

2019–2021
RCTP PLANS

MT. HOOD & GORGE

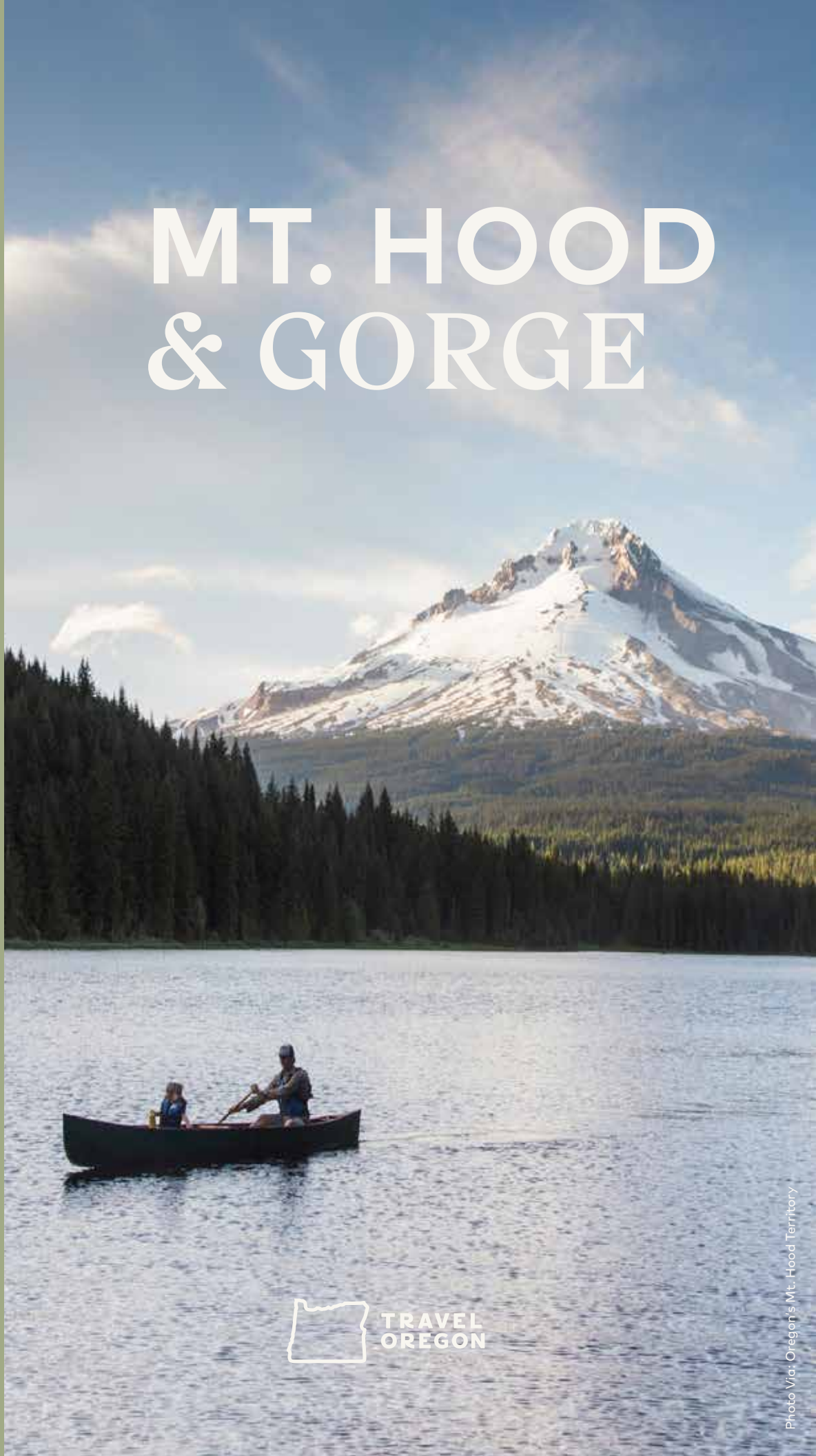
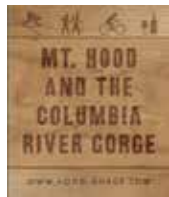


TABLE OF CONTENTS

REGIONAL COOPERATIVE TOURISM PROGRAM (RCTP)

RDMO:



Research & writing:

**Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge
Regional Tourism Alliance**

Organized by:

Travel Oregon

For more regional information visit:

www.hood-gorge.com

RDMO Contact:

Lizzie Keenan

lizzie@hood-gorge.com

AWARENESS & IMPROVEMENT

Mission	03
RCTP Goals	03

PEOPLE

Organization	04
--------------------	----

MEASUREMENT

Overall Success Measures	05
--------------------------------	----

STATE OF TOURISM

Regional Tourism	06
Stakeholder Feedback	07

BUDGET

Overall Budget	10
----------------------	----

TACTICS

Overall Plan	11
Destination Development	12
Global Marketing	15
Global Strategic Partnerships	19
Global Sales	21
Staffing & Administration	23
Bibliography	24

MISSION

The Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge RDMO seeks to use responsible visitor management to build awareness for the region as a multi-day and year-round travel destination that benefits all communities.

