RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL HANDBOOK
Washington Tourism Organizations

Port of Seattle®

the Travel Foundation

Tourism Cares

Contents

Numerica Sky Ride, Libby Kamrowski, Courtesy of Visit Spokane.

Cover Image: Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Humpback Breach, Lee Andelson, Courtesy of San Juan Islands Visitor Bureau

Contents

Garbage Eating Goat, Libby Kamrowski, Courtesy of Visit Spokane

Spokane Riverfront Park,
Miles Bergsma, Courtesy of Visit Spokane

Introduction

Message from the Port of Seattle

When the Port of Seattle introduced its Century Agenda in 2012, it created a clear vision for the organization to be a positive force for Washington's economy and its people. Among the ambitious goals outlined in the plan are promoting tourism, becoming the greenest port in North America, and becoming a model for diversity, equity and inclusion.

With those goals in mind, the Port's tourism department sponsored the State of Washington Tourism's Responsible Outdoor Travel Summit in 2022 to advance conversations around tourism's impact on the environment, destination stewardship and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Port brought in the internationally recognized experts at the Travel Foundation and Tourism Cares to help bring those messages to Washington's tourism industry.

Developing this Responsible Tourism Handbook is a follow-up on commitments made at the Summit to take action. In it, you will find inspiration and practical guidance on how your organization, region, or community can help usher in a better version of the tourism industry that works for all Washingtonians.

We hope the contents of this handbook will be a foundational tool that will help your organizations drive the positive impact of tourism not just economically but also environmentally and socially.

Washington Beer Awards, Yakima Valley, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Message from State of Washington Tourism

Washington's statewide tourism program was re-built amid the COVID-19 pandemic, informed by tourism's deep need for recovery, visitation management and stewardship planning and development.

State of Washington Tourism (SWT) adopted a strategic position around responsible travel, beginning with a values-based destination brand platform and consumer campaigns targeting responsible travelers. Robust destination development and management programs were created to bolster the tourism industry and rural and underserved communities. And SWT inaugurated the Responsible Outdoor Travel Summit, with foundational sponsorship from the Port of Seattle, to convene thought leaders in travel and tourism, recreation and conservation.

We look forward to continuing and expanding these partnerships and hope this Responsible Travel Handbook provides a framework for your initiatives.

Message from the Travel Foundation and Tourism Cares

Congratulations on taking this step! At the Travel Foundation our mission is to support tourism leaders like you in having the tools you need to ensure your community is truly benefiting from tourism. And at Tourism Cares, we unite the travel industry to be a catalyst of positive social, environmental and economic impact for the people and places of travel. This handbook, alongside the associated worksheet exercises, offers you the building blocks to help you identify ideal outcomes and incorporate tested approaches to creating a more responsible, inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant future of tourism in your community.

What the COVID-19 pandemic taught us, and what our changing economic, environmental, and social

challenges are constantly reminding us, is that we have to be prepared for uncertainty. If tourism is to do its part in contributing to vitality and prosperity, it is essential to support the small businesses that fuel the travel experience, the environmental resources, and the diverse and vibrant communities that we all depend on. It will also be critical to innovate and fund adaptation strategies which respond to changing trends and expectations from local, national and global influences, as well as develop a deep understanding of the varied impacts tourism has on our communities.

There are three crucial factors to this adaptation which we cover in this handbook.

- First, the shift towards a stewardship model, where community needs are placed at the center of tourism planning and management.

- Second, new, balanced measures of success beyond a focus on visitor numbers to a focus on the value that tourism brings, including its contribution and impacts on the natural environment and community wellbeing.

- Third, collaboration - we all need to align towards more collective action.

This handbook explores these three elements more deeply and offers advice and tips that will help you build resilience into your organization's plans and day-to-day decision making. The time to adapt is now. By working through this manual and by coming together to solve the challenges we all face, we can help to ensure that tourism is part of the solution, and truly a force for good for our communities and our world.

Aims and Goals of this Handbook

This guidebook provides details and tools that can help tourism organizations including destination marketing and management organizations (DMOs), government

Mudhouse Pottery painting, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

departments and agencies, chambers of commerce, trade and industry associations, and tourism businesses within the state of Washington to develop and promote responsible tourism and enhance knowledge and skills in destination management.

The handbook provides tourism professionals and volunteers alike with professional development resources that can help them understand and deliver on new and evolving challenges and opportunities in sustainability, responsible outdoor recreation, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and destination stewardship.

This handbook will assist organizations to ask and answer the important questions and provides guidance on identifying and addressing impacts through action planning, better enabling them to respond to local and global trends and becoming more resilient to future shocks.

In particular, it aims to:

- Build capacity of organizations responsible for tourism marketing and management.
- Equip readers with the knowledge and skills required to develop action plans.
- Build overall destination stewardship capacities
- Address destination vulnerabilities.
- Build resilience to the threats of climate change.
- Ensure ongoing impacts are understood and strategies are in place to better manage future impacts.
- Facilitate the development of tourism product offers to meet changing market demands.

Vancouver Washington,
Courtesy of Traveling While Black

- Establish the foundation for enhancing tourism products and marketing in line with equity and destination stewardship principles.
- Create greater opportunities for all community members to benefit from tourism.
- Build stronger and resilient local supply chains.
- Align marketing and promotional strategies with impact management, inclusivity, and stewardship.
- Foster greater collaboration amongst tourism organizations and community members.

How to Use this Handbook

This handbook provides a wealth of up-to-date information and practical guidance to equip readers with the knowledge and tools needed to develop an action plan – and start taking action immediately.

WORKSHEET
There is a companion workbook that includes worksheet activities to support you to put the information and learning into practice. When you see this icon, that's an indicator that there is a companion worksheet for that section.

It starts with background information on the concepts of global challenges facing tourism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), sustainable tourism standards and destination stewardship principles. An overview of the current situation in Washington tourism is provided for context as well as lists of organizations doing

work within each important area of responsible travel in the state so that organizations can turn to local partners to get started on new initiatives right away. An in-depth section on DEIA is included and readers can choose to go straight there if that is the immediate priority. Likewise, readers may choose to focus on sections regarding managing impacts or developing an action plan. The most important way to use the handbook is as a reference tool – both a starting point and something to go back to for ideas over time.

A Handbook Rooted in the Future of Tourism Coalition Guiding Principles

In the immediate onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Travel Foundation along with Tourism Cares and four other international tourism NGOs including the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), Sustainable Travel International, Green Destinations and the Destination Stewardship Center, set up a coalition to align industry behind a shared vision for a better future of tourism. The Future of Tourism Coalition (FOTC) sets out 13 guiding principles to guide efforts by tourism businesses and destinations to make the better future of tourism a reality. Tourism organizations can become signatories to the Guiding Principles, enabling them to join the community platform which provides a space for knowledge-sharing, toolkits, and connecting with others on their journeys.

Learn more at https://www.futureoftourism.org/

Throughout the handbook, these icons appear, referring to how the topics are related to each guiding principle.

13 Guiding Principles

1. See the whole picture
2. Use sustainability standards
3. Collaborate in destination management
4. Choose quality over quantity
5. Demand fair income distribution
6. Reduce tourism's burden
7. Redefine economic success
8. Mitigate climate impacts
9. Close the loop on resources
10. Contain tourism's land use
11. Diversify source markets
12. Protect sense of place
13. Operate business responsibly

FUTURE OF TOURISM

Deception Pass, Jason Hummel Photography,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Why Take Action Now?

Tourism destinations are vulnerable to shocks, crises, trends, degradation, and changes in visitor patterns, particularly if they are dependent on external factors and sudden shifts occur, such as changes in visitation from specific source markets or extreme weather events. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these vulnerabilities and, unfortunately, is unlikely to be the last shock that communities face. Identifying and developing strategies to address these vulnerabilities is vital for responding to immediate challenges, adapting to trends and new realities, and identifying new opportunities. Additionally, considering how to address long term potential impacts, such as social and environmental degradation, effects from overtourism, and other threats such as climate change and volatile economic situations, helps organizations build resilience for the future. It's also about

doing the right thing. Residents and visitors alike are demanding more from tourism – more positive and less negative impacts – and there is no time like the present to commit and act!

The Challenges Today and Ahead

In addition to being better prepared to respond to a specific crisis, integrating inclusivity and sustainability into your organization's decision-making and improving the resilience of your organization and destination will also support you to be more successful as you continue to adapt. It is useful to consider a selection of these challenges and concerns reported by tourism destinations and communities across the globe when planning new activities. This will also help to provide context to the guidance provided in this handbook:

- Increase in extreme weather events due to climate change such as wildfire, smoke, floods, extreme heat, lack of reliable snow in mountain resorts, etc.
- Increased tourism and recreation impacts on lands, habitats and cultures, including impacts to Indigenous peoples and lands and Tribal rights.
- Exclusion and inequity (minimal benefits and often more negative impacts) for marginalized and underrepresented people and communities).
- Lack of accessibility for people with different abilities
- Economic leakage (not enough tourism revenue remaining in the destination)
- Low margins
- Seasonality
- Blending of leisure and corporate travel; remote work
- Workforce shortages
- Housing crisis (surge in property values, demand for short-term rentals, lack of housing for residents/workers)
- Overcrowding of hotspot areas
- Changes in demand and market segments
- Strained visitor-resident dynamics

COVID-19 Recovery

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism destinations highlighted the need to strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector against ongoing and

The Port of Seattle's Equity Statement and Vision

The Port of Seattle commits to taking a lead role in regional and national efforts to achieve equity and social justice. We are identifying and dismantling structural barriers to ensure that historically oppressed communities, particularly communities of color, have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Bias and oppression are embedded in our society, systems, and our organization. By failing to acknowledge inequities, we play a role in perpetuating them. We can and must do better. In order to achieve equitable outcomes for all our communities, we must be accountable for equitable policies that ensure racial, social, and economic justice are achieved in strategies, practices, and projects.

Our Vision is to develop a Port that mirrors — throughout its breadth of operations and services and within its leadership structure — the diversity of our community, instills principles of equity in its culture, and ensures a fair and intentional distribution of opportunities to expand economic development and quality of life for all.

