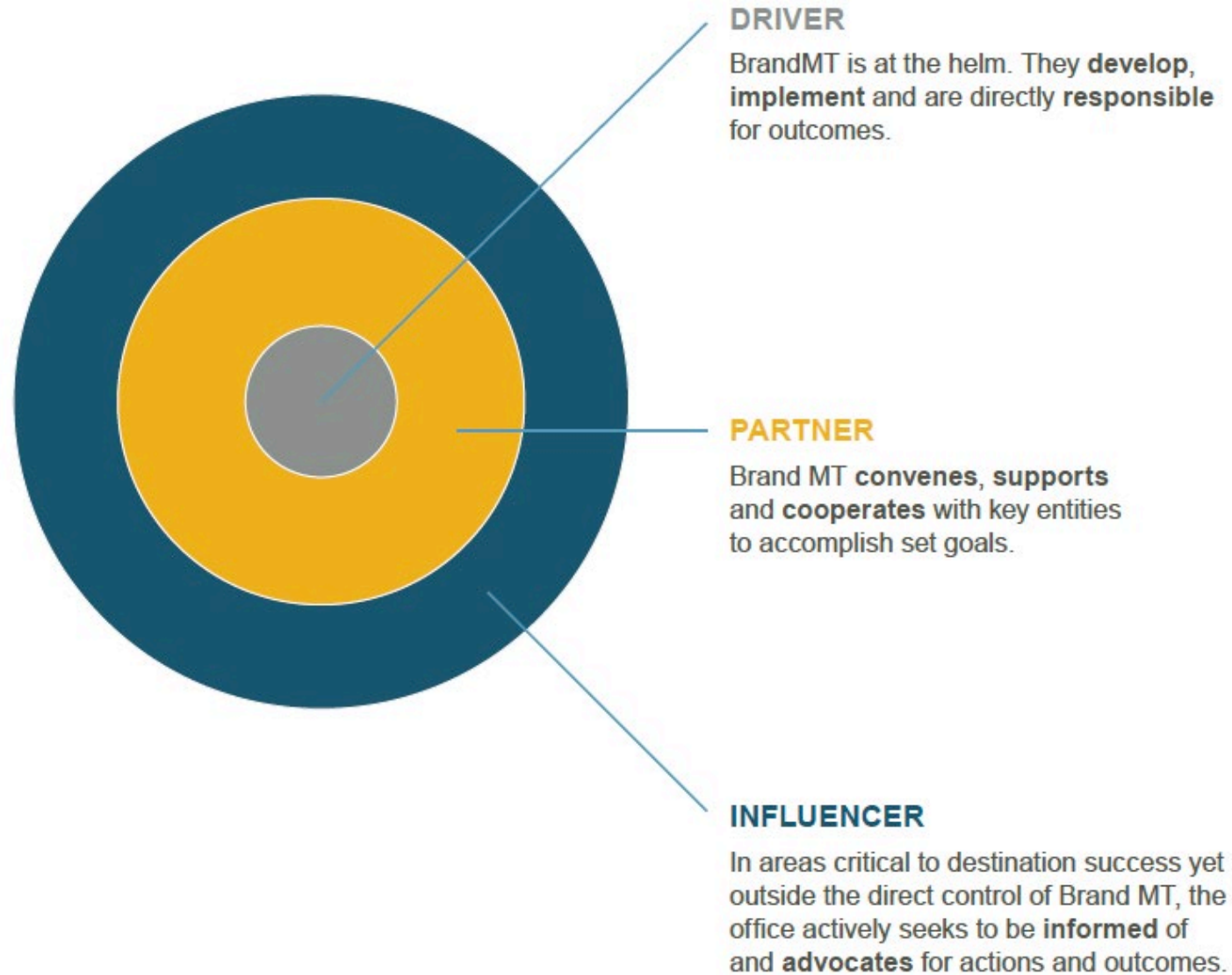


ASSETS



FUNDING

How can we implement wide-ranging initiatives?



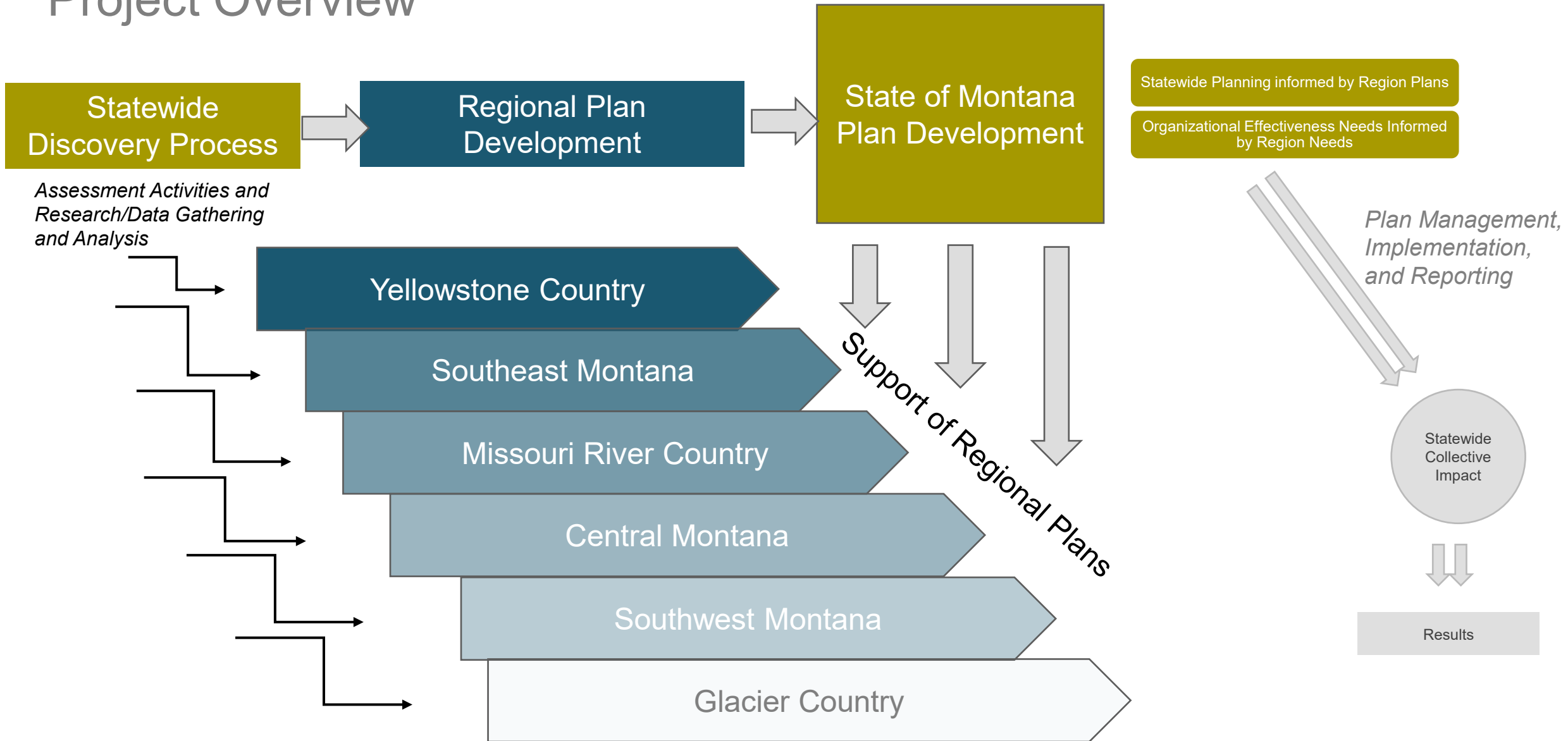
How can we implement wide-ranging initiatives?





Project Overview

Project Overview



Get Clear: Stakeholder Outreach Activities



2,196

Online Survey
Respondents



41

Interviews



24

Town Halls



2,535

Total Participants

- Montana Resident Sentiment and Perspectives Survey
- Online Focus Groups of Montana Residents
- National Survey of Montana Visitors
- Survey of BrandMT and Partners' Owned Audiences
- Montana Visitor Survey
- Stakeholder Survey
- Resilience Assessment
- Asset Mapping and Infrastructure Assessment
- Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Gap Analysis
- 1:1 Stakeholder Interviews
- Regional Town Hall Summits

Get Focused: Planning Session Participation



31

Regional Planning Sessions



21

Virtual Sessions



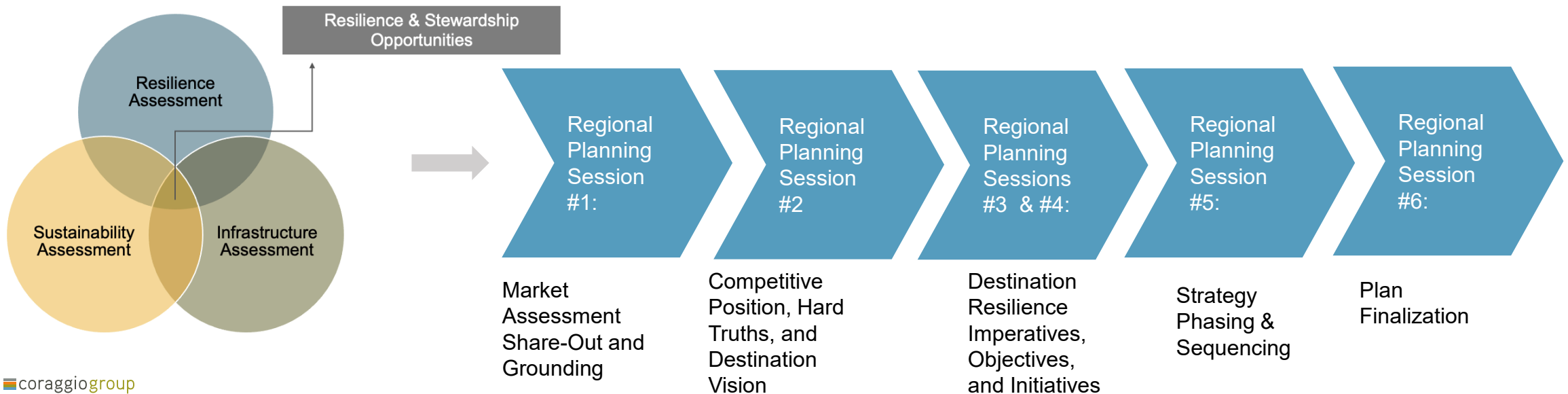
10

In-person Sessions



73

Total Participants



Sample Get Focused: Rapid Initiative Planning Virtual Session Participation

Competitive Position, Hard Truths, Vision

3/5 entrances to Yellowstone NP
2 are the most-used

Leadership

Trust - Communication - Delegation/Power
Sharing - Risk Tolerance & Mitigation - Influencer
Engagement

Competitive Position
Unique value proposition; better than most

Hard Truths
Challenges, risks,
barriers;
what we are not

Vision/Future
Ideal future state;
Aspirational

Team and Talent

Culture & Values - Engagement - Innovation -
Bench Strength - Skills - Capacity

Community (DMS)

Leaders and business leaders

Strong network of DMS/businesses

Passionate about their communities

Organizations are working toward common goals

Easy to recruit talent to such a beautiful destination

Diverse groups become part of the community and build the talent pool

People want to give back

Work particularly well with the airport

Recreation efforts are well coordinated; everyone sees the benefits; may be limited to business?

Affordable Housing	Sustainable wage-paying jobs that support a good quality of life	Affordable Childcare	Can we build housing AND improve transportation to where they work
Building housing farther out, but that adds transportation costs onto employee	VRB/ODSs constraining supply	Capacity: everyone is so busy	If we want to do product development in rural areas, you need the people to work there
Aging workforce	Who will be the next generation of workers?	Remote workers do not contribute to the workforce	Seasonal workforce may not be able to stay

Younger people are more involved in the workforce	People give back to their community	All generations are deeply invested and interested
Our kids can afford to stay here and own a home	Strong public transportation system	Sustainable choices
Year-round employment options	More diversified economy, more stability in a crisis	More balanced economy - less of a divide between have and have not

Stakeholders and Community

Variety & Diversity of Partners - Types of Collaborations - Awareness of Impacts - Resident Sentiment Toward Tourism - Community Engagement in Planning - Broad Support

Strong buy-in in some areas	Strong sense of community (volunteer-run restaurant)	Community pride	because they are proud of where they live
Diverse group of partners across the region	Strong marketing collaborations	People will speak to it when there is an issue	The community always shows up

Not strong buy-in in other areas	Sentiment that tourism doesn't do anything for me	Strengthen education and stewardship collaborations	Tourism as the new 'extractive' industry
People will engage issues, but fall short of acting on solutions	Plans sit on a shelf	Talk the talk AND walk the walk	Someone absolutely does not want tourism to be a part of their economy
Resentment: housing, affordability			

Residents can find a camping spot when they want to	Visitor inluxes are balanced	Full understanding and knowledge appreciation of how tourism benefits residents	Residents know how they are benefiting
As an industry, we are putting back into the community and investing, not extracting	Plans are executed. Measurable end results		

Visitors

Audience Diversification - Geography &
Seasonality of Visitation - Visitor Management
Capabilities - Visitor Research & Insight

variety for people to do	variety of visitors, because of the wide variety of activities	Destination for all seasons	visitors have a variety of interesting activities - more than anywhere and because of it
visitors do want to help, they just may not know how	ITRR - huge resource, long-running		We're so glad you came here
Truly positioned to be a year-round			

Visitors don't understand how far apart places are

Don't always understand the importance of the community to the residents and that it is accordingly

Visitors don't feel the connection to the community

Think the DMO should be the weatherman!

Don't have plans for inclement weather

Communicable disease responsible for the reputation or at their expected price point

Expectation that there are enough restaurants and that they'll be open

Businesses are busy and staffing is tight

When do you bring the animals

They need to plan ahead and be educated

Knowledgeable of Leave No Trace impact	The desire to return	Know and see themselves/ have a sense of place	Leave it better than you found it
Understand the culture	New residents understand visitation	Preserved way of life and culture	Don't reuse here and make it better you moved from here and it's better Yellowstone County culture - embrace it
People understand that living here year- round is not just like living here in the summer	Education others on their experience and what their visit was like so word of mouth lets the right people come and into the right experience and culture		

Infrastructure and Assets

Infrastructure - Connectivity - Accessibility -
Maintenance - Community Amenities - Natural
Resources - Diversity of Experiences

fers, parks)	lands	and visitors	
More diversity (diversity) than most areas	Good restaurants, shopping etc. (place to spend)	Unique experiences (Bute lighthouse, sailing, hot springs)	Agritourism an opportunity to expand
Lack of internet connectivity can be a barrier (e.g. decompression, etc.)	Ability to disconnect from work, everyday life	Workers / employees in hospitality industry (e.g. tour concierge, ambassador)	People are genuinely friendly
Family owned businesses in large corporate	Various towns provide options for	Unique road signs (iconic drives)	Each town has everything you need and

<p>Lack of housing (growing concern)</p> <p>Increased pressure for the services has been very difficult to accommodate residents & visitor needs</p>	<p>Waste and interaction with town/residents</p> <p>Waste is not being taken to the transfer station</p>	<p>Costs</p> <p>In certain areas, housing has been an issue, but it is not a priority for the town. The town is not planning new residents & visitors</p>	<p>Community advice</p> <p>Community advice is being sought from the town and the residents</p>
<p>Road management (particularly Park County's) not enough \$</p> <p>Visitor education (do they understand our differences/expectations?)</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>There is a need for health services (dentist, medical, etc.)</p>	<p>Tourism</p> <p>Tourism takes a big toll on our natural resources</p>	<p>Reliability (all one)</p> <p>Reliability is a concern for the town and the residents</p>
<p>Stewardship of natural areas - room to improve</p> <p>Certain trails, attractions are over crowded</p>	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Climate change (floods, fires, fish kills, etc.)</p>	<p>Nature protection (DNR)</p> <p>Nature protection is a priority for the town and the residents</p>	<p>Flood insurance</p> <p>Flood insurance is a concern for the town and the residents</p>

<p>Local pensioners lived to death</p>	<p>Local pensioners with growth in tourism</p>	<p>Guests aren't looking for more business</p>	<p>summer, long winter</p>
<p>Sustainable tourism plan - environmentally friendly tourism industry</p>	<p>Able to provide better for hospitality workforce & community members</p>	<p>Strong destination management, not purely profit-oriented, more tail always kept</p>	<p>Sustainable jobs, livable wage</p>
<p>Families and locals able to afford to live here, also be part of tourism families</p>	<p>Don't want to lose our authentic communities (our appeal)</p>	<p>Diversified economy if we "sell" "nature" more than we sell season or attractive destinations</p>	<p>Need to make sure that we don't lose our sense of place in our tourism perspective</p>

Diversification & Variety of Channels - Risk
Tolerance - Budget Flexibility - Crisis Readiness -
Brand Consistency & Relatability

communication ecosystem	business & management	diversity of audiences	new
Regional messaging; desire by local CVBs to be on message	Starting to build more robust on-air communication network	Have a list of collaborative partnerships; partner well	

<p>Yellowstone (NP) is perceived as only draw</p>	<p>Fear of overtourism in certain communities</p>	<p>Still opportunity to improve cross community relationships, particularly at the OMS level</p>	<p>Local business relationships with charter not always strong</p>
<p>Not all communities are highlighted in the marketing and communication efforts</p>	<p>Agreed to develop marketing with state and others, need for the right balance</p>	<p>Potentially an issue with others on certain segments/market</p>	<p>In local OMS need consistent resources to maintain marketing, develop ability to respond to changes or barriers</p>
<p>Local OMS understand the need for the draw but are not always the best way to approach the draw (advertisers & visitors)</p>	<p>YC Regional Org not always known by industry</p>	<p>In a crisis, mass messaging could be important</p>	<p>What do we do if all the draw is lost? How do we communicate this to our local?</p>

Better visitor communication, transition from marketing to management	Ensure visitors value and respect natural assets	Budget & maintain trail, can benefit downstream management in planning	Partner with NPS to help educate public/visitors
Collaboration: sequential business plan, reflecting ongoing & effectively, leverage	Find a way to make use of all the state of existing, health is a way to make use of all the state of existing	Yellowstone Country: a top brand (opp to better define brand)	

Funding

- Variety & Diversification of Sources - Flexibility of Funding Allocation
- Structure of Funding Access
- Scope of Funding Control

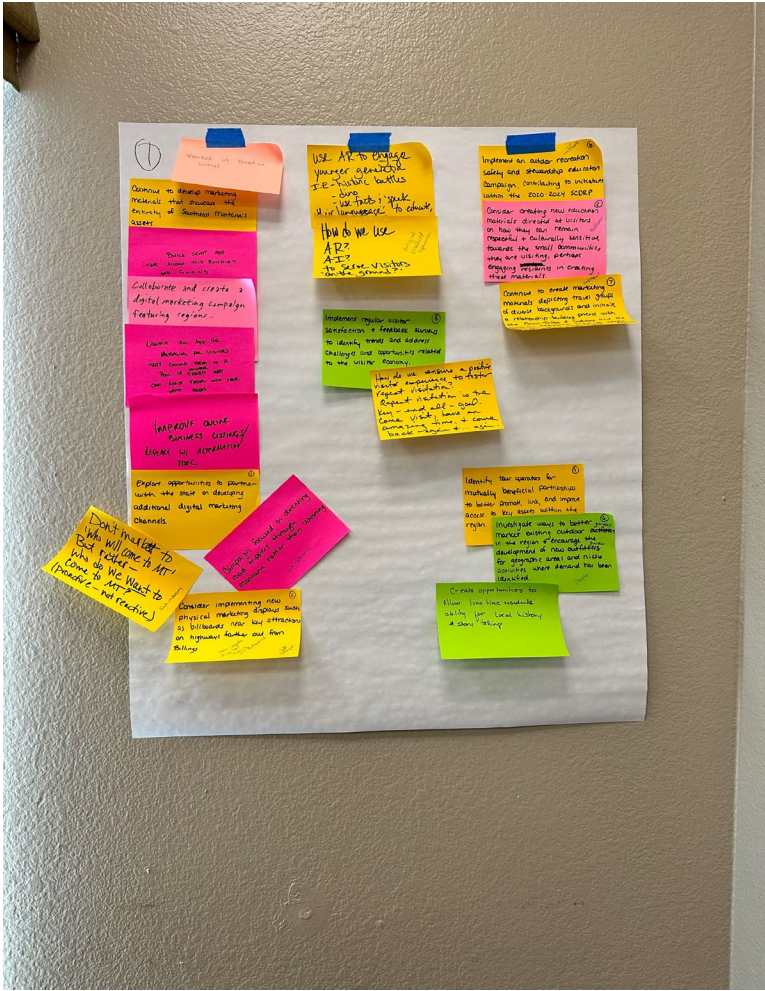
revenue	regulation (oversaturation)	opportunities	Tax
		Opp to leverage federal (BDA, ARRPA) to help grow industry	

The infographic consists of eight pink rectangular boxes arranged in a 2x4 grid. Each box contains a number and a reason. The reasons are:

- 1. **Bed tax** doesn't stay in region
- 2. Limited use of 5% opportunity to support a local business beyond marketing (mostly international)
- 3. **%/allocation** in the hands of state legislature
- 4. Lack of wilderness/tax to attract guests and resources that are available
- 5. Local residents paying for visitor expenses (like on tour tax \$), can't support on-local resources
- 6. Not all orgs are aware of the various funding resources
- 7. Hotel industry bears burden of industry (bed tax)
- 8. Can't pass state tax to state, lots of negotiation, different perspectives in different regions

Disaster insurance for tourism industry help manage risk and avoid lawsuits	"Risky day fund" of resources to respond to crisis	Local option tax incentives to help pay for infrastructure, not just residents	Improved relationships with community and business partners to help us better understand and experience, 2020
Expanded resort tax Other communities can implement	Access to grant writers	More communities able to implement a TRF	Timely state marketing plan with 5 attached to it

Sample Get Focused: Rapid Initiative Planning In-person Participation





Regional Findings Overview



Leadership

Trust

Communication

Delegation and
power sharing

Risk tolerance
and mitigation

Influencer
engagement



Regional Insights by Leadership

Missouri River Country is focused on building and strengthening its network of tourism stakeholders. This includes strengthening Board engagement, connecting with the Tribes from Fort Peck, activating local businesses to support the tourism industry, and building interest in tourism among youth and residents to ensure a lasting pool of talent.