Our mission is to continuously and creatively address the challenges that come with being a mature destination that is surrounded by small communities and neighbors Oregon's largest metro area. Challenges include congested roadways, over-visited sites, imbalance of visitation throughout all of our communities, and workforce development and training needs. By establishing regular feedback channels for us to learn from community and industry representatives we will be better equipped to design global marketing, PR, destination development and global sales tactics in order to address these complex challenges and convert them to opportunities.

RCTP GOALS

1. Promote lesser visited communities and visitor-ready sites in the region.
2. Increase shoulder season and weekday occupancy.
3. Increase alignment between the Gorge and Mt. Hood communities through regional programs.
4. Increase and improve messaging and communications about transportation options throughout the region.
5. Leverage marketing and development opportunities with Travel Oregon and industry partners.
6. Increase workforce development and marketing training opportunities in the region.
7. Support product development led by community stakeholders through the Strategic Investment Fund.
8. Increase awareness about the economic impact of tourism in the region.
9. Increase awareness about natural lands stewardship among visitors and local residents.

ORGANIZATION

Clackamas County Tourism and Cultural Affairs (CCTCA) has administered the Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region for 15 years in close collaboration with the members of the Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance (MHCRGTA) which includes representatives from the West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, Visit Hood River, The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce, and Clackamas County Tourism and Cultural Affairs. MHCRGTA is a handshake alliance of the core DMOs within the region, created at the inception of the RCTP program in 2004. A role in the alliance comes when a DMO has dedicated staffing for tourism. Considerations are underway for Cascade

Locks and the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance to hold seats on MHCRGTA as their tourism staffing increases. This alliance meets in person as a full group approximately once every 2-3 months and holds additional phone meetings as needed.

Our RDMO serves tourism stakeholders across four counties of Oregon, from the Wood Village/ Troutdale area to The Dalles, south to Dufur, back west over Mt. Hood, and all the way down to Estacada. The RDMO meets regularly with stakeholders in the region during our biannual engagement sessions, at regional committee and network meetings (like the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance), and in one-on-one sessions.

Photo Via: Travel Oregon





Photo Via: Travel Oregon

OVERALL SUCCESS MEASURES

- To best understand economic impact, visitation spread, and international trends, the RDMO invests in and reviews Dean Runyan economic impact estimates, Longwoods Travel research, monthly STR Statewide Lodging reports, and Tourism Economics International Regional research.
- Data collected from our Trail-head Ambassadors will shed light on our stewardship impact and addressing the needs of our recreation lands.
- The biannual stakeholder survey and stakeholder meetings will help us understand the effectiveness and reach of our work, while gauging the relevancy and success of our tactics meeting the needs across the region.
- Google Analytics data for the website will help us understand the effectiveness of our transportation communications, social media messaging, and outbound links.
- Tracking results from our earned media as a result of our proactive PR efforts focused on priority regional messaging.

REGIONAL TOURISM

Tourism is a crucial industry for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region of Oregon. Direct tourism destination spending was estimated at \$412 million in 2018, of which 34% is accounted for from day visitors. The remaining 66% is from overnight visitors (2019, Dean Runyan).

Year over year, the industry continues to bring more tax revenue to state and local taxes, while supporting over 4,970 jobs. The most current estimates are that there were 3.3 million overnight person-visits to the region in 2017, 57% of which were “marketable visits.” The top domestic source markets for the Mt. Hood/Gorge region are Oregon (33%), California (16%), Washington (16%), New York (5%), and Texas (3%) (2017, Longwoods). Our top international source markets in terms of spend are Canada, China, the UK, Australia, Germany, and Japan (2018, Oregon Dashboard).

Why do they come?