Visit the Port of Seattle's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion **for more info and resources.**

future shocks. The pandemic exposed the fragility of the travel sector as global travel virtually came to a standstill overnight. The subsequent widespread lockdowns resulted in the permanent closure of significant numbers of tourism businesses and drastically impacted the economies of tourism destinations worldwide, especially those where tourism makes a substantial contribution to GDP. And yet, for several communities, the years preceding the pandemic were marked by increasing resentment towards tourism as popular places witnessed extreme overcrowding, locals being priced out, environmental degradation, excess pressure on infrastructure and services, and resident protests, among other things. For some destinations, particularly in outdoor recreation communities like many rural destinations in Washington, the pandemic years marked record visitation and led to, or exacerbated, some of these issues that were rising pre-pandemic. Now, with international travel available again, numbers are down in many places and uncertainty continues to loom.

The disruption of the sector caused by the pandemic also provided an opportunity for the tourism industry to re-evaluate the purpose and management of tourism to ensure that it is resulting in positive benefits for the local community and environment. Many organizations decided to use this opportunity to reset, strengthen resilience to future shocks and create a more balanced tourism product; one that would continue to deliver economic benefits, but also address negative impacts. Building awareness and skills in these areas will enable you to tackle broader issues that impact on the long-term sustainability of your destination and futureproof it against further crises as well as respond and adapt to ongoing changes.

Olympia, Wondercamp, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA)

Prioritizing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in the management of tourism within a destination is an integral component of tourism's sustainability and deserves urgent attention in most tourism destinations. Most people in communities will be impacted by tourism, if not through direct employment by the sector, then indirectly through the shared use of services, businesses, spaces, and infrastructure with visitors. The benefits of tourism are typically not equitable across diverse and underrepresented communities. At the same time, negative impacts often disproportionately impact marginalized communities. For example, tourism and recreation impacts on lands, ecosystems, fisheries, and forests important to Indigenous peoples affect cultural practices and livelihoods. Without intentional diversification of tourism businesses as well as source markets and support for diverse enterprises in the tourism supply chain within destinations, a lack of diversity and equity often persists.

From a visitor perspective, many activities and destinations are not perceived as welcoming or inclusive to all people. "Being welcomed is not the same as being invited." (DBC DEIA Strategy 2023). Many travel experiences are not accessible to people with different abilities, which means that groups already marginalized in society become further marginalized by tourism. Addressing diversity and inclusivity in marketing is one step, but it is one step towards a much broader effort and direct actions that organizations need to take.

Westcott Bay Shellfish Co., Carina Skrobecki Swain, Courtesy of San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility must also all be addressed from the supply side and that will involve assessing your own organization as well as the broader delivery of tourism services and activities across your business or community.

For example:

- What are the challenges and barriers to recruiting a more diverse workforce?
- How can you change your organization's internal policies and procedures to ensure that employment and growth opportunities are inclusive and equitable?
- What kind of training is needed to learn more and identify new strategies?

"Research has shown that by supporting and promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace, companies experience benefits including greater profitability, increased creativity and innovation, and a happier workforce where employees feel free and safe to be who they are. It is good for business, enabling the sector to serve its clients and stakeholders better, and it is the right thing to do." (World Travel and Tourism Council)

To truly embed sustainability based on the triple bottom line of people, profit and planet, it is vital that tourism is designed and delivered in a way that is equitable and inclusive for all groups in society and creates a space for all voices to be heard.

Feeling Welcome: The concepts of safety & belonging and cultural competency

We all know that welcoming people is at the heart of the hospitality and tourism industry. If a person doesn't feel

Port Angeles, Courtesy of Traveling While Black

welcome in a store, or a restaurant, or a hotel, would they ever go back? It's customer service 101. But what does providing a welcoming atmosphere entail? Simply saying "everyone is welcome" and leaving it at that without checking if people really do feel welcome is potentially having an adverse impact on some of your visitors – and residents alike.

Why? Feeling welcome is more than just customer service. It's about feeling safe, both physically and mentally, and about a sense of belonging. In tourism we place a lot of emphasis on ensuring guests will be safe physically, and therefore will *feel safe* (mentally) from physical harm. But what is meant by emotional safety? Feeling emotionally safe is to *feel comfortable to ask questions, share concerns, and show up as your full self* (The Mountaineers: Emotional Safety eLearning Course). The Mountaineers, right here in Washington, provides an e-learning course on this very subject, recognizing that to have more successful and safe experiences in the outdoors, for all people, they needed to invest in training their leaders on the concept.

Sometimes this concept is met with a reaction, such as "Everyone is welcome in the outdoors." But it's not enough to be told all people are welcome. It must be demonstrated through action. *Read more:* Meet BIPOC Groups Working to Make Outdoors Accessible. Hear from Washington's Chevon Powell about the history of why Black and other People of Color sometimes feel unwelcome in the outdoors, her personal journey, and what she and others are doing about it.

Marissa Solini Photography,
Courtesy of Disabled Hikers
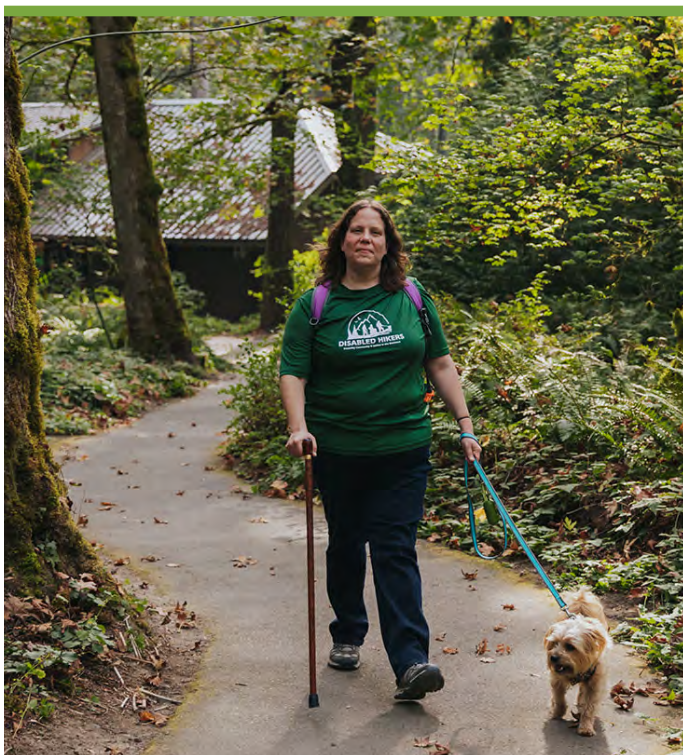
Creating welcome sometimes means being explicit in your communications, and marketing, like statements about inclusivity right on your website or signs at your entrance. But it also means doing the work to ensure the leaders and the frontline staff delivering the experiences understand the concepts, the importance, and are able to deliver that welcome.

Language is an important component of this too. Sometimes communities hold events, festivals, or promote activities to residents. But often these are promoted only in English. In places where other languages are spoken, promoting events and activities in other languages signals to speakers of those languages - residents and visitors alike - that they are welcome.

What about cultural competency? How does that improve the welcome that is delivered?

Building cultural competency is another part of creating a welcoming atmosphere for diverse, multicultural and other marginalized groups including Indigenous people, LGBTQ+ community members and people with disabilities. It's about being empathetic and challenging your own assumptions. Sometimes it translates into simply being more polite because you are more aware of, and appreciative of, differences, and therefore a little more careful about what you say and how you say things. Cultural competency needs to be learned, it's not something we're born with, particularly if we live in a place that is not very diverse. It requires a definitive commitment to learning and being vulnerable. So,

Roslyn Cafe, Carina Skrobecki Swain, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

we need to spend some time diving into our biases, assumptions, and the best part of being in the tourism industry – experiencing the glorious diversity of humanity – and all the cultures we may not have had the opportunity to interact with before. From an Indigenous perspective, this also means learning about the land you're on, what Indigenous cultures are in or close to your location, who the Tribal government is, and what their guidance is in regard to tourism impacts on their land and cultural traditions. More on this in the coming sections.

Defining each aspect of D, E, I and A

"Elevating the importance of DEI and ensuring it is woven into the core of the industry is vital for the future of travel and our workforce. As we rebuild the travel industry following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential for our future growth and success to support programs that increase diversity and upward mobility throughout and across all sectors of the industry." (US Travel Association)

In the context of tourism, the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility carry specific meanings.

Diversity in Tourism

Diversity in tourism refers to the representation and engagement of a wide range of people with varied backgrounds, identities, and characteristics in all aspects of the tourism industry, including tourists, service providers, and destinations. It encompasses differences such as cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, age, ability, and socio-economic backgrounds among those who participate in and contribute to the tourism experience.

> **Cultural Competency is not a soft skill, it is a must skill. (Destinations International)**
>
> *Cultural Competence is the ability to understand, communicate, and effectively interact with people across cultures, also known as Cultural Intelligence, Cultural Fluency, or Cultural Quotient. Cultural Competency encompasses being aware of one's own world view, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, and gaining knowledge of various cultural practices and world views. Within the travel and tourism industry, and our everyday lives, being able to understand and communicate with people of various cultures is a must skill. Cultural Competency enables you to establish and build professional relationships with partners, suppliers, buyers, vendors, colleagues, and everyone you come into contact with.*
>
> ***Read more:*** What is Cultural Competency and Why it Matters to Your Business

Courtesy of Miles Hike Club

Travel Unity is a US-based non-profit organization that works with organizations in the world of travel to broaden their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, including aligning with best practices for DEI. In 2020, Travel Unity assembled over 100 individuals and organizations from inside and outside the travel industry to collaboratively engage in a process to create living standards for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the world of travel and tourism. These Standards are meant to engage the travel industry in an ongoing dialogue and encourage the sharing of best practices in DEI. Resource: Travel Unity Standards

Mead, Greg Balkin, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Blacks in Travel & Tourism is a membership organization that designs and delivers programs, initiatives and training focused on advancing opportunities for Blacks in travel and tourism and building better destinations. It is an initiative of the Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance whose vision is to create broader access, diversity, inclusion and equitable opportunity for small BIPOC businesses to fully participate and profit in the global travel and tourism industry. Through their Diversity Tourism Academy they offer masterclasses for small travel and tourism businesses and tourism professionals to access tourism business enhancement and readiness trainings to help build sustainable businesses.

