



**TRAVEL OREGON**

**INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE & EDUCATION UPDATE**  
**OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING**

**3.9.2026**

hood-gorge.com (photographer: Modoc Stories)

# DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP / SERVICES



**SCOTT BRICKER**  
Director



**HILARY SAGER**  
Manager



**ALEXA CAREY**  
Destination Stewardship  
Department Strategist



**NASTASSJA OLSON**  
Manager



**FAVIANA SCHECTMAN**  
Coordinator

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. Introduction to the Work – Scott Bricker
2. Engaging the Industry – Alexa Carey
3. Topical Education & Engagement – Hilary Sager
4. Growing the Work at Travel Oregon – Faviana Schectman



# MISSION

We inspire travel that uplifts Oregon communities. Collaborating with stakeholders and partners to align as stewards of Oregon, we work to optimize economic opportunity, advance equity and respect the ecosystems, cultures and places that make Oregon...Oregon.

# ALIGNMENT WITH OUR VISION

A strong and aligned industry will be more impactful in achieving our 10-year Strategic Vision.

- Mission: "...Collaborating with Stakeholders and Partners to align as stewards of Oregon..."
- Fostering Destination Stewardship Leadership: "...rooted in our purest intention to be in service to the industry..."
- Impact of Distributed Leadership: "leadership, partnership and alignment among our stakeholders and partners as we all leverage one another's ideas and passions."

## TRAVEL OREGON'S 10-YEAR STRATEGIC VISION

Oregon Tourism Commission | 2022

TRAVEL  OREGON



# Engaging the Industry



# ENGAGING THE INDUSTRY

## Purpose

- Coordinated training, capacity building, and partner engagement to create a more impactful & connected industry

## Engagement Levers

- Introduction to Destination Stewardship (Learning Lab) & Destination Boot Camp
- Learning Community focused on organizational sustainability and leadership
- Ongoing partner pulses and interviews

## Outcomes

- Real-time identification of regional and local priorities & alignment opportunities
- Strengthened long-term resilience across Oregon's destination network ground game

# DESTINATION BOOT CAMP

May 13–15, 2026 | Graduate by Hilton Eugene  
Eugene, Oregon | Willamette Valley

## What It Is

- Annual statewide convening on destination development, management, and stewardship professionals
- Interactive, discussion-based learning with peer exchange for 11 years

## Who Attends

- Development, Management & Stewardship staff from DMOs & RDMO partners
- Oregon Tourism Studio, Destination Ready & Recreation Ready partners
- Economic development organizations
- Main Street leaders
- Local & county government
- Stewardship, recreation, & land managers



# DESTINATION BOOT CAMP

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Eugene, Oregon | Willamette Valley

## Outcomes

- Shared solutions to destination management & stewardship challenges
- Stronger cross-sector relationships and industry partnerships
- Increased capacity & alignment across Oregon communities

## Logistics:

- Free registration with targeted invitations.
- Attendance capped at 100.
- Lodging scholarships available.





