

Community Tourism Planning Workshop – Notes
Oregon Rural Tourism Studio
April 3, 2009 | Hurricane Creek Grange, Enterprise, Wallowa County

Workshop summary:

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.

Lead Trainer:

- Kristin Dahl, Travel Oregon

Welcome addresses by:

- Sara Miller, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District
- Troy Nave, Wallowa Resources
- Vicki Searles, Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
- Mike Hayward, County Commissioner
- Alice Trindle, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association
- Scott West, Travel Oregon

In these notes:

1. *Draft* Community Vision for Tourism
2. Sustainable Tourism Strategies for Wallowa County
3. Interim Goals for Achieving the Vision
4. Wallowa County Tourism Assets

1. A VISION FOR TOURISM IN WALLOWA COUNTY

How does this economic sector look in 15 years?

Context: Participants worked in small groups to discuss the future of tourism. Groups reported out ideas that resonated with each of their tables. There was a lot of resonance between tables on a few aspects.

- Visitors have an authentic experience (x3)
- Direction of tourism is controlled by local people (x2)
- Locals maintain culture and heritage by sharing their stories (x3)
- Businesses are locally owned & local people shop there
- All economic sectors engage with and benefit from the tourism economy (examples: a land owner sublets a barn to rent to visitors for overnight stays, or transportation from place to place meets the needs of visitors and residents)
- All four towns (hamlets) in Wallowa County are vibrant and unique. Retail spaces are filled, mainstreets are bustling, and each town is unique with its own story and distinct offerings
- The Hells Canyon Scenic Byway connects all of the vibrant towns
- Tourism is robust providing job opportunities year round – spring, summer, fall and winter
- Strengthen agricultural, cultural and environmental history of the area. Presentation / interpretation of the way of life – both present and past -- is strong
- Infrastructure for tourism exists and supports the type of tourism desired by residents
 - Public/mass transportation exists into and around the county – specifically trains
 - pull outs for scenic vistas/interpretation kiosks
 - public restrooms
 - expanded airport
 - well-maintained roads
 - bike trails / bike lanes
 - walking paths
 - skiing/snowshoeing trails/paths
 - historic buildings preserved
- Lodging opportunities are plentiful and unique

2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGIES FOR WALLOWA COUNTY

Context: These ideas were generated by participants in small group conversations and shared with the entire group. The ideas have not been sorted, prioritized or expanded yet.

Encourage businesses to take on locally relevant names “Logger Lager”

Expand the tourism season, lengthen the shoulder seasons

Create a new venue for winter recreation (skate skiing) – Salt Creek Summit partnership with Gambler’s – Nordic Club snow

Partnerships – TNC

Environmental education: use the state to present local history

Local currency program (such as *Wallowa County Bucks*)

Publicize community calendar to coordinate events to eliminate overlap

Convey traditions and culture to people who visit

-bike tour, map, talk with ranchers, artists, etc. along the way

Capitalize on Eagle Cap Wilderness

-more hiking experiences

-guided tours

-find ways to cater to the “slack packers”

Lot of winter potential (especially in the north end of the county)

Mix of private/public land – opportunity to create connected trails

Asset – locally owned, benefits local (seeing non-local infiltrate in summer)

Help businesses (local) maintain competitiveness

Education local businesses on the value of tourism and connect to innovative ideas

Ensure as events grow they support all the local businesses they can

Authenticity more value

Infrastructure – needs adequate to support tourism growth

Includes Nez Perce – learn indigenous way of life and local history

-tell the NP story

Ice climbing – grain elevator – near Wallowa Lake

3. INTERIM GOALS FOR ACHIEVING VISION – Strategies & Ideas

Notes from small group discussions:

Group #1:

It will be very important to have open meetings that include all of the different demographics in this. It won't be owned by one entrepreneur or group. Needs to be a common vision for the community to plan together for the future. Avoid divisiveness.

Group #2:

Thought similarly about who should be involved? Build off of the energy and momentum of the people involved with a positive attitude.

Start with clusters of businesses that have synergies to start action and create momentum. Do what you can do well and bring people along. Don't spend all of your energy on people who don't want to be part of the conversation.