Courtesy of Miles Hike Club

Tourism Diversity Matters (TDM), founded as the collaborative leader of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and concepts that can address the gaps of ethnic disparities and provide decision-makers in the tourism and events industry access, resources, and tactics to develop more effective Diversity & Inclusion strategies that will engage and retain a diverse workforce. TDM focuses on four primary pillars of activity to benefit the Tourism Industry: Apprenticeships, Workforce Development, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Research and Data. The team and partners can work with all sizes of organizations, from small community DMOs to large companies, providing assessments and advice to help tourism organizations reach DEI goals.

Equity in Tourism

Equity in tourism involves ensuring fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all individuals involved in the industry. This includes addressing historical and systemic disparities that might exist among different groups of people. An equitable tourism approach seeks to provide equal access to benefits, resources, and opportunities regardless of factors like socio-economic status, race, or gender.

Inclusion in Tourism

Inclusion in tourism focuses on creating an environment where all individuals, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, feel welcomed, respected, and valued. It involves actively involving people of all backgrounds in decision-making processes, designing experiences that cater to their needs, and fostering a sense of belonging for both tourists and those working in the tourism industry.

Accessibility in Tourism

Accessibility in tourism pertains to making travel experiences, destinations, accommodations, and activities available and usable to everyone, including those with disabilities or different needs. This involves removing physical, cognitive, and informational barriers to ensure that all individuals can fully participate and enjoy tourism offerings.

These concepts collectively contribute to creating a tourism environment that is not only diverse and inclusive but also strives for fairness, equal opportunities, and broad access. When these principles are effectively integrated into the tourism industry, they enhance the quality of experiences for all, provide economic opportunities for diverse communities, and foster a sense of harmony and mutual understanding among people from different backgrounds.

See the section Taking Action to Improve Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility for detailed guidance and resources on this topic, including Washington-based organizations to partner with and learn from.

Impacts on Indigenous Lands and People

Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on Indigenous lands and people, and these impacts can vary widely based on factors such as the type of tourism, the cultural context, and the specific practices of the tourism

Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

industry. Therefore, it's important to understand the specific context in your tourism destination to start taking action right away to reduce negative impacts tourism may be having, and work towards positive impacts.

Tourism is often seen as a positive because it provides employment, income and entrepreneurship opportunities as well as can be a source of cultural celebration and pride for Indigenous communities. It can also lead to increased awareness about diverse Indigenous cultures, traditions, and issues, leading to better understanding and relationships among visitors and locals alike.

On the other hand, what often happens is that tourism has both exploitative effects and destructive attributes, including commodification and misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures, as well as degradation of sacred sites, undermining the spiritual and cultural significance of places that have been important since time immemorial. Another potential negative impact tourism may be having in your destination is habitat and ecosystem degradation, which often impacts Indigenous lands, livelihoods, and ways of life.

It's important to note that the impact of tourism on Indigenous lands and people is complex and context specific. Engaging – and partnering with - Indigenous communities and businesses directly; taking the lead from local Tribal governments with regard to decision-making processes around implementing tourism experiences, creating entrepreneurship opportunities, and how to respect cultural protocols, is an essential step in mitigating negative impacts and maximizing the benefits of tourism for Indigenous peoples.

An Opportunity To Turn A Conflict Into A Win-Win

In the summer of 2023, a Tribe near a rural Washington community set out for its annual traditional canoe journey, an event to celebrate the canoe as a central part of Coast Salish peoples' way of life and a cultural activity in existence since time immemorial. Participants encountered difficulty accessing the river this year. The water levels were already low due to drought, and on this day, there were river floaters that impeded access for the traditional canoes. This is an example of a negative cultural impact, and one that could have been avoided. The Tribe and the main business operating on the river did coordinate for a positive outcome, demonstrating that organized activities are beneficial because there can be more controls on behaviors and interactions. It was an opportunity for the destination management organization to collaborate with the Tribe and any other applicable local authorities, as well as to use their communications channels to message recreationists directly, but also to support organized activities as those relationships with businesses can create positive outcomes for all. This demonstrates the importance of incorporating efforts to partner with Tribal governments into destination management strategies and action plans.

Welcoming Week 2022, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

The Guardians Program: Indigenous-led Destination Stewardship

The Indigenous Guardians Program was pioneered by the Haida Nation in 2005 and has become an exemplary model of Indigenous-led stewardship other communities are replicating. There is a network of guardian programs on the north Pacific coast. On the north Pacific coast, Coastal Guardian Watchmen "play a critical role in all aspects of stewardship for Coastal First Nations—ensuring resources are sustainably managed, that rules and regulations are followed, and that land and marine use agreements are implemented effectively. They uphold and enforce traditional and contemporary Indigenous laws and continue the work of their ancestors in protecting and managing coastal territories. Within the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), reconciliation and efforts in collaborative governance, the Coastal Guardian Watchmen are at the leading edge of a global movement toward Indigenous-led stewardship."

"The Guardian Watchmen programs play a critical role in protecting and managing traditional territories, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering a thriving conservation economy." Read more: Destination Stewardship Report Summer 2023 Issue

The Indigenous Leadership Initiative explains the history of the model and how it is modeled after an Australian program, and how it works in Canada, and provides guidance around how it could be replicated in other countries including the United States.

TREAD Map App

An innovative partnership between State of Washington Tourism, TREAD, and Dharma Maps elevates destination management initiatives across Washington. The TREAD Map App was developed during the pandemic and launched statewide in 2022 as a real-time tool help visitors and recreationists with exploration and wayfinding while inspiring responsible use of public lands. What sets it apart from other map apps is that local land managers, Tribes and destination organizations can share messaging about how to recreate responsibly and respectfully. Existing partners include Disabled Hikers, Snoqualmie Tribe, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Back Country Horsemen, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Northwest Motorcycle Association, Evergreen, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Mountaineers. It comes with a marketing toolkit and can be downloaded to iOS and Android devices. The more people contribute to it and the more it is promoted, the better, and more effective a tool it will become.

Building Climate Resilience

The global travel community now faces an even greater threat (than the COVID-19 pandemic) posed by climate change, one of the biggest and most urgent issues of our time. The travel and tourism sector, reliant on the weather and local natural environments, particularly in outdoor recreation communities, faces growing uncertainty. While the sector accounts for around 8%-11% of global carbon emissions with transport-related emissions forecasted to increase by 25% by 2030 from 2016 levels (UNWTO/ITF), it may disproportionately be affected by changing weather patterns and extreme events such as flooding and wildfires – something Washington is all too familiar with already. We need to act now to adapt and adjust, as well as to reduce the sector's direct emissions.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2022 ranked climate inaction as the number one threat to the world and the most severe risk, in terms of potential impacts, over the next decade. Tourism destinations are on the frontline of this crisis, with extreme temperatures, wildfires, flooding, coral bleaching, drought, storms and hurricanes all increasing in severity and frequency, as well as a growing threat from rising sea levels.

Nowhere will be exempt from these impacts, from crowded cities to areas of wilderness, as extreme weather events increase in severity and frequency. Yet, the effects of climate change are not felt equally – it affects under-represented and vulnerable groups including women, Indigenous communities, small island states and coastal areas more severely. Communities across Washington are experiencing this firsthand, from the increasing instances of wildfire smoke every summer,

to record heat, to unstable snowpack at ski resorts and drought conditions for many counties across the state in summer of 2023 at the time of this writing. Drought and persistent heat lead to forests being more susceptible to wildfire, and recreation has a direct impact on the number and frequency of fires. Washington's coastal waters are experiencing ocean acidification and warming temperatures as well, affecting marine life with long-term potential impacts for coastal communities.

According to the department of natural resources, 85% of wildfires in Washington are human-caused, necessitating urgent and consistent messaging by all tourism and recreation businesses to ensure guests, visitors, campers, hikers, etc., are aware of this extreme risk.

To ensure communities and environments are protected and to stay viable, all tourism organizations, including travel companies and destination marketing and management organizations need to take action; this is essential to maintain and protect a thriving tourism economy. In an increasingly unstable world, there is an opportunity for tourism to move beyond simply minimizing its negative impact on destinations to actively contributing to long-term sustainability and restoration and regeneration by working with communities to improve social, environmental and economic situation of the places where they live, and tourists visit. Tourism can also contribute to the generation of good quality jobs, including green jobs, and diverse opportunities for entrepreneurship throughout the tourism supply chain.

Mt. Constitution, Brandon Fralic, Courtesy of San Juan Islands Visitor Bureau

16

Reaching Net Zero: Envisioning 2030 and Beyond

On a local, national and international level, the tourism sector is both highly vulnerable to climate change and a notable contributor, meaning it has a key role to play in both reducing its own impacts as well as preparing and adapting. Globally, there is an effort to transition to 'Net Zero'; this refers to the goal of the total level of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere being reduced to zero (achieved by a combination of reduction and removal). There is consensus that in order to avoid irreversible effects of climate change, emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) need to fall by approximately 50 percent from 2010 levels by 2030 and need to reach net zero by 2050. This requires large-scale decarbonization across all levels of society, increased capture in soils, plants and trees, and increased removal via technologies that remove carbon from the air. This ambition was first set out in the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 and has been reinforced at subsequent UN climate change conferences or COPs since then. In order for countries to make these commitments, national targets must include action from all types of sectors, organizations and businesses of all sizes.

In 2021, at the climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, leading players from the tourism sector came together to launch the Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism. **The Glasgow Declaration is part of the**

Defining Greenhouse Gases and Decarbonization

Greenhouse gases (GHG) are atmospheric gases such as carbon dioxide and methane that trap heat from the sun, leading to the greenhouse effect and subsequently causing the Earth's surface temperature to rise. Human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes, are major sources of GHG emissions which are accelerating global warming and climate change.