# EVOLVING INDUSTRY NEEDS

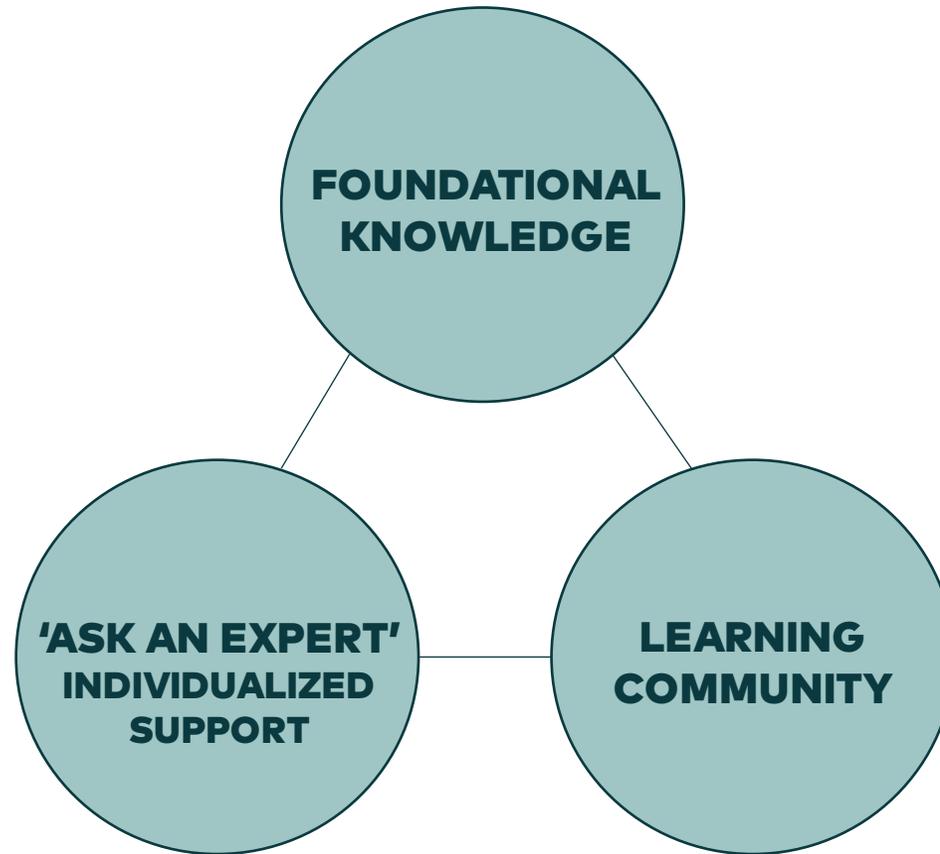
Insights from Interviews & Blue Room Research

- Stronger case-making for tourism's community and economic value
- Expanded local and regional capacity building & organizational support
- Greater focus on professional development, training & education
- Increased scrutiny, transparency, and accountability expectations
- Growing cross-sector collaboration across economic development, Main Street, stewardship, and residents

# Topical Education & Engagement



# TOPICAL EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT **METHODOLOGY**



# Dark Sky Tourism

Learn how Oregon’s pristine dark skies can be a sustainable tourism asset in your destination.

Celebrating, protecting and visiting “dark sky” areas is a growing worldwide phenomenon – and that’s great news, because since the invention of electric streetlights and the use of artificial light at night (ALAN), we are losing the natural darkness of night literally at the speed of light. In fact, it’s estimated that 80% of Americans and nearly 33% of all humanity can no longer see the Milky Way from home.

Unlike states east of the Mississippi River and our neighbors to the north and south, Oregon is fortunate to have an abundance of dark skies. In fact, much of Eastern Oregon comprises the majority of the largest and most pristine dark sky zone in the contiguous United States.

**Questions?** *Reach out to our staff*



**Hilary Sager**  
*Destination Services Manager*

✉ [hilary@traveloregon.com](mailto:hilary@traveloregon.com)



**Dark Sky Tourism  
Learning Community**



**Dark Sky Tourism Toolkit**



**Dark Sky Tourism  
Consultations**



# I. FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE



## II. ASK AN EXPERT

- Consultations provided by topical experts
- Available for free to Oregon tourism-related businesses, DMOs and non-profits
- Up to 5 hours of support available per consult area
- 41 consults provided in 2025 across all experts



Digital Accessibility Consultation



Accessibility in the Outdoors Consultation



Agritourism Consultation



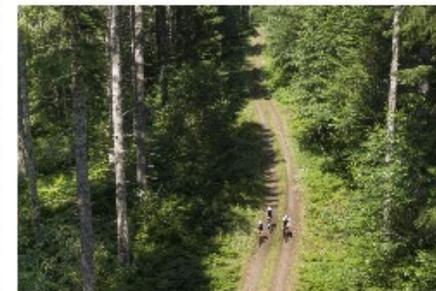
Tour Operators, Guides & Outfitters Consultation



