

**RURAL TOURISM STUDIO – North Santiam
Community Tourism Workshop Part 2
Tuesday April 12, 2016**

FACILITATOR

Jon Paul Bowles, Travel Oregon consultant

TRAVEL OREGON STAFF

Kristin Dahl, VP Destination Development
Elena Vizzini, Destination Development
Coordinator
Alexa Carey, Destination Development Specialist

ATTENDEES

Alison McCaull, Friends of Silver Falls State Park
Allison Ford McKenzie, GROW-EDC
Angela Lazarean, Oregon Dept of Land
Conservation and Development
Anthony Jaramillo, Elkhorn Golf
Ben Anderson
Brandy Belcourt, The Lodge at Detroit Lake
Brian Czarnik, Aumsville City Council
Carmelle Bielenberg, Stayton/Sublimity Chamber
of Commerce
Charlie Prince, Detroit Lake Fish and Fun Cruises
Chonteh Rivertree
Dan Fleishman, City of Stayton
Danielle Gonzalez, Marion County Community
Services
Dawn Plotts, Canyon Catalysts
Dean ODonnell
Dee Hendrix, Travel Salem
Diana Cvitanovich, City Mouse~Country House
Elaina Turpin, GROW-EDC
Ellen Murphy, poppa Al's
Gay Stuntzner, retired (Mill City Planning
Commission)

ATTENDEES cont.

Geronimo Clark, Images Of The Dine'
Greg Hansen, GQG Consulting
Irene Bernards, Travel Salem
Jamie Dobrowolski, Project LTD
Jean Moule, Community Member
Jerry Stevens
Jon-Paul Bowles, Consultant- Travel Oregon
karen widmer, The Canyon Weekly
Kelly Schreiber, Stayton Sublimity Chamber
Kevin Muniz, Poppa Al's Famous Hamburgers
Larry Parrish, Elkhorn Valley Inn b&b
Linda Sunderland, Marian Estates Auxiliary
Marcie Clark, Magic Tek LLC
Maricela Urzua, Travel Salem
Mary Stewart, Oregon State University Extension
Service
Michael Miller, Experience Store
Nadji Vogel, 5th Ave Healing Arts
Nicolle Owings, Neal Creek Resort
Paul Toews, Art Gone Wild Toews Studio
Paula Mabry, Mt. Angel Publishing, Inc.
Renata Wakeley, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of
Governments
Sam Drevo, Northwest River Guides LLC
Sarah Smith, Sugar and Spice Bakery
Stacie Cook, City of Mill City
Steasia Findley, Project LTD
Suzanne Cable, US Forest Service, Willamette NF,
Detroit Ranger District
Tabitha Henricksen, Modern Building Systems, Inc.
Teresa Van De Veere, Rushing River Retreat
Tom Peters, Santiam Hearts to Arts
Yvonne Hanna, Santiam Canyon School District

1.) INTRODUCTIONS: WHY ARE YOU HERE?

After reviewing program goals and the day’s agenda, Jon-Paul gave an overview of who the workshop participants were...

- Restaurants (6)
- Lodging properties (5)
- Tour operators/experience providers/visitors centers (5)
- City/county government (12 +)
- Land Management (1)
- Non Profits (12+)
- Marketing Communications (6)
- Retail/Arts/Artisans (7 +)

....And reviewed the themes that arose during workshop 1 and in the Survey Monkey responses filled out by web training participants

Economic	Community	Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Vacant bldgs. • Overnights • Living wages • Gaps in chain • Focus on new economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social capital • Sense of place • Art & culture • Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieve demand • Protect fragile eco-systems • Stewardship story • Green product

Participants were asked to share their name, organization, and the one thing they were most excited about in relation to this tourism workshop. (Listed on page 1).

2.) INTRODUCTIONS: TOURISM PROMOTION ENTITIES

Travel Salem, Irene Bernards, Maricela Guerrero, Dee Hendrix

- Serving Marion and Polk Co – Aurora to Jefferson, Detroit Lake to Spirit Mt. Casino
- Irene also represents Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA)- Eugene to Corvallis to Albany to Salem to Yamhill & Clackamas, some regional funding from Travel Oregon to do valley wide marketing. What Travel Salem learns is moved up to WVVA (three main pillars: Culinary, Outdoor Rec, Cultural Heritage)

