

Community Tourism Planning Workshop | Travel Oregon

October 6-7, 2009 | Oakridge, Oregon

Join business and community leaders to shape the future of tourism in your region. Tourism employs more people than any industry in the state and has a significant economic impact in rural counties. This interactive session will set the stage for sustainable tourism development (tourism that sustains and enhances the region) and provide participants with relevant industry information to set the context for sound tourism planning. Participants will take a close look at current trends in travel, identify target markets, map Community tourism assets, and set priority strategies for a positive future in this industry.

Day 1: October 6, 2009

Introductions from local Steering Committee and Travel Oregon

Randy Dreiling, Oakridge-Westfir Chamber & Oregon Adventures

Natalie Inouye, Travel Lane County

Gordon Zimmerman, City of Lowell

Cristina Rosado, Lane County Community & Economic Development

Warren Weathers, City of Lowell

Kristin Dahl, Travel Oregon

What is the one thing you'd like to accomplish in the community as a result of this program?

- Community pulling together better attitude
- Project a better attitude to the public
- Greater aesthetics reflected in built environment
- Recruit entrepreneurs and mountain biking activity to Lowell w/linkages
- "Get there" - finish the job
- Increase the number of visitors and improve Hwy 58
- Revitalize uptown
- Learn how to market our community
- Create stronger linkages between Lowell, Westfir & Oakridge
- Increase jobs, decrease poverty through increased tourism
- Raise our sights on something bigger
- Reinvent as Oakridge as a recreation destination and do it better than Hood River, Leavenworth, or Sisters → find our identity
- Tourism is a collection of experience; develop our tourism sector as a component of that Oakridge experience
- Expand vision of tourism in addition to mountain biking, hiking, paddling, skiing, etc.
- Build up the community and create opportunities for more family wage jobs that can be sustained (year round)
- Bridge the gap between history and now. Capitalize on the resources we have now and create collective inertia.
- Make sure the word is getting out about what the community has to offer
- Develop jobs here in Oakridge, decrease the number of workers that have to commute

- Create a nice backyard
- Attract more mountain bikers
- Build something that lasts and is sustainable
- Develop a paved bike path including a safe way for cyclists and pedestrians to get across Hwy 58
- Educate and bring them back

TOURISM ASSETS IN THE OAKRIDGE AREA

OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS (trails, boat harbors, wild scenic rivers, bike parking)

- Constitution Grove
- Joe Gooddard Trail
- Silver Creek Falls
- Salt Creek Falls
- Fall foliage
- North Fork kayaking
- Larison Cove canoe area
- National scenic byway
- Alpine Trail
- Salmon Creek Falls
- Huckleberry Flats OHV trail
- Hills Creek Reservoir
- Willamette Pass ski and summer resort
- Gold Lake XC ski area
- Pump tracks (Oakridge, Westfir)
- North Fork swimming holes...(not sure I want to advertise these!) ☺
- Office bridge
- Just a lot of easy scenic walks-everywhere
- Greenwaters Park
- Cascades bird trail

MARKETING & PR (venues – get word out)

- Chamber
- Dead Mountain Echo
- MBO listserv
- Oakridge Ride Center/IMBA
- Greater Oakridge area trail stewards
- Word of mouth! (ie: coffee shops, restaurants, kitchen tables, your back yard...)
- City E-newsletter
- MBO fan page on Facebook
- Attending tourism events and conference
- Forest service front office
- Travel Oregon
- Travel Lane County

- Willamette Valley Visitors Association
- KLCC – radio station (PSA’s)
- Ride Oregon Ride.com
- Ben’s Facebook account
- Buying club forum/email list

UNIQUE CULINARY EXPERIENCES (restaurants, farmers markets, u-pick stands)

- Lees Gourmet Garden
- Community Garden (pick fruit)
- Matsutaki mushroom (seasonal)
- Wild berries and the Trailhead
- Brewers Union Local 180
- Cooking club
- Mazatlan
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Gondola dinner
- Oakridge-Westfir buying club
- Local mushrooms (wild Chanterelles)
- Electric blends

QUALITY EVENTS

- Pioneer picnic
- Tree planting festival
- Tree planning parade
- Community theatre (zero tolerance payers)
- Fourth of July @ golf course
- Keg and Kask
- Salmon Creek run/walk
- Tired Dog Ranch
- Where’s Waldo Run
- Crème puff Oregon
- Willamette Pass events
- Music in the park

SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL/HISTORICAL SITES AND STORIES

- Free Immigrants Road
- Oakridge Museum
- Joe Gooddards Grove
- Judge Waldo-Waldo Lake – Klovdahl Bay
- Constitution Grove
- Zero Clearance Theater
- The “Lost”Wagon Train
- “Loggers Den” – Big Mountain Pizza building
- Rigdon Meadows (history early biking)

TOUR OPPORTUNITIES (tour operators, self guided tours, education tours)

- Museum
- Fish hatchery/museum
- Covered bridges
- Oregon Adventures
- Delta Old Growth Trail
- Lowell Dam
- Willamette Pass
- Gondola
- Motorcycle Rally tour

PLACES TO STAY (lodging, camping, etc.)