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region is home to one of Oregon’s most diverse outdoor landscapes. From the waterfall corridor to the high desert of the Columbia River Gorge National

Scenic Area to the top of Mt. Hood, Oregon’s tallest mountain, we have recreation opportunities for all skill and interest levels. But the region offers so much more than an adventurer’s paradise. Thriving arts and culture scenes in many of the communities complement the rich agriculture and heritage of the region. According to 2017 Longwoods data, the top two drivers for visiting the region are touring (30%) and recreation (27%).

Our region is home to some of Oregon’s most iconic attractions and, with our close proximity to Portland, this leads to overcrowding and congestion that leaves negative impacts on our land and on the visitor and resident experience in those places. The region has come together in the past few years to shine renewed light on our less visited communities and hidden gems to help spread the love and economic impact of tourism and to improve visitor and resident experiences.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholder feedback was incorporated into the development of the 2019/2021 biennial plan and reviewed and approved by the regional DMO stakeholders in the Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance. This is the RDMO response to the feedback:

- Focus on marketing, communication and development that supports an increase in shoulder season, mid-week and multi-day travel.
- Target marketing and communications toward lesser-known communities and sites throughout the region and away from congested areas.
- Address the negative impacts that increased tourism can cause on our natural assets.
- Support and communicate transportation congestion mitigation efforts in the region.
- Support business and workforce development with marketing and customer service training opportunities in the region.
- Increase engagement and communications about the value of tourism with local and regional policymakers.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Feedback: Focus on marketing, communication, and development that supports shoulder season, mid-week, and multi-day travel.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *We have laid out very clear tactics in our plan to address the weekend and seasonal congestion and “day trip” issues that the region faces by focusing content creation and media pitches on shoulder season, mid-week, and multi-day travel messaging. Our investment in global sales also plays a critical role in achieving this goal, targeting the international visitor who statistically stays longer, spends more money, and has a higher likelihood to travel during our shoulder seasons.*

Feedback: Target marketing and communications toward lesser known communities and sites throughout the region and away from congested areas.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *The imbalance of economic benefits from tourism among different communities is felt and heard clearly. Building off of the success from the 2017/2019 biennial plan, the RDMO is targeting this biennium’s content and PR again around lesser visited communities and sites to draw attention to our ‘hidden gems’. During high season at congested sites, we will continue to use the Trailhead Ambassador program to encourage people away from heavily trafficked trails and on to lesser visited ones to help relieve congestion.*

Feedback: Address the negative impacts that increased tourism causes on our natural assets.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *Building off the success of the launch of the Trailhead Ambassador Program from the 2017/2019 biennium, where volunteers met with over 23,000 visitors in one season, we will continue to support this program and the positive impacts it has on our natural assets. The Trailhead Ambassador volunteers are charged with relaying messaging to visitors including: Leave No Trace, hiking packing essentials, and safety tips. Volunteers also pass out USFS garbage bags and dog bags to help reduce waste on the trails. This program works in close partnership with Oregon State Parks and the US Forest Service.*

Feedback: Support and communicate transportation congestion mitigation efforts in the region.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *There are many instrumental players in the region that are critical to addressing our transportation and congestion mitigation needs. The RDMO is making it a priority to make sure a regional tourism entity is at the table for these planning discussions to ensure that tourism is a valued and considered stakeholder in this space. Additionally, with the expanded transportation section to the RDMO’s website and partnership with the Car-Free Implementation Team (CFIT), we will continue to use transportation funds to develop, promote, and support the car-free travel stories and provide useful transportation information to incoming visitors throughout the region.*

Feedback: Support workforce development in the region with marketing and customer service training opportunities.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *Based on continued feedback in this area over the past few years, the RDMO is putting funds this biennium behind workforce development. In addition to bringing more Guest Service Gold Training to the region, we will work with tourism partners to clarify key workforce needs in the region, and identify regional and statewide partners who can deliver programming to our local businesses to support those needs. This will include working closely with all the local Chambers of Commerce and statewide associations to align outreach and available resources.*

Feedback: Need for increased engagement and communications about the value of tourism with local and regional policymakers.