Stayton – Sublimity Chamber, Kelly Schriber

- Geographic designation does not mean we can’t serve you if you do not operate in those two towns
- Operate a visitor center – seeing a lot of traffic and people looking for printed material
- Common inquiries: covered bridges, silver creek falls, outdoor recreation opportunities
- Chamber of commerce greeters- opportunities for businesses to introduce themselves

North Santiam Chamber (no representative present – direct inquires to Dave Shelton)

- Based in Mill City
- Extension of the Stayton- Sublimity Chamber

Detroit Lake Recreation Area Business Association, Dean XXX

- Primarily develop events – actively looking for new events that are not so labor and volunteer intensive as they currently have. Looking for new unique events to bring in out of town traffic

3.) INTRODUCTIONS: CHIEF STEERING COMMITTEE CONVENER

Grow- Santiam EDC, Allison McKenzie

- Economic development entity (not a chamber)
- Offer business consulting, classes and networking opportunities

4.) VISION STATEMENT

A draft vision statement created by facilitator Jon-Paul Bowles was read to the group. Feedback was provided and the following revision is available below.

15-YEAR TOURISM VISION

Towns along the North Santiam River form a community, revitalized by the natural beauty surrounding them and the thriving tourism economy it sustains. Businesses support each other, sending visitors up and down the river corridor, from one adventure to another – one business to the next. The corridor now marks a journey in its own right, each town a portal into a new experience in nature taking visitors to the banks of rivers and Detroit Lake, trail heads and night skies.

The region has a place for all types of nature lovers – from adrenaline seeking paddlers to silent star gazers. Visitors come year round, enticed by friendly locals, the restoration of quiet forests or challenging trails, and opportunities to ride, hike, paddle and fish, swim or simply rest.

5.) ONLINE TRAININGS – KEY LEARNINGS

Participants were asked to reflect on the following question in relation to the online trainings they watched the week before. Key takeaways are summarized below.

- *What can have the biggest economic impact?*
- *How will a catalytic project benefit a wide range of partners and foster collaboration?*
- *Best combination of product and marketing?*
- *Preview: “What types of projects will unlock the destination’s potential for outdoor rec enthusiasts?”*

Key Takeaways:

Product

- Product is an authentic reflection of what’s available on the ground
- Combination project that links the all the assets (food, recreation, art, culture)
- Estacada bikeway is a huge asset we should capitalize on
- Focusing on your iconic asset – creates a point of collaboration – need to hone in on what the best of the best is of your assets and bring everyone to the table to coalesce on that theme
- What do we have that’s easy to package and ready for market and what’s a more long term project develop new product – need to distinguish these two activities

Marketing

- People relocating – need to treat them as tourists as well and an opportunity to market to and integrate into the tourism fabric
- A funnel exists to move information from the local level to the umbrella region and up to the state brand.
- Need for a regional river corridor website
 - Visit 22 website is partially build and owner is willing to hand it over to a team that can take it on
 - Need for a marketing team

Community Process

- Has to be a true collaborative – something that everyone gets
- Bringing people back is a signifier of success
- How do we engage with the youth? – We need to bring the youth into the equation
- Awareness campaign – need to educate community leaders on the value of tourism (they can often be the stumbling block for getting things accomplished)
- Everyone can't just work in their silo

6.) IDENTIFYING GAPS TO ACHIEVE THE 15 YEAR VISION

The group discussed the gaps that stand between the destination's current state and the vision. The following themes emerged.

Key Themes:

Access/Infrastructure

- Signage/wayfinding – overcoming policy barriers
- Cell coverage?
- Public bathrooms (barrier- no sewer)
- Beautification of town corridors and businesses

Marketing/Communications

- Matching product with marketing message

Marketing/Communications

- Matching product with marketing message

Collaboration/Network

- Information on what assets exists in the region – what's lacking in the current resources that exist?
- Linkage between businesses, attractions, lodging and are communicating consistently with visitors
- What's the information/distribution network?
- Front line training – need to tie to community pride (engaging lower wage workers and youth)

Business Services

- Developing new lodging experiences
- Increasing the business to business communication and collaboration to improve cross-promotion

Capacity

- Fund a tourism position for the region

7.) PROJECT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The community team was presented with the potential projects that emerged in the first workshop, and voted for the one they thought was most important.