Group #3:

Businesses could get together for collaborative marketing rather than each doing their individual marketing. Coordination across the county for marketing. County could create a clearinghouse for information. Capitalize on some of the cooperation that may already exist in neighboring areas.

We need to find ways to make benefits of the tourism industry apparent to those who don't participate in it every day. Not everyone goes to meetings! Community needs to find other ways to get the word out.

Group #4:

Developing year-round tourism

In summary, the groups came up with 4 Interim Goals:

1. Communicate with community about tourism development – its value and the direction, involve everyone
2. Work with natural clusters of businesses to find synergies and go with it – develop pilot projects
3. Increase opportunities for businesses to do collaborative marketing – eliminate inefficiencies
4. Develop year round (or off-season) tourism

ITERIM GOALS & POTENTIAL STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

1. Communicate with community about tourism development – its value and the direction, involve everyone

Ideas for action:

Local radio
Newsletter
As many media outlets
Nickel
HUB to consolidate info
PPL bills
Community code of conduct/communication
Case studies, vision, benefits fears

2. Work with natural clusters of businesses to find synergies and go with it – develop pilot projects

Ideas for action:

Packages
Cross selling
Knowing local opportunities

3. Increase opportunities for businesses to do collaborative marketing – eliminate inefficiencies

Ideas for action:

*marketing plan for tourism
*Identification of all marketing opportunities that exist – where we are weak in marketing its education and partnerships

4. Develop year round (or off-season) tourism Bus tours

Ideas for action:

Better ice rink
Ice climbing
Nordic
Winter use of rodeo grounds

4. WALLOWA COUNTY TOURISM ASSETS

Hells Canyon Byway
Tie all communities together
Agri-tourism
Tell the story

Outdoor Recreation (activities, venues, Fergi Ridge, gear rental shops, etc.)

Wing Ridge Tours
Gondola
Enterprise City, ice skating
River rafting – Wallowa Snake
Fishing, grided, fish train
Eagle Cap
Buckhorn Lookout – wildflowers, zumwah
Bird watching – eagle cap, prairie, rivers, lake and ponds

Transportation Options (modes/routes/services)

Link bus
-community connections
-Eagle Cap (example: Train, fish train) *link to Amtrak
-Hells Canyon AARD
Moffitt Bros.
Bike rentals and repairs
Hells Canyon lookout
Hat Point lookout
Buck Horn lookout
Joseph Canyon lookouts
Rattle Snake grade
Wallowa Lake Tram
Horse drawn
Waterways (rafting)
Bike routes/rickshaw
River rafting
Hiking
Horseback riding
Driving
Scenic flights
Motorcycles

Unique Retail Shops

June Colony's new farmer/gardeners exchange in Lostine
June Colony's shop
Skylight Gallery featuring art, photos, book, glass ware, jewelry (all made locally)
**Wolfe Fleece – some locally made

Stewart Jones Jeweler
Bronze Gallery
beecrowbee
To Zion
Mad Mary's
Simply Sandy's
New Yarn Shop
Joseph Hardware
Book Loft
Quilt shops
Soroptomists
Art galleries
Locally owned grocery stores

Agricultural Experiences (ways to engage with local way of life, traditions, etc.)

Farmers markets
(June's store, Enterprise Market – Joseph)
Old Time Tractors (McLaughlin)
6 Ranch: Corriente (?) Cattle, roping, stewardship
Go build fences on the 6 Ranch
Wallowa Land Trust – tour working ranches
Sunrise Iron
Historic barn tour
Plowing Bee – Lang waters
County fair
Watch crop harvesting
Watch branding
Hunting and fishing season
Hells Canyon Mule Days

Events

Nordic marathon race
Cross country skis, snowshoes, and biathlon
Fiddle camps/shows
Ranch tours
Pole, pedal, paddle
Fish trap
Sled dog race
TNC Tour
Ranch rodeo
Art festival
Eagle Cap Extreme
Bronze, blues, and brews
Bronze Bike (August)
Chief Joseph Days

Mule Days (Hells Canyon)
Beer gut triathlon
Fish train/Santa train/history train
Quilt shows
Hells Canyon Mule Days D.O. cook-off
Nez Perce Art (auction/dinner)
Joseph Merchants Halloween
Jingle thru Joseph (?)