Southeast Montana's Board is highly engaged and could serve as a model for other regions. Stronger relationships with state agencies, Brand MT and collaboration with other regions are a priority.

Most regions expressed a desire to connect with and work collaboratively with the Indigenous Tribes in their area. **Yellowstone Country** in particular places importance on increasing diversity in its tourism economy and ensuring access to training and career paths.

Glacier Country will leverage its leadership in the region to collaborate more deeply with local governments to increase resident engagement and communication.

Central Montana's Board will continue strengthen its representation from rural communities while balancing their board engagement and participation.

Southwest Montana expressed a commitment to leading the region in expanding data collection and evaluation to bolster the region's capacity for data-driven decision making.



Team/Talent

Culture and
values

Engagement

Innovation

Bench
strength

Skills

Capacity



Regional Insights by Team and Talent

The top challenge for **Central, Missouri River Country, Southwest** and **Southeast Montana** is the ability to draw from a strong workforce to enable tourism growth.

Missouri River Country and **Southeast** stakeholders expressed concern that “brain drain” is occurring; local youth are leaving the region and those currently working in the tourism industry do not have clear successors. Communicating the value and opportunity of work in the tourism industry will be key along with increasing affordable housing.

Yellowstone and Glacier Country cite the seasonal patterns of hospitality work as a challenge to sustaining workforce and maintaining well-trained employees.



Community and Stakeholders

Variety and
diversity of
partners

Types of
collaborations

Awareness of
impacts

Resident
sentiment
toward
tourism/visitors

Community
engagement in
development
and planning

Broad-based
sources of
support



Regional Insights by Community and Stakeholders

Missouri River Country stakeholders believe that tourism can play a larger role in their local economy and are passionate about supporting their local businesses. Tourism development here should be in balance with local culture and preserve the beloved small-town feel in the region.

Preserving the unique feel of their communities is a key guardrail for tourism development in **Southeast Montana**. Maintaining a pulse on resident concerns and interests through community engagement and data is a priority for Southeast as well as **Yellowstone Country**.

Southwest and **Central Montana** identified stronger ways to communicate with residents and key stakeholders to better understand their needs and challenges while continuing to communicate the positive impact of tourism in the region.

Glacier Country will continue to build its organizational capacity to engage with regional stakeholders while leveraging new data sources to track resident sentiment.



Visitors

Audience diversification:

age, socioeconomics, race,
culture, gender, ability, origin
markets, interests, activities

Geography/seasonality of visitation

Visitor management capabilities

Visitor research/insights



Regional Insights by Visitors

Missouri River Country stakeholders note a need for product development, as visitor experiences tend to be limited to skilled outdoors experiences such as guided hunting or those concentrated around the river. The MRC visitor, on average, has one of the highest incomes among Montana visitors, but the region would benefit from more experiences that open up the outdoors to a broader range of visitors. In **Yellowstone Country**, stakeholders want to expand activity offerings in the area to be able to draw from a broader visitor base, preserve the natural environment, support locally owned businesses as well as preserve access for residents to favorite areas.

Accommodations in **Southeast Montana** tend to be concentrated in the largest city and along highways. Strategic investment in accommodations and capacity building will be key to support the region's marketing efforts to distribute visitors across the region. **Southwest Montana** also places importance on investments that make the region more accessible to those with disabilities.

Central Montana will continue to drive visitation and destination asset development while developing new visitor itineraries and interest in winter activities.

Glacier Country identified an on-going need to disperse visitors throughout the region to protect Glacier National Park and other mature destination assets.



Assets and Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Connectivity

Accessibility

Maintenance

Community
amenities

Natural
resources

Diversity of
experiences



Regional Insights by Assets and Infrastructure

Missouri River Country's large geography and status as an emerging destination highlights the need for improvements to transportation infrastructure (particularly improved road conditions and wayfinding) and visitor facilities. Growth will need to be supported by affordable housing stock for hospitality workers.

Certain infrastructure investments like broadband access, cellular coverage, well-maintained roads and wayfinding are high priorities for **Central** and **Southeast Montana** and are important factors in a visitor's sense of safety while traveling.

Both **Southeast Montana** and **Yellowstone Country** cited rail as an important transportation opportunity.

Glacier Country will continue to improve access to key tourism assets while partnering with local partners to advocate for infrastructure improvement funding.



Marketing/Communications

Diversification
and variety of
channels

Risk tolerance

Budget
flexibility

Crisis
readiness

Brand
consistency
and relatability



Regional Insights by Marketing and Communication

As emerging destinations, regions like **Missouri River Country** and **Southeast Montana** still require a primary focus on marketing to build destination awareness and visitation. Limited resources restrict marketing reach and frequency and leave little room for additional necessary messaging (such as encouraging responsible recreation or cultural etiquette).

Yellowstone Country and Central MT will focus on developing stronger crisis communication and collaborations with emergency services.

Southwest Montana focused on growing their brand and increasing the adoption of consistent brand adoption by local CVBs and chambers of commerce.

Glacier Country will support and market individual Indigenous-owned businesses, in addition to showcasing events on the Blackfeet and Flathead reservations.



Funding

Variety and
diversification of
funding sources

Flexibility of
funding
allocation

Structure of
funding access

Scope of
funding control

A scenic photograph of a sunset over a river landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The foreground shows a calm river flowing through a valley with rolling hills in the distance.

Regional Insights by Funding

In some regions, the model in which regions receive a share of their lodging use tax revenue may not match the level of visitation occurring. Visitors to **Missouri River Country** are more likely than other regions to visit and stay overnight in other regions. The result is that fewer visitors contribute to the lodging taxes that fund the region.

Southeast Montana's share of lodging facility use taxes have been declining over the past few years, and the proportion of statewide lodging facility use taxes collected in Southeast Montana also has remained slightly below the proportion of visitor spending occurring in the tourism region in recent years.

Yellowstone Country stakeholders point out that lodging tax revenue does not cover certain expenses brought by visitors such as emergency services. This burden is left to the local communities.

Central and Southwest Montana identified a need to grow their staff to increase organizational capacity to implement destination stewardship initiatives.

Themes Statewide

- Shared vision for the future
- Workforce capacity, training, career perception, support services
- Resident sentiment and engagement
- Collaboration: local, regional, inter-regional, statewide
- Product development and maintenance, including agritourism, lodging, transportation
- Wayfinding
- Visitor management and distribution: geographic, seasonality, etc.
- Readiness for and attraction of more varied visitor demographic
- Accessibility of facilities and experiences
- Housing availability and affordability
- Leverage of data and technology
- Protection of land, heritage, and culture
- Organizational capacity
- Broader stakeholder involvement in community and tourism development and leadership, including Tribal representation
- Brand consistency and awareness
- Flexible funding
- Local business support
- Emergency/crisis preparedness and communication



Yellowstone Country Draft Plan

Yellowstone Country Draft Plan

IMPERATIVE 1

Determine, align and deploy collective resources toward shared long-range vision and priorities.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase the percent of dollars that can be used flexibly for management and resilience activities
- Establish a set of key representative groups and measure the percent of those roles that are filled on the Board – 25% of the Board is comprised of key representative groups
- Increase the number of stakeholders who have access to needed data
- Increase the availability and frequency of data

STRATEGIES	PURSUE VERSATILE INDUSTRY FUNDING AND FLEXIBILITY OF USAGE FOR ALTERNATIVES	ENSURE DIVERSE REPRESENTATION ACROSS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP	ESTABLISH AND SHARE DATA-DRIVEN REGIONAL MASTER PLAN
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	Leverage Yellowstone's leadership strength and reputation with stakeholders to develop clear short- and long-term priorities and advocate for funding and resources	Deepen representation of broader, more diverse visitor identities to encourage welcoming environment	Develop a shared list of identified stakeholders who should receive and provide information
	Identify financial resources, grants, and support programs to help local small businesses that are still recovering from tourism shocks (natural disasters, overuse, etc.)	Build capabilities/ mentor to encourage diverse small business ownership	Expand region's capacity for environmental risk evaluation and data collection
	Advocate for state infrastructure funds for regional priorities and allow counties and/or communities to operationalize those funds	Invest in leadership education and training to ensure diverse access to industry leadership positions	Increase informed decision-making and sustainable development
	Establish an emergency reserve fund that can be accessed in times of disaster		Develop and implement a long-range Destination Development Plan to articulate the region's long-term vision and prioritize key investments, allocate focus, and achieve balance in visitor capacities across the region
	Explore alternative funding mechanisms for capital improvements to address long term infrastructure needs		
	Explore funding opportunities, such as local option taxes, to better realize the economic impact of visitor spending		
	Revisit resort tax parameters and advocate for updates		
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	In partnership with the State, seek opportunities to broaden the use of state funds beyond out-of-state marketing	Increase the diversity of the Yellowstone Country's and DMO organizations' boards to ensure representation of all stakeholders, including but not limited to Indigenous communities, local residents, and youth	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional DMOs, downtown business organizations, and Chambers • TAC • Dept of Commerce • City/County governments • State lawmakers • Economic Development Agencies (i.e. Rocky Mt), community foundations • National Parks Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT Department of Transportation • Local and regional nonprofits • US Forest Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM • Business owners

IMPERATIVE 2

Ensure the necessary capacity and capabilities to deliver the right messages to the right audiences at the right times.

OBJECTIVES

- Increased positive resident sentiment as a result of initiatives
- Increase in brand awareness
- Increase diversity of visitors

STRATEGIES	EXPAND AND CONNECT CRISIS READINESS AND RESPONSE	INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR TOURISM BENEFITS AND IMPACTS	BOLSTER STRENGTH AND RELEVANCE OF REGIONAL BRAND	PRIORITIZE RESPONSIBLE DESTINATION PROMOTION PRACTICES
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	Establish local crisis communication processes and tools to better inform residents and visitors - help ensure that every community has a plan (in progress)	Leverage insights to better understand the impacts of tourism on population growth and community livability	Explore and expand inclusive marketing opportunities to ensure the region is welcoming to diverse visitor audiences	Review the funding rules around tourism and marketing and advocate for balanced strategic changes (considering unintended consequences)
	Establish crisis communication network across the region and with the state/counties	Increase the opportunity for communities to share what they've learned through challenges and successes - share best practices	Align with and support diverse DMO/CVB brands within the region when possible	Utilize media and communication channels to promote environmental stewardship and responsible recreation principles to residents and visitors
	Increase access, awareness and utilization of crisis comms plan - make sure everyone knows who to call	Establish and maintain resident and business communications program		Balance promotion of a place, attraction or activity with the locals in mind.
		Deepen knowledge of and education of both positive and negative impacts of tourism		Increase collaboration and alignment in responsible recreational programs (eg. Leave No Trace)
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	Be at the table for important conversations that impact the region - coordinate	Advocacy campaigns that explain the need for tax structures that enable tourism spending to go toward needed services and infrastructure - specifically towards road funding		
	Maintain relationships among agencies for crisis communications in spite of turnover	Educate the broader region on what Yellowstone Country Tourism does. Increase those conversations/be at the table during their discussions/collaborate		
		Highlight and advance champion stories and examples		
Community Partners		Continue to display a strong, consistent regional brand across the region's CVBs that evolves with changes in visitor demographics and the broader visitor economy		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoQAD group (example: Park Co CoQAD) • Hospitals • (TRR, BrandM, Headwaters Economics- research partners) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers and other news services • Schools and childcare organizations 		

IMPERATIVE 3

Enhance and sustain regional assets to support the current and future needs of residents and visitors alike.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions
- Increase Employee retention in tourism businesses

STRATEGIES	DEVELOP AND PROTECT REGIONAL ASSETS AND AMENITIES TO IMPROVE AND DIVERSIFY AVAILABLE EXPERIENCES	ENHANCE AND CONNECT WAYFINDING EFFORTS	ENGAGE IN AND SUPPORT SOLUTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHALLENGES	ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS	PROTECT AND MAINTAIN EXISTING ASSETS AND RESOURCES	BUILD PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUSTAIN YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY'S CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE NEEDS.
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	Advocate for and improve trail connectivity to allow biking options between trails, communities and businesses	Work with communities and their governing agencies to determine wayfinding efforts that will direct visitors in the correct way	Engage in research regarding the need and number of housing units needed in progress	Advocate for passenger rail - be at the table to make sure our priorities are reflected In progress	Identify and support initiatives that protect Yellowstone Country's outdoor assets	Identify areas in need of hospitality management training and expand access beyond front line workforce. (ref: Super Hosts)
	Explore and develop programs and opportunities for visitors to contribute positively to our region	Collaborate with Indigenous communities to review and/or create new wayfinding that is culturally aligned and appropriate	Identify state and federal funding resources to address housing challenges such as an economic development grant In progress	Identify and pursue public-private partnerships to increase access and decrease personal vehicle use	Explore opportunities to support stakeholders seeking to enhance the sustainability practices of the tourism industry in the region	Explore solutions for seasonal worker recruitment and support programs
	Explore destination development opportunities that enhance non-outdoor recreation tourism drivers	Correctly identify and share information regarding important local cultural and historical sites	Identify and partner with communities and governing agencies to advocate for increased workforce housing - address market conditions Action step: identify existing programs to replicate and expand		Increase awareness and participation in tourism grant and available recovery funding to repair, maintain, and expand critical tourism infrastructure	(Partner with regional tourism, higher education (MSU, Gallatin College) and hospitality employers to) Develop strategies to mitigate barriers to attracting new workers to the industry.
	Expand sustainable tourism offering, e.g. agritourism, ecotourism, etc.	Provide route suggestions and wayfinding to minimize congestion in peak visitation seasons and direct visitors away from resident-occupied areas				
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	Build and expand multi-use trails and pathways plan	Find ways to partner with other organizations and land managers to improve wayfinding through increased trail signage and online guides	Highlight and connect business around best practices and success stories from housing initiatives across the region	Increase and improve bus service between all businesses, attractions and communities - Dependent on workforce		Work with businesses to create career pathways and skill development opportunities within the industry to help address workforce gaps. (workforce development dept, ec dev, etc.)
	Explore options to develop new tourism experiences outside of Gallatin County and Yellowstone Park		Explore options to drive income from tourism spending to support and/or subsidize housing initiatives	Support and engage in increasing public/shared/ mass transportation options		
	Invest in the development of new hospitality assets and outdoor recreation infrastructure to better distribute visitation throughout the region			Develop rails to trails and other bike connectivity options		
Phase 3: Long-Term 10-20 Years	Diversify lodging options to provide opportunities for visitors at different price points			Address transportation gaps to increase accessibility to more remote outdoor or rural destinations, particularly those where visitation is low but also desired by locals		Establish a tourism ambassador and local host program. (to increase resident participation and knowledge of tourism assets and opportunities)
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bike clubs (ex. Livingston Bike Club, SWMTBA) • Gallatin Valley Land Trust • Aero • Abundant Montana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group, River Task Force, CWMA-weed group • Conservation Groups • Community councils in unincorporated areas • HRDC-Housing, Neighborworks Montana, National Affordable Housing organizations (located in Butte but works across the state), Park County Housing Coalition, Gallatin County Chamber, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Economic Affairs Office, Western Native Voice, Mountain Time Arts, Hoppa Mountain, AINTA-National organization, Sted commission, MIDA, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windrider, Streamline, bus transportation organization-Western Transportation organization, Big Sky passenger rail authority-working to bring passenger rail to southern Montana, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM, Forest Service, Parks Service • Western Sustainability exchange (WSE), Leave No Trace, Park County Environment Council, Paradise Valley recreate responsibly, Be Good to Bozeman, RiverKind, • Montana State Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food resource centers (ex. Livingston food resource center) • Gallatin College, Job Service, high schools

Screenshot

IMPERATIVE 4

Prioritize collaboration with and inclusion of community perspectives in destination advancement.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Year-over-year increase in "Resident Support of Tourism" score over 2022 baseline

STRATEGIES	FACILITATE AND ENCOURAGE RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT, COLLABORATION, AND COMMUNICATION	CATALYZE CROSS-SECTOR AND CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	<p>Regularly measure and address resident sentiment issues</p> <p>Communicate the financial and economic benefits of tourism with residents as core audience and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Identify representatives from Tribal communities who can provide cultural context and advice.</p> <p>Strengthen communication with and participation of residents regarding the goals for and awareness of the benefits of tourism to the community and economy</p> <p>Increase engagement with rural communities to promote less-visited communities/ experiences and improve visitor dispersal</p> <p>Leverage Yellowstone Country's strength in creating opportunities for collaboration to build better partnerships with Montana's historically marginalized communities, including but not limited to the region's Indigenous population</p>	<p>Strengthen collaboration among the region's DMOs and Chambers to more effectively align on industry priorities and shared knowledge, and reinforce channels of communication. In progress</p> <p>Advance engagement in tourism self-determination with local residents, ranchers, elected officials, other community organizations, etc. Already planned for Fall 2023</p> <p>Prioritize effective and efficient engagement with legislators, NGOs, academia, and other influencers to advance and support pro-tourism policy and education and ensure that information sharing continues</p> <p>For communities that do not have a DMO/CVB/ Chamber, identify a local leader to be the voice in regional initiatives</p>
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years		<p>Work with elected officials (state, local and federal) on zoning constraints and potential policy solutions</p> <p>Outreach program between the industry/community/ suppliers and potential new businesses, collaborate better with existing businesses</p>
Phase 3: Long-Term 10-20 Years	Explore opportunities to ensure residents can access popular outdoor sites and assets through permitting or other regulation	Create and improve tourism monetization through support of local small businesses and entrepreneurs
Community Partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Livelihoods Coalition, Save the X (wolf, bears, ect.), Tom Murphy and wildlife photographers, local influencers, writers and photographers