Decarbonization is the process of reducing or eliminating Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from various sources, particularly from human activities such as burning fossil fuels, industrial processes, and deforestation. The goal of decarbonization is to eliminate the global economy's reliance on fossil fuels and to transition to a low-carbon or carbon-neutral economy, where the net emissions of GHGs, especially CO_2, are minimized or balanced by removing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere.

wider global movement to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050. Signatories to the declaration commit to developing a climate action goals, setting out how they will reduce their emissions.

Developing a Climate Action Plan or goals for an existing strategy enables signatories to prioritize which actions to take to reach Net Zero and how to measure progress against them.

What should Climate Action Plans contain?

- The main climate impacts of your business i.e., significant sources of emissions
- The steps you will take to address those impacts, over the next year and beyond
- How you will monitor and report on your progress

Climate Action Plans can be standalone or simply new goals and actions integrated into broader business plans,

strategic plans or sustainability plans. The important thing is to keep plans simple, concise and actionable, using language that all those affected understand and that can engage people across the business or community in the plan's development and implementation.

Is It Possible To Reach Net Zero?

In 2023, the Travel Foundation set out to understand what a decarbonized travel and tourism industry would look like, and if it was feasible to reach the targets, within a thriving sector. Together with Breda University in the Netherlands, the European Tourism Futures Institute, and sponsored by Intrepid Travel and Destination Vancouver, they published Envisioning 2030 and Beyond: The changing shape of tourism in a decarbonizing world.

The report finds only one scenario to achieve Net Zero by 2050, while also allowing for growth. To achieve this scenario, key recommendations include:

- More governments including international aviation emissions (to reach their destinations) in their plans;
- Tourist boards and travel companies targeting a greater proportion of short-haul customer and bringing net zero products to market;
- Governments investing in greener forms of transport and the travel industry adopting and promoting them;

What is a Climate Action Plan?

A detailed, customized roadmap for measuring, planning and reducing GHG emissions and related climate impacts, including:

- **Measure** - inventory of existing emissions
- **Decarbonize** - reduction targets and prioritized actions
- **Regenerate** - actions to restore and protect ecosystems
- **Collaborate** - sharing solutions
- **Finance** - resources and funding required

- Relying less on offsetting as a primary solution, focusing instead on decarbonization; and using offsetting a final resort or focusing on investing in restoration and carbon sequestration solutions to offset those emissions that cannot be reduced;
- The need to consider equity and fairness, recognizing that some destinations are more ready for the scenario than others and some destinations rely more on long-haul travelers than others; and
- Slowing the expected rapid growth in aviation, with limits on the number of long-haul flights.

Tourism in 2030
Getting on track for
Net Zero

To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C – as called for in the Paris Agreement – the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism supports a global commitment to halve CO2 emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050.

1 THE URGENCY OF THE NEED TO DECARBONISE

**Tourism's emissions now**

Travel and Tourism accounts for at least 5% of global CO_2 emissions with some estimates at 8-11% if you include indirect (supply chain) emissions.

Long haul flying is a big polluter

The longest-distance journeys are a small percentage of all trips (2% in 2019) but are, by far, the most polluting and hardest to decarbonise. If left unchecked, by 2050 such flights will quadruple, and account for 41% of all tourism's emissions (up from 19% in 2019).

Tourism's emissions are set to grow

Global tourism is set to double in size by 2050 (from 2019 levels), and emissions are set to increase by 73%.
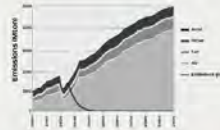
Our modelling

We sought alternative positive scenario for tourism that would meet the Glasgow Declaration's goals. We modelled what would happen if we increased a range of measures under 7 categories:

- SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL
- ELECTRIFICATION AND EFFICIENCY
- INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
- TAXES AND SUBSIDIES

- Strong impact
- Moderate impact
- Limited impact

The first three categories provided the biggest reductions in emissions. But even optimising all measures, we fell short of the emissions goal.

2 ONLY ONE OPTION TO TRAVEL AND DECARBONISE

Our decarbonisation scenario

We found only one decarbonisation scenario which allows for the fact that tourism will grow, with similar levels of growth by 2050 (+102% trips +91% guest nights +80% revenue).

How we got to net zero

Significant investments and incentives to accelerate the use of green energy and shift to the greenest forms of transport such as electric cars and trains.

Applying limits to the most polluting forms of transport, reducing long haul flights and keeping overall distance travelled by air to 2019 levels.

Taking immediate action to prevent further escalation of emissions, to come even close to halving them by the end of this decade.

A shift in how we travel

This means more trips by road and rail, comparatively fewer trips by air, and an overall reduction in distances travelled.

3 THE NEED FOR FAIR TOURISM STRATEGIES

Tourism's emissions are inequitable

About half of tourism's global footprint is caused by travel between the richest countries (per capita GDP of more than US $25,000).

The most frequent fliers – at most 1% of the world population – account for more than half of total emissions from passenger air travel.

Destinations are all different

Some destinations have fewer resources to invest in green infrastructure and technology.

Some, such as island nations, are more dependent on long-haul visitors.

Some have contributed very little to climate change but are suffering the most from its impacts.

And should less-developed economies be required to introduce limits in the same way as richer, developed nations?

4 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NOW

Support the call for global coordination of policies, innovation, investment and data.

Ensure emissions from travel to/from destinations are fully accounted for in tourism plans.

Start identifying and providing low and net-zero emissions tourism options.

Better understand and plan for how tourism will operate in a decarbonised, 1.5 degree world.

Sign and implement the Glasgow Declaration.

Read the full report at www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/envision2030

Download high-res version of infographic

Responding to Shifts in Demand

There is an increasing awareness from consumers about the negative impacts of travel and a corresponding demand for more sustainable travel options.

- 83% of global travelers think sustainable travel is vital, with 61% saying the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future (Booking.com, 2021)

- 90% of travelers are actively looking for sustainable travel options when booking (Expedia Group, 2022)

- When traveling, 69% of people want to reduce their carbon footprint (Booking.com, 2021).

- Google data found that 82% of people say sustainability is more top of mind than before the COVID-19 pandemic and recorded a 70% rise in the number of travelers seeking sustainable travel options in 2021 (Travel Weekly, 2021)

- 46% of flyers are willing to pay more than 2% extra for a carbon neutral flight and 71% think travel companies should offer more sustainable choices (Travel Weekly, 2021)

- 'A world in motion: shifting consumer travel trends in 2022 and beyond' (WTTC 2023) shows that sustainability is a key element of the travel agenda, with travelers eager to reduce their carbon footprint and support sustainable tourism.

Research shows that sustainability is most valued by Millennial and Gen Z travelers, who will comprise the biggest segment of global travel consumers for the foreseeable future.

- 77% of travelers aged between 18-29 surveyed by Intrepid Travel say that sustainability impacts their travel decisions (Travel Agent Central, 2018)

- 82% of 18–29-year-olds said that they would be willing to spend more money on accommodation that operates responsibly (Globetrender, 2021)

- "Close to half of Gen Z globally have climate anxiety... The vast majority worry about the potentially catastrophic consequences of climate change – and many say they are committed to finding solutions by speaking up," changing their diet and altering their vacation plans, according to survey research conducted by the Oliver Wyman Forum. (WEForum 2022)

Furthermore, far from sustainable options and experiences simply being a bonus for consumers, for a majority of travelers, a lack of these options will negatively impact their trip and have lasting ramifications for the business and/or destination.

- 53% of travelers surveyed admit that they get annoyed if somewhere they are staying stops them from being sustainable, for example by not providing recycling facilities (Booking.com, 2021)

Tourism destinations and organizations that are able to respond to the growing demand and expectation for sustainable travel options by providing innovative and sustainable offerings will be in a stronger position to attract responsible and economically valuable visitors in an increasingly competitive market, in addition to the obvious benefits of boosting the resilience of the destination itself.

Alongside the growing demand for more sustainable travel experiences, there are several other emerging travel trends that can be better harnessed by improved sustainability and resilience at the community level. These consumer trends are well-aligned to the tourism landscape in Washington and the products offered in the region. For example, the pandemic inspired increased interest in nature-based activities for many people

who were required to spend more time outside to meet social distancing requirements, as well as to exercise and to escape the confines of their homes during lockdowns. This resulted in sudden changes to existing visitor flows and behavior as more people headed to rural sites and attractions which often do not have the corresponding infrastructure and facilities to support rapid increases in arrivals. If outdoor experiences become overcrowded, they can result in degradation of the natural environment which jeopardizes the very asset that the tourism product is built on and diminishes the quality of the experience for the visitor. This threatens the long-term viability of the destination and underlines the need for integrating sustainability and resilience-building into destination planning and management.

Evolving from Destination Marketing to Destination Management

The COVID-19 pandemic was catalytic in galvanizing the tourism sector to want to 'build back better' and to use the recovery from the pandemic as an opportunity to address many of the challenges that destinations were facing. In many cases, actions were already being taken toward change, and the pandemic served to accelerate important

The Case of Lake Tahoe

The Lake Tahoe region was experiencing high volumes of visitors to recreation sites and an increasing cost of living that came to a point of crisis during the pandemic when many sought refuge in natural areas and outdoor recreation communities. There were instances of anti-tourism protesting and closures of restaurants at certain times due to staff shortages. This inspired a group of organizations from across the region to come together in 2021 to commit to coordinated solutions and to demonstrate to residents that decision-makers and leaders across government, and non-governmental organizations and the tourism industry would work together to ensure a better future of tourism in Tahoe. They formed a coalition and began the destination stewardship planning process. Upon releasing the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan in 2023 the coalition became the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council with the region's destination management organizations, conservation organizations, the regional planning agency, forest service and more, committing funding to ensure implementation of the plan. Learn more at stewardshiptahoe.org.

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #6
Reduce tourism's burden

Account for all tourism costs in terms of local tax burdens, environmental and social impacts, and objectively verifiable disruption. Ensure investments are linked to optimizing net-positive impacts for communities and the environment.

shifts to the tourism status quo. For example, over several years now, the mandate of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) across the globe has increasingly expanded from a primary focus on marketing to boost visitor numbers to a wider mandate of management of tourism in the destination.

