

Polk County Rural Tourism Studio

15 Year Community Vision

Widely known as a destination for damn good wine and the Hop Capital of the World, Polk County captivates a distinctive traveler – one who is looking to escape the hub-bub of city life for a quieter pace. Here, visitors find a pastoral landscape tucked between the Willamette River and the Oregon Coast Range which boasts vibrant historic small towns with giant personality amidst fields with giant flavor, giant old growth forest, and giant river bends. It's no surprise why pioneers on the Oregon Trail decided to end their journey here.

Outdoor enthusiasts and foodies alike in search of that 'next best place' have discovered the region's bounty and are returning with friends. Locals know the area like the back of their hand and are quick to provide recommendations on things to see and do. Multi-day experiences are supported through a variety of unique, quality boutique lodging and upscale camping options that go far beyond just providing a 'place to stay'.

Visitors are able to enjoy and appreciate the region's agricultural roots through a variety of farm-centric activities including direct vineyard and farm tours, product tastings, cooking classes, unique farm-focused events, farm stays and by savoring locally grown food and beverages in the towns' quality eating establishments.

Home to several world-class, destination trails including a mountain bike vineyard loop, Black Rock Mountain Bike Area, the Willamette River Water Trail and an Oregon Scenic Bikeway, this region provides unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities enticing enthusiasts far and wide who want to combine paddling and pedaling with pints and pinot. The Valley of the Giants and the Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge overflowing with birds and native wildlife provide everyone with the opportunity to be immersed in nature.

The region's heritage is known and celebrated – both its tribal and pioneering roots come to the forefront of the local experience through a variety of interactions, activities, and the arts. The Chachalu Tribal Museum and Cultural Center is one attraction that adds a richness and depth to the visitor's overall experience.

Ultimately, tourism helps knit the region together by cultivating a vibrant social and economic fabric that retains and enhances the region's authentic rural roots. The local tourism industry has worked hard to build and foster a collaborative approach and by doing so has built strong partnerships with Salem to the east and counties to the north and south. This has resulted in local recognition of the positive economic and societal benefits of a robust tourism economy.