IMPERATIVE 5

Expand understanding, experience, and management of current and future visitor needs and behaviors.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase length of stay
- Increase shoulder season and off-season visitation
- Increase per visitor spend
- Year-over-year increase in participation in Leave No Trace training

STRATEGIES	ENHANCE VISITOR MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITY
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	<p>Advance education and management of visitor and resident behaviors, expectations and attitudes In progress now</p> <p>Define and increase focus on attracting visitors best aligned to the ethos of our region - and the times of visitation, through data and research in progress now</p> <p>Collaborate with the National Parks Service, BLM, FWP, and state parks to identify and explore visitor management best practices and approaches</p> <p>Build on existing efforts that highlight assets with less visitation to encourage visitor dispersal and ease the impact of visitation on the region's natural environment</p>
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	<p>Expand international visitor readiness and region-wide exploration</p> <p>Continue to encourage visitor dispersal throughout the region by curating itineraries or marketing experiences that result in more balanced seasonal and geographical visitation In progress</p>
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State outfitters (MOGA) • Dude ranchers association • Mt Ski association • BrandUSA, US Travel

Imperative 1: Determine, align and deploy collective resources toward shared long-range vision and priorities

Pursue versatile industry funding and flexibility of usage for alternatives	Ensure diverse representation across regional leadership	Establish and share data-driven regional master plan
Leverage Yellowstone's leadership strength and reputation with stakeholders to develop clear short- and long-term priorities and advocate for funding and resources (5 year)	Deepen representation of broader, more diverse visitor identities to encourage welcoming environment (5 year)	Develop a shared list of identified stakeholders who should receive and provide information (5 year)
Identify financial resources, grants, and support programs to help local small businesses that are still recovering from tourism shocks (5 year)	Build capabilities/ mentor to encourage diverse small business ownership (5 year)	Expand region's capacity for environmental risk evaluation and data collection (5 year)
Advocate for state infrastructure funds for regional priorities and allow counties and/or communities to operationalize those funds (5 year)	Invest in leadership education and training to ensure diverse access to industry leadership positions (5 year)	Increase informed decision-making and sustainable development (5 year)
Establish an emergency reserve fund that can be accessed in times of disaster (5 year)	Increase the diversity of the Yellowstone Country's and DMO organizations' boards to ensure representation of all stakeholders, including but not limited to Indigenous communities, local residents, and youth (10 year)	Develop and implement a long-range Destination Development Plan to articulate the region's long-term vision and prioritize key investments, allocate focus, and achieve balance in visitor capacities across the region (5 year)
Explore alternative funding mechanisms for capital improvements to address long term infrastructure needs (5 year)		
Explore funding opportunities, such as local option taxes, to better realize the economic impact of visitor spending (5		

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase the percent of dollars that can be used flexibly for management and resilience activities
- Establish a set of key representative groups and measure the percent of those roles that are filled on the Board- 25% of the Board is comprised of key representative groups
- Increase the number of stakeholders who have access to needed data
- Increase the availability and frequency of data

MONTANA'S
YELLOWSTONE
COUNTRY

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Imperative 2: Ensure the necessary capacity and capabilities to deliver the right messages to the right audiences at the right times

Expand and connect crisis readiness and response	Increase awareness of and support for tourism benefits and impacts
Establish local crisis communication processes and tools to better inform residents and visitors - help ensure that every community has a plan (5 year)	Leverage insights to better understand the impacts of tourism on population growth and community livability (5 year)
Establish crisis communication network across the region and with the state/counties (5 year)	Increase the opportunity for communities to share what they've learned through challenges and successes - share best practices. (5 year)
Increase access, awareness and utilization of crisis comms plan - make sure everyone knows who to call (5 year)	Establish and maintain resident and business communications program (5 year)
Be at the table for important conversations that impact the region (10 year)	Deepen knowledge of and education of both positive and negative impacts of tourism (5 year)
Maintain relationships among agencies for crisis communications in spite of turnover (10 year)	Advocacy campaigns that explain the need for tax structures that enable tourism spending to go toward needed services and infrastructure - specifically towards road funding (10 year)
	Educate the broader region on what Yellowstone Country Tourism does. Increase those conversations/be at the table during their discussions/collaborate (10 year)
	Highlight and advance champion stories and examples (10 year)
	Continue to display a strong, consistent regional brand across the region's CVBs that evolves with changes in visitor demographics and the broader visitor economy (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increased positive resident sentiment as a result of initiatives
- Increase in brand awareness
- Increase diversity of visitors

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COUNTRY

Imperative 2: Ensure the necessary capacity and capabilities to deliver the right messages to the right audiences at the right times (continued)

Bolster strength and relevance of regional brand	Prioritize responsible destination promotion practices
Explore and expand inclusive marketing opportunities to ensure the region is welcoming to diverse visitor audiences (5 year)	Review the funding rules around tourism and marketing and advocate for balanced strategic changes (5 year)
Align with and support diverse DMO/CVB brands within the region when possible (5 year)	Utilize media and communication channels to promote environmental stewardship and responsible recreation principles to residents and visitors (5 year)
	Balance promotion of a place, attraction or activity with the locals in mind (5 year)
	Increase collaboration and alignment in responsible recreational programs (5 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increased positive resident sentiment as a result of initiatives
- Increase in brand awareness
- Increase diversity of visitors



Imperative 3: Enhance and sustain regional assets to support the current and future needs of residents and visitors alike

Develop and protect regional assets and amenities to improve and diversify available experiences	Enhance and connect wayfinding efforts	Engage in and support solutions for affordable housing challenges
Advocate for and improve trail connectivity to allow biking options between trails, communities and businesses (5 year)	Work with communities and their governing agencies to determine wayfinding efforts that will direct visitors in the correct way (5 year)	Engage in research regarding the need and number of housing units needed In progress (5 year)
Explore and develop programs and opportunities for visitors to contribute positively to our region (5 year)	Collaborate with Indigenous communities to review and/or create new wayfinding that is culturally aligned and appropriate (5 year)	Find ways to partner with other organizations and land managers to improve wayfinding through increased trail signage and online guides (5 years)
Explore destination development opportunities that enhance non-outdoor recreation tourism drivers (5 year)	Correctly identify and share information regarding important local cultural and historical sites (5 year)	Identify and partner with communities and governing agencies to advocate for increased workforce housing and address market conditions (5 years)
Expand sustainable tourism offerings (5 year)	Provide route suggestions and wayfinding to minimize congestion in peak visitation seasons and direct visitors away from resident-occupied areas (5 year)	Highlight and connect business around best practices and success stories from housing initiatives across the region (10 year)
Build and expand multi-use trails and pathways plan (10 year)	Find ways to partner with other organizations and land managers to improve wayfinding through increased trail signage and online guides (10 year)	Explore options to drive income from tourism spending to support and/or subsidize housing initiatives (10 year)
Explore options to develop new tourism experiences outside of Gallatin County and Yellowstone Park (10 year)		
Invest in the development of new hospitality assets and outdoor recreation infrastructure to better distribute visitation throughout the region (10 year)		
Diversify lodging options to provide opportunities for visitors at different price points (20 year)		

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions
- Increase Employee retention in tourism businesses

MONTANA'S
YELLOWSTONE
COUNTRY

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Imperative 3: Enhance and sustain regional assets to support the current and future needs of residents and visitors alike (continued)

Advocate for improved public and active transportation options	Protect and maintain existing assets and resources	Build programs and partnerships that sustain Yellowstone Country's current and future workforce needs
Advocate for passenger rail - be at the table to make sure our priorities are reflected In progress (5 year)	Identify and support initiatives that protect Yellowstone Country's outdoor assets (5 year)	Identify areas in need of hospitality management training and expand access beyond front line workforce. (5 year)
Identify and pursue public-private partnerships to increase access and decrease personal vehicle use (5 year)	Explore opportunities to support stakeholders seeking to enhance the sustainability practices of the tourism industry in the region (5 year)	Explore solutions for seasonal worker recruitment and support programs (5 year)
Increase and improve bus service between all businesses, attractions and communities - Dependent on workforce (10 year)	Increase awareness and participation in tourism grant and available recovery funding to repair, maintain, and expand critical tourism infrastructure (5 year)	(Partner with regional tourism, higher education (MSU, Gallatin College) and hospitality employers to) Develop strategies to mitigate barriers to attracting new workers to the industry (5 year)
Support and engage in increasing public/shared/ mass transportation options (10 year)		
Develop rails to trails and other bike connectivity options (10 year)		
Address transportation gaps to increase accessibility to more remote outdoor or rural destinations, particularly those where visitation is low but also desired by locals (20 year)		

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions
- Increase Employee retention in tourism businesses

MONTANA'S
YELLOWSTONE
COUNTRY

Imperative 4: Prioritize collaboration with and inclusion of community perspectives in destination advancement

Facilitate and encourage resident involvement, collaboration, and communication	Catalyze cross-sector and cross-regional collaboration and partnership
Regularly measure and address resident sentiment issues (5 year)	Strengthen collaboration among the region's DMOs and Chambers to more effectively align on industry priorities and shared knowledge, and reinforce channels of communication. In progress (5 year)
Communicate the financial and economic benefits of tourism with residents as core audience and beneficiaries (5 year)	Advance engagement in tourism self-determination with local residents, ranchers, elected officials, other community organizations (5 year)
Identify representatives from Tribal communities who can provide cultural context and advice (5 year)	Prioritize effective and efficient engagement with legislators, NGOs, academia, and other influencers to advance and support pro-tourism policy and education and ensure that information sharing continues (5 year)
Strengthen communication with and participation of residents regarding the goals for and awareness of the benefits of tourism to the community and economy (5 year)	For communities that do not have a DMO/CVB/Chamber, identify a local leader to be the voice in regional initiatives (5 year)
Increase engagement with rural communities to promote less- visited communities/ experiences and improve visitor dispersal (5 year)	Work with elected officials (state, local and federal) on zoning constraints and potential policy solutions (10 year)
Leverage Yellowstone Country's strength in creating opportunities for collaboration to build better partnerships with Montana's historically marginalized communities, including but not limited to the region's Indigenous population (5 year)	Outreach program between the industry/community/ suppliers and potential new businesses, collaborate better with existing businesses (10 year)
	Work with elected officials (state, local and federal) on zoning constraints and potential policy solutions (20 years)
	Outreach program between the industry/community/ suppliers and potential new businesses, collaborate better with existing businesses

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Year-over-year increase in "Resident Support of Tourism" score over 2022 baseline

Imperative 5: Expand understanding, experience, and management of current and future visitor needs and behaviors

Enhance visitor management capabilities and capacity	
Advance education and management of visitor and resident behaviors, expectations and attitudes In progress now	Expand international visitor readiness and region-wide exploration (10 year)
Define and increase focus on attracting visitors best aligned to the ethos of our region - and the times of visitation, through data and research in progress now	Continue to encourage visitor dispersal throughout the region by curating itineraries or marketing experiences that result in more balanced seasonal and geographical visitation In progress (10 year)
Collaborate with the National Parks Service, BLM, FWP, and state parks to identify and explore visitor management best practices and approaches	
Build on existing efforts that highlight assets with less visitation to encourage visitor dispersal and ease the impact of visitation on the region's natural environment	

OBJECTIVES:

·Increase length of stay

·Increase shoulder season and off-season visitation

·Increase per visitor spend

Year-over-year increase in participation in Leave No Trace training





Southeast MT Draft Plan

IMPERATIVE 1

Marketing and Communication

OBJECTIVES

- Increased engagement on social media channels
- Increased length of stay
- Increase content in shared database

STRATEGIES	EXPAND MARKETING REACH AND CONTENT	FOCUS ON COLLABORATIONS TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES	LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY IN INNOVATIVE WAYS
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	Explore options for new physical marketing displays such as billboards near key attractions on highways farther out from Billings	Host pertinent Brand MT/State employees on FAM tours that showcase aspirational experiences in SEMT.	Create a landing page to educate visitors and the community on local etiquette at events
	Create creative marketing/social campaigns that lean into the East v. West/Us vs. Them divide in a playful way	Identify tour operators for mutually beneficial partnerships to better promote, link and improve key assets in the region	Use AR to engage younger generation i.e. Historic battles, dino, use facts and speak their language and educate + inspire
	Continue to develop marketing materials that showcase the entirety of SE Montana's assets	SEMT BOD to host community forums prior to official BOD meetings to exchange insights and information	
	Improve current online business listings on the SE Montana website or replace w/ an alternative tool	Advocate for opportunities to partner with the state on developing additional digital marketing channels	
	Campaign focuses on directing road trippers through Montana rather than Wyoming	Communicate and collaborate with other MT offices	
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	Create marketing materials depicting travel groups of diverse backgrounds		
	Build a regionwide database of image and text materials for partners		
		Leverage partnerships within and outside of the region (i.e. SEMT and Teddy Roosevelt Library/Black Hills), breaking down the East vs. West/Us vs. them divide	Build SEMT app that allows trip building, chat and guidance from experts
Community Partners		Continue the relationship building process with the Crow Tribe of Indians and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe to better facilitate their involvement in future efforts to brand the region	Create a geo based, region-wide audio tour for visitors who are deaf/hard of hearing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Dept. Of Transportation • EDCs • BLM, NPS, NFS • Attractions (museums, cultural centers, historical sites) • Restaurants/Dining/Lodging/Main Street Associations • Associations (education, Dude Ranch Assoc., Guides, Museums) • Elected officials/bodies at all levels • FWP • BrandMT/Dept of Commerce/TAC • Tribal Governments, Partners and Event Coordinators • ITRR • Agency of Record/Vendor partners • Community colleges/higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical partners/One Health • Foundations (MT State Parks Foundation, etc.) • Other Regions • MSU Extension (agritourism) • Historical Preservation Grants/Societies 	

IMPERATIVE 2

Destination Development

OBJECTIVES

- Number of agritourism product offerings established
- Increase in repeat visitation

STRATEGIES	ENGAGE AND ACTIVATE THE SOUTHEAST REGION'S RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	CHAMPION ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY	IMPROVE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE THROUGH CAPACITY-BUILDING AND DATA GATHERING/DISSEMINATION
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	Create opportunities to allow longtime residents the ability to share local history and storytelling	Identify existing arts, culture, agritourism and heritage attractions and prioritize the development of new attractions that cater to diverse communities	Pursue nontraditional funding sources, such as private-sector partnerships, sponsorships and cooperative models
	Engage local farmers and ranchers in developing new agritourism experiences		Fund dedicated staff or programs that address destination development
	Establish a destination master plan in collaboration with the CVBs		Identify existing and new partners to help conduct and disseminate research on tourism's positive economic impacts to residents to continue increasing positive resident sentiment towards tourism
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	Pursue funding sources to revitalize historical and cultural assets		Create a Lodging Trail to showcase experiences with unique stories for visitors
	Prioritize opportunities to improve ADA accessibility of the region's experiences and attractions		Sell ads on products built with private funds
	Support local retailers to increase visitor spending on local goods		Utilize historic tax credits, maybe assist MT farmers/ranchers with another income stream via agritourism
Community Partners			Develop additional lodging accommodations options outside of Billings and Yellowstone County
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Dept. Of Transportation • EDCs • BLM, NPS, USFS • Elected officials/bodies at all levels • FWP • BrandMT/Dept of Commerce/TAC • Tribal Governments, Partners and Event Coordinators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractions (museums, cultural centers, historical sites) • Restaurants/Dining/Lodging/Main Street Associations • ITRR • Agency of Record/Vendor partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations (education, Dude Ranch Assoc., Guides, Museums) • Medical partners/One Health • Foundations (MT State Parks Foundation, etc.) • Civic groups • Community colleges/higher education • MSU Extension (agritourism) • Historical Preservation Grants/Societies

IMPERATIVE 3

Community Stewardship

- OBJECTIVES
- SEMT Board engagement score
 - Increase in stakeholder sentiment

STRATEGIES	SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN GROWING THE TOURISM ECONOMY	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	SOUTHEAST MONTANA BOARD DEVELOPMENT	ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	<p>Consider developing new programs or leveraging existing programs such as the Certified tourism ambassador program to prepare hospitality staff to better educate visitors on regional tourism assets/show excellent customer service & support recertification</p> <p>Advocate for local policies supporting small businesses and minimize economic leakage given that residents realize the importance of tourism supporting local businesses</p> <p>Build intra-regional relationships to build trust, emergency response (understanding its capacity), and communicate the value and importance of tourism</p> <p>Continue regular visitor satisfaction or feedback surveys to identify trends and address challenges/opportunities related to visitor economy (in progress) and SHARE information with partners (through the news releases?)</p> <p>Identify partners in the community who can act as Visitor Information Center-alternatives and are able to provide broad visitor information.</p> <p>Define role of SE MT in aiding tourism workforce development</p>		<p>Work to prevent SE MT staff & BOD burnout and improve bench strength</p> <p>Define the role of SEMT in the greater scope of work w/ Brand MT + Clarify expectations, rules, and relationships w/ brand MT</p> <p>Define SEMT's values and align board positions with the needs of the organization + Create a skills-based SEMT board recruitment matrix to map our county based recruitment strategy to ensure geographic and skill diversity + Refine the SEMT board recruitment strategy to included geographic regions as well as skills</p> <p>Better align SEMT internal, cooperative marketing grants to projects that directly raise our mission (VIC staffing, cooperative marketing grants)</p> <p>Host one board development training workshop annually (teaching communities to be on boards, reviewing Robert's Rules of Order)</p>	<p>Leverage statewide leadership on LNT education. Distribute materials to visitors on how they can be respectful and culturally sensitive towards the communities they are visiting.</p>
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	<p>Create workshops for local businesses on techniques for tourism marketing in partnership with SE MT to attract visitors (specifically from the international market, and for organizing FAM tours)</p> <p>Invite, listen to, and engage local Tribes</p> <p>Develop strategies to increase lodging and accommodation occupancy in response to how programs of SR 540 can be best utilized and stakeholders can best engage with the bill</p>	<p>Engage with the general resident population more frequently considering public forums and ongoing Community sentiment research to provide an opportunity to ask questions and voice potential concerns surrounding visitor economy and impacts of visitor behaviors in their region</p>	<p>Explore avenues to expand representation on the regional and/or local tourism boards to include members from the Crow Tribe of Indians and the Northern Cheyenne tribe</p> <p>Build social networks that connect professionally similar leaders with one another to raise region-wide tourism skillset</p>	<p>Implement outdoor recreation safety in stewardship campaign contributing to initiatives within the 202 SCORP if possible</p>
Phase 3: Long-Term 10-20 Years		<p>Collaborate with state, local, and federal partners to increase the supply of multi-unit and short-term affordable housing for hospitality workers</p>		
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers • Dept. Of Transportation • EDCs • BLM, NPS, NFS • Attractions (museums, cultural centers, historical sites) • Restaurants/Dring/Lodging/Main Street Associations • Elected officials/bodies at all levels • FWP • BrandMT/Dept of Commerce • Tribal Governments • ITRR 			

IMPERATIVE 4

Infrastructure

- OBJECTIVES
- Increased signage and wayfinding
 - Increase the number of letters of support for infrastructure priorities