Mt. Hood/Gorge RDMO Response: *The RDMO will leverage the opportunity in the Menu of Investment to develop new collateral for the region on the economic impact of tourism for Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. The region will use this collateral to help educate local residents and regional policy-makers about the value of tourism in our region.*

OVERALL BUDGET

MT. HOOD AND THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE OVERALL BUDGET

DEPARTMENT / CATEGORY	2019-21 BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Destination Development	\$ 54,000	9%
Global Marketing	\$ 194,540	32%
Global Sales	\$ 70,460	12%
Global Strategic Partnerships	\$ 71,000	12%
Regional Immediate Opportunity (≥5%)	\$ 30,000	5%
Staffing	\$ 180,000	30%
Total	\$ 600,000	100%

OVERALL PLAN

		2019						2020						2021											
		JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Destination Development																									
Trailhead Ambassador	\$20,000						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Workforce Development	\$20,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Transportation	\$4,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Stakeholder Engagement	\$10,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Greater Portland Training	\$0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Global Marketing																									
Infinity Loop Map	\$39,520	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
OR Welcome Center Brochure Prg.	\$2,200												●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Google Content Co-op	\$12,500	●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Website Hosting & Management	\$9,600	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Madden Media SEM	\$24,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Marketing Media Deskside Tours	\$25,000												●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Regional Media FAM Tour Hosting	\$20,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Travel Oregon Domestic FAM Tour	\$1,000												●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
In-Market Activation in Key Media	\$10,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Economic Impact of Tourism Coll.	\$0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
TORP	\$26,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Photo Asset Management	\$720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Content Contractor	\$24,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
OTIS Strategy	\$0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Global Strategic Partnerships																									
Regional Grant Writing Workshop	\$1,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Strategic Investment Fund	\$70,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Global Sales																									
IPW 2020 & 2021	\$11,000												●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Go West Summit 2020 & 2021	\$7,900						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Go West Summit 2020 FAM	\$5,000						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Go West Sum. Open/Closing	\$3,000						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
FAM Coordination Contractor	\$24,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Travel Trade & Press Trips	\$14,310	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Tourism Economics	\$5,250												●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Staffing																									
Staffing	\$180,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

This biennium we will be addressing some of the core concern areas indicated by our regional stakeholders as priorities. These include: land and trail stewardship, workforce development and training programs, and transportation and congestion issues. For stewardship and workforce development, we will seek out and work with partner organizations that specialize in these areas to lead and execute valuable programs for the Mt. Hood and Columbia Gorge Region. Transportation is a space in which we and our partners believe the regional role is to make sure that tourism is at the table for planning, but not leading the charge on transportation development, which is best left to transportation professionals and providers.

In particular, workforce development and training will be a key focus area this biennium for the region.



Photo Via: www.hood-gorge.com

1. Trailhead Ambassador
2. Workforce Development
3. Transportation
4. Stakeholder Engagement
5. Greater Portland Training

TACTICS

1. BUDGET: \$20,000
 FY19-20: \$10,000
 FY20-21: \$10,000

Trailhead Ambassadors:

Based on the success of the 2018 Trailhead Ambassador season, the RDMO will continue to support the program in the Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge region. The program’s key partners include: non-profits, U.S. Forest Service and State Parks.

The goals of this program are multifaceted: reduce trailhead and trail congestion, have less search and rescue incidents, improve visitor experiences, reduce the spread of invasive plant species, and encourage responsible hiker ethics.

Common questions the Trailhead Ambassadors answer include questions about: parking passes, hike alternatives, trail hazards and food suggestions nearby. Ambassadors also provide info on Leave-No-Trace ethics and share Ready, Set, GORge! messaging at the Gorge trailheads.

In addition to sharing information with recreation visitors, our ambassadors collect data that is regularly shared with our land managers. This includes their insights on the ground and feedback they collect from visitors.

Examples in the past have included: identifying new landslides, waste management and recreation site maintenance. Funding for the program supports a part-time Trailhead Ambassador Coordinator, training materials and trailhead equipment.

Additional funding for the program is raised by the program’s partners, which includes the cost of running the program at two trailheads in Washington State.



Photo Via: www.hood-gorge.com

2. BUDGET: \$20,000
 FY19-20: \$10,000
 FY20-21: \$10,000

Workforce Development:

The RDMO recognizes the needs in the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region for workforce development. This runs the gamut of needs around customer service training, marketing skills training, and other tourism and hospitality skill sets. We have mapped out \$10,000 in year one and \$10,000 in year two to elevate and help address the workforce needs in the region.

Year one will primarily be spent bringing more Guest Service Gold training to the region and developing a workforce development plan for year two. This includes mapping out current regional, state and nationwide resources and programs that address our region’s needs and supporting them in our region. Examples of outreach partners include: Columbia Gorge Community College, Clackamas County Community College, ORLA, MCEDD, Travel Oregon, and Regional Solutions, among others. In year two we will, in conjunction with key regional partners, execute the workforce development plan that was developed in year one. The RDMO will also leverage the insights gained by Travel Oregon in their Workforce Development research study conducted by ECONorthwest, available fall 2019.