Entertainment (music venues, local theaters, roller-skating rinks, golf courses, etc.)

Courthouse gazebo (music)
Ice rink
Fish trap
Tunesmith nights
Lostine Theater
Ember's – Saturday nights
Soroptimist talent/fashion show
OK Theater (revive)
Contra-dances
Hells Canyon Mule Days Cowboy Gathering
Open mic (TG)
Lears: Tunesmith and Irish music

Marketing and Public Relations (ways to market and get the word out)

Troy: Lynne Sampson (culinary magazine writer)
Wallowa Visitors Guide
Chieftain
Cowgirl calendars
Bear Creek Press (Mark Highburger also wrote Falom's Guide for PNW)
Kid/local radio station partnership
Lynn Curry – food writer (aka Lynne Sampson) see her rural eating blog
Wallowa City Chamber
Wow in Wallowa
WWNF Visitors Center (aka Wallowa Mountain VC)
Artiest USA Today
Local WC
Western lifestyles magazine
All business websites to link to WC Chamber and Joseph, etc. sites
Food connection
Get your local info to Wallowa Lake
State park
Internet
Newspaper
Ag reporters
Robert Dawson – photography

Facebook "Wallowa County"
EOVA Guide

Great Lodging and accommodations

Vacation cabins at lake

Lodge

Bronze Antler B&B

All B&B's

Home stays (friendly-stranger NTWK)

Cow camps/bunkhouses

Wallowa Lake Lodge – historic

Houses by owners for rent for vacations (some allow you to bring your own ____
(couldn't make out this word)

Wing Ridge

Campground

Little hostels/boarding HS

Campgrounds – RV Parks

Rimrock Trips

Wallowa Lake State Park Huts

Troy Cabins- bigger private houses for rent)

State park yurts

Minam Lodge

Imnaha B&B

Significant Cultural Historical Sites or Stories

Bates Mill (Looking Glass)

Railroad to Camp Ten (Hwy 3)

Enterprise Courthouse

Cambium peel trees (Indian Grove)

Basque Shepherds

Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site

Dug Bar – Nez Perce Trail

Chief Joseph/Nez Perce Heritage

Joseph Canyon Overlook

Pioneer Guest Home

Lime quarry

Flora transformation of America's agricultural history/from rural to urban

Maxville Project

-Imnaha

Tamkaliks!

Lodge

Wallowa History Center

Wallowa Nez Perce Interpretative Center

Unique Local Culinary Experiences (restaurants, farmers markets, u-pick, eat beef, etc.)

Potlucks
Yali's
Beth Gibbons Catering
Brewery tours: TG, Mutiny,
Cheyenne Breakfast (the round table locals only)
Tram & patio there
Farmers market cooking demos
Rim Rock
Caldera's
Local caterers/local food – in home
Gizzards at Imnaha Store (frog legs, too)
Lostine Tavern, Blue Banana, Blonde Strawberry
Stein's Distillery coming soon

Tour Opportunities – tour companies, tour routes (self-guided)

Wilderness horseback/drop camps – Del Sol Adventures
Hells Canyon AA road
Blue Mt. Heritage Trail
Moffett Transportation
Hike to slick rock
Boise Cascade Loop (Hwy 3)
June's Store
Riding/hiking Nez Perce Trail (Wallowa County section)
Zumwalt Prairie
Rimrock – Joseph Canyon overlook
Maxville – multicultural history – logging history
Snake River rafting/Grande Ronde day trips
Wallowa Mountain Institute: Nature Tours
Source – agritours of farms and ranches – camping summer 2009
Hike and eat tours (guided berries/mushroom grazing)
Train - Joseph to lower valley or to Elgin
Tram – Wallowa Valley Holiday Bus Tours
Tourists, unique businesses (Motley Brew, Steward Jones Jeweler, other artists)
Wingridge (backcountry skiing) and Wallowa Alpine Huts
Horse training workshops with Bany Cox and others