STRATEGIES	FOCUS ON TOURISM BYWAYS AND VISITOR TRANSPORTATION
Phase 1: Near-Term 0-5 Years	<p>Continue to support the development with the Big Sky Rail Authority in securing passenger rail across the region</p> <p>Identify opportunities to continue to support the rollout of the Montana Electric Vehicle infrastructure deployment plan</p>
Phase 2: Mid-Term 5-10 Years	<p>Initiative a cohesive region-to-state wayfinding system centered around key visitor attractions (partner with state?) Bighorn or Makoshika as a pillar?</p> <p>Assess historic and tribally relevant wayfinding and other language to a Tribal passport system</p>
Phase 3: Long-Term 10-20 Years	<p>Partner with organizations addressing gaps in the broadband and cellular service</p> <p>Partner to understand and advocate current air service gaps to improve capacity</p>
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority • Dept. Of Transportation • EDCs • BLM, NPS, NFS • Electric Vehicle Authority (?) • Elected officials/bodies at all levels • FWP • BrandMT/Dept of Commerce • Tribal Governments • NEVI – EV charging stations project (federal)

Imperative 1: Expand our marketing and communications capabilities

Expand marketing reach and content	Focus on collaborations to increase opportunities	Leverage technology in innovative ways
Explore options for new physical marketing displays such as billboards near key attractions on highways farther out from Billings (5 year)	Host pertinent Brand MT/State employees on FAM tours that showcase aspirational experiences in SEMT (5 year)	Create a landing page to educate visitors and the community on local etiquette at events (5 year)
Create creative marketing/social campaigns that lean into the East v. West/Us vs. Them divide in a playful way (5 year)	Identify tour operators for mutually beneficial partnerships to better promote, link and improve key assets in the region (5 year)	Use AR to engage younger generations (5 year)
Continue to develop marketing materials that showcase the entirety of SE Montana's assets (5 year)	SEMT BOD to host community forums prior to official BOD meetings to exchange insights and information (5 year)	Build SEMT app that allows trip building, chat and guidance from experts (10 year)
Improve current online business listings on the SE Montana website or replace w/ an alternative tool (5 year)	Advocate for opportunities to partner with the state on developing additional digital marketing channels (5 year)	Create a geo based, region-wide audio tour for visitors who are deaf/hard of hearing (10 year)
Campaign focuses on directing road trippers through Montana rather than Wyoming (5 year)	Communicate and collaborate with other MT offices (5 year)	
Create marketing materials depicting travel groups of diverse backgrounds (5 year)	Leverage partnerships within and outside of the region (10 year)	
Build a regionwide database of image and text materials for partners (5 year)	Continue the relationship building process with the Crow Tribe of Indians and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe to better facilitate their involvement in future efforts to brand the region (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increased engagement on social media channels
- Increased length of stay
- Increase content in shared database



Imperative 2: Activate residents and stakeholders to evolve our destination and enhance the visitor experience

Engage and activate the Southeast Region's residents and businesses in tourism development	Champion accessibility and diversity	Improve the visitor experience through capacity-building and data gathering
Create opportunities to allow longtime residents the ability to share local history and storytelling (5 year)	Identify existing arts, culture, agritourism and heritage attractions and prioritize the development of new attractions that cater to diverse communities (5 year)	Pursue nontraditional funding sources, such as private-sector partnerships, sponsorships and cooperative models (5 year)
Engage local farmers and ranchers in developing new agritourism experiences (5 year)		Fund dedicated staff or programs that address destination development (5 year)
Establish a destination master plan in collaboration with the CVBs (5 year)		Identify existing and new partners to help conduct and disseminate research on tourism's positive economic impacts to residents to continue increasing positive resident sentiment towards tourism (5 year)
Identify existing arts, culture, agritourism and heritage attractions and prioritize the development of new attractions that cater to diverse communities (5 year)		Create a Lodging Trail to showcase experiences with unique stories for visitors (5 year)
Pursue funding sources to revitalize historical and cultural assets (10 year)		Develop additional lodging accommodations options outside of Billings and Yellowstone County (10 year)
Prioritize opportunities to improve ADA accessibility of the region's experiences and attractions (10 year)		Utilize historic tax credits, maybe assist MT farmers/ranchers with another income stream via agritourism (10 year)
Support local retailers to increase visitor spending on local goods (10 year)		Sell ads on products built with private funds (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in the number of agritourism product offerings
- Increase repeat visitation



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Imperative 3: Evolve our destination stewardship

Housing and community engagement	Southeast Montana Board Development	Environmental Stewardship
Develop strategies to increase lodging and accommodation occupancy in response to how programs of SB 540 can be best utilized and stakeholders can best engage with the bill (10 year)	Work to prevent SE MT staff & BOD burnout and improve bench strength (5 year)	Leverage statewide leadership on LNT education materials. Distribute materials to visitors on how they can remain respectful and culturally sensitive towards the small communities they are visiting (5 year).
Collaborate with state, local, and federal partners to increase the supply of multi-unit and short-term affordable housing for hospitality workers (20 year)	Define the role of SEMT in the greater scope of work w/ Brand MT + Clarify expectations, rules, and relationships w/ Brand MT (5 year)	Implement outdoor recreation safety in stewardship education campaign (5 year)
	Better align SEMT internal, cooperative marketing grants to projects that directly raise our mission (5 year)	
	Host one board development training workshop annually (teaching communities to be on boards, reviewing Robert's Rules of Order (5 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in SEMT Board engagement score
- Increase in stakeholder sentiment

Imperative 3: Evolve our destination stewardship (continued)

Support local businesses and organizations in growing the tourism economy

Consider developing new programs or leveraging existing programs such as the Certified tourism ambassador program to prepare hospitality staff to better educate visitors on regional tourism assets/show excellent customer service & support recertification (5 year)	Identify partners in the community who can act as Visitor Information Center-alternatives and are able to provide broad visitor information.(5 year)
Advocate for local policies supporting small businesses and minimize economic leakage given that residents realize the importance of tourism supporting local businesses (5 year)	Define role of SE MT in aiding tourism workforce development (5 year)
Build intra-regional relationships to build trust, emergency response (understanding its capacity), and communicate the value and importance of tourism (5 year)	Create workshops for local businesses on techniques for tourism marketing in partnership with SE MT to attract visitors (specifically from the international market, and for organizing FAM tours)(10 year)
Continue regular visitor satisfaction or feedback surveys to identify trends and address challenges/ opportunities related to visitor economy (5 year)	Invite, listen to, and engage local Tribes (10 year)
Develop strategies to increase lodging and accommodation (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in SEMT Board engagement score
- Increase in stakeholder sentiment



Imperative 4: Improve infrastructure and access on important visitor byways

Focus on tourism byways and visitor transportation

Continue to support the development with the Big Sky Rail Authority in securing passenger rail across the region	Assess historic and tribally relevant wayfinding and other language to a Tribal passport system (10 year)
Identify opportunities to continue to support the rollout of the Montana Electric Vehicle infrastructure deployment plan	Partner to understand and advocate current air service gaps to improve capacity (20 year)
Identify opportunities to continue to support the rollout of the Montana Electric Vehicle infrastructure deployment plan (10 year)	Assess historic and tribally relevant wayfinding and other language to a Tribal passport system (20 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increased signage and wayfinding
- Increase the number of letters of support for infrastructure priorities





Missouri River Country Draft Plan

IMPERATIVE 1

Increase collaboration within and between regions

OBJECTIVES

- Completed list of contacts for the region's tourism stakeholders
- Increase the number of counties with 2 active MRC board members
- Complete/ initiate a collaboration with FWP on sportsmen/visitor etiquette
- Increase funding for cross-regional projects

STRATEGIES	IMPROVE LEADERSHIP AND BOARD COLLABORATION	ENSURE DIVERSE REPRESENTATION ACROSS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP
Initiatives (to be phased)	Assess the current organizational structure and staff skills of the MRC tourism organization and board in the context of current and future needs. (1a, 1b, 1c)	Seek opportunities to improve communication between MRC and BrandMT to align on industry support, advocacy and messaging. (1g, 1h)
	Establish a destination vision and identify a set of governing values and principles to guide decision-making related to tourism development and resilience. (1c)	Build stronger and shared connections with Chambers, TBIDs, local governments, elected officials, Tribal Tourism Department, other Tribal departments and the Community Services department within the college, hospitality businesses, and determine a structure for working together
	Move to a more "working" board with engaged and present members.	Seek opportunities to collaborate with other tourism regions in Montana to address broad-ranging issues such as industry workforce gaps. (1i)
	Encourage communities to participate in Main Street programs and get each community on a level playing field	

Screenshot

IMPERATIVE 2

Train Missouri River Country's residents to further engage them in the visitor economy.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase annual count of housing units meeting affordable housing standard of 30% of U.S. median income "partner for data needed (GNDC)"
- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions (State JobService program-community management team)
- Increase hours or days of key tourism businesses
- Increase the number of days Fort Peck Interpretive Center is open
- Attend x number of job fairs
- (existing) increase education to local resident organizations on tourism's value (goal of 2 per year currently, goal could be 5)

STRATEGIES	EXPAND DATA GATHERING AROUND THE TOURISM WORKFORCE	INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF WORKFORCE HOUSING AVAILABLE TO TOURISM WORKERS	EXPAND TRAINING FOR TOURISM WORKERS	EXPAND OUTREACH TO POTENTIAL TOURISM WORKERS	INCREASINGLY ENGAGE WITH THE GENERAL RESIDENT POPULATION AROUND TOURISM AND ITS IMPACTS
	Evaluate existing/emerging workforce development programs to see if they fit the region's needs	Work with local and state entities to ensure continued availability and growing supply of housing at all income levels (feasibility of apartments?), especially for tourism workers. (5h)	In partnership with workforce and education stakeholders, launch tourism industry training courses and organize familiarization tours for hospitality workers to enhance their knowledge of the destination and improve the visitor experience. (2e, 2f)	Promote part-time opportunities to younger workers	Partner with local communities and residents to ensure that tourism growth does not negatively impact community culture. (3e, 3f, 3g)
		Evaluate the potential to increase the availability of short-term rentals to provide alternative lodging options for visitors, while also weighing the potential negative impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability and affordability. (4m)	Provide incentives for training participation	Engage high-schoolers in the industry/ community	Engage residents and tour guides in creating itineraries or a marketing plan that promotes attractions and destinations to visitors but also preserves certain areas for local use. (3f)
		Connect longtime residents and those seeking housing		Highlight careers/ opportunities in the region for college graduates	Host community forums to build relationships with community members and have authentic conversations about tourism's impact on residents, including how to preserve local culture and address negative impacts of visitors. (3e, 3f, 3i)
				Promote gig economy opportunities that can benefit visitors' experience (ie. Rideshare and food delivery services)	Implement systems to monitor visitor feedback on their experiences in the region to identify opportunities for improvement. (4o)
				Work closely with front-line hospitality staff and local guides to align on current visitor preferences, understand destination conditions, and discuss how to balance the visitor experience with local resident needs. (2f)	
				Engage with tourism businesses to get their input - understand the opportunities they would be interested in	
				Leverage existing tourism and hospitality workers to help promote the industry and its career paths to future workers or current students to help boost the talent pipeline. (2c, 2d)	
				Work with regional workforce development stakeholders to identify strategies and best practices to improve the conditions for tourism industry workers and to market the sector as a desirable industry for employment. (2a, 2b, 2c, 2d)	

Screenshot

IMPERATIVE 3

Leverage funding to expand visitor attractions in the region and the infrastructure required to access them.

OBJECTIVES

- Build signage of key assets in 3+ new communities
- Build 2 new EV charging stations in MRC
- Increase stakeholder awareness of destination stewardship
- Create & market 2 new agritourism experiences
- Increase average visitation to agritourism assets

STRATEGIES	IMPROVE WAYFINDING INFRASTRUCTURE	IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR VISITORS	IMPROVE VISITOR AMENITIES AND FACILITIES	DISPERSE OUTDOOR RECREATIONISTS	DEVELOP ASSETS THAT BROADEN THE REGION'S APPEAL	FURTHER DEVELOP AGRITOURISM
	Implement a region-wide wayfinding system centered around the destination's most important assets. (5f)	Conduct more regular road maintenance and construct guardrails	Invest in infrastructure improvements for large events	Develop additional off-road (designated trails for access) and snowmobile access	Create new recreational activities like mini-golf, go-karts, and playgrounds	Pursue agritourism opportunities (leveraging state efforts/funding to grow industry) as a regional competitive strength
	Enhance wayfinding and information on how to access and navigate permitted outdoor spaces and remain off private land. (4g)	Pursue funding sources to improve highways 2, 200, and 191 and other highly traveled roads--and others such as highway 24 and 13--to improve regional mobility and access to key visitor sites. (5a, 5b, 5e)	Increase existing amenity capacity	Cri att		
		Support the rollout of the statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan and advocate for stations at key sites. Charging station at Fort Peck Interpretive Center? At hotels? (5d)	Pursue funding sources to implement and improve public facilities such as restrooms, garbage cans and drinking fountains near key visitor assets and population centers. (5g)	Inc bik		
		Investigate options to boost rental car availability within the region. (5c)		Ex nu (4i)		
		Investigate whether public transportation services are viable within the region's population centers. (5a)		De an reg vis ha (4i)		
		Increase the availability of ride-sharing and food delivery services (like DoorDash/ GrubHub)		Inc car		

IMPERATIVE 4

Support local businesses and address their marketing needs by leveraging MRC's brand.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase resident engagement with MRC hashtags and other digital markets
- Increase small business engagement with MRC hashtags and other digital markets
- Increase per visitor spend
- (existing) Increase bed tax revenue

STRATEGIES	DEVELOP AND ACCURATELY MARKET MISSOURI RIVER COUNTRY'S BUSINESSES	ESTABLISH NOVEL FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT
	Manage visitor expectations for the region's amenities & businesses	Establish or pursue a funding pool for business owners to use for beautification projects.
	Create and communicate a schedule of when businesses are open to manage visitor expectations. (4n)	
	Advocate for local policies and programs that support the development of tourism-dependent small businesses. (3h)	
	Leverage the positive resident sentiment toward the tourism industry and its positive impact on the regional economy to intentionally engage the community in the promotion and management of the destination. (3a, 3b, 3c, 3d)	
	Improve cohesion in hashtags and digital markers amongst tourism enterprises (state, regional, and town)	
	Develop region-specific materials showcasing tourism's economic benefits aimed at residents or distribute existing materials from the state more widely. (3g)	
	Further market existing guided outdoor experiences and investigate if there is demand for developing new types of experiences around niche, off-season, or year-round activities to disperse visitors geographically and seasonally. (4i, 4j)	

IMPERATIVE 5

Guide the visitor economy to benefit stakeholders and visitors of all backgrounds.

OBJECTIVES

- (existing) project to increase Canadian border opening
- Completed list of contacts for Indigenous communities in the region
- Add at least 1 active tribal representative to MRC's board

STRATEGIES	IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL READINESS	IMPROVE TRIBAL REPRESENTATION AT ALL LEVELS OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY
	Advocate for extended Canadian border openings.	Seek opportunities to diversify the staff and board of the MRC tourism organization, especially with representatives from Tribal nations. (1a, 1e)
		Identify ways to engage Tribal nations, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, elected officials, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (potentially tribal Fish & Game Department too), and industry and agricultural leaders in planning for tourism growth. (3j, 3k)

Imperative 1: Increase collaboration within and between regions

Improve leadership and board collaboration	Increase collaboration with other tourism regions, state agencies, and federal agencies
Assess the current organizational structure and staff skills of the MRC tourism organization and board in the context of current and future needs (5 year)	Seek opportunities to improve communication between MRC and BrandMT to align on industry support, advocacy and messaging.
Move to a more "working" board with engaged and present members (5 year)	Evaluate the potential to increase the availability of short-term rentals to provide alternative lodging options for visitors, while also weighing the potential negative impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability and affordability (10 year)
Encourage communities to participate in Main Street programs and get each community on a level playing field (5 year)	Seek opportunities to collaborate with other tourism regions in Montana to address broad-ranging issues such as industry workforce gaps (5 year)
Establish a destination vision and identify a set of governing values and principles to guide decision-making related to tourism development and resilience (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase the number of complete contacts for the region's tourism stakeholders
- Increase the number of counties with 2 active MRC board members
- Increase funding for cross-regional projects



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Imperative 2: Address workforce shortages by advocating for additional training, as well as policies that address housing and childcare needs

Expand data gathering around the tourism workforce	Increase the supply of workforce housing available to tourism workers	Expand training for tourism workers
Evaluate existing/emerging workforce development programs to see if they fit the region's needs (5 year)	Evaluate the potential to increase the availability of short-term rentals to provide alternative lodging options for visitors, while also weighing the potential negative impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability and affordability (5 year)	Evaluate the potential to increase the availability of short-term rentals to provide alternative lodging options for visitors, while also weighing the potential negative impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability and affordability (5 year)
Work with local and state entities to ensure continued availability and growing supply of housing at all income levels, especially for tourism workers (10 year)	Evaluate the potential to increase the availability of short-term rentals to provide alternative lodging options for visitors, while also weighing the potential negative impacts of vacation rentals on housing availability and affordability (10 year)	In partnership with workforce and education stakeholders, launch tourism industry training courses and organize familiarization tours for hospitality workers to enhance their knowledge of the destination and improve the visitor experience (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase annual count of housing units meeting affordable housing standard of 30% of U.S. median income
- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions
- Increase hours or days of key tourism businesses
- Increase the number of days Fort Peck Interpretive Center is open
- Attend an increasing number of job fairs



Imperative 2: Address workforce shortages by advocating for additional training, as well as policies that address housing and childcare needs (continued)

Expand outreach to potential tourism workers

Engage high-schoolers in the industry (5 year)

Work closely with front-line hospitality staff and local guides to align on current visitor preferences, understand destination conditions, and discuss how to balance the visitor experience with local resident needs (5 year)

Promote part-time opportunities to younger workers (10 year)

Promote gig economy opportunities that can benefit visitors' experience (10 year)

Leverage existing tourism and hospitality workers to help promote the industry and its career paths to future workers or current students to help boost the talent pipeline (10 year)

Work with regional workforce development stakeholders to identify strategies and best practices to improve the conditions for tourism industry workers and to market the sector as a desirable industry for employment. (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase annual count of housing units meeting affordable housing standard of 30% of U.S. median income
- Reduce vacancies in hospitality positions
- Increase hours or days of key tourism businesses
- Increase the number of days Fort Peck Interpretive Center is open
- Attend an increasing number of job fairs



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Imperative 3: Leverage funding to expand visitor attractions in the region and the infrastructure required to access them

Improve wayfinding infrastructure	Improve transportation infrastructure and provide additional transportation options for visitors
Implement a region-wide wayfinding system centered around the destination’s most important assets (5 year)	Investigate options to boost rental car availability within the region (5 year)
Enhance wayfinding and information on how to access and navigate permitted outdoor spaces and remain off private land (5 year)	Support the rollout of the statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan and advocate for stations at key sites (10 year)
	Investigate whether public transportation services are viable within the region’s population centers (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Build signage of key assets in 3+ new communities
- Build 2 new EV charging stations in MRC



Imperative 3: Leverage funding to expand visitor attractions in the region and the infrastructure required to access them (continued)

Disperse outdoor recreationists	Develop assets that broaden the region's appeal	Further develop agritourism
Explore opportunities to increase the number of full-service campgrounds. (5 year)	Invest in the development of attractions and experiences in a balanced way across all counties in the region (5 year)	Pursue agritourism opportunities (leveraging state efforts/funding to grow industry) as a regional competitive strength (10 year)
Increase trail development (10 year)	Pursue funding sources to develop and enhance cultural and heritage experiences, including accurate information and depictions (5 year)	
Increase the number of designated camping sites and dump stations (10 year)	Create additional equipment rental opportunities (10 year)	
Develop additional off-road (designated tails for access) and snowmobile access (20 year)	Develop winter sport opportunities (20 year)	
Develop outdoor recreation assets and infrastructure to broaden the region's appeal to a broader set of visitors and reduce crowding at a handful of popular sites or attractions (20 year)		