Growth has always been the primary goal in tourism, which is why tourism organizations have primarily concentrated on marketing their destination to attract ever increasing numbers of visitors. The assumption has been that more visitors result in more spending in the destination which translates into employment opportunities, infrastructure improvements, economic and social development. However, a sole focus on marketing and increased visitor numbers ignores the complex challenges that unmanaged growth can lead to, including overcrowding, increases in pollution, lack of capacity for processing waste, water shortages, inflated rent and living costs, resident dissatisfaction, the degradation of the natural environment, etc. This is essential public policy cost-benefit analysis that should go on at every local and regional tourism planning department. These impacts threaten the tourism economy itself over the long run and can negatively impact the social and cultural fabric of communities which, while intangible, is often a key attraction for visitors to a particular area.

This reached a crisis point in some city destinations such as Amsterdam and Barcelona and resulted in new measures from destination authorities looking to appease unhappy residents and halt the negative impacts of unchecked tourism. For example, in 2019, the city of Amsterdam passed a regulation which limits entire properties to being rented out for a maximum of 30 nights per year and in 2023 they set a cap on overnight and daytrip visitor numbers to the city. Likewise, Venice banned large cruise

ships from docking or passing through the city's main canals and introduced other measures such as higher tourist taxes and turnstiles to curb visitor numbers and reduce the problems caused by overcrowding. In Washington there have been cases where cars parked erratically along roadways near popular hiking routes have prevented emergency vehicles from being able to pass through, a current challenge that has yet to be solved.

The tourism revenue that stays in the local economy and supports local livelihoods can also vary by place, and by policy. By expanding the focus to tourism management, tourism organizations can work with policymakers to ensure that tourism is reaching its full potential of boosting local livelihoods and resulting in the most benefits and least harm for the local community and environment.

The Invisible Burden of Tourism

As visitor numbers grow, the relationship between 'more visitors and 'more benefits' provides diminishing returns. Not only do the costs – or burdens – increase, but visitor demand begins to reach – and breach - various limitations. Examples of the uunaccounted or 'invisible' costs associated with the additional demand of visitors include:

• additional infrastructure required to transport, feed, accommodate, provide energy and water, and manage the waste of tourists and those employed in the sector.

• protecting/maintaining shared environmental & cultural assets

These pressures are not necessarily caused by very large numbers of visitors as tourism is often in places that are particularly vulnerable (e.g. fragile ecosystems, traditional ways of life) as that is what makes them special. Even small numbers can lead to degradation.

This 'invisible burden' of tourism relates to shared or 'common pool' resources between the tourism sector and the community. The travel and tourism industry is highly reliant on common pool resources: natural habitats, historical monuments, water and energy, public spaces, infrastructure, and social and cultural capital which, when taken together, amount to 'the destination'. It is 'invisible' because the wider destination costs/impacts of servicing demand (i.e., the implications of growth) are simply not taken into account, and there is no clear accountability or shared responsibility between sectors or businesses for maintaining them.

So what can be done to manage the 'invisible burden'? There needs to be a shift away from growth as the primary metric for assessing the performance of tourism. Organizations need to define new measures of success and a holistic set of indicators which account for the full costs of tourism in their destination and aims for a net positive impact for their communities.

Read the full report Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism Watch the Video

Balanced Measures of Success

An increasing number of organizations are recognizing that traditional metrics focusing solely on volume of visitors, of trips, of occupancy, etc., are insufficient in telling the real story of success. Economic measures do not address the impacts of tourism in a destination. Communities need a new vision, and new ways to measure success that go beyond simply growth. Many leading tourism destinations are now recognizing that it's not a move from marketing to management that's needed but a move from destination-thinking (with tourism and tourists at the center) to place-thinking (with residents at the center).

Destinations can and should be places where people live, work, play, study...and visit. For this to happen, destinations of the future need to ensure that the needs of residents and communities – not just tourists – are at the heart of their strategy and will need a new definition of what success looks like.

Organizations that develop products and experiences for visitors without thinking about the needs of residents may not be contributing well to a place, despite the obvious benefits typically associated with tourism. Taking part in place-making means taking a seat at the table with

the public and private sector partners, to be involved in broader conversations that affect the community, from infrastructure, development planning, retail, culture and sports, environmental protection, and citizen wellbeing. This offers many new possibilities and opportunities for innovative product development and destination management.

Please see Section 5 of this handbook for more detail on how to assess the impacts of tourism in your destination.

Destination Stewardship and Global Sustainability Standards

Building on what has been outlined above, this holistic approach to tourism management can be defined as

Case Study: Iceland Rethinking Tourism for the Long Haul

PROBLEM: During 2019, Iceland's tourism rapid growth had become unsustainable.

SOLUTIONS:

- Invest in improving tourism infrastructure (restrooms, parking lots, trails, accessible trails etc).
- Attract higher-earning professionals who stay longer and spend more
- Developing two new tourism routes to avoid over-congestion on Route 1 to enable more remote adventures.

(Source: Condé Nast Traveler, 2021)

What does this mean in practice?

New measures of success could include the following, with some requiring the identification of impacts that to be increased or decreased over time, in order to determine tracking methods and targets:

- Increasing positive impacts on communities
- Decreasing negative impacts on communities
- Decreasing impacts on natural resources, public spaces, built assets, etc.
- Distribution of tourism's benefits, related to local supply chain as well as diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The contribution of tourism to the climate and ecological emergencies, including financial and human resources
- Others are based on the vision for tourism in the community and how community members wish tourism to contribute value (economic, social, cultural, and environmental value).

Destination Stewardship. This approach considers the environmental and social context of the destination to understand tourism's wider impacts. A stewardship approach also prioritizes collaboration between destination community members, including industry and residents and other sectors, to develop a shared vision of what the future of tourism should look like in line with the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit. Destination stewardship is a regenerative model, where tourism strategies aim to restore, protect and revitalize the local environment and community.

"Destination stewardship can be defined as an approach to destination governance that seeks to balance and meet the economic, environmental, and social/cultural needs of a destination; while operating within a legitimate governance model with active participation from the public and private sectors, as well as the local community." (World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC))

The white paper "Towards Destination Stewardship: Achieving Destination Stewardship through scenarios & a Governance Diagnostics framework" developed by the Travel Foundation, World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) identifies the key drivers and barriers for destination stewardship.

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #2
Sustainability Standards

Respect the publicly available, internationally approved minimum criteria for sustainable tourism practices maintained by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council for both industry and destinations.

Tourism destination management organizations and businesses alike are encouraged to turn to global standards for guidance on responsible and sustainable destination management and stewardship. These can be starting points for action planning and for self-assessments to gauge performance as well as identify priority areas that need attention in your destination.

4VI: A Social Enterprise Mission and Balanced KPIs

4VI (formerly Tourism Vancouver Island a regional destination marketing organization for Vancouver Island, Canada) re-launched themselves as a social enterprise with new social responsibility commitments in 2022 under four pillars – communities, environment, cultures and businesses. These new pillars meant the organization's 2023 strategy was redesigned to include destination and organization-focused key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the efforts of their team, and the impact of their work, across Vancouver Island. The KPIs range from increasing revenues to Indigenous, women and LGBTQ+ -owned tourism enterprises, to increases in businesses signed up to their Biosphere Sustainability Program, to measuring investment by the tourism industry into conservation programs, and much more. Read 4VI's full Impact Strategy

Port Townsend, Jason Hummel Photography, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

24

GSTC®
Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria were developed by a working group of experts in the field to reflect a thorough and common set of ideal practices for industry and destinations to work toward achieving more sustainable tourism operations and destination management. "They reflect certification standards, indicators, criteria, and best practices from different cultural and geo-political contexts around the world in tourism and other sectors." (gstcouncil.org) There are two types of criteria, adapted for businesses and for destinations. Destination criteria, mapped to the sustainable development goals with suggested performance indicators, can be found here.

Some destinations use the criteria to guide activities, to work toward certification, to assess and monitor performance, to develop requirements for regionally specific programs or labels to help consumers identify organizations with more sustainable practices and to highlight and reward businesses that are taking steps to improve their practices.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 development goals covering areas from poverty and inequality to environmental protection, climate action, and inclusive employment opportunities. They were established by the United Nations (UN) and adopted by all member states in 2015, who have committed to take meaningful actions across all of the target areas by 2030. As such, in many countries these targets have been integrated into planning documents. Many organizations use the thematic areas of the SDGs as a guide to align goals and actions in tourism and sustainability plans to some of the SDG targets. This may be especially relevant if your region has existing plans in place that are linked to the SDGs or if your local authority is already required to report against the SDG indicator framework. Learn more about the SDGs and tourism here https://tourism4sdgs.org/ or at https://www.goodlifegoals.org/.

GREEN DESTINATIONS

Try a Tourism for SDGs Self-Assessment for your destination here. Green Destinations is a Future of Tourism Coalition Partner supporting sustainable destinations, their businesses and their communities.

Certified B Corporation

B Tourism More and more travel companies are going the route of becoming a Certified B Corporation. B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Tourism is a global network of Certified B Corporation travel and tourism companies as well as other conscious travel organizations that take collective action for environmental and social justice. For destination leaders, this can be a resource to provide for businesses looking for a process and network to join. Learn More

Reflections

- **Did you learn anything new while reading this section? Were there perspectives that you hadn't thought of that you are interested in learning more about?**
- **Are you aware of existing initiatives in your community focused on areas of environmental protection including reducing waste, decarbonization, protecting wildlife, conserving water, etc.?**
- **Are you aware of existing initiatives by businesses in your community to become more inclusive and accessible?**
- **Does your organization have any goals in place relating to the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) e.g., environmental protection, poverty, inequality etc.?**

Silver Falls, Greg Balkin – Wondercamp,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Towards Sustainable & Inclusive Tourism in Washington

Challenges & Opportunities

Washington State is a remarkable region that entices both domestic and international travelers with its extraordinary blend of natural wonders, cultural diversity, iconic places, urban centers and rural communities, and thrilling recreational adventure opportunities. From the Salish Sea's incredible marine environment with coastal beaches, estuaries and islands, to arts and music to sprawling vineyards & craft beer, vast networks of hiking trails, volcanoes, the edges of the desert, and the towering Cascade mountains, it's a truly special place. Each of the state's regions offer something different for all explorers.