Project concepts are listed below, pink highlighted concepts received the most votes:

SHORT TERM PROJECT CONCEPTS:

Create a canyon-wide “Passport to adventure” to the North Santiam (9 votes)

- Have a historian in each town connected to the passport system so that people have the opportunity to hear the local story
- Include coupons within the passport to incentivize travel to certain locations
- Could be tied in with a signature event
- Could tie in to signage

Having one canyon-wide trip planning website. (7 votes)

- Consider developing a complimentary app or mobile friendly site
- Think about it as an educational site; include video content
- Geofencing – travel alerts when they’re in the area
- Intranet for linking/supporting ambassadors from each local area
- Include packages and itineraries
- DMOs/Chambers can link to/from site

Front-line staff training. (1 vote)

- Program to educate locals
- Increase awareness prior to the 2017 Eclipse

Developing a coordinated tourism marketing strategy for the canyon. (18 votes)

- Create a multi-year plan to put all these pieces in the appropriate buckets

Create one common identity/brand to tie everyone together (0 vote)

- Use this to unify a network
- Perhaps design one common logo
- Note: *Highway of 1,000 Dreams* used to be used.

Strengthen local networks for tourism – creating business to business connections, etc. (24 votes)

- Increasing the local knowledge by incentivizing locals experiencing locals.
- Monthly events potentially

Artistic stump carvings at the lake to generate year-round traffic. (3 votes)

- In summer we can create a new non-motorized way to enjoy the lake...“art underwater”.
- Unique, potentially world-class.
- Mud-castle building contest

‘Santiam Rocks’ program. Rock carvings that are hidden in the region. Visitors come to discover them and get a reward in return. (2 votes)

‘Santiam River Festival’ that would take place around the 2017 Eclipse II (19 votes)

“Stump Chuck” disc-golf tournament throughout the area during the low-water season using lake bed. Fall/winter. (0 Votes)

Utilize 2017 Eclipse ‘event’ to catalyze tourism development (3 votes)

- Training/awareness campaign prior to the 2017 Eclipse
- Engage youth, train them to be ambassadors
- Create ambassadors out of the people who come for the Eclipse
- Utilize 2017 Eclipse draw as momentum to start a signature event

MEDIUM TERM PROJECT CONCEPTS:

Create a canyon-wide Wifi network – all businesses provide access when anyone asks. Ends up on a destination landing page. (5 Votes)

Develop a coordinated wayfinding/signage system in the region IIIII (32 Votes)

- Engaging ODOT in a unified way from the destination.
- Incorporate local artists
- Include visitor information at key locations

8.) ACTION TEAM PLANNING SESSION

After the attendees voted on priority projects, they self-selected into action teams started a planning session for how to move forward.

ACTION TEAM 1 : Strengthening the Local Tourism Network

Convener: **Allison McKenzie – GROW**

Members:

- Diana Cvit.
Nadji (Scio)
- Sarah Smith
- Brandy Belcort
- Nicolle Owings
- Kelly Schreiber
- Paul Toews
- Michael Miller
- Teresa Skinner
- Karen Widmer

FIRST MEETING DATE

- Convener: Allison at GROW
Date: Wed April 20
Time: 11:00am -12:30pm
Location: Trexler Farms Farm Store Café

Team Assets:

- Facilitation – GROW
- Have local publicist that can be used – GROW
- Well networked up and down coordinator – GROW
- Program development / grantwriting expertise – Diana C

- Local newspaper/local media – Karen
- Have a lot of local assets already categorized – Karen
- Know lots of people up and down canyon / networking – Karen
- Great communicator with people – verbally and know a lot about Scio – Nadji
- Vacant space for meetings -- Nadji
- Sarah – has a gathering space for meetings, she has food/treats/coffee and cute baby
- Fundraising expertise, asking for donations and people don't tell me no! – Brandy
- Mule Creek Resort as a meeting location for meetings or fundraisers - Nicolle
- Marketing and hospitality background - Nicolle
- Love networking – Nicolle
- Meeting space at Chamber – Kelly S.
- Good at social media – Kelly S.
- Good w/ making connections with businesses in the area, esp the West-side – Kelly S.
- Artistic skillz, local storytelling, know a fair number of local folks – could put on a fundraiser – Paul Toews
- Idanha/Detroit knowledge – Michael
- Rushing River Retreat lodge great for gathering spaces – Michael
- Writing, sales and marketing – Michael
- Financial wizard & master recycler – Judy

What are the weaknesses? What skills/knowledge do you need?