OBJECTIVES:

- Build signage of key assets in 3+ new communities
- Build 2 new EV charging stations in MRC



Imperative 4: Support local businesses and address their marketing needs by leveraging MRC's brand

Develop and accurately market Missouri River Country's businesses	Establish novel funding mechanisms for small business support
Manage visitor expectations for the region's amenities & businesses (5 year)	Establish or pursue a funding pool for business owners to use for beautification projects (10 year)
Create and communicate a schedule of when businesses are open to manage visitor expectations. (5 year)	
Advocate for local policies and programs that support the development of tourism-dependent small businesses. (5 year)	
Leverage the positive resident sentiment toward the tourism industry and its positive impact on the regional economy to intentionally engage the community in the promotion and management of the destination. (5 year)	
Develop region-specific materials showcasing tourism's economic benefits aimed at residents or distribute existing materials from the state more widely (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase resident engagement with MRC hashtags and other digital markets
- Increase small business engagement with MRC hashtags and other digital markets



Imperative 5: Guide the visitor economy to benefit stakeholders and visitors of all backgrounds

Improve international readiness	Improve tribal representation at all levels of the visitor economy	Increasingly engage with the general resident population around tourism and its impacts
Advocate for extended Canadian border openings (5 year)	Seek opportunities to diversify the staff and board of the MRC tourism organization, especially with representatives from Tribal nations. (5 year)	Partner with local communities and residents to ensure that tourism growth does not negatively impact community culture. (5 year)
	Identify ways to engage Tribal nations, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, elected officials, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (potentially tribal Fish & Game Department too), and industry and agricultural leaders in planning for tourism growth. (5 year)	Implement systems to monitor visitor feedback on their experiences in the region to identify opportunities for improvement. (5 year)
		Host community forums to build relationships with community members and have authentic conversations about tourism's impact on residents, including how to preserve local culture and address negative impacts of visitors. (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Completed list of contacts for Indigenous communities in the region
- Add at least 1 active tribal representative to MRC's board
- Increase education to local resident organizations on tourism's value





Central MT Draft Plan

Imperative 1: Increase stakeholder engagement to enhance the positive impact of tourism in the region

Strengthen alignment and collaboration with the Commerce Department to create a web of relationships and communication	Increase regional efficiencies through shared resources	OBJECTIVES: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in # of partners who collaborate with Central MT• Year-over-year increase in businesses and resident satisfaction survey results• Increase in stakeholder database• Increase resident and business community awareness of tourism benefits, impacts
Strengthen state engagement by staying informed about state developments and fostering greater collaboration between the state and central MT region (5 year)	Optimize the coordination of media schedules and strategies between the state and Central MT (5 year)	
Expand the region's capacity for environmental risk evaluation and data collection—potentially partnering with Brand MT or other third parties to access broader resource— and responding appropriately (5 year)	Develop standard operating procedures for tourism organizations, including to facilitate succession planning (5 year)	
Improve the sharing and accessibility of marketing materials between the state and region (10 year)	Amplify Central Montana's message so local communities and businesses can capitalize on the brand and marketing channels through partnerships and collaborative efforts (10 year)	
	Create a recommended list of partners available for marketing, media, and training assistance (10 year)	



Imperative 1: Increase stakeholder engagement to enhance the positive impact of tourism in the region (continued)

Support, protect, and enhance the diverse culture and heritage of the region	Identify, expand, and deepen stakeholder engagement and collaboration
Proactively ensure that growth is intentional and preserves the culture and heritage of the region by identifying clear growth objectives in collaboration with local and regional government, residents, and other local stakeholders (5 year)	Nurture relationships with business owners and populations from historically disadvantaged groups in the region and co-create opportunities to engage in discussions and decisions that affect businesses in the region (5 year)
Preserve the region's agricultural history and heritage while identifying ways to provide access to and promote this unique cultural offering to potential visitors (5 year)	Work with Glacier and Yellowstone-bound visitors to increase awareness of and travel to Central region (5 year)
Collaborate with connected partners to build education campaigns to set behavioral expectations for visitors and residents to encourage respectful interactions and stewardship of the natural environment and full-time residents (10 year)	Help stakeholders build digital/online presence (10 year)
	Connect and foster partnerships between tourism industry stakeholders and local government (10 year)
	Connect and foster partnerships between tourism industry stakeholders and local government (20 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in # of partners who collaborate with Central MT
- Year-over-year increase in businesses and resident satisfaction survey results
- Increase in stakeholder database
- Increase resident and business community awareness of tourism benefits, impacts



Imperative 2: Increase traveler awareness of and visitation to Central Montana through marketing and public relations

Expand awareness of regional assets, experiences, and opportunities	Foster local pride and interest in tourism and sites in region
Form a shared database of tourism assets and contacts (current, emerging, and potential) to share with tourism stakeholders region-wide (5 year)	Design and deploy a resident engagement and communication plan that may include a resident sentiment survey or public forums where residents can voice concerns and/or support for the visitor economy's impacts on their quality of life (5 year)
Leverage interest in outdoor recreation to motivate travel beyond high-visitation assets and visitor opportunities (5 year)	Ensure that the benefits from tourism and its future development in the region are equitably distributed throughout the year, across the region, and among all communities within Central Montana, including Indigenous communities (20 year)
Pursue opportunities to reach out to younger visitors through innovative marketing effort (5 year)	
Invest in the expansion of data collection as it pertains to tourism across the region (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in total visitation
- Increase the number of visitors to promoted communities through itineraries
- Increase traveler Net Promoter Score
- Increase shoulder season and off-season visitation



Imperative 3: Support workforce development efforts to increase the region's capacity for visitation

Support the development of Workforce education and training	Enhance perception of and quality of hospitality industry careers
Expand workforce research capabilities (5 year)	Develop programs and strategies to smooth out seasonal tourism fluctuations to improve workforce sustainability (5year)
Build destination ambassadorship programs that center on customer service/ambassador training utilizing field trips and guides for hospitality workers and tourism partners to understand destinations (10 year)	Create opportunities to appreciate and highlight tourism industry careers (10 year)
Strengthen and leverage the existing relationship between training and education providers and the tourism industry to develop tourism-specific regional workforce development programs that are tailored to training a highly seasonal workforce (20 year)	Develop opportunities for and encourage youth to get involved in local tourism (10 year)
	Work with key partners to better understand workforce needs within the region and lend support to ensure high-quality talent is attracted (20 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase Employee retention in tourism businesses
- Increase in the # of tourism-related jobs
- Increase in # of workforce trainings
- Increase # of tourism ambassadors



Imperative 4: Enhance the visitor experience through continued destination development and management

Diversify visitor types and experiences	Improve accessibility throughout the region
Create regional itineraries based on different interests (5 year)	Continue advocating for extended border openings to increase Canadian visitation opportunities. Consider collaborating with US Travel to accomplish this (5 year)
Expand channels and approaches to attract greater variety of audiences (5 year)	Provide resources and support to community efforts to increase accessibility (5 year)
Establish wayfinding infrastructure linking itineraries across the region (10 year)	Advocate for and invest in public transportation initiatives that aim to improve accessibility to and within the region (20 year)
Identify and address gaps in access to key visitor experiences (10 year)	
Advocate for enhancement or development of family-friendly destination assets (10 year)	
Develop a signage and connectivity plan between cultural heritage sites and phases for implementation (10 year)	
Research opportunities to disperse visitors throughout the year and beyond Cascade County (20 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase usage of targeted newly-accessible assets
- Increase in tourism assets/attractions
- % completion of wayfinding plan
- Increase in the # of available rooms by community

Imperative 4: Enhance the visitor experience through continued destination development and management (continued)

Advocate for and facilitate investment in essential infrastructure	Pursue and support product development	Expand region's lodging capacity, quality and diversity
Support efforts to expand Wifi, broadband, cell coverage across region (20 year)	Facilitate and support property owners seeking licensing and development of onsite experiences, e.g. tourism and work stays (5 year)	Advocate for and support the increase of lodging and accommodation quality throughout the region and increase quantity of options in smaller communities (5 year)
Support the rollout of the statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan and advocate for locating charging stations near areas that see high visitor volumes (20 year)	Convene tourism and agricultural industry stakeholders to explore connections between agricultural products and potential tourism experiences (10 year)	Investigate the benefits and downsides of increased short-term rentals in the region and advocate accordingly (20 year)
Advocate for and support existing plans for constructing and maintaining an adequate affordable housing supply for the region's hospitality workforce and a plan to handle the seasonal demands for workforce housing (20 year)	Explore increase in quantity and quality of rest areas and mid-point experiences (20 year)	Investigate the viability of expanding campgrounds in the region (20 year)
Explore increase in quantity and quality of rest areas and mid-point experiences (20 year)	Pursue and support funding and advocacy for additional indoor recreation spaces (20 year)	
Pursue and support funding and advocacy for additional indoor recreation spaces (20 year)		

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase usage of targeted newly-accessible assets
- Increase in tourism assets/attractions
- % completion of wayfinding plan
- Increase in the # of available rooms by community

Imperative 5: Increase organizational capacity to support regional stakeholders

Enhance and support the brand(s) of Central Montana	Lead regional stakeholder communications efforts
Maintain an updated list of events where visitors and residents can find out about upcoming festivals, events, cultural and history events (5 year)	Increase education and communication on the impacts of legislative changes to funding (5 year)
Expand existing marketing efforts and materials to appeal to a more diverse market, affordable travel, and the group sales segment, as well as showcasing the key assets and competitive advantages of the region (5 year)	Create a communications plan that optimizes frequency and content of communications with regional stakeholders and partners that emphasizes stakeholders' role within the regional tourism economy (10 year)
Define and identify the region's brand and competitive advantage to inform priorities for marketing, communication, and management (5 year)	
Communicate and represent expectations for visitors consistent with regional experience (5 year)	
Hire additional Central MT staff (5 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase staffing levels to support tourism growth
- Increase in % of open rates for communications
- Increase % of brand adoption by partners
- Year over year update to crisis and communication plan
- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase # of annual communication efforts



Imperative 5: Increase organizational capacity to support regional stakeholders (continued)

Identify ways to expand funding to broadly benefit regional resilience	Increase regional emergency and crisis preparedness
Explore partnerships to increase funding for marketing Central Montana (5 year)	Explore additional funding opportunities and prioritization for building repair and maintenance (5 year)
Expand funding utilization for rural communities to explore agritourism opportunities, including additional funding for permits to farms/ranches to allow for visitation and/or activation (10 year)	Develop a regional crisis communications plan that identifies the partners to connect with that can provide insight regarding disaster response (5 year)
Collaborate with stakeholders to better align funding possibilities with potential opportunities and areas of need (10 year)	
Identify and nurture relationships with funding partners who have an interest in investing in areas outside Cascade County (20 year)	
Explore and assess alternative industry funding models to secure greater versatility and flexibility in funding sources and uses (20 years)	
Explore additional funding opportunities and prioritization for building repair and maintenance (20 years)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase staffing levels to support tourism growth
- Increase in % of open rates for communications
- Increase % of brand adoption by partners
- Year over year update to crisis and communication plan
- Increase number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase # of annual communication efforts





Southwest MT Draft Plan

Imperative 1: Utilize multichannel communication and marketing to improve visitors' and residents' experience of the destination

Market to and Manage Visitors	Resident Engagement
Highlight visitor experiences beyond the outdoor draws (5 years)	Connect with local leaders—such as business owners and other prominent figures—to tell the region's story (5 years)
Highlight winter activities in the region (5 years)	Connect with lifestyle brands to promote the region (5 years)
Increase communication with visitors while they are in-market (5 years)	
Increase information and communication regarding dog-friendly places (5 years)	
Create additional visitor itineraries to spotlight attractions and food options, highlighting larger historic tours (5 years)	
Advocate for state-sponsored visitor centers at state gateways (5 years)	
Compile updated contact information for key industry stakeholders (5 years)	
Continue to promote shoulder season offerings (5 years)	
Increase the number of consistently-open destination services and attractions (10 years)	
Increase Southwest Montana's brand recognition as a destination (10 years)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase visitation year-over-year outside of the summer months
- Increase the number of collaborations with local leaders
- Increase engagement across key identified platforms



Imperative 2: Increase our workforce training and support to improve our capacity and anticipate future challenges

Workforce Development	Workforce Retention	Workforce Housing
Create presentations on customer service and tourism job opportunities for high schoolers (5 years)	Implement a rewards recognition program for tourism workers who go the extra mile (5 years)	Create a plan to address homelessness (10 years)
Create educational materials on career mobility within the tourism industry (5 years)		Create a strategy to increase housing supply for seasonal workers (10 years)
Recruit seniors in the tourism workforce (5 years)		
Engage younger workers to increase the total workforce (5 years)		

OBJECTIVES:

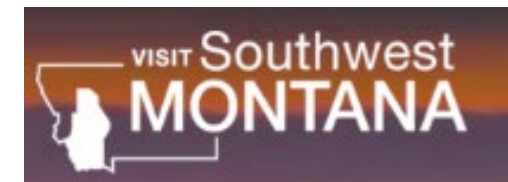
- Improve workforce retention in tourism businesses
- Increase the number of available workforce trainings
- Increase in the number of businesses participating in workforce trainings
- Increase in the supply of affordable workforce housing
- Increase in the number of interns in different tourism organizations
- Increase in the number of interns in different tourism organizations

Imperative 3: Improve regional infrastructure to further develop new and existing tourism assets

Transportation	Diversify Product Options
Advocate for EV charging stations adjacent to regional tourism assets (5 years)	Work more collaboratively with short-term rental owners (5 years)
Advocate for additional air service routes for the Butte airport (5 years)	Support a wider selection of motels, especially higher-end properties (5 years)
Explore collaborations with scooter and bike rentals (5 years)	Develop wellness assets (5 years)
Advocate for a shuttle service between towns in the Southwest region (10 years)	Develop conference and event facilities (10 years)
Advocate for additional stops in Southwest Montana via the Big Sky Rail (10 years)	Craft new incentive programs to stimulate product development (10 years)
Increase information on accessibility in the region through wayfinding, signage, and online information on accessibility at different locations (10 years)	Develop our Lady of the Rockies site and tram (10 years)
	Pursue resources to support new product development (20 years)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in the number of in-market transportation options
- Increase in the number of unique product offerings

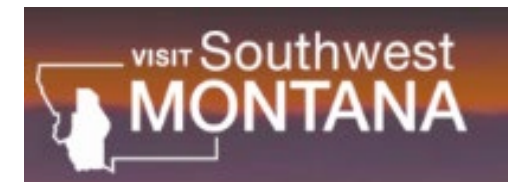


Imperative 4: Grow our organizational capacity, resources, and support through greater collaboration

Increase organizational capacity	Collaborate with our partners
Seek additional funding for region-specific marketing and local storytelling (5 years)	Partner with public land managers to encourage their participation in tourism (5 years)
Implement a strategic plan for Southwest Montana (5 years)	Support efforts by smaller communities to create TBIDs (5 years)
Create additional HR and admin support for regional leaders (5 years)	Strengthen the transfer of institutional knowledge within regional CVB/Chambers (5 years)
Increase Southwest Montana's data gathering capacity (5 years)	Increase stakeholder engagement at regional board meetings (5 years)
Hire additional regional tourism staff (5 years)	Develop a "State of the Region" report (10 years)
Provide health and financial benefits for regional and CVB leaders (5 years)	Improve communication and collaboration with non-locally owned lodging properties (10 years)
Actively recruit diverse board members (5 years)	
Pursue a revised funding model to support local chambers and build up local businesses (10 years)	
Levy assessments/surcharges to support specific tourism experiences (20 years)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase in the number of collaborative projects with state and regional communities
- Diversify funding sources



Imperative 5: Optimize and align residents on the benefits of tourism

Optimize and align residents on the benefits of tourism

Advocate for legislative recognition of tourism as an economic driver (5 years)

Expand regular communication beyond membership contact lists (5 years)

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a baseline score for resident sentiment around tourism and increase this score over time
- Increase in regional participation in education programs around tourism's benefits

A scenic mountain landscape. In the foreground, several bright yellow wildflowers with dark centers are in focus, growing on a green, grassy slope. The middle ground shows a deep, green valley with a winding road and dense evergreen forests. In the background, majestic mountains rise, their peaks partially covered in snow and shrouded in soft, white clouds under a clear blue sky.

Glacier Country Draft Plan

Imperative 1: Ensure broad engagement in destination management efforts

Advance and diversify civic engagement
Streamline current tourism governance structures to clarify roles and responsibilities and increase regional tourism board effectiveness (5 year)
Increase efforts to engage tourism stakeholders and residents who are based outside Flathead County or Missoula County (5 year)
Increase participation and representation of region's diversity of cultures and perspectives (5 year)
Encourage greater regional alignment and leverage of existing marketing capabilities and brand (5 year)
Build a plan to support and market individual Indigenous-owned businesses, in addition to showcasing events on the Blackfeet and Flathead reservations (5 year)
Encourage broader engagement within regional tourism leadership (5 year)
Partner with local and regional economic development agencies to develop programs and services that benefit the tourism industry and identify opportunities for the tourism industry to assume a greater decision-making role in determining local and regional economic growth (5 year)
Facilitate greater connection and synergy between independent destination management and development initiatives across the region (10 year)
Connect, engage, and uplift initiatives within other relevant development plans to ensure collaboration of resources and priorities across organizations and assets, particularly in areas that fall outside of tourism's direct control or management (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a baseline resident sentiment score around tourism and improve upon it
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations



Imperative 1: Ensure broad engagement in destination management efforts (continued)

Advance and diversify civic engagement

- Assist community stakeholders in grant writing through training, workshops and potentially retaining the services of a person with grant-writing expertise (5 year)
- Work with partners to develop “how-to guides,” outlining practical ways for partners to integrate destination stewardship principles into their own organizations (5 year)
- Develop a more expansive resident sentiment survey program that tracks sentiment on the visitor economy and community issues, and publish the results on a regular basis for ongoing conversation (5 year)
- Enhance and develop avenues for citizens to engage with Glacier Country Tourism so they are informed, feel heard, and become involved and collaborate to find solutions (5 year)
- Establish regularly scheduled community forums and other live and digital programming to provide more transparent and effective communication between industry stakeholders and residents
- Build industry engagement with organizations and networks responsible for planning and policy decision-making that impacts the visitor economy (5 year)
- Convene experts in areas such as housing, transportation, workforce, etc. with stakeholders in the tourism industry to share strategies, best practices, and the perspectives of the visitor economy (5 year)
- Partner with local stakeholders to develop destination development plans that pull together planning, policy, and capacity-building efforts (5 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a baseline resident sentiment score around tourism and improve upon it
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations



Imperative 1: Ensure broad engagement in destination management efforts (continued)

Increase collaboration with public organizations, private organizations, and NGOs

Increase inter-regional partnership and collaboration opportunities with neighboring regions to increase the impact and effectiveness of Glacier Country's own efforts. (e.g. pursue wider geographic distribution to relieve over-visitation) (5 year)

Deepen relationships and collaboration with adjacent sector government agencies and community organizations to pursue solutions to issues affecting residents and visitors alike (5 year)

Continue to advocate for regional cooperation to create a seamless visitor experience and share a "rising tide lifts all boats" mentality across the region (5 year)

Work with partners to develop experiences offering visitors the chance to "give back", with possibilities including creating "voluntourism" opportunities or incentivizing responsible visitor behavior with discounted or exclusive experiences (5 year)

Advocate at state and federal levels to address community issues related to the visitor economy, such as supporting ways to alleviate visitor pressures on gateway cities (5 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a baseline resident sentiment score around tourism and improve upon it
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations
- Increase the number of collaborative projects between stakeholders
- Increase the number and diversity of new stakeholders and organizations

Imperative 2: Protect natural resources while strengthening tourism infrastructure