Tourism is Washington State's fourth largest industry, employing more than 200,000 people and generating close to $22B in annual spending, close to $3B in tax revenues. According to the Department of Commerce, close to 98% of visitors to WA are domestic (75% state residents), and just over 2% are international.

As a mecca for outdoor recreation, the main challenge is to ensure the natural places tourism depends on are protected for the future while not only allowing people to enjoy them, but ensuring all people feel welcome to do so.

As is common in most other jurisdictions in North America, tourism marketing and management funding is primarily from lodging taxes and allocated to promotional activities. Smaller organizations with limited funds do not typically have the capacity to incorporate broader management activities. However, within the current

mandate there are ways to expand and adjust activities to reflect destination stewardship principles and inclusivity aims. Some examples of these efforts can be found, such as: support for local businesses, diverse cultural events, greater diversity in marketing, and promotion of low-impact activities as well as responsible recreation.

There is a lot of GOOD happening in Washington tourism and this section is not a critique of past and current practice but is based on real life experiences and feedback from a range of people from throughout the state who provided perspectives to shape this handbook in order to ensure it would be a useful resource for peers across Washington. See the acknowledgements section for list of organizations that contributed perspectives.

Challenges

Impacts from Congestion in Outdoor Recreation Destinations: Washington is renowned for outdoor recreation, but managing the influx of tourists and recreationists while protecting natural spaces is a challenge. A range of impacts stemming from congestion and overuse including parking impeding emergency vehicles, safety concerns, degradation to trails with high concentrations of users, and a lack of capacity to manage waste. Complexity of land management authorities impedes solutions; for example, enforcement, communication, and providing transportation alternatives.

Impacts on Tribal rights: Building on the above, there is a lack of relationships with Tribal governments and Indigenous community members, and therefore tourism developments and activities often negatively impact Tribes – from impeding on traditional ways of life through encroachment on natural areas, to degrading Indigenous lands. There is a lack of incorporation of Tribal messaging in communications about activities, sacred places, etc., and much opportunity for improvement in this area, to the benefit of all destinations and community members.

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #1
See the Whole Picture

Recognize that most tourism by its nature involves the destination as a whole, not only industry businesses, but also its ecosystems, natural resources, cultural assets and traditions, communities, aesthetics, and built infrastructure.

Lack of diverse representation, awareness and resources to improve DEIA: In general, there is a lack of relationships with diverse communities and a lack of diversity in staff and leadership to facilitate the bridging of this gap. For example, there is a lack of engagement with Spanish-speakers and Tribal representatives. There is also room for improvement in creating a sense of belonging and cultural sensitivity for diverse travelers including people with different abilities, cultural identities (including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)), LGBTQ+ community, etc.

Decreasing affordability and livability: High prices and increased cost of living are leading to exclusion of locals. There are concerns about changes toward catering to visitors in certain places impacting community sentiment and creating perceptions that places cater only to the wealthy. This decreasing affordability is leading to housing and labor shortages which affects the industry, including reducing service quality.

Lack of cohesion in branding and communications. There is a need for increased awareness and education among frontline staff for better destination experiences. This includes providing a safe and inclusive welcome, promoting how to recreate responsibly, and how and when to disperse travelers from areas that are overcrowded to areas that need more visitation, to account for seasonality and peak/off-peak times. Sometimes in communities there are too many resources, but not enough clear information (different maps and websites from different entities that are not coordinated).

TMACS, Jason Hummel Photography, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Spokane, Greg Balkin - Wondercamp, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Funding structure and resource limitations: There is a lack of support particularly for rural tourism destination marketing and management organizations. These organizations must apply annually for funding from city or county governments if they do not have a Tourism Promotion Area designation and funding is typically tied to specific projects and/or limited to tourism promotion activities. They also must compete against chambers for funding so they find themselves busy defending their businesses. This presents a challenge for small organizations in that there is a lack of staffing and financial resources to increase awareness and skills, and even to channel funds toward collaborative initiatives.

Limited Mandates: The current structure of destination marketing and management organizations in Washington is based on funding generated from lodging taxes or membership and therefore the mandate is still limited primarily to promotional activities. While marketing is a great tool and can be leveraged to pursue destination stewardship and DEIA goals, the limited mandate prevents them from spending time and resources on broader objectives.

External Threats and Impacts Beyond Management Capacity: Tourism organizations are increasingly faced with challenges such as overuse, congestion, parking violations, safety concerns, housing shortages, workforce

Chamna Natural Preserve, Jason Hummel Photography,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

shortages, climate change disruptions, and decreasing resident satisfaction, and lack the skills, funding, and capacity to implement management strategies.

Strengths & Opportunities

Leadership from the State of Washington Tourism and the Port of Seattle: Each of the two organizations leading tourism for the state are providing leadership in the areas of destination stewardship and DEIA, through various efforts including the Rural Tourism Support Program and Tourism Sustainability Grant Program, the Port of Seattle's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and commitment as well as resources for the sector, among many other initiatives. Visit Seattle is a lighthouse example for diversity in marketing, supporting diverse enterprises through its Shop BIPOC initiative, its LGBTQ+ focused content, cultural tourism guides and highlight of Indigenous cultures and Tribes. There is room to provide further guidelines and support, including funding for DEIA initiatives and resources for increasing skills and capacity across destination management organizations and industry associations to keep progressing toward goals.

Motivation to continuously improve: Tourism organizations have shown their interest in learning, growing, and motivation to build relationships with

organizations in their communities, increase cultural competency, and support their industry partners to create a more welcoming atmosphere for all people, through experiences as well as messaging and marketing. What they need is the tools and resources to take steps, starting with awareness, and adjustments to day-to-day activities, toward longer term goals.

Examples and resources abound: The strong non-profit and nongovernmental (NGO) sector in Washington, including social and environmental organizations, as well as initiatives already underway by some destination management organizations, means that there are examples close to home, as well as learning resources available, for others to get started right away on their learning and action journeys.

Partnership opportunities are abundant: This strength of the NGO sector as well as the significant number of enterprises and organizations focused on improving inclusion, quality of life, restoration of lands, etc., mean that the tourism sector has immediate opportunities to collaborate. Collaboration to solve challenges – like parking issues, by working with local government and land managers, or to improve representation in marketing by working with diverse content creators, or to improve accessibility, by gaining an understanding of the status and action steps to take, or to increase cultural awareness and improve relationships and experiences by reaching out to Tribal governments. These are opportunities that are available now in Washington and a perfect way for the tourism sector to get started or progress in their destination stewardship journeys.

Diverse Communities in Washington

The greatest gift to tourism is cultural diversity. People travel all over the world to see new places and learn new things and meet new and interesting people. In the United States, we are fortunate that our communities are places enriched by such a wide range of cultures and tourism offers the chance for our cultures, our differences, and our commonalities to be celebrated.

Washington's cultural diversity is part of each community's identity, whether rural or urban. There may be more diversity in urban centers; however, most communities can identify and celebrate the different cultures that exist within or nearby, including Indigenous peoples and cultures. And the more diverse representation we have in our tourism industry, the more diversity of travelers we will continue to see, as they feel

more and more welcome and interested to experience each place's uniqueness.

In addition to being home to 34 distinct Indigenous Tribes and Nations, there are many different cultural communities that make up the tapestry of the state. There are vibrant African American communities, East, Southeast, and South Asian communities, Pacific Islanders, Middle Eastern and Arab people, Hispanic & Latino/a communities, Scandinavian communities and more. There are various religious communities and thriving creative arts & culture communities celebrating this diversity with festivals, music, and food! Washington is also known for being LGBTQ+ friendly, with active communities, events, businesses, festivals and more, promoting pride and inclusivity.

Visit Seattle, the destination marketing and management organization for Seattle, hosts Cultural Heritage pages on their website that highlight history from past to present of five of these cultural communities including Native American, African American, Asian & Pacific American, Latino, and Nordic. The pages include downloadable cultural heritage guides and refer to organizations that share more information and can be visited to celebrate cultures throughout the city. It is an example of how to highlight cultural heritage, history, current cultural events, festivals, arts, food, tours, and more offered to celebrate diverse cultures found within the city. Visit Seattle's LGBTQ+ page shares not only a plethora of businesses and events to visit, but organizations and resources for

Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA)

Established in 1981, GSBA is Washington State's LGBTQ+ and allied chamber of commerce and is the largest of its kind in North America. They represent small business, corporate, and nonprofit members who share the values of promoting equality and diversity in the workplace. Their mission is to combine business development, leadership and social action to expand economic opportunities for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community and those who support equality for all. Their programs include supporting business members with business development, providing networking opportunities and visibility for LGBTQ+ organizations, provide advocacy to elected officials on business and equality issues, and have extensive education programs. They produce the Travel Out guide for LGBTQ+ travel in Washington to highlight LGBTQ+ travel businesses, experiences and more.

visitors to refer to and learn from including Travel Out Seattle LGBTQ travel guide created by the GSBA, the Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project, and many more.

Explore Seattle's Vibrant Cultural Heritage

Photo: Jack Storms
Native American Cultural Heritage

Photo: Josh Trujillo / Seattle Post-Intelligencer
Asian American Cultural Heritage

Jimi Hendrix Memorial. Photo: David Newman
African American Cultural Heritage

Photo: South Park Neighborhood Association
Latino Cultural Heritage

Rosemaling by Betty Edwards.
Nordic Cultural Heritage

Shop BIPOC: Support Seattle's BIPOC-owned Businesses – and put it on Visit Seattle's tab!

Visit Seattle partnered with Seattle Bank and Intentionalist to help spread tourism dollars to Seattle's small businesses in diverse communities. There were 16 businesses featured in 2023 with subsidized "tabs" available to try food and drink at BIPOC-owned restaurants and shops, sponsored by Seattle Bank and Intentionalist.

Through 2023 they are hosting several $250 tabs at shops and restaurants in Capitol Hill and First Hill neighborhoods. Visit the website, click on a restaurant, get a code, use it to get a complementary treat.

Indigenous Peoples and Tourism in Washington

The State of Washington has 29 federally recognized Tribes and Nations (with several others not federally recognized), with over 140,000 citizens and each with their own cultures, governments and enterprises employing more than 37,000 people (or 1 in 86 jobs – washingtontribes.org). This map shows where each is located.