TACTICS

3. BUDGET: \$4,000

Transportation:

Transportation and congestion are critical issues in our region. But tourism is only a piece of this complicated puzzle. Our plan for transportation in this biennium is two-fold. First, we are partnering with the existing Car-free Implementation Team (CFIT) to find stable hosting for their transportation content on the www.hood-gorge.com website. Identifying a host for the current columbiagorgecarfree.com content, we are working with Mt. Hood partners to get car-free Mt. Hood transportation options implemented into the content. The RDMO will support the CFIT work with \$1,000 a year to help pay for new and improved transportation mapping and recreation tools on the website.

The other \$1,000 a year will be used to drive traffic to the transportation information page on our website to provide visitors with the most up-to-date information about transportation options in the region.

Promotion will happen on social media channels and via SEM (in part coming out of the SEM budget in marketing). Second, we are prioritizing making sure that tourism always has a voice in transportation planning conversations in this region via representation from

the RDMO and/or CFIT. This includes working closely with and leveraging partners like: CFIT, ODOT and the Columbia Gorge Express, Mt. Hood Express, Explore The Dalles bus, local private transportation and shuttle providers, and the larger round-the-mountain body of work.

4. BUDGET: \$20,000 FY19-20: \$10,000 FY20-21: \$10,000

Stakeholder Engagement:

Successful destination development relies on strong communication and partnerships. The best way to ensure the Mt. Hood/Gorge region is building strong, foundational relationships and working collaboratively and closely with tourism stakeholders across the region is to engage with them face to face.

The funding from this tactic will go towards travel expenses to support attending various Alliance and Coalition meetings, trainings, and conferences, as well as proactive stakeholder outreach meetings. It also includes the RDMO's partnership dues for the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance.

Examples include:

Individual meetings with tourism businesses, new and existing, in the region to talk about the value of tourism and determine how they can best work with their DMO and RDMO. The RDMO will

also use this time to talk to partners about engaging with receptive tour operators.

- Policymakers, government agencies, and elected officials
- Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance and coinciding project teams
- Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance
- Bi-annual regional stakeholder meetings
- Clackamas River Post Tourism Studio work
- Others, to be determined

5. BUDGET: 0

Greater Portland Training:

We will work with organizations in the Portland Region, such as PNW Experience, Travel Portland, airport rental car companies, and the Oregon Welcome Centers to promote appropriate messaging about the Mt. Hood/Gorge region. We know that visitors who stay in Portland and other parts of the state see our region as a day trip, and it is actively marketed that way by tourism entities and DMOs in the Portland Region and their frontline staff. While we cannot control this, we can help shape the way these tourism ambassadors talk about and outwardly communicate our region to ensure those communications fit with the goals of the region and do not detract from it.

GLOBAL MARKETING

Finding new and better ways to manage visitor flow in our region by driving visitation away from congested areas and out toward our lesser visited communities is a top priority for our Global Marketing plans this biennium. Every marketing tactic is positioned as a visitor management tool.

Based on feedback from visitor facing tourism partners throughout the state, we will be transitioning from our normal Travel Magazine to a visitor-friendly map resource as our core promotional collateral. Our map will return to the original branding for the region, the “Infinity Loop,” but this time it will be used to call out and draw attention to target communities and away from the high-traffic areas. In year two we will start to work on thematic “Infinity Loop” versions of the map, allowing visitors a more diverse view of what our region has to offer. Benefits to the map strategy are that it addresses the feedback that visitors want more maps and less guides, there will be lower printing and shipping costs, and we will have a more targeted way to direct the flow of visitor traffic through the region, away from congested areas and out toward our lesser visited communities.

The Google Content Co-op will provide marketing training to our small and less visited communities that they would not normally be able to access to improve their searchability online.

Finally, we will leverage social media and PR channels to focus on storylines and messaging connected to better visitor flow and management.