Protect outdoor assets and resources and promote responsible recreation

Develop itineraries focused on sustainable visitor experiences and trails, integrating responsible behaviors with local businesses and organizations that embrace sustainable tourism (5 year)

Actively recruit and gain ongoing commitment for stakeholder engagement in plan implementation through participation in initiative management teams (5 year)

Develop resident communication strategies to reduce anti-tourism behaviors: "Be Kind" messaging (5 year)

Develop resident communication strategies to provide timely information on availability of outdoor recreation assets based on real-time data (5 year)

Collaborate with parks, campgrounds, etc. to leverage permit and reservation system for optimal real-time availability (no-shows, wait-list notifications) (5 year)

Explore opportunities to ensure local/resident access to campgrounds, other assets (5 year)

Continue to pursue development and enhancement of outdoor recreation activities, assets, and infrastructure that bolster the region's existing reputation as a world-class outdoor recreation destination (5 year)

Explore data and technology solutions to enable proactive hyperlocal destination management based on real-time visitation patterns (5 year)

Develop content strategies to deliver Recreate Responsibly messaging in the various channels where visitors are consuming content (5 year)

Encourage more businesses to take part in the Montana Recreate Responsibly Business Partner program and encourage responsible tourism throughout the customer journey (5 year)

Actively highlight organizations that embrace sustainable and regenerative practices throughout their business (5 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Decrease year-over-year trailhead-related complaints
- Measure and increase the number of communities who pledge to destination stewardship principles
- Increase Glacier Country's visitor Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Imperative 2: Protect natural resources while strengthening tourism infrastructure (continued)

Enhance the destination experience

Increase access and visitation to lesser-known tourism assets and experiences across the region through enhanced wayfinding, content, and experience-driven itineraries and trails (5 year)

Support the pursuit of alternative funding sources to improve necessary infrastructure throughout the region (5 year)

Invest in wayfinding infrastructure to lead visitors to lesser-known attractions, and inter-regional experiences as a means to disperse visitors throughout and outside of Glacier Country (5 year)

Investigate pathways to introduce new and improve existing amenities and visitor services along transportation corridors to draw and support visitation throughout the region, including the northern and western parts of Glacier Country (5 year)

Grow the domestic tourism market by creating and promoting more “off-the-beaten-path” destinations and experiences for Montana visitors (5 year)

Identify and prioritize “high yield, low impact” travelers who are more likely to leave a larger economic impact, come during shoulder season and travel beyond iconic destinations (5 year)

Identify and incentivize event and festival opportunities to drive shoulder season visitation (5 year)

Advocate for funding mechanisms, such as the resort tax, that harness tourism to drive public revenues for infrastructure and capacity development (5 year)

Advocate for infrastructure improvements (5 year)

Expand the region's capacity to host events, meetings, conventions, and conferences to help diversify the region's tourism assets (10 year)

Diversify the region's tourism products – beyond outdoor recreation assets and experiences – to expand the region's appeal to a more diverse range of visitor types, with additional focus on areas outside

Missoula, Kalispell, and Whitefish (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Decrease year-over-year trailhead-related complaints
- Measure and increase the number of communities who pledge to destination stewardship principles
- Increase Glacier Country's visitor Net Promoter Score (NPS)



DRAFT

Imperative 2: Protect natural resources while strengthening tourism infrastructure (continued)

Ensure the destination is welcoming to all

Increase efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming destination, including visitor groups historically underrepresented in the region's visitor demographics (5 year)

Reduce systemic barriers and increase equity of visitor access and experiences, e.g. investment in technological solutions, resources, and tools to support equitable navigation of permitting system for Glacier National Park, affordability of attractions, etc. (5 year)

Establish a DEI leader and resource for the region (5 year)

Prepare the region for accessible international visitation by investing in multilingual signage, expanding multilingual promotional material and wayfinding outside of the National Parks, and training frontline workers to assist non-native English speakers (10 year)

Advocate for improved accessibility of key tourism assets for individuals with a variety of mobility challenges and other disabilities (10 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase visitation year-over-year outside of the summer months
- Increase the number of collaborations with local leaders
- Increase engagement across key identified platforms

Imperative 3: Increase the availability and quality of tourism workforce

Expand outreach and training	Develop and connect resources supporting workforce support infrastructure and small businesses
Increase promotion of industry careers and open positions to the local community (5 year)	Develop and advance tourism-specific regional workforce development programs, including customer service training and brand ambassador training for visitor-facing workers, building upon initiatives from the Destination Stewardship Plan (5 year)
Partner with higher ed and technical school system to leverage and advance local hospitality and tourism industry training programs (5 year)	Advocate to improve the supply of affordable housing and support specific projects likely to host tourism workers such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) (5 year)
Advocate for support and resources for small businesses and entrepreneurship across the region (5 year)	Create webinars and/or educational resources for regional stakeholders about innovative workforce development and childcare options (5 year)
Leverage data to promote information about the economic impact of tourism, and make data available to all communities in Glacier Country (5 year)	Develop resources for businesses owned by tribal members, people of color, LGBTQ+, women and other underrepresented groups to remove systemic barriers and provide access and opportunity to benefit from the region's visitor economy (5 year)
Explore opportunities to champion and promote positive stories from the tourism industry workforce to promote the regional tourism industry as a great place to work (5 year)	Engage in public-private partnerships to enhance workforce development initiatives revolving around housing, transportation, and childcare (5 year)
Partner with other regions and industries/sectors across Montana to identify and leverage potential solutions to workforce shortages that could mutually benefit different geographies and industries (5 year)	Develop community-wide programs to increase awareness and support of tourism and hospitality as a key economic driver that provides growth opportunities for all locals and small businesses (5 year)
Support greater access and resources for participation in industry educational conferences and memberships (5 year)	Support the development and implementation of a referral program where businesses are incentivized to refer customers to other local businesses (5 year)
Develop a Glacier Country Ambassador program to provide visitor-facing workers and residents with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to be ambassadors for responsible tourism in the region (5 year)	Fund, support, and resource local childcare initiatives (10 year)
Enhance and promote awareness of hospitality culture training programs in collaboration with local educational institutions and industry partners (5 year)	
Develop and promote training programs for stakeholders to strengthen alignment and positioning of the region (5 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase employee retention in tourism businesses
- Increase employee retention in tourism businesses



DRAFT

Imperative 4: Align resources in support of strategy and implementation

Ensure proactive, inclusive, and consistent stakeholder communication

Increase industry-focused advocacy channels and opportunities (5 year)

Strengthen coordination with state to ensure timely information and crisis communication is received and can be communicated out through Glacier Country's channels (5 year)

Encourage inclusion of more individuals from a variety of demographic backgrounds in the region's marketing materials (5 year)

Ensure all messaging and materials are welcoming and representative of the ethos of Glacier Country (5 year)

Ensure Recreate Responsibly messaging is supported by and through travel writers and influencers (5 year)

Build awareness of existing crisis response plans and ensure that Glacier Country Tourism can effectively communicate with visitors in the event of a crisis (5 year)

Ensure regular public communication of progress toward Resilience Plan and Stewardship Plan outcomes to establish Glacier Country as a stewardship leader within Montana's tourism industry (5 year)

Continuously monitor and assess the evolving impacts of high resident population growth in evaluating strategies to mitigate the impacts of high visitor volumes (5 year)

Ensure ongoing communication of existing strategies and progress toward minimizing and mitigating some of the negative impacts impacts of tourism at local, regional, and state levels (5 year)

Convene experts in areas such as outdoor recreation, trail development, agritourism, arts and culture, culinary, etc. With local stakeholders to assist in the development and implementation of destination development plans (5 year)

Hire community engagement director(s) to engage with residents and local community organizations and advocate for the interests of all parties (5 year)

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a set of key representative groups and measure the percent of those roles that are filled on the board such that 25% of the board is comprised of key representative groups
- Increase stakeholder awareness of destination stewardship
- Increase the number of stakeholders who have access to needed data



DRAFT

Imperative 4: Align resources in support of strategy and implementation

Enhance data collection and knowledge-sharing capacity

Support the rollout of the statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan and advocate for locating charging stations in opportune areas (5 year)	Work with key partners to perform research to better understand and predict workforce needs within the region in response to changing patterns of demand for tourism workers (5 year)
Create a funding/resource platform to communicate opportunities for EV charging stations (5 year)	Gather and share data and information related to the visitor economy that may be utilized in addressing community issues, such as short-term rental and visitor flow data (5 year)
Identify funding sources to improve broadband and Wi-Fi throughout the region (5 year)	Continue to invest in data management platforms to monitor visitor flows and carrying capacities (5 year)
Provide wifi/internet access in visitor's centers (5 year)	Gather and share data and information related to the visitor economy that may be used in advocating for better transportation links throughout the region (5 year)
Provide information on funding opportunities and for small business enhancement to help attract additional visitors (5 year)	Gather and share data and information related to the visitor economy that may be utilized in attracting investment in lodging and accommodations (5 year)
Continue to seek and diversify new types of resources/funding for both tourism marketing and tourism management as they become available to both the public and private sector (5 year)	Continue to invest in data management platforms and share information with partners and stakeholders to inform local strategies (5 year)
Provide information on distances between regional destinations within the travel guides and in visitor-facing resources (5 year)	Explore opportunities to expand upon limited public transportation options in the region (10 year)
Research and advocate for short-term rental policies that support a well-balanced experience for residents, communities, and visitors alike (5 year)	Seek and support additional and alternative funding sources available for natural resource protection and restoration (10 year)
Advocate for the creation of additional digital access points (10 year)	

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a set of key representative groups and measure the percent of those roles that are filled on the board such that 25% of the board is comprised of key representative groups
- Increase stakeholder awareness of destination stewardship
- Increase the number of stakeholders who have access to needed data



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Comments, Insights, and Considerations

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Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research

Tourism Advisory Council Meeting
October 3 & 4, 2023

Agenda

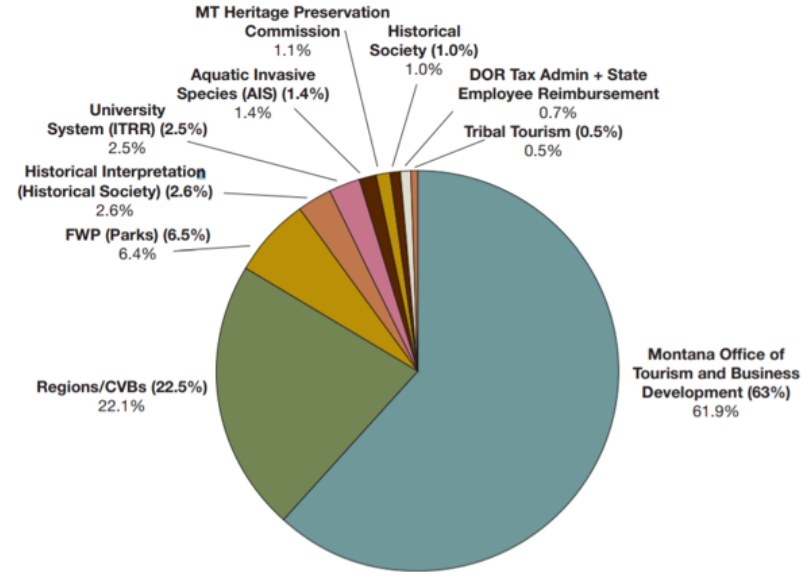
- Welcome & Introductions
- Data Collection Methods
- FY 24 Projects
- Research Impacts
- ITRR Accomplishments
- FY 25 Proposed Project Ideas/Research



Who we are

- ITRR was established in 1987 to conduct objective research in tourism and recreation. ITRR is housed in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation at The University of Montana-Missoula.
- ITRR receives 2.5% of the 4% of Lodging Facility Use Tax. Research needs are solicited annually from tourism businesses, government agencies, non-profits, and other interested parties, then prioritized and approved by the Tourism Advisory Council. The Dean of the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation has final approval of selected projects.
- Additional grants and contracts are obtained through written proposals to public and nonprofit agencies involved in tourism and recreation. In 2020, ITRR was awarded a \$40 million 5- yr. contract with two other research firms.

DISTRIBUTION OF 4% LODGING FACILITY USE TAX*



Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research



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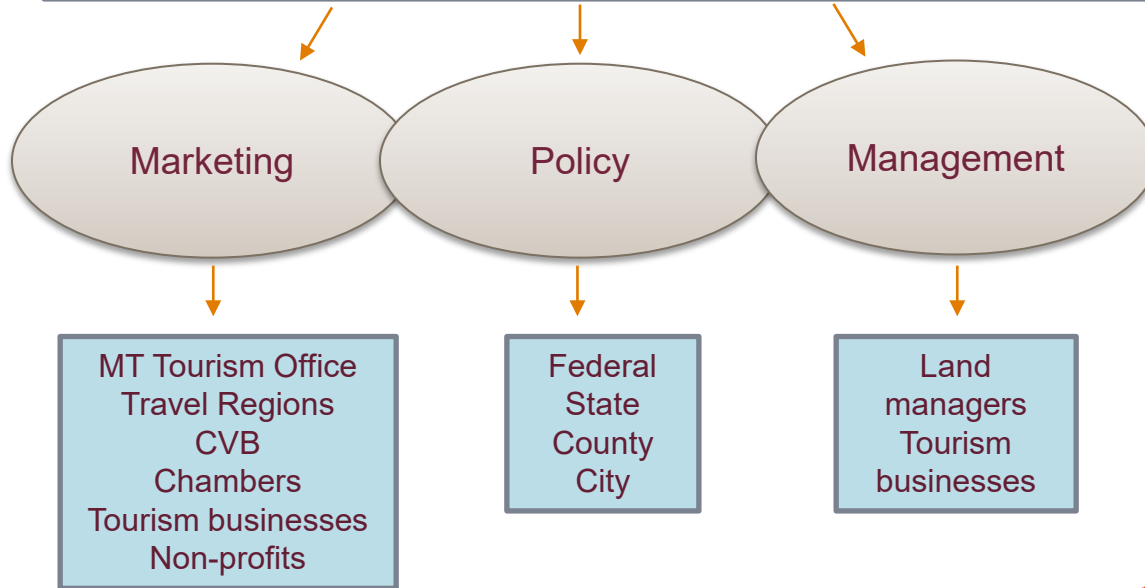
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Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR):
Collect, analyze, and interpret tourism and
recreation data for planning and decision making



Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research

- Quarterly Nonresident Travel & Recreation Analysis
- Quarterly Resident Survey
- Economic Impacts and Future Outlooks
- Tourism and Recreation Monitoring
- Emerging Issues
- Survey Kits
- Data Visualization
- Public Repository of Research



36 Years of Providing Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Research

Tourism Advisory Council



- The Governor-appointed Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) oversees the distribution of the Lodging Facility Use Tax ("bed tax") to Montana's tourism regions and convention and visitor bureaus, advises the Department of Commerce relative to tourism promotion, and fulfills other functions as defined by MCA 2-15-1816.
- Each year, ITRR proposes a research agenda, including project proposals and a budget outline, to the TAC Research Committee.
- Projects are discussed based on how beneficial they will be to the tourism and recreation industry statewide. More niche, or local projects, may be approved if the findings would be beneficial or applicable to others.
- TAC votes on bed tax-funded projects annually

ITRR Research Projects

FY 24 TAC Approved Projects

Yellowstone Flood Recovery & Resiliency

Tourists' Preferences for Stargazing in Eastern MT

Impacts of Short-term Rentals in Montana

Montana Agritourism & Recreation: 20 Years Later

Recreation Access Research (Cooke City/Silver Gate)

Understanding Eastern Montana Visitor

On-going Annual Research

Quarterly Nonresident Analysis

Quarterly Resident Analysis

Annual Economic Impacts and Outlook

Tourism and Recreation Monitoring

State Park Visitation

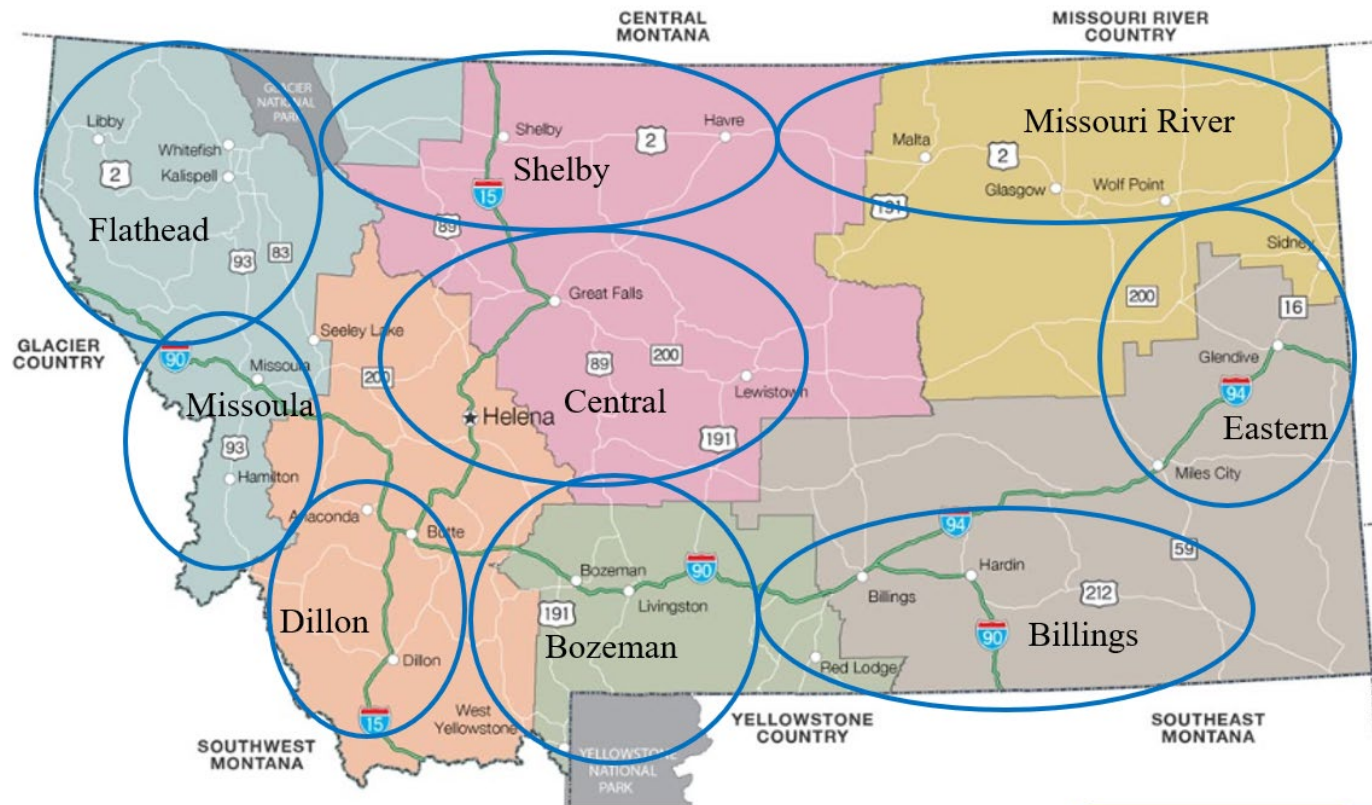
Survey Kits

Quarterly Nonresident Research

- On-going since July 2009
- Each Intercept:
 - Up-front survey on the iPad
 - Mailback survey
- Understanding the Total Population of Visitors to Montana
 - 11 Surveyors covering 9 Territories
 - Over 65 Communities Represented
 - Each working 29 hours per week*



Data Collection Territories



INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM & RECREATION RESEARCH

Home
Survey Kit

About ITRR
Employment Opportunities

Interactive Data
Contact Us

Publications and Reports

INSTITUTE FOR TOURISM & RECREATION RESEARCH

The Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research conducts travel and recreation research in Montana, with a primary focus on the nonresident travel survey conducted throughout the state. ITRR is perhaps best known for producing the widely used statewide estimates of total nonresident visitation and travel expenditures, as well as visitor characteristics, in the state each year, along with the annual estimate of the economic contribution of nonresident travel to Montana's economy. Read more about the [nonresident travel survey and visitation and spending estimation models](#).