Indigenous Peoples & Sovereignty: Tribal Governments

Indigenous peoples are sovereign – self-governed with rights and power to determine their own governance structures and laws. The National Congress on American Indians (NCAI) provides an overview of sovereignty as follows:
The essence of tribal sovereignty is the ability to govern and to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of tribal citizens within tribal territory. Tribal governments maintain the power to determine their own governance structures and enforce laws through police departments and tribal courts. The governments exercise these inherent rights through the development of their distinct forms of government, determining citizenship; establishing civil and criminal laws for their nations; taxing, licensing, regulating, and maintaining and exercising the power to exclude wrongdoers from tribal lands. In addition, tribal governments are responsible for a broad range of governmental activities on tribal lands, including education, law enforcement, judicial systems, health care, environmental protection, natural resource management, and the development and maintenance of infrastructure and a broad range public services. *Read More* https://www.ncai.org/about-tribes

More information about each federally recognized Tribe including contact info can be found through these direct links to their government websites: Chehalis, Colville, Cowlitz, Hoh, Jamestown S'Klallam, Kalispel, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater Bay, Skokomish, Snoqualmie, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Yakama.

The State of Washington Tourism website provides a great overview of Indigenous experiences, cultural centers, museums and events around the state that can be visited that are owned and operated by the Tribes and showcase both heritage and current cultures, enabling visitors to support Indigenous-led tourism initiatives and learn about the land on which they are guests. This page also provides direct links to each government (provided above).

There are a number of resources available for learning more about building relationships and partnerships with Indigenous peoples, about developing Indigenous tourism, and the local Tribal government in each community is generally the best place to start. Reaching out to start a relationship without a specific agenda, but to learn more about the land on which a destination is located, the people, the culture along with the challenges and opportunities to work together is a journey that starts with reaching out to introduce oneself and visit. It is important to emphasize here that it is incumbent upon tourism organizations to do research before reaching out to the Tribe. Many Tribes have worked hard to produce public outreach and education materials that are available online. It's helpful to look for these first, digest, and come forward in a more informed way. It is also essential to meaningfully engage with Tribal governments to get information as early

Washington Organizations to Partner With and Learn From

Black Heritage Society of Washington State

Preserving, collecting and sharing the history of African Americans in Washington State. Founded in 1977 the organization continues to provide educational events, exhibits, and resources to promote public awareness of African American history and culture. The Society recognizes the importance for documenting the culture and heritage of Black people state-wide, and advocates for saving places to uphold the notion that Washington State history is an essential link in the broader narrative that defines the story of our nation.

Chinatown-International District BIA

Business Improvement District for Chinatown-International District. It is an important cultural center in Seattle with over 200 businesses reflecting the diversity of the city as well as important cultural events including Lunar New Year celebrations, Dragon Fest, Night Market, and Food Walk events.

National Nordic Museum

The Nordic Museum's guiding principles for the core exhibition experience, tracing Nordic themes of connection to nature, sustainability, social justice, and innovation from the earliest anthropological records through contemporary Nordic society.

Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture

The first of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, the Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture showcases the history of Chicano/as and Latino/as from post war immigration to present time.

Wing Luke Museum

Art and history Smithsonian-Affiliate Museum (the only pan Asian-Pacific American community-based museum in the US) focused on the culture, art and history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

The Burke Museum

The Burke Museum cares for and shares natural and cultural collections so all people can learn, be inspired, generate knowledge, feel joy, and heal. Its working labs located on the University of Washington campus in Seattle focus on dinosaurs, fossils, Northwest Native art, plant and animal collections, and cultural pieces from across the globe. Its exhibits are guided by their Native American Advisory Board.

Golden Bricks Events

Golden Brick's outdoor-focused experiences for Black, Indigenous, People of Color are designed for emotional & physical safety, accessibility, connection, joy, and belonging. *We envision a world where BIPOC outdoor participation is not "unbelievable", but common. We want to diversify the faces of the outdoors and conservation through our events.*

Northwest African American Museum

The Northwest African American Museum is an anti-racist, pro-equity, affirming gathering place of hope, help, and healing for the entire Northwest region that is building intergenerational cultural wealth, through ongoing exhibits, events and educational programs.

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

Manages the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area – a region-wide partnership that aims to connect diverse cross-sector organizations to protect marine resources and connect residents and visitors to the state's maritime heritage.

as possible in the planning process to get feedback on how to avoid or mitigate any negative impact your planned tourism activities may have on tribal traditional ways of life, cultural practices, or resources. Being open to hearing that an idea is not appropriate or of interest, and working together on ideas, is also the advisable approach.

One of the biggest opportunities for tourism organizations to enhance relationships and experiences for visitors is to work with Tribes to explore whether there are appropriate and helpful ways to incorporate tribal messaging into tourism communications, or ways in which organizations can help amplify messaging Tribes are already sharing. Information highlighting the cultures, the stories, the people, the sacred sites, as well as what is appropriate and not appropriate to do and where, must be provided by the Tribe and not written by the destination organization without collaboration or the Tribe's consent.

Note that Tribes should not be expected to contribute to tourism projects without compensation – they must be at the table and compensated for their time and subject expertise. Working with Tribal representatives to ensure tourism in your community is not having negative impacts on lands and cultural resources is essential to a positive future of tourism on Indigenous lands and with Indigenous peoples across Washington.

Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement

The Ancestral Lands Movement seeks to spread awareness of the Snoqualmie people who have lived in the southern Salish Sea region since time immemorial and share the significance of these lands and provide information on how people can help the Tribe in respecting, restoring, and protecting these lands.

Launched in 2021 in response to the increased impacts of recreation on their ancestral lands which includes the well-known sacred Snoqualmie Falls, the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement shares regular information via blogs, social media and their website. Tips on how to Recreate Respectfully are provided by the Tribe, along with downloadable resources such as this one-pager and an animated, illustrated story map Recreational Impacts on Snoqualmie Tribal Ancestral Lands which provides an overview of Snoqualmie history, current information about the Tribe and impacts of recreation activities including as hiking and mountain biking as well as development impacts to lands, and wildlife.

The Snoqualmie Tribe is calling for increased research and monitoring to drive decision making around outdoor recreation development and mitigation. Learn More and Follow on Facebook

Land Acknowledgements – How do we do them and why?

A Land Acknowledgement is a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call the land home.

Land Acknowledgements reflect the Indigenous cultural practice of protocol — acknowledging and appreciating that one is on the land of another. It is a sign of respect and appreciation and gratitude.

The following websites have useful resources on Land Acknowledgements:
Duwamish Tribe How to Make a Land Acknowledgement
Snoqualmie Tribe Introduction to Land Acknowledgement
Washington State Health Care Authority on Medium
Native Land

Local, National, and International Resources

Local Resources

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs offers information resources and Tribal Directory of government offices and businesses in Washington.

The Nature Conservancy's Washington Chapter partnered with Native-owned consultant firm The Whitener Group out of Olympia created a free training course *Growing Competency and Capacity to Partner with Indigenous Peoples: Tribal Engagement Training for Conservation Practitioners in North America.* Access "Indian Country 101" here and there is a deeper dive into working with Washington Tribes called IC 102 on the same course page, it's module 4 of the total set.

National and International Resources
AIANTA
The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is the national tourism association representing and supporting Tribes across the US. Their mission is to "define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors traditions and values." They offer workshops, courses, webinars, conferences, technical assistance, funding opportunities, research, and more, to support the development of Indigenous tourism. The board of directors represents each of the 15 regions and the northwest region is represented by Jamie SiJohn of the Spokane Tribe. They have a broad team of staff and consultants and offer a wealth of information for those interested in learning about what may be happening in their area. They also operate a consumer-facing travel website called nativeamerica.travel showcasing experiences around the US. The Northwest region does not currently have any experiences in Washington and therefore there are opportunities to develop the relationship with AIANTA and ensure experiences are showcased as well as to explore development of new experiences with Tribes directly.

Indigenous Tourism Association of BC
ITBC provides guidelines on working with Indigenous peoples which can be found here: ITBC's Working with Indigenous Communities set of resources including A Guide for Developing Tourism and Media Relationships in Indigenous Communities and 10 Considerations When Working with Indigenous Communities.

Indigenous Association of Canada
ITAC provides several great resources including its Media & Language Guidelines 12 Ways to Better Choose Our Words When We Write About Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. shares 7 Tips on Building Relationships with Indigenous Peoples. It's one of the several resources the organization provides.

Indigenous People and the Travel Industry: Global Good Practice Guidelines published by the International Institute of Tourism Studies, G Adventures and Planeterra with an advisory committee of international Indigenous tourism representatives including Ben Sherman, Chair of the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance, Keith Henry, CEO of Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and Edward Hall 111, US Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Syren Nagakyrie, Marissa Solini Photography,
Courtesy of Disabled Hikers

Disability & Accessibility in Washington Tourism

Accessibility in Washington has a long way to go, but the good news is there is a lot of motivation to get there. There is a growing interest in improving accessibility, with some Washington tourism organizations taking initiative to engage with specialists to conduct an audit and begin implementing recommendations. For example, Visit San Juans' *Accessible San Juans* page highlights activities, accommodation and transportation options for people with disabilities. In most cases, destination organizations and businesses lack awareness and guidance on how to make offerings more accessible and there is therefore a need to boost awareness and provide tools to make improvements.

Some examples of efforts outside but nearby Washington include Oregon, who has made progress in trail accessibility and is investing in accessibility audits for operators. In British Columbia, non-profit Spinal Cord Injury BC and the province's regional destination management organizations

Disabled Hikers

Get Involved: https://www.disabledhikers.com/allies

Disabled Hikers is an entirely Disabled-led non-profit organization based in Washington. Disabled Hikers helps facilitate disabled experiences in the outdoors with information, resources, and events, including trail guides and group hikes. They are committed advocates for justice, access, and inclusion, and work with parks, organizations, brands, and more. Disabled Hikers is available to provide audits of outdoor activities and built environments and therefore can advise a full range of hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation organizations, including destination marketing and management organizations. Their assessment service includes meeting with staff to gain an understanding of their perspectives and bring them through the process. The ideal approach is to provide training either before or after the site visit.