1. Infinity Loop Map
2. Oregon Welcome Center Brochure Program
3. Google Content Co-op
4. Website Hosting & Management
5. Madden Media SEM (Search Engine Marketing) Program
6. Media Deskside Tours
7. Regional Media FAM Tour Hosting
8. Travel Oregon-Led/Suggested Domestic Fam Tour Budget
9. In-Market Activation in Key Media Market
10. Economic Impact of Tourism-Regional Collateral
11. Travel Oregon Regional Pack (TORP) Programtactic
12. Photo Asset Management Systemtactic
13. Content Contractor
14. OTIS Strategy

TACTICS

1. BUDGET: \$39,520
 FY19-20: \$24,730
 FY20-21: \$14,790

Infinity Loop Map:

In an effort to address the changing needs of visitors and feedback from regional partners and visitor centers, the RDMO received a lot of feedback about needing a good regional map for Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. Many of our visitor facing partners have been relying on the outdated USFS map of the Mt. Hood Scenic Loop for years. That is why the RDMO plans to revise the “Infinity Loop” for the region and build a map around it that showcases all the great things you can do in the region on one visitor friendly map. This print piece will bring extra focus to our lesser visited sites and communities including the East Gorge and lower Mt. Hood to help draw visitation away from the more congested areas and out towards other communities. It will serve as the fulfillment piece for Travel Oregon and for Welcome Centers in the state. There will be a map on one side and interpretation content on the other side.

Funding in year one (\$24,730) will cover the costs to design and print the map. We plan to print two versions of it, one as a folded fulfillment piece, and the other as a tear off map for frontline staff. Trailhead Ambassadors, and Welcome/ Visitor Centers.

Year two funding (\$14,790) will go toward additional printing, if needed,



as well as integration of the map onto our website. The goal is to create digital thematic versions of the map. Examples could include: Recreation, Arts & Heritage, Culinary Adventures, etc.

2. BUDGET: \$2,000

Oregon Welcome Center Brochure Program:

Printed brochures and visitor guides remain an effective, commonly used in-market resources for visitor information.

In 2017, Oregon’s Welcome Centers assisted over 200,000 walk-in visitors and serve as highly influential, effective distribution points for regional visitor information. The Mt. Hood/Gorge Infinity Loop map will be stocked at Travel Oregon’s eight staffed welcome centers throughout the state.

3. BUDGET: \$12,500

Google Content Co-op:

Partner with the Travel Oregon marketing team and Miles Media in a program which will give the RDMOs an understanding of what 12 key cities in their area look like in Google Travel Guides and Top Sights – which are the two most destination-centric Google products. This program emphasizes in-person education for RDMOs that will focus on how they can take action to address any opportunities surfaced by the audit, as well as begin to engage the industry in becoming more active on Google My Business. We’ve also included options for the RDMOs to expand the number of cities audited, as well as an option for content creation – both outside the shared cost of the co-op. This audit will provide valuable information for the RDMO to work with partners to improve Google Travel Guide information and Top Sights. Through this program each RDMO will have a personalized, in-person training session and become a member of the Google DMO Partnership Program. The Google Content Co-Op will whitelists the RDMO for access to a RDMO Knowledge Base developed by Google that provides how-to guides on 13+ Google tools that RDMOs can leverage. The Mt. Hood/Gorge region is made up of 12 cities/communities, which means every destination will get to benefit from this program.

TACTICS

4. BUDGET: \$12,500

Website Hosting & Management:

In order to control our messaging and continue to drive visitors to inspirational shoulder season and targeted community content about the region, we need a well-functioning website to host content. Hosting and website management costs for the biennium will be covered with \$9,600. Continued upkeep of weekly blog posts about the region will further enhance the inspirational value and usability of the website. Our content calendar allows for each sub-region to post a blog story once a month as well as writing one full regional post a month. The Industry Resources section provides a valuable channel for communication with our partners and stakeholders.

5. BUDGET: \$24,000

Madden Media SEM

(Search Engine Marketing) Program:

This is a two-year SEM program with Madden Media to direct traffic to the hood-gorge.com website with a guaranteed 1,000 visits to the website each month which costs \$1,000/month. An SEM program uses targeted keywords to help drive relevant and interested travelers to the region's website that we would not have otherwise been able to attract. The more eyes we can get on the website, the more promotion our lesser-visited communities will receive. We will incorporate a strategy with targeted transportation keywords, intentionally driving more visitors to the car-free transportation section of the website.

6. BUDGET: \$25,000

Media Deskside Tours:

The RDMO will work with Lawrence Public Relations to research, build and schedule two deskside tours in FY 2020-21, that focus on media outlets that can tell targeted stories about our region, including but not limited to: multi-day visits, arts and culture, heritage, agritourism, destination stewardship, transportation and lesser-visited communities. The RDMO will work with Lawrence Public Relations to select the best markets to target. The regional coordinator will attend the deskside tours. This budget includes PR agency contract and travel expenses for two deskside tours.