INTERACTIVE DATA

SPENDING & ECONOMICS

PUBLICATIONS

MOST RECENT FINDINGS

SURVEY KIT

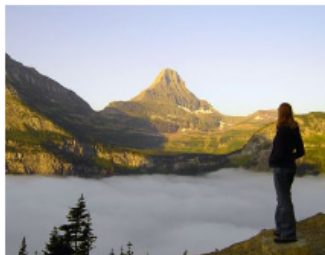
<https://www.umt.edu/tourism-recreation-research/>

Survey Kit Overview

- Service for a minimal fee
 - \$500 to \$800
 - Depends on method used
- Includes:
 - Survey design (based off template)
 - Guidance on collecting the data
 - Data entry and analysis
 - Report on the results
 - Including open-ended comments in an appendix
- Survey Kits (2023 Examples)
 - Montana Folk Festival
 - Livingston Yellowstone HarvestFest
 - The Event at Rebecca Farm
 - Gardiner Rodeo



ITRR Data Dashboards (Publicly Available)



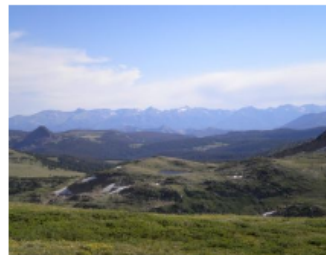
Nonresident Survey Full Data Summary

Dive in to complete customizable access to summary percentages from our complete nonresident survey.



Nonresident Survey Mailback Crosstabs

Examine how trip characteristics like Activities or Sites Visited on trip vary across cross-sections of nonresident visitors.



Visitor Trends Nonresident Visitation

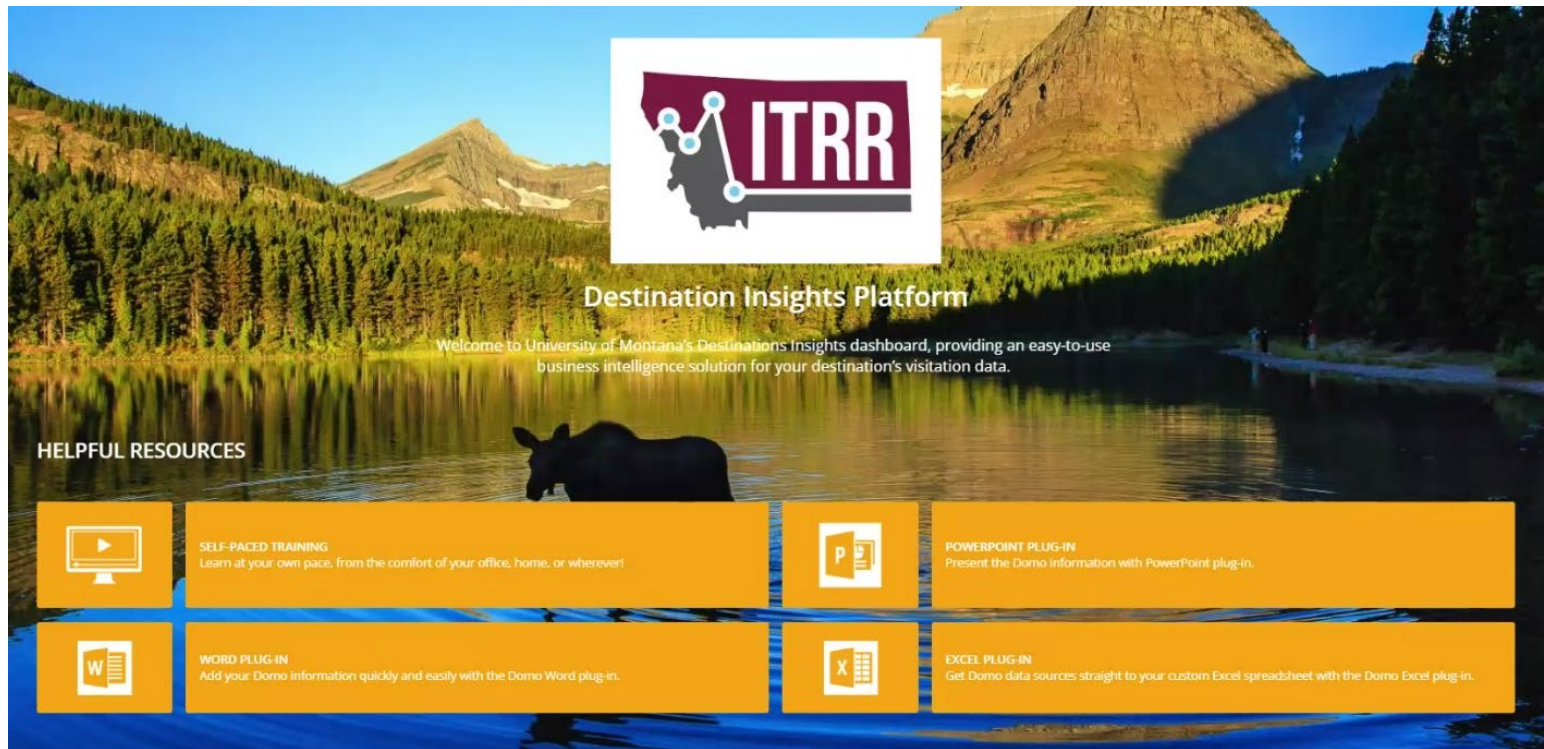
Learn how many nonresidents visit Montana by examining visitation trends.



Resident Survey National Park Visitation Q1, 2023

Our most recent resident report from Q1, 2023 highlights Montana residents' visitation to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks.

NEW-Destination Insight Platform (Authorized Users)



The screenshot shows the Destination Insights Platform dashboard. At the top center is the ITRR logo, which features a stylized map of Montana with a network of nodes and lines, and the letters 'ITRR' in a maroon box. Below the logo, the text 'Destination Insights Platform' is displayed. A welcome message reads: 'Welcome to University of Montana's Destinations Insights dashboard, providing an easy-to-use business intelligence solution for your destination's visitation data.' Below this, a section titled 'HELPFUL RESOURCES' contains four orange boxes, each with an icon and text: a play button icon for 'SELF-PACED TRAINING' (Learn at your own pace, from the comfort of your office, home, or wherever!); a PowerPoint icon for 'POWERPOINT PLUG-IN' (Present the Domo information with PowerPoint plug-in.); a Word icon for 'WORD PLUG-IN' (Add your Domo information quickly and easily with the Domo Word plug-in.); and an Excel icon for 'EXCEL PLUG-IN' (Get Domo data sources straight to your custom Excel spreadsheet with the Domo Excel plug-in.). The background of the dashboard is a scenic photograph of a lake with a moose in the foreground and mountains in the background.

ITRR

Destination Insights Platform

Welcome to University of Montana's Destinations Insights dashboard, providing an easy-to-use business intelligence solution for your destination's visitation data.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

SELF-PACED TRAINING
Learn at your own pace, from the comfort of your office, home, or wherever!

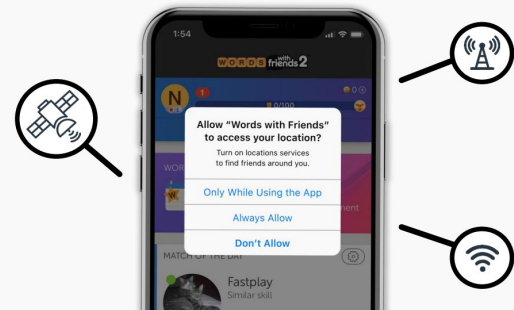
POWERPOINT PLUG-IN
Present the Domo information with PowerPoint plug-in.

WORD PLUG-IN
Add your Domo information quickly and easily with the Domo Word plug-in.

EXCEL PLUG-IN
Get Domo data sources straight to your custom Excel spreadsheet with the Domo Excel plug-in.

Mobile Location Data

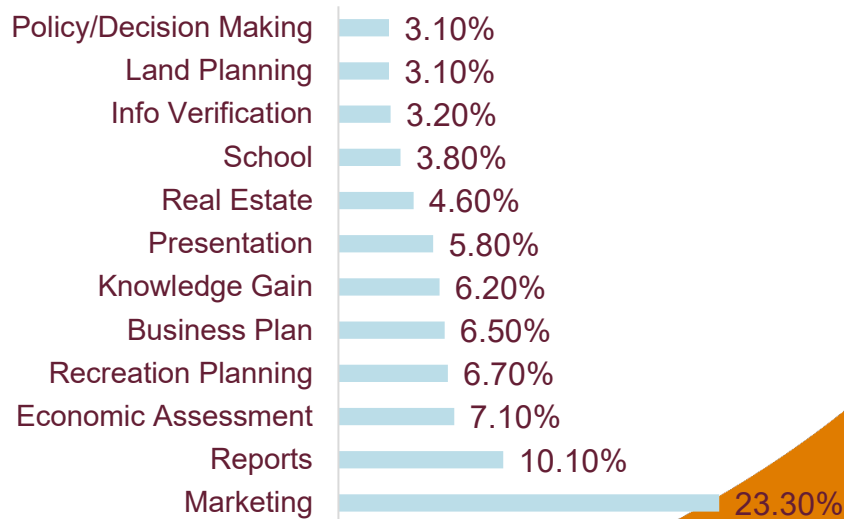
- Growing Trends in Tourism Industry
- Should not be compared to visitation data (apples vs oranges)
- Provides information about geographic positions of devices (such as smartphones or tablets) or structures (such as buildings and attractions) and does not collect a person's identity, demographics, or other identifiable information
- Rural location challenges with cell service and sample size
- Many factors impact the total sample size
 - Number of app partnerships
 - Usage of apps
 - App developer policies
 - Volume of visitors



ITRR Research Impacts

- **ScholarWorks**
 - ~15,000 Annual Downloads
 - Over 96k Downloads since 2014
- **Interactive Data Reports**
 - ~2k views each quarter
- **In 2022 ITRR**
 - Surveyed 7,496 nonresidents
 - Surveyed 11,537 residents

Data Usage by Type



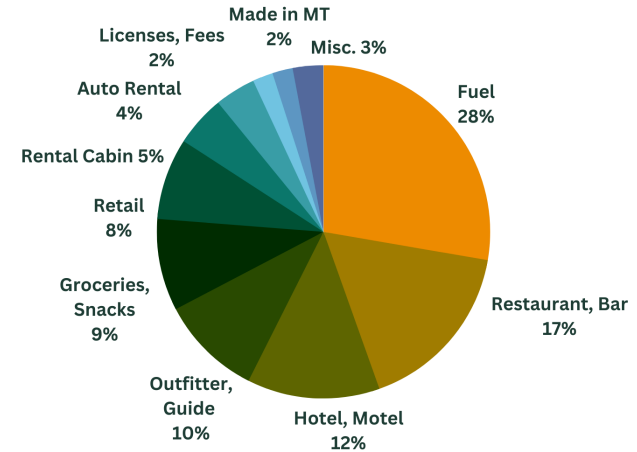
2022 Montana Travel Industry

2022 Estimates



12.5 million travelers

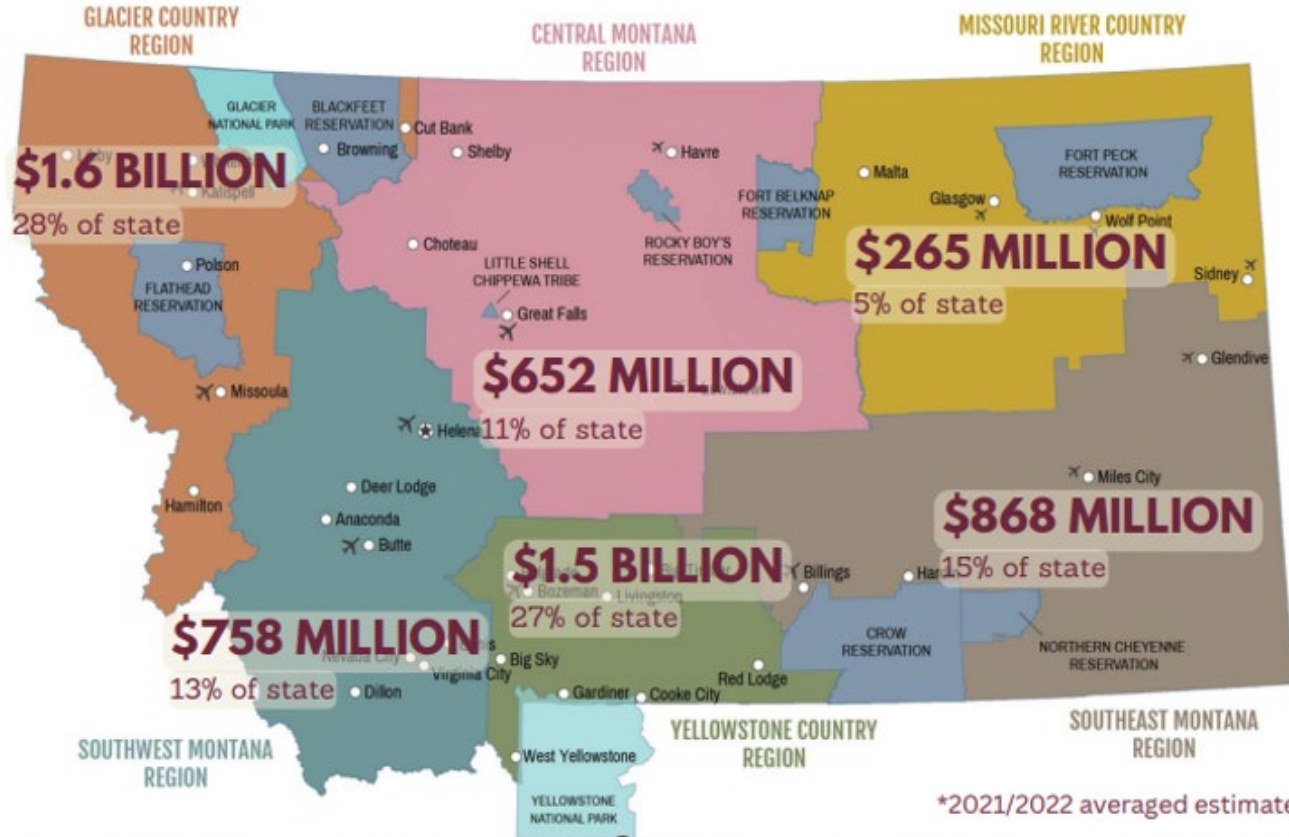
Nonresident travel spending in Montana -
\$5.82 billion



Year	Nonresident Visitors
2022	12,409,000
2021	12,840,000
2020	11,202,000
2019	12,585,000
2018	12,343,000

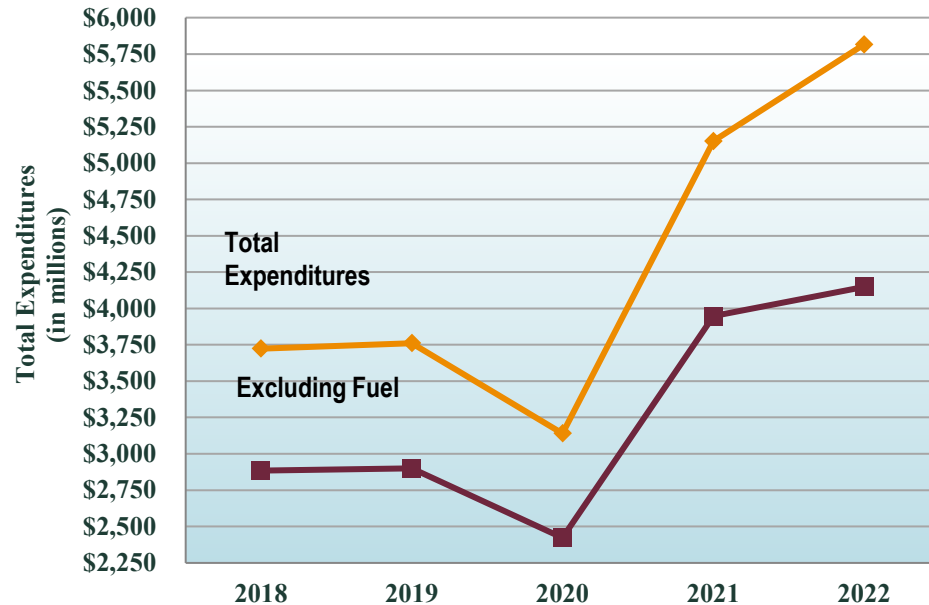


2022 Montana Travel Industry

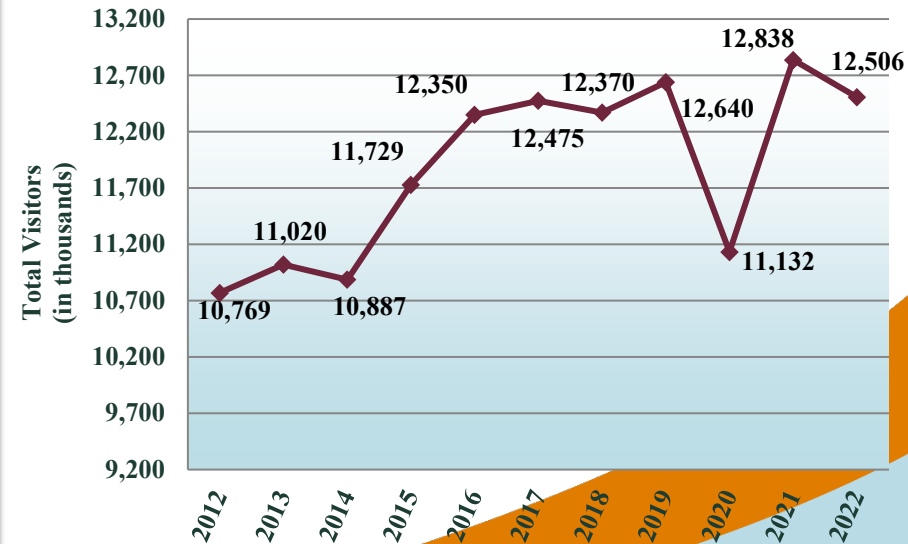


2018-2022 Montana Nonresident Traveler Expenditure and Visitation Trends

Total Actual Expenditures

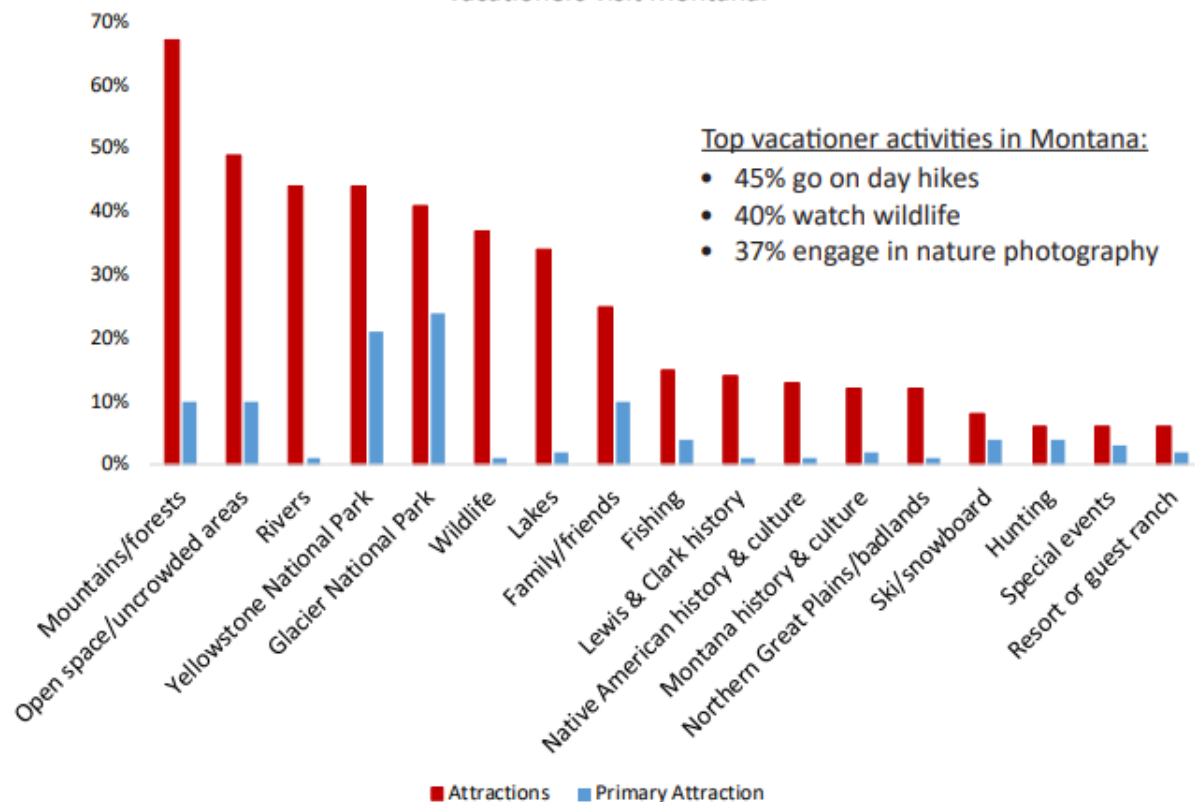


Nonresident Visitors



Vacationers Come to Montana for the Great Outdoors

Natural resources are the top eight out of nine reasons vacationers visit Montana.