Dark Sky Tourism Consultations



Recreation Feasibility & Concept Planning Consultation



Trail Stewardship & Development Consultation



Recreation Asset Mapping & Multimedia Consultation



# III. LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- Dark Sky Tourism
- Food Systems & Tourism
- Accessibility (RDMOs only)
- Tour Operators, Guides & Outfitters



A photograph of a dirt path winding through a lush forest. Three people are walking along the path: a man in a blue shirt and cap, a woman in a white shirt, and a man in a light purple shirt. The forest is filled with large, thick tree trunks and dense green ferns. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the path. The text "Growing the work at Travel Oregon" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

# Growing the work at Travel Oregon

# EXPANSION OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

## Data & Research (RDMO, DMO & Chambers only)

- Leads: Dipti Muni-O'Connor & Javier Parada Torres
- Launch: March 25<sup>th</sup> 2026

## Oregon Visitor Services (Visitor Services staff only)

- Lead: Allison George
- Launch: Early May 2026

## Destination Capacity Building

- Lead: Alexa Carey
- Launch: April 2026





# EXPANSION OF ASK AN EXPERT

- Data & Research
- Global Sales
- Business Support Services

Goal of program expansion is to elevate the expertise and existing offerings we have here at Travel Oregon to:

- Improve program visibility and efficiency
- continue to support and strengthen the tourism industry

# ASK AN EXPERT



## Ashley Schahfer

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE OUTDOORS

Empowering Access provides equitable experience- and knowledge-based guidance to those looking to engage in disability, equity, and inclusion work. By leveraging expertise and

lived-experience to collaborate with stakeholders in design, assessment, evaluation, and planning for inclusive changes. The goal is to listen, learn and amplify voices with lived experience as a means to empowering inclusion in all built environments, indoors and out.



## Dawn Nilson

DARK SKY TOURISM

Dawn J. Nilson has been engaged in dark sky work for over 15 years. She is sole proprietor of Fibonacci Enterprises. She serves as Travel Oregon's dark sky expert and has authored the Oregon Dark Sky

Tourism Toolkit and provided over 30 one-on-one consultations through its Ask an Expert program. She has provided support on 6 International Dark Sky Place pursuits, including managing and authoring the nomination for the Oregon Outback International Dark Sky Sanctuary. During and after the workshop she will be offering the following services: dark sky destination strategic planning, event planning and hosting, outdoor lighting inventories & management plans, community engagement, lighting ordinance reviews & revision, marketing assistance, interpretive master plans, tour programming, education curriculum, Dark Sky Place nominations, & more.



## Dan Sizer

TOUR OPERATORS, GUIDES & OUTFITTERS

Dan's passions for bringing friends together around good food, adventuring, and entrepreneurship meet in Go Wild: American Adventures. At Go Wild, Dan creates elevated backcountry

trips in Eastern Oregon for guests from around the globe with a mission to foster enthusiasm for the outdoors, the rural lifestyle, and to support the local community. Before consulting Travel Oregon, Dan worked for his local Small Business Development Center. When he's not thinking about permitting, insurance, or guerilla marketing, you might find Dan playing in his funk band or teaching salsa dance.



## Chris Bernhardt

RECREATIONAL TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

Chris' passion is sharing the outdoors with others, bringing 35 years of experience to tangibly improve people's lives through outdoor recreation. Working

in locations from Hong Kong to Switzerland, Chris shares international best practices to help Oregon's communities create outdoor rec opportunities that support small businesses and preserve rural spaces.



## Erika Polmar

AGRITOURISM

Erika Polmar provides culinary and agritourism technical assistance to small businesses across Oregon. With a background spanning restaurant operation, agritourism, and food policy,

Erika brings a practical understanding of how food businesses operate from working lands to Main Street. Her work supports resilient local food economies and tourism strategies that align with community values and long-term sustainability. She is the Executive Director of the Independent Restaurant Coalition and the Founder of Plate & Pitchfork, a nationally recognized agritourism organization connecting farms, chefs, and the public through on-farm experiences.