7. BUDGET: \$20,000

Regional Media FAM Tour Hosting:

Funds will cover hosting visiting media on FAMs as outcomes of the deskside tours and in-market activation. Media coverage coming out of the deskside tours and in-market activation will target third-party endorsement of our key goals around multi-day visits and seasonality, promoting lesser visited communities, alternate forms of transportation, and showcasing the breadth of attractions in the region beyond the exceptional recreation.

8. BUDGET: \$1,000

Travel Oregon-Led/Suggested Domestic Fam Tour Budget:

Every year Travel Oregon vets and supports several domestic FAM tours of the state to inspire third party endorsement of Oregon as a premier vacation destination.

In FY 2017/18 these FAM tours resulted in coverage in the Chicago Tribune, L.A. Times, Sunset Magazine, S.F. Chronicle, Huffington Post and more. Given stakeholders' prioritizing PR outreach and media coverage, it is crucial to have each region have some buy-in when hosting journalists.

When a region is investing in these tours, Travel Oregon will ensure that there is time built into itineraries for RDMOs and their partners to meet with key media influencers so they can further strengthen/build their own relationships with the media, a crucial factor in garnering the right coverage in the right publications for each region.

Funding is targeted in Year two to coincide with Travel Oregon led FAMs that may arise from the in-market activation.

TACTICS

9. BUDGET: \$10,000

In-Market Activation in Key Media Market:

Create a statewide activation in a key media market like New York City to raise awareness of the many offerings of Oregon and the fresh, new story ideas that are coming out of the state, including, but not limited to: culinary, outdoor recreation, wellness, arts and culture, and the people who help make Oregon a magical place. Travel Oregon and Travel Portland would work together to create an affordable opportunity for all regions to participate and further enhance/build relationships with influential journalists in key media markets. Locations and exact ideas for the activation are TBD.

10. BUDGET: \$0

Economic Impact of Tourism Collateral:

As an RDMO it is critical to clearly communicate how tourism generates jobs and economic impacts for the counties, region and state. This provides RDMOs with an opportunity to partner with Travel Oregon and create a high impact leave behind that can communicate these impacts down to the county level. This material can be presented at county commissions, city councils, and be left as a leave behind after meetings with elected leaders. Providing a clear understanding of how tourism benefits the area

will garner more support for tourism programs and strengthen other local tourism initiatives. Budget includes design and printing of 250 copies each year for each RDMO.

11. BUDGET: \$40,000

Travel Oregon Regional Pack (TORP) Program:

The Travel Oregon Regional Pack (TORP) provides partners with an opportunity to distribute printed visitor guides through Travel Oregon’s distribution channels, maximizing efficiencies for the state tourism industry. As inquiries related to a specific TORP partner are received, Travel Oregon’s fulfillment house processes the order and mails the packet to the consumer.

12. BUDGET: \$720

Photo Asset Management System:

This tactic funds the cost of our Zenfolio account, a DAM (Digital Asset Management) platform, where we house all our regional images to share with industry partners and interested media to support their marketing and communication efforts about the area.

13. BUDGET: \$24,000

Content Contractor:

The content contractor will help support the workload of the region in the space of content creation. This contractor will manage social media posts, manage the content calendar of the website, write occasional blog posts, assist the editing of the Infinity Loop Map content, and manage the region’s photo/video asset library. Their role is to regularly review and maintain the social channels, including engaging with followers to increase clicks to our website. Priority messaging includes: car-free transportation, lesser visited communities, Ready, Set, Gorge and Leave No Trace tips, week-day and overnight visitation. This budget does not include funds for paid posts.

14. BUDGET: \$0

OTIS Strategy:

The RDMO’s strategy for maintaining complete and up-to-date OTIS data is to utilize our regional DMO partners. The following DMOs have been identified: Clackamas County Tourism, the West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce, Cascade Locks Tourism Committee, Visit Hood River, and The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce. Each DMO is trained on making updates and will do so minimally on a quarterly basis. The RDMO will send out monthly reminder emails.

GLOBAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

After working with the Grants team at Travel Oregon, and hearing feedback from our regional partners, it is clear that there is a high demand for grant opportunities in the region, but a lack of knowledge around how to apply for them with success.

We want to bolster grant writing skills in the region and help support critical areas that only our partners can lead, including product development and improvements to the visitor experience.

The grant training will also help catalyze project ideas for the region's Strategic Investment Fund. The fund is targeted towards helping to address destination development needs in the region.