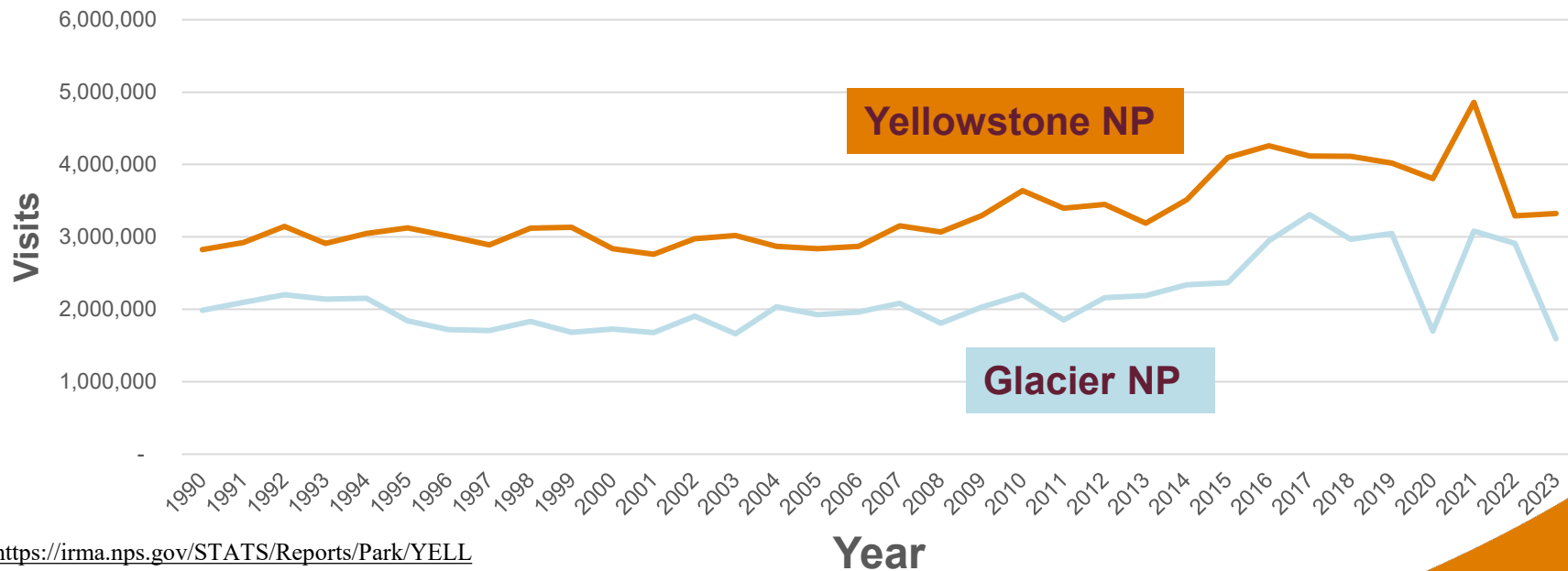
2022-23 ITRR Accomplishments

- New Logo & Brand
- Annual Infographic
- Conferences & Networking
- Research Listening Sessions
- Research Collaborations
- BBER Annual Economic Update
- Montana Outdoor Recreation Summit (Oct 11-13)
- Destination Insight Platform – Authorized Users
- Data Science Communication Specialist Hire



2023 Update – National Parks

Montana National Park Recreation Visitation: 1990-2023



<https://irma.nps.gov/STATS/Reports/Park/YELL>

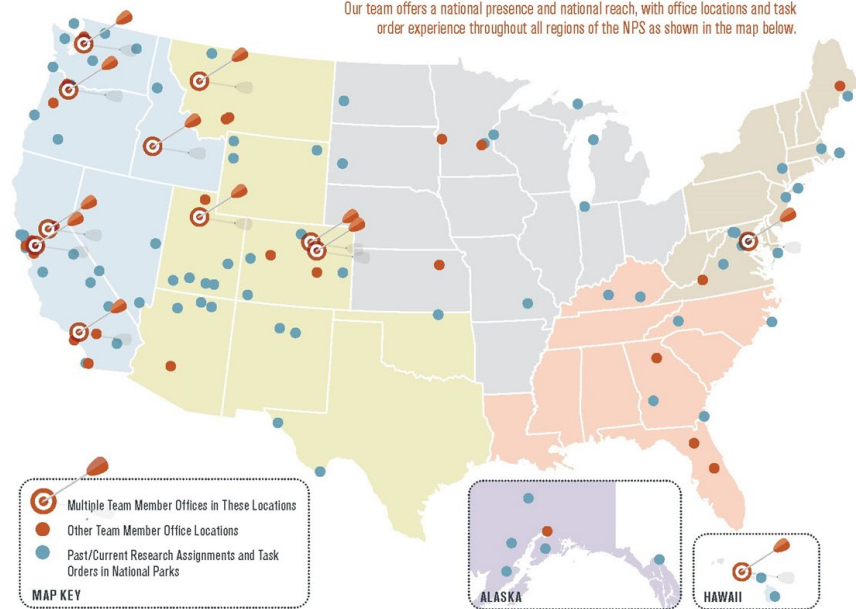
**YTD for 2023; not a full year*

National Parks Collaboration

- Great Basin National Park
- Badlands National Park
- Lassen Volcanic National Park
- Grant Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
- Canyon de Chelly National Monument
- NPS Wildland Fire Communications
- National Survey of Educators
- Interagency Pass Program



Our team offers a national presence and national reach, with office locations and task order experience throughout all regions of the NPS as shown in the map below.



FY 25 TAC Project Proposals

1. Montana Dinosaur Trail & Paleo Tourism
2. Economic and Social Impact of Montana Museums on Local Communities
3. Impact of Conventions, Meetings & Retreats
4. Impact of Guided Hunting and Fishing on Nonresident Expenditures
5. Flathead Lake Levels Impacts on the Recreation Economy of Surrounding Communities
6. Factors Influencing Vacationers not to Visit Montana
7. Understanding Recreation Users of Canyon Ferry Lake

Questions?

Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research

itr@umontana.edu

THAT'S HOW YOU
MONTANA

Mitch Staley

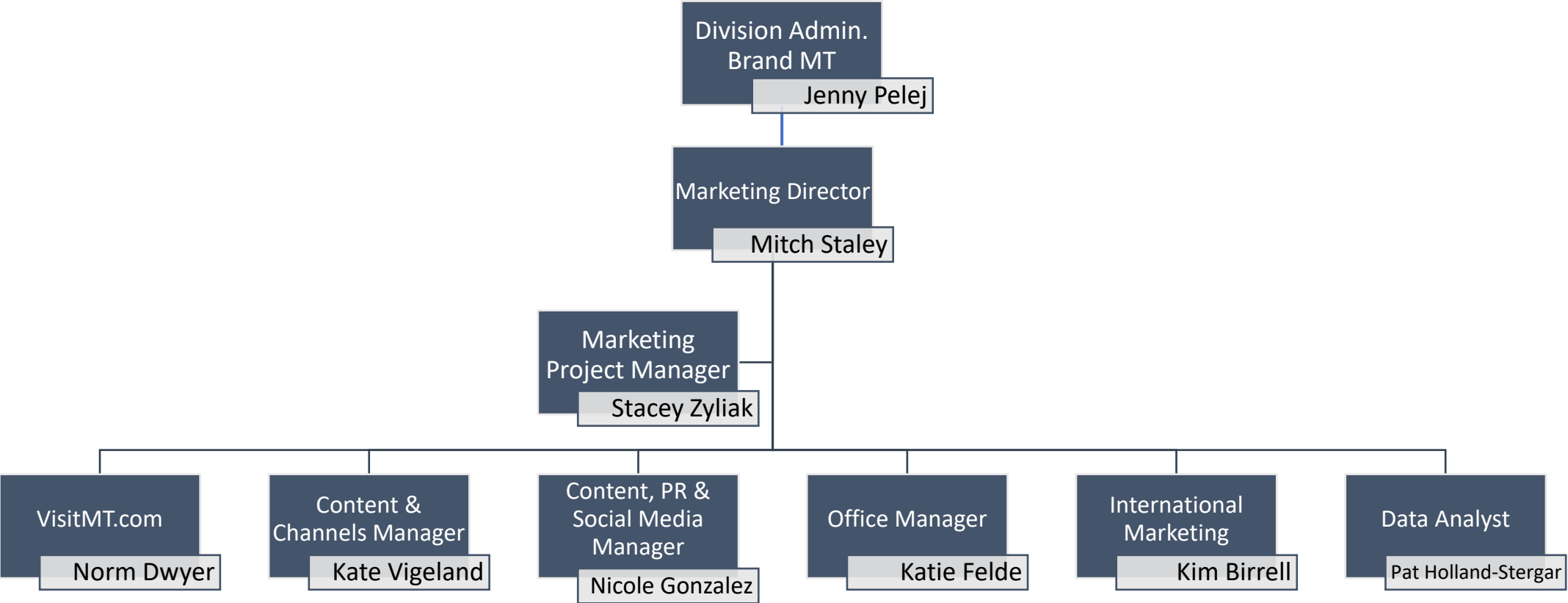
Strategic Communication and Marketing Director
Director's Office

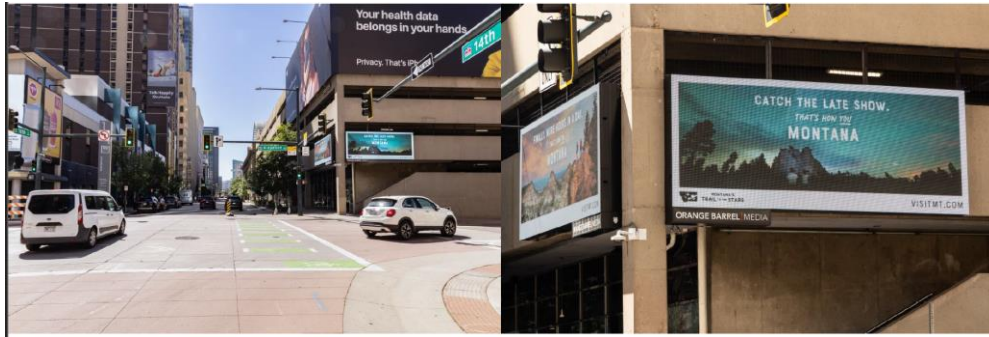
406-660-0059

mitch.staley@mt.gov

Since June

- Marketing Team Restructure
- Launch of Warm 2023 Campaign: That's How You Montana
- Two productions: Montana is a road trip and the stops along the way.
- Launch of restructured Marketing Agency of Record RFP





Warm Season 2023

Montana is a road trip...

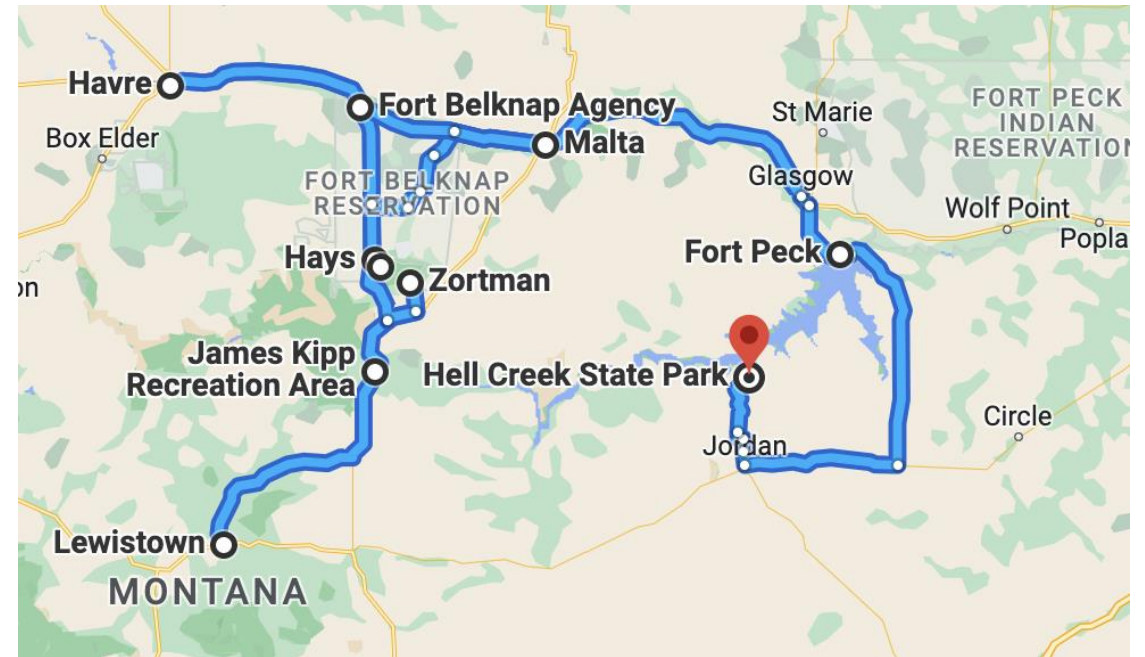
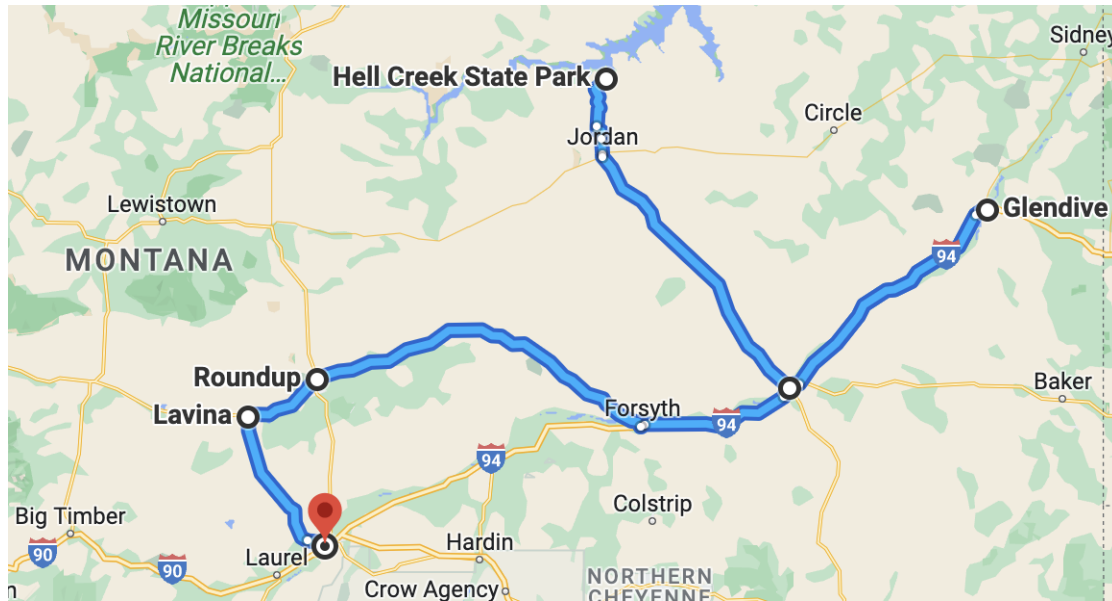
And the stops along the way.

Warm Season 2024 Directional Preview



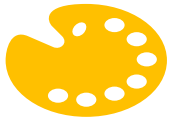






Looking forward...

Agencies of Record



Creative



Web/Digital

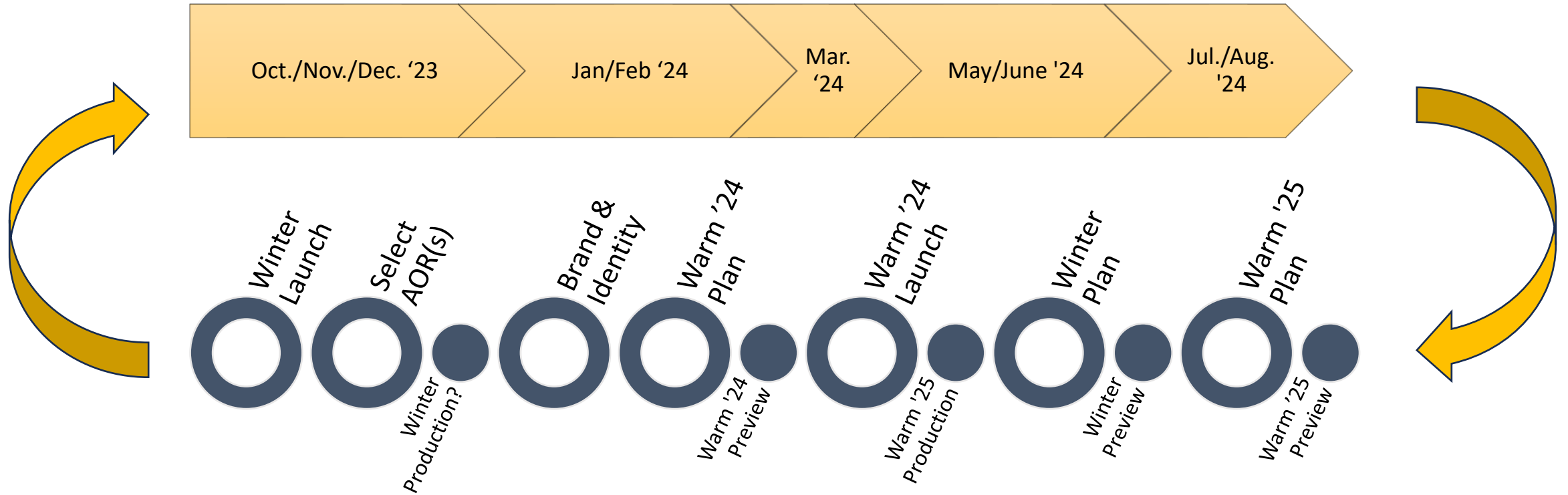


Media



Data & Research

Accelerated timeline...



Mitch Staley

Strategic Communication and Marketing Director
Director's Office

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THAT'S HOW YOU
MONTANA

Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting

October 3-4, 2023 | The Forge
Anaconda, MT



THANK YOU!