- Best Western
- Cascade Motel
- FS Campgrounds/rental cabins
- B&B
- Lodges (Westfir & McKenzie)
- Casey's RV Park
- FZ Oaks B&B
- Tired Dog Ranch
- The Oakridge Motel
- Salmon Creek Falls Campground
- Blue Wolf Motel
- Crescent Lake Lodge
- Oakridge Hostel (Nov 2009)
- Westfir B&B
- Crescent Lake and Odell Lodge

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE (transportation options, recreation, signage)

- The Diamond!
- Oregon Adventure's shuttle service
- Greater Oakridge area trail stewards (G.O.A.T.S)
- Oakridge-Westfir trails plan
- Willamette Pass X-press bus

UNIQUE RETAIL OR ATTRACTIONS (art galleries, museums, theaters)

- Zero Clearance Theater
- Flying Turtle Art Gallery
- Oakridge Museum
- Somewhere in Time
- Mertel woodshop
- Willamette Mountain Mercantile "The Merc"
- Tom's Wood 'n' Stuff
- Fish hatchery (especially for families)
- Music in the park

FUN ITINERARIES USING COMMUNITY ASSETS IN NEW WAYS

- People without a bike finding one, riding trails and having a good time
- Salmon Creek 10k run, creek bath, berry and museum hunting.....music in the park
- Ranger station, bike ride, local berries, really cool locals campsite, Brewers Union, more ideas....repeat
- Where's Waldo 10k run, Peggy-where's Waldo fish on N. Fork (historical story telling)
- Buy RV, mountain bike on Alpine, covered bridge dinner at Lees and beer
- With bikes, hotel, bikes on Constitutional Grove, dinner at Mannings and pie
- 7:15 Diamond Express, Trailhead breakfast, Oregon Adventures, mercantile, ride, brew put, hostel, Diamond Lake
- Keg and Kask, Cascade Motel, Skiing and Willamette Pass, dinner at Lees
- Fall foliage, stay at Tired dog, cater food at art event, ranch sanctuary with birding and hiking

Day 2: October 7, 2009

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ~ NEW TOURISM PRODUCT IDEAS

Group 1 Sprouts

- Community involvement on local history
- Capture all of the voices in our community (ie: history, culture, natural resources)
- Mine the experiences and activities we (locals) have and engage in
- Create a venue (web/written) to share these stories
- Answer the question: “What’s in Oakridge?” Why do you live here? What is there to do?

Group 2 Sprouts

- Authentic truth
- Rivers, fish hatcheries, native people, food, events, culture
- Need a very focused “must see/do” million dollar race/ride for mountain bike

Festivals: Tree planting festival goes green

- Carbon offset project
- Voluntourism
- Train stops for the festival

Rivers

- Fish hatchery
- Fly fishing
- Guides
- Festivals
- Dam tours

Forest

- Tree top tours
- Zip line
- Bike tours
- Hikes

- Find ways to link Lowell, Westfir, Oakridge and Eugene to Pacific Crest Trail
- Sell health benefit of all of these great outdoor activities
- iPod tours

Group 3 Sprouts

- Combo trips (fishing, biking, and education clinics)
- Rafting (water sports, tours, guides, long trips, short trips)
- Redefine Oakridge as “the heart of the carbon offsets”
- Education
- History & culture
- Forest history

- Finding new ways for trail users to give back \$\$, trail work, and \$1 to something to go to trails

Group 4 Sprouts

- What happens in Oakridge – is shared with everyone in Oakridge!
- Package with motels
- “Rehab tours”
- Natural resource- hike, bike, rehab
- Youth volunteerism for Oakridge

DESTINATION BRANDING

LURES IN OAKRIDGE

- Forest in Oakridge – natural resource and a bit of a catch 22 because it is so pristine and once people start coming will it go away or be ruined? Change?
- Unique environment in the sense you can hunt, fish, hike, bike, etc. within a short distance.
- Salt Creek Falls
- Constitution Trail
- Waldo Lake
- Mountain biking trails – quality trails, knowledge of trails
- 8-12 national river runs that isn’t being utilized

DIVERSIONS IN OAKRIDGE

- Fish hatchery
- Brew pub

AMENITIES IN OAKRIDGE

- Greenwaters public recreation area

A 15-YEAR VISION FOR TOURISM IN THE OAKRIDGE AREA

Twenty-some participants of the Rural Tourism Studio in Oakridge comprised of local business owners, event organizers, economic development professionals, trail advocates and public officials generated the following.

(1) The Oakridge area is clean and inviting. As a result, residents have a refreshed sense of community pride and visitors stop and stay more frequently.

Specific comments:

- Clean up and beautify uptown
- Overall Highway 58 with a boulevard, bike paths, and side walks
- Clean and tidy
- Increase community pride
- Clean up the community in such a way that recognizes and accommodates all socio-economic

(2) Oakridge is a mountain biking destination and known throughout North America as the “Mountain Biking Capital of the Northwest”. The community and surrounding area is a “pedal driven economy” offering a range of opportunities to target niche cycling markets and ability levels.