1. Regional Grant Writing Workshop
2. Strategic Investment Fund

TACTICS



Photo Via: www.hood-gorge.com

1. BUDGET: \$1,000

Regional Grant Writing Workshop: Training on grant writing tips and techniques to give members of the region the opportunity to gain insights on how to enhance a grant application to make it more competitive for funding. Program planning and budgeting will be highlighted. An emphasis will be placed on tourism-related grants, including Travel Oregon’s Competitive Grants program or any regional funding opportunities. RDMO can work with the contractor to determine the details of the programing and whether the training should be geared as basic or more advanced.

2. BUDGET: \$70,000

Strategic Investment Fund: The RDMO has chosen to run a Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) in the region vs. a grant program. This decision was made because of our limited staffing resources being unable to manage a grant program. Additionally, the RDMO feels we can be more flexible and nimble with a SIF, relying on the region’s local DMOs to vet and bring forward funding proposals. Once a formal process is set up for applying for these funds, it will be communicated throughout the region. The goal would be to get the SIF promoted

by fall 2019. Investment requests will be encouraged in the following areas: new/improved tourism product, wayfinding, arts/culture/heritage, fishing, biking, trail congestion solutions, transportation congestion solutions, agritourism, and menu of investment opportunities. The fund includes \$30,000 in year one, and \$40,000 in year two, a \$10,000 increase over the required minimum for this fund.

GLOBAL SALES

One of the best strategies for bringing visitors to the region during shoulder seasons and for mid-week and multi-day stays is to target international markets. Building on the successful global sales training and development in the previous biennium in our region, we now have more product online and more informed partners to pitch and work with international markets.

By partnering with Travel Oregon on their Global Sales programs, we will be able to leverage the larger Oregon messages to benefit our region and continue to develop relationships in this space and build awareness about our region.



1. IPW 2020 & 2021
2. Go West Summit 2020 and 2021
3. Go West Summit 2020 (Portland, Oregon) Pre- and Post- Familiarization Tours
4. Go West Summit 2020 Opening or Closing Event
5. FAM Coordination Contractor
6. Travel Trade Familiarization Tours (FAMs) and Press Trips
7. Tourism Economics International Regional Research

TACTICS

1. BUDGET: \$11,000

IPW 2020 & 2021:

IPW is the USA's largest international inbound travel trade and media marketplace. RDMOs will have the opportunity to network, build relationships, promote product, and provide regional information to key international markets, media, and clients.

2. BUDGET: \$7,900

Go West Summit 2020 and 2021:

Go West Summit includes one-on-one scheduled appointments with global tour operators and receptive tour operators and trade media from key markets. There is also an industry education day and networking events.

3. BUDGET: \$5,000

Go West Summit 2020 (Portland, Oregon)

Pre- and Post- Familiarization Tours: Official pre- and post- FAM tour opportunities during Go West Summit.

4. BUDGET: \$3,000

Go West Summit 2020 Opening or Closing Event:

Regional representation, recognition, and participation in Go West Summit opening/closing event highlighting Oregon regional sponsors during the event.

5. BUDGET: \$24,000

FAM Coordination Contractor:

The FAM coordination contractor will help support the workload of the region by managing the logistics of all FAM leads that come from Travel Oregon for Travel Trade and Media, as well as media FAMs generated by the region.

6. BUDGET: \$5,250

Tourism Economics International Regional Research:

The Tourism Economics Regional International Research Data is an international marketing analysis containing visitor volume and spend data by market. This annual report combines VisaVue data as well as additional sources.

7. BUDGET: \$14,310

Travel Trade Familiarization Tours (FAMs) and Press Trips:

Travel Trade product development trips for international tour operators, product managers and travel trade sales teams to experience Oregon product first-hand. Media research trips for international publications, niche media outlets, influencers and travel trade media. We have \$6,310 allocated to year one and \$8,000 for year two.



Photo Via: Travel Oregon

STAFFING & ADMINISTRATION

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO will accomplish the proposed body of work with the support of a 75% staff person and supporting contractors for content and FAM coordination.

The staff role will administer the body of work laid out in this plan, with support from the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance as well as feedback from regional stakeholders.

Funding for staffing is directly targeting all of the goals established in this plan. This budget includes salary and benefits for one 75% staff for two years.

STAFFING PLANNED BUDGET: \$180,000



BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. OREGON VISITOR REPORT: 2017 LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

industry.traveloregon.com/resources/research/oregon-visitor-report-2015-longwoods-international

2. OREGON TRAVEL IMPACTS: 1991 – 2018, DEAN RUNYAN ASSOCIATES

industry.traveloregon.com/resources/research/oregon-travel-impacts-1991-2011-dean-runyan-associates

TRAVEL  OREGON

SWING
AT
OWN
RISK

