

# OREGON TOURISM LISTENING SESSIONS

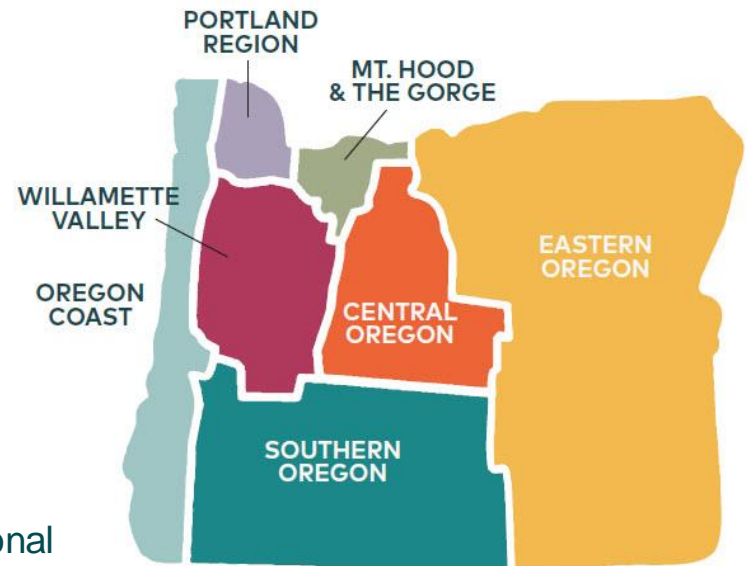
## Statewide Summary

### June 2018



# 2018 OREGON TOURISM LISTENING SESSIONS OVERVIEW

- Travel Oregon, in partnership with Oregon's 7 regional destination management organizations (RDMOs), hosted 10 Oregon Tourism listening sessions across the state in spring of 2018
- Anyone who touches the tourism industry, including business owners, land managers, volunteers, nonprofits, policymakers and more, was invited to attend
- Stakeholders input was gathered on a host of topics ranging from tourism challenges to asset opportunities
- Listening sessions' findings will help shape the future of tourism in Oregon through Travel Oregon's statewide strategic plan, as well as each of the 7 RDMOs' regional plans
- Session attendees had the chance to meet their RDMO representative and Travel Oregon employees, learn about and provide ample input on their region's 2017-2019 plans and as well as for the statewide and regional 2019-21 plans
- All sessions were interactive, and attendees got to partake in small group table exercises, provide input and share opinions in a respectful and productive manner. Sessions were 3 hours; food and beverages were provided