Specific comments:

- Ride center is fully developed (extreme bike skills, beginner level, amenities for road bike touring) – cycling in it variety of forms
- A velodrome has been built
- The town becomes known as “pedal driven” and supports bike-related businesses such as a pedicab service
- There is an integrated bike path throughout town
- Oakridge draws in bike manufacturers, research and development teams, and educational workshops to use its world-class riding facilities

(3) Places for community connections are prevalent throughout the Oakridge area increasing the quality of life of locals and providing visitors with places to enjoy the local culture.

Specific comments:

- Town square, gateway kiosk
- Ability for people to park and walk throughout town
- Pedestrian friendly
- Community center
- Lowell, Oakridge, Westfir, and Willamette Pass are all connected with routes and trails via our public lands. (Thinking specifically about developing connections up and down the corridor.)
- Build off pavilion

(4) The Oakridge area is known as a sustainable travel destination with businesses and organizations dedicated to meeting environmental, social and economic objectives simultaneously.

Specific comments:

- Keep this community green
- Environmentally friendly, reducing carbon footprint, increase recycling, getting off the grid
- Island in the sea of trees! Fresh air!!
- Optimize use of natural assets: trails, forest, social capital

(5) Tourism is an integral and growing part of the Oakridge area economy offering local, living-wage jobs. As a result of strong business-to-business relations, tourism helps to strengthen the local economy.

Specific comments:

- Family wage, local jobs
- Services come from within. Local businesses are thriving selling local food, products
- Non commuting jobs
- Economic development: bringing in green jobs, family wage jobs
- Oakridge Industrial Park – economic development

(6) The quality of life in Oakridge is high with ample social services available. A healthy, happy community adds to the positive local experience attracting new businesses and visitors.

Specific comments:

- Community will be better...we will like it more and so will the visitors
- Community first (medical, social services, community center)
- Quality experiences by residents and visitors (quality of life for all residents)
- Quality services available to all
- Raising quality of life services for underinsured
- Basic good medical services

STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY ELEMENTS OF THE VISION (#1-3)

(1) The Oakridge area is clean and inviting. As a result, residents have a refreshed sense of community pride and visitors stop and stay more frequently.

Group Strategy Brainstorm:

- Form committee
- Let people know about Junk Amnesty Day
- Identify problem areas. Legalities of who we can talk to. Contact local landowners (who has info?)
- What codes need enforcement?
 - Solution
 - Find funds

Recommend Critical Next Steps:

1. Form a city clean up committee
2. Identify problems, solutions. Legalities
3. Put into action (use kids, groups, work parties)

(3) Places for community connections are prevalent throughout the Oakridge area increasing the quality of life locally and providing visitors with places to enjoy the local.

Group Strategy Brainstorm:

- Redo WAC for energy efficiency and program delivery
 - New roof
 - Double pane windows
 - Façade improvements
 - Floor coverings
- Refurbish North Shore Drive between Westfir and Lowell for bike route and alternate vehicle route for Highway 58
- Complete Access Management Plan for Highway 58 in Oakridge
- City-wide Wi-Fi
- Build new Senior Center
- Build new Library

Recommend Critical Next Steps:

1. Complete the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for library
2. Fund Access Management Plan
3. Fundraising for WAC redo (Possibilities for funding: CDBG, Ford Family Foundation, Union Pacific Foundation or Meyer Memorial Trust)

(2) Oakridge is a mountain biking destination and known throughout North America as the “Mountain Biking Capital of the Northwest”. The community and surrounding area is a “pedal driven economy” offering a range of opportunities to target niche cycling markets and ability levels.

Group Strategy Brainstorm:

- How do we get the naysayers?
- How do we get the research data to show economic impact locally of bike tourism?
- Coupons cashed in by bikers to local merchants (paper trail)
- How do we breakdown (gently) the local barriers between locals and bike tourists?
- How do we continue the funding process to continue the investments that are started?

Recommend Critical Next Steps:

1. Involve the community in a positive way in mountain biking events
2. Use the media, newspapers, TV, press releases to reach locals and tell the bigger local story of bike tourism, culture and economic impacts

::: From Bicycle Tourism Development Workshop :::

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMING
<u>Facilities</u> : Work with ODOT about changes advised in the Visitor Readiness Report.	Chamber of Commerce, City of Oakridge, City Planner, Forest Service	Now
<u>Facilities</u> : Identify the gateway trailhead signage needed & design the signs.	IMBA, GOATS rep	2010
<u>Marketing & communications</u> : Create welcoming signs for cyclists at either end of the city. Add mountain bikes to existing city signs.	Gordon Zimmerman	Now
<u>Marketing & communications</u> : Develop information for other tourist activities that cyclists can participate in. Identify, group by theme/target market, distribute information to those target markets.	Chamber w/ UBRA	By April 2010
<u>Goods & services</u> : Develop the bike tourism concierge/ambassador concept.	Catrina will convene the first meeting	Jan 2010
<u>Goods & services</u> : Compile knowledge base and create a pamphlet. Connect with local businesses to distribute information and educate them on the needs of bike tourists.	Catrina & Peggy	Start in January, distribute by spring