## Cameron Sanders

RECREATION ASSET MAPPING & MULTIMEDIA CONSULTATION

Cameron Sanders is the sole proprietor of A Lens for Wanderlust, providing nonprofits, government agencies, and outdoor for-profit industries with

grassroots and technical solutions - steeped in geospatial design and storytelling - for building sustainable and resilient ecotourism in a rapidly evolving world. Cameron brings 13 years of experience as a federal lands manager to all aspects of their consulting and project development. A Lens for Wanderlust also provides 3D modeling, design, and engineering services for the development of cycling components as well as market strategies, e-commerce platform creation and maintenance, and multimedia acquisition for cycling industries.



## Rose Naigus

GLOBAL SALES CONSULTATION

Rose Naigus is the Global Sales Coordinator with six years in the travel industry, including the past two years with Travel Oregon. I love connecting people to places and helping

our global sales team shine in international markets. From coordinating FAM tours and tradeshows to supporting sales missions and client events, I enjoy bringing the details together so everything runs smoothly. Known for clear communication, strong relationships with industry partners, and a positive, team-first approach that helps turn great ideas into successful experiences.



## Steph Noll

TRAIL STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION

Steph Noll (she/her) serves as the Director of the Oregon Trails Coalition, a coalition of broad-based, statewide partners dedicated to the preservation,

development, and stewardship of a statewide network of sustainable trails that provide access to outdoor recreation and active transportation for all. Steph loves working at the intersection of community health, outdoor recreation, and transportation. While at the Oregon Trails Coalition, she has worked with countless partners to forward individual trail projects as well as broader initiatives like Oregon Signature Trails and Ready, Set, Plan, the introductory guide trail planning and development. When not working, she loves camping and exploring Oregon with her partner and two kids, drinking coffee by the ocean or on any river, and playing old country and string band music with friends.



## Dipti Muni-O'Connor & Javier Parada

DATA & RESEARCH CONSULTATION

Dipti Muni-O'Connor is the Insights and Planning Manager at Travel Oregon for Strategy, Research and Analytics team. Since joining the agency in

September 2024, she has been responsible for overseeing the Business Intelligence platform, managing organizational KPIs, and developing the strategic dashboards that drive data-informed decision-making for the state's tourism industry. Dipti brings a lot of hands-on experience to the team. At Fiserv, she focused on the technical side of Business Intelligence and automating big data. Then at Nike, she refined her approach to metric strategy, learning exactly how to pick the right KPIs to make dashboards more effective.



## Jen Macias De La Parra

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Jen Macias De La Parra is a design strategist and accessibility practitioner whose path into this work began in biology. That scientific lens, combined with

experience in trauma-informed design, shapes how she approaches access: not as a checklist, but as a question of how systems either sustain or harm the people inside them.

With over a decade of experience spanning Fortune 500 companies, public agencies, and global nonprofits, Jen helps organizations build accessibility practices that endure. Her work focuses on embedding accessibility standards into design systems, governance models, and team workflows so that inclusion outlasts any single project. She consistently prioritizes meaningful access over minimum compliance.

Jen holds IAAP CPACC certification and DHS T trusted Tester credentials and runs an ESB/WBE/MBE-certified consultancy serving clients across healthcare, government, entertainment, and education.



## Miles Partnership

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE CONSULTATION

Miles Partnership is a strategic marketing consultancy focused exclusively on travel and tourism.

They work with more than 130 destinations, hospitality businesses and other travel industry clients to develop marketing and management strategies that amplify local experiences, boost visitation, support community engagement and increase overall economic impact.

On behalf of Travel Oregon, Miles Partnership provides free one-on-one support to you for your Google Business Profile related questions.



A group of seven hikers is walking away from the camera on a dirt trail through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The hikers are wearing various gear, including backpacks and hats. The ground is covered in dry pine needles and some sparse vegetation. The text "Thank you! Questions?" is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, white, serif font.

Thank you!  
Questions?