# DATES, LOCATIONS & ATTENDEES

April 3 | Eugene  
WILLAMETTE VALLEY REGION

April 4 | Cascade Locks  
MT. HOOD/GORGE REGION

April 13 | Portland  
PORTLAND REGION

April 17 | Tillamook  
COAST REGION

May 9 | Coos Bay  
COAST REGION

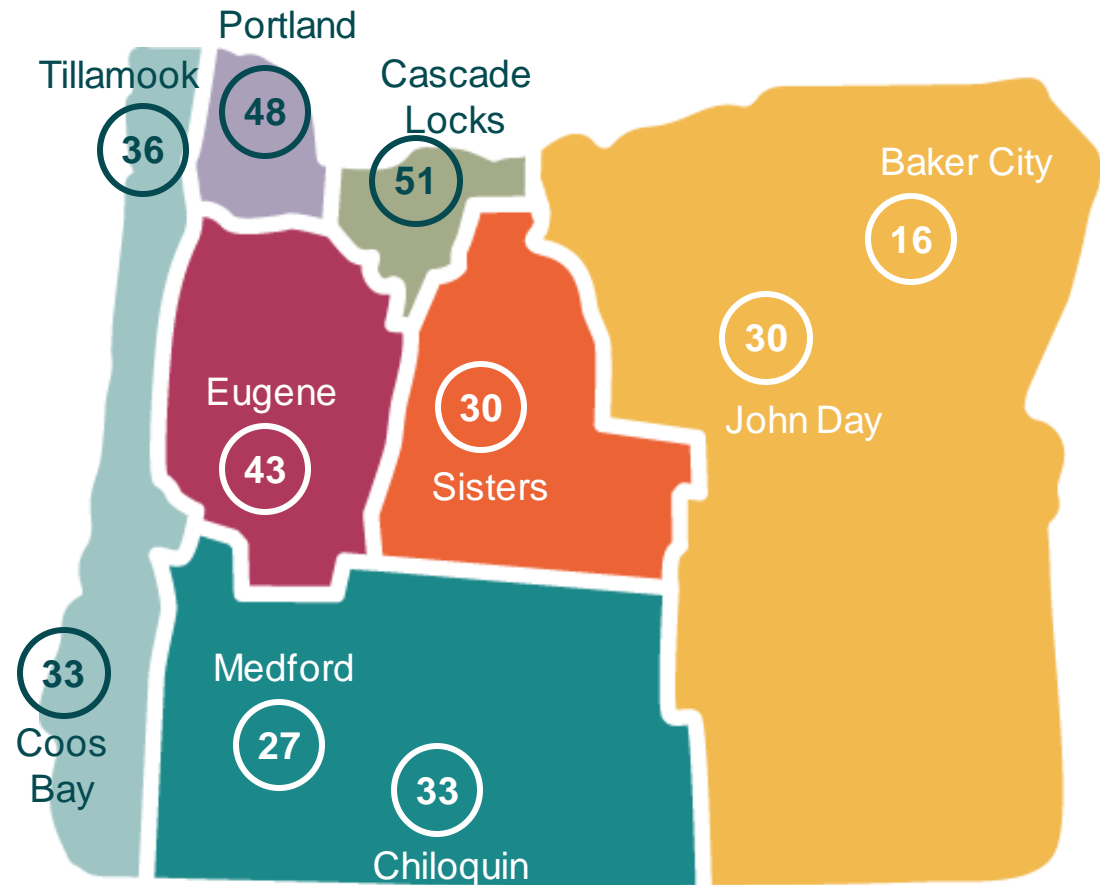
May 10 | Chiloquin  
SOUTHERN REGION

May 11 | Medford  
SOUTHERN REGION

May 14 | Baker City  
EASTERN REGION

May 15 | John Day  
EASTERN REGION

May 16 | Sisters  
CENTRAL REGION



347 Total Attendees

# STATEWIDE ATTENDEE REPRESENTATION





# QUESTIONS ASKED

## General Perspectives

- How engaged are you with the tourism partnering structure (Travel Oregon > RDMO > DMO)?
- What tourism-related challenges currently face your business or community?
- What excites you about the role tourism plays in your future?
- What 1-3 priorities do you want us to consider as we build the Travel Oregon 2019-2021 strategic plan?

## Regional Perspectives

- What excites you most about your current regional plan? What's working well and showing strong ROI?
- What potential plan gaps do you see?
- Are there specific regional assets that need to be developed or further promoted?
- Are there new areas of focus you think should be considered for how future funds are used?
- What stakeholders are missing from this conversation?



# STATEWIDE EXCITEMENT FOR TOURISMS ROLE IN FUTURE

## Destination Development & Management

- Increased attention to conservation, sustainability and mitigating visitor impacts on Oregon's natural resources and outdoor assets
- Promotion of lesser known experiences and assets
- Assisting in dispersing overcrowded areas

## Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

- Partner engagement at a deeper level and more often
- Increased engagement with culturally diverse stakeholders (Tribes)
- Engagement with rural communities and businesses
- Collaboration with Port of Portland to increase international and global growth opportunities

## Product Development

- Developing product beyond “bikes, beers, and hiking” such as agritourism, arts and culture, fish and game, surfing and winter sports

## Marketing & Promotion

- Increased and easily accessible photo and video marketing assets
- More co-op marketing opportunities

# STATEWIDE EXCITEMENT FOR TOURISMS ROLE IN FUTURE (Cont'd)

## Visitation & Sales

- Increased shoulder season visitation
- Visitor diversity
- Expanded international visitor opportunities

## Regional Planning

- Comprehensive regional plans that have broad awareness and support across stakeholders

## Funding & Grants

- Continued economic impact
- Growth in funding
- Broader and easily accessible grants to addresses identified regional needs
- Increased accessibility for diverse tourism stakeholders



# STATEWIDE TOURISM CHALLENGES

## Destination Development & Management

- Balancing growing visitation numbers with natural asset conservation
- Maintaining identity and livability of rural communities as tourism increases
- Incorporating sustainability ethos into development activities
- Developing product outside of outdoor recreation such as arts, culture, and heritage
- Demand on destination assets (parks, attractions, infrastructure) exceeds resources
- Geographic distance and regional variability of Oregon as a destination

## Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

- Confusion on most appropriate and beneficial ways to engage with the tourism partnering structure  
(Travel Oregon > RDMO > DMO)
- Understanding which communications matter and when to plan with the region
- Difficulty due to capacity constraints and size of Oregon (driving distance to attend meetings)
- Lack of engagement with tourism-related businesses, policymakers and Tribes
- Availability of networking and learning opportunities to connect with all levels and types of stakeholders
- People and businesses not seeing themselves as a part of the tourism industry



# STATEWIDE TOURISM CHALLENGES (Cont'd)

## Infrastructure & Transportation

- Outdated state visitor signage and limited wayfinding creates confusion and need
- Demand on Oregon's infrastructure (parking, lodging, parks) is higher than supply and funding
- Limited alternative transportation between key destinations and tourism assets
- Insufficient lodging capacity across the state; imbalance

## Workforce & Training

- Capacity at personal/DMO/RDMO level to keep up with state communication, marketing and development activities
- Absence of a quality workforce due to low wages and poor perceptions of tourism as a career
- Affordable housing options for service industry employees
- Limited sales and marketing experience to adequately sell and promote destinations
- Communities with unwelcoming attitudes



# STATEWIDE REGIONAL COOPERATIVE TOURISM PROGRAM PLAN GAPS

## Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

- Clear, actionable communications from regional partners
- Expectations on cooperation and engagement
- Small business/community outreach

## Marketing & Promotion

- Promotion for arts, culture & heritage
- Regional, aligned messaging
- Inter-state marketing
- Additive/less popular experiences

## Destination Management

- Funding for more maintenance resources
- Overcrowding
- Conservation and stewardship

## Product Development

- Fish and game
- Arts, culture and Heritage
- Outdoor recreation



# STATEWIDE REGIONAL COOPERATIVE TOURISM PROGRAM PLAN GAPS (Cont'd)

## Infrastructure & Transportation

- Wayfinding
- Congestion and parking
- Bike accommodations
- Intra-state transportation and asset connection

## Workforce & Training

- Staff augmentation and training
- Limited workforce
- Living wage and affordable housing

## Funding

- Limited availability
- Grant process clarity
- Access by other agencies with shared interest (USFS, BLM, etc.)



# STATEWIDE DESIRED TOURISM PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS

## Workforce & Training

- Effective frontline training to create visitor-ready businesses and brand ambassadors
- Provide technical assistance for data analytics and marketing
- Educate community leaders and policymakers (local, county, state) on value of tourism and its viability as a long-term career
- Pursue a tourism industry that has quality workforce with access to living wages and affordable housing

## Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

- Better convene all levels of tourism partnering structure (Travel Oregon > RDMO > DMO)
- Assist stakeholders with political advocacy related to bolstering local tourism initiatives
- Help small businesses and rural communities engage with the tourism industry and understand role in it
- Provide clear communication that simplifies engagement and action

## Destination Development & Management

- Help address the current demand on outdoor/natural resources and identify plans to mitigate its impact
- Influence an ethos of conservation and sustainability in ongoing development and marketing
- Focus on placemaking opportunities where necessary, including main street revitalization
- Help address impact of perceived and real visitor safety threats including homeless/houseless
- Foster diversity and welcoming, open tourism attractions and destinations

## Product Development

- Evaluate and focus product development opportunities to include more arts, culture and heritage, fish and game, new trail networks (Oregon Coast Trail, Salmonberry Trail), culinary and agritourism, gardens, sporting events and conferences



# STATEWIDE DESIRED TOURISM PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS (Cont'd)

## Marketing & Promotion

- Evaluate promotions to identify awareness gaps of unknown experiences and smaller communities
- Assist regions in brand development and aligned messaging
- Provide better access to photos and videos to assist in marketing and PR efforts