- Natural resources / land management agency/ies should be involved on the Action Team as they have all the assets
- Need one other financial guru – as their leading strength
- Someone who's great at collaborative social media/web based communications
- Young person

Who might be recruited to join the action:

- Grady McMahan from USFS
- Jeff Keto, Mill City (financial guy from Dept. of Revenue)
- Micah Keto alternatively

Preferred Communication

- Communicate via email amongst the action team

Decision-making Protocol

- In-person meetings for generating ideas and making decisions
 - Move the locations from place
- Conference calls in-between when needed
- Allison will facilitate decision making – we like dot when needed

Who is in the network?

- People providing a tourism experience in the region

What would a strong network look like?

- People know one another – we're knowledgeable of one another
- There is trust
- Sense of pride so people see vitality and they're motivated
- Referrals in between businesses

- We have information is at one another's fingertips

Ideas for How We Could strengthen the network

- Conduct local familiarization trips
- Start with a group and add on to a group – invite two more
- Giving people in the region a chance to get to know one another's products/experiences
- Have a monthly social network gathering

ACTION TEAM 2: Create a coordinated marketing strategy

Convener: TBD

Members:

- Suzanne Cable, US Forest Service
- Irene Bernards, Travel Salem
- Tass Morrison, SSCOC
- Paula Mabry, Mt. Angel Publishing
- Teresa VanDeVeere, Rushing River Retreat & The Experience Store
- Dan Fleishman, City of Stayton
- Dee Hendrix, Travel Salem
- Tabitha Hendricksen, NS Young Pros
- Kevin Muniz, Poppa Al's Famous Hamburgers
- Brian Czarnik, City of Aumsville
- Elaina Turpin

Next Meeting: Tuesday 19th 2pm at Poppa Al's

Action Items:

1. Select actions that take advantage of the "low-hanging fruit," and also allows the area to "play catch up" with other area tourism efforts.
 - a. Post events on Travel Salem
 - b. Take part in existing brochure vehicles
 - c. Submit content to Travel Salem and Travel Oregon – photos, story ideas, itineraries. Flickr.
 - d. Participate in/create an Event Calendar for the area.
 - e. Create North Santiam page on Travel Oregon website.
 - f. Recognize that information funnels from broader subjects/geographic areas down to a narrower search.

Process Guideline:

2. Make sure your strategy is the right size to dovetail with Travel Oregon and Travel Salem.
3. FAM tours - Find out who will do what: e.g. who will provide a free meal, free stay, free ticket to event, etc.
4. Who is missing? Inform public agencies, such as BLM, OTRP, ODOT and chambers including NS Chamber, DCRBA, Breitenbush, Stayton Mail/Statesman Journal, Silver Falls and Hoodoo.
5. Move on to 2.0 Development of Brand Identity Guidelines.

Key Actions:

1. Reach out to those who are missing and invite participation.
2. Action team meets within 2 weeks.

Missing People

- BLM
- OPRD
- ODOT
- NS Chamber
- DLRBA
- Breitenbush
- Stayton Mail/Statesman
- Silver Falls
- Hoodoo
- Attraction/event Stakeholders

ACTION TEAM 3: North Santiam River-Wide Festival

- 8/23 Eclipse- 1 or 2 weekends?
- Fall Event (Lrg event on Saturday)-MC!
- Incorporate all towns/communities (create sub committees)
- Activities:
 - Music
 - Paddling contest
 - Food
 - Artistic/cultural/Historical
 - Food Competition like food Networked show Chopped using local ingredients.
 - Dancing/Dance
 - We are close to populated areas

Key Actions

1. Calendar Event
2. Funding & Sponsorships
3. Create steering & subcommittees to develop project
4. Select location

Next Meeting: May 3 10 am- 12 pm Stayton Sublimity Chamber Conference room

Cities & What they have to offer:

- Aumsville-Historical Museum/ Skate Park/ Water Splash Park/ & Fishing at the ponds
- Stayton- Covered Bridges/ Disc Golf/ Swimming Pool/ Library/ Golf Course/ Bed & Breakfast
- Sublimity-Disc Golf/ Harvest Festival/Canyon Stampede
- Lyons- River Take out/ End of the Little North Fork
- Mehama- Shelberg Falls/ Mountain Biking
- Mill City- Historic museum/ Take out for river/river front park/ Fire Works
- Gates- Elkhorn Access (Golf course & Bed & Breakfast)

Fire Department-Community Center/ Spencer's hole

- Detroit- Boating/fishing/swimming/ camping/ Fireworks show/ Motels
- Idanha- Bed & Breakfast/ General Store