## Infrastructure & Transportation

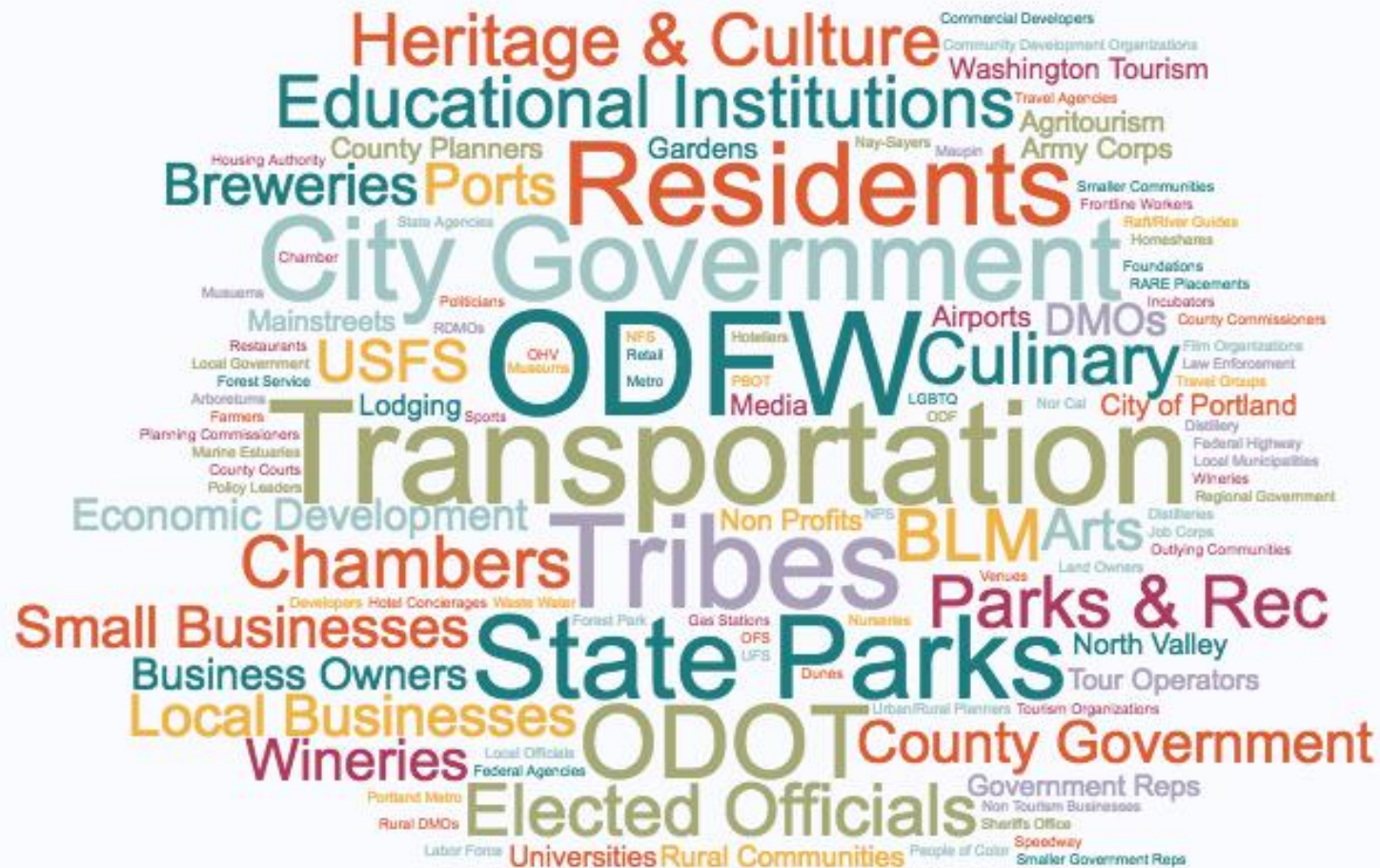
- Work to connect key tourism destinations intra-regionally and clarify availability of transportation options outside of automobiles
- Evaluate current infrastructure of key destinations and their ability to absorb increased marketing promotions/reach and rising visitation numbers
- Establish effective wayfinding programs

## Funding & Grants

- Explore possibility of micro-grants with quick turnaround times for short-term opportunities
- Remove certain restriction on grants to assist all tourism entities (small businesses, transportation, etc.)



## STATEWIDE DESIRED STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE





# THANK YOU

Travel Oregon's strategic planning info can be found at:

**[Industry.TravelOregon.com/Organization](https://Industry.TravelOregon.com/Organization)**

The Regional Cooperative Tourism Program info and regional summaries of the Listening Sessions can be found at:

**[Industry.TravelOregon.com/RCTP](https://Industry.TravelOregon.com/RCTP)**

Nastassja Olson  
Strategy Manager  
[Staj@TravelOregon.com](mailto:Staj@TravelOregon.com)

Harry Dalgaard  
Regional Cooperative Tourism Program Manager  
[Harry@TravelOregon.com](mailto:Harry@TravelOregon.com)

TRAVEL



OREGON