"Disabled Hikers are the invaluable base to the accessibility work in our region. They have provided professional, clear and compassionate guidance through our multiple visitor-facing projects, working seamlessly with a wide range of interest/knowledge levels and political backgrounds. Accessibility is incredibly important to the welcomability of our area, and it's become clear through our work with Syren that information is power and that we all benefit from greater accessibility. We cannot recommend them highly enough."

—Emily Reed | Network Director (she, her),
   Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance

co-fund regional accessibility & inclusion specialists who are based in the regional destination management offices and support the tourism industry by conducting visits, audits, and recommendation reports. They also are called up on to act as advisors and models for inclusive marketing content.

In general, outdoor accessibility in Washington is increasing at a slow pace. State parks are working on it. Beaches have some accessible features, like beach wheelchairs, but there is no consistency in availability

or promotion. Hotels will often have some adaptions or implementation of ADA regulations, but almost always have issues because there is no enforcement of the regulations. For example, they may have "accessible" rooms but the doorway to the bathroom is too narrow, or the ramp at the entrance is at too high of an incline. To add to the challenge, disabled individuals bear the burden of making complaints.

There is also a lack of recognition and adaptation for various disabilities outside of mobility challenges such as sensory needs, blindness, deafness, and immune-compromised conditions. The Port of Seattle has done some work to improve accessibility at SEA-TAC Airport and included a room for people with sensory sensitivities.

When it comes to marketing and communications, there is a lot that can be done. Several organizations have started to involve influencers with disabilities to visit and document their experience on social media, which is an excellent step. But it isn't sufficient for a comprehensive accessibility audit, which is also necessary for enabling change. Additionally, often only one type of disability is represented (for example, a person in a wheelchair), yet there are many different types of disabilities and being inclusive and representative means seeking out content creators that can include more diverse people and experiences.

There's also typically a lack of transparent information about accessibility. It is important to ensure available information is clearly communicated and not buried in websites. Ensure that it is easy to find, include as much detail as possible, prepared or at least reviewed by someone who is disabled (but also with expertise on conducting professional audits for the broad range of disabilities to be well represented).

There are resources available online including:
The National ADA Network online resources
The US Access Board guidance documents

Taking Action to Improve Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)

A deep and broad approach to improving DEIA

The first thing to recognize is that this is a long-term process that requires ongoing commitment and learning, and un-learning and re-learning. It is not a box that can be checked and completed quickly. It's a progression and evolution toward better.

If resources allow, you may decide to contract a specialist who can undertake a deep dive into your organization and your practices and make recommendations. This handbook provides an overview of some of the key steps that you can take to get a better understanding of DEIA and to start thinking about ideal outcomes and actions to take to integrate these considerations into your day-to-day operations.

Familiarize and build awareness

- One of the first things you can do as an individual is to start reading books and articles as well as following social media accounts of people from different cultural and marginalized communities. There are many across the nation and some right in Washington that provide perspective as well as share their experiences of traveling and of the outdoors.
- We provide a number of organizations in the coming pages that you can read about and engage with. In some cases, they may be able to support you by providing an audit and/or advice, and, in other cases, they may be a suitable organization for you to sponsor or to engage in content development.
- The Port of Seattle provides a number of anti-racism resources on its website available for any organization to access and read.

Highlands Juneteenth Celebration 2021, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

- In many cases, organizations survey their employees and customers (existing and potential) to solicit direct feedback about inclusivity, sense of belonging, representation – how well the organization is doing from the perspectives of the people it serves and interacts with or would like to in the future.

Social media channels to follow

@asianswhoexplore @black_people_hike @browngirloutdoorworld @Brownpeoplecamping @colourthetrails @disabledhikers @thegsba @indigenouswomenhike @latinxhikers @lgbtoutdoors @loseattlewa @latinooutdoors @mileshikeclub @outdoorafro @outdoorasian @outdoorasianwa @snotribeancestrallandsmovement @twbseattle @wheeltheworld

Crowdriff's list of LGBTQ+ Travel social media to follow
Read Visit Spokane's blog written by local Lisa Gardner on her discovery and experience with @black_people_hike

Seek out advice

- One of the most important steps is to find an organization that can provide advice – from an audit of your products, services, experiences, and marketing, to your organization's operational and human resources practices.
- In many cases, organizations set up a working group or a committee, made up of internal and external people to make an action plan and begin the work.
- Many organizations try to improve the diversity of their staff and their board without doing internal work on their organization's culture and sense of belonging.

Queets River, Jason Hummel Photography,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

This can alienate new staff and board members and ultimately defeat the intended purpose.

- It is important to recognize the burden placed on people of color and representatives of racialized and marginalized communities when they are the only one repeatedly called upon to provide advice, to educate, to translate, to be the voice of all those in their community. That is a difficult and burdensome (and often emotional) load to place on any one person.

- Advice needs to be compensated, always. Too often this kind of advice is sought without due compensation. This is business consulting and needs to be valued as such.

Review practices

- As mentioned above, in many cases, surveys (or focus groups or interviews or a combination thereof) are employed to get an understanding of how well the organization is doing across the spectrum of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility according to different audiences of the organization.

- In terms of practices, we are referring to all internal and external organizational practices, from purchasing, to hiring, to training, to company protocols, to events, product development, B2B communications and B2C communications.

PATHWAYS PROJECT

A program initiated by Tourism Cares and supported by a number of travel businesses, Pathways is a coalition of leading travel industry organizations helping to reduce hiring inequalities by offering opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship. Pathways is helping spread the word about lesser-known travel industry careers such as tour guiding, travel directing, and tour operating, sponsoring training opportunities in tourism management and business ownership, as well as providing networking and mentoring toward job placement. Learn More

- As a destination management or industry association, it's also a good idea to survey tourism industry partners to get an understanding of the needs businesses have to improve their awareness and action on DEIA.

- Identify gaps to inform an action plan.

Engage in training

- There are many kinds of training available for employees, executives, frontline staff, board members, etc. There are online courses, webinars, reading resources, and in-person workshops led by specialists.

- Every organization should be undertaking DEIA training to be able to assess their stage in the process and identify gaps and ideal future states and outcomes.

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA™

Destination British Columbia took a holistic approach to assess and take action on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Some of the key actions included: Contracting outside experts for advice, establishing an Accessibility & Inclusion Committee and Strategic Action Plan, created a learning center for tourism industry partners, created Social Impact Procurement Guidelines for purchasing, underwent an inclusivity audit of brand and marketing, created guidelines for inclusivity in marketing and content production for community DMOs and industry, underwent a DEIA culture audit and sought support from the national Center for Diversity & Inclusion, developed and action plan, training, and guidance to support belonging and wellbeing for employees, and made updates to hiring processes. Read more here.

India Independence Day Celebration, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

38

Develop a policy, public statement and action plan

- Part of the process is making a commitment and publicly stating that commitment. This is important to communicate with employees, but also to the public via your website and other communications channels. This helps prospective employees and visitors see that the organization is aware, is committed to evolving and improving, and has implemented specific action steps (as and when this is available).
- A policy or a statement is meaningless without evidence of action to support it. Communicate clearly the action plan, targets, and steps taken on an ongoing basis.

Dismantle and rebuild practices

- Don't be afraid to question everything and rethink all prior practices. This is a difficult but necessary stage.
- From recruiting to purchasing to onboarding to staff events to communications, leave no area unturned.

Improve representation and inclusivity in employment

- Learn new ways to recruit people from outside your usual networks.
- Collaborate with the tourism sector and with other sectors to build promotion pathways to management and leadership.

Creating more equity: Supporting diverse businesses in your community

- An organization can be making efforts toward improving diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, but the reality on the ground might be that visitors and experiences are still not diverse and marginalized communities are still experiencing more negative impacts than positive ones.
- Getting to know the businesses owned by peoples and groups deserving of equity and highlighting them in promotional materials is one step.
- Getting to know the communities, and how to support more people getting involved in tourism including pathways to employment as well as to entrepreneurship is another.
- Across Washington many environmental organizations have begun this journey and partner with youth groups, non-profit organizations, BIPOC-owned businesses and more, to support their participation in outdoor recreation and environmental conservation. This is something every organization can get started on right away.

Future of Tourism
Guiding Principle #5
Fair Income Distribution

Set policies that counter unequal tourism benefits within destination communities that maximize retention of tourism revenues within those communities.

"Targeted recruitment that diversifies the tourism workforce and lends voice and presence in all levels – representative of the world we live in – will create optimal cultural and unique experiences. It will also lead to more curated destinations that can appeal to all who visit and travel in Washington."
— Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, President, **Black Heritage Society of Washington State.**

Representation and inclusivity in marketing and communications

- This is often the first step taken by organizations. Seeking out diverse models for photo and video shoots of their tourism experiences, accommodations, or destinations. Or seeking out diverse influencers to take trips and highlight them on social media. It is a useful and important step but should be considered as one part of a broader effort.

Question to ask – how diverse is your diverse marketing?

Sometimes there can be an over-reliance on one group or one content creator to create diversity. But it is important to go beyond and think about broader diversity. This includes people with different gender identities, from different cultural groups, and with different types of disabilities. For example, as discussed earlier, disabilities range from physical to mental and affect 10% of the population – from all backgrounds.

Language is key to communicating with diverse audiences

- Oftentimes marketing and communications materials are only in English. Sometimes there are messages directly targeting international source markets. But it's important to consider your local context and speak to the communities represented in the place in which you operate. This demonstrates a culture of welcome and inclusion to the people that live there, and in turn to the people who are considering visiting.
- This also is important when conducting engagement efforts, such as resident sentiment or satisfaction surveys to ensure that a broad and diverse set of community members are consulted.

Washington Organizations to Partner With and Learn From

Big Tent Outdoor Rec Coalition

The Coalition is an association of the primary organizations participating in outdoor recreation in Washington State. The more than 45 organizations involve over 200,000 members. The mission of the Big Tent is to promote sustainable, diverse, equitable, and inclusive outdoor experiences in Washington state through advocacy and education. The organization advocates for sustainable state funding for recreation and conservation lands as well as sustainable and equitable development and human interaction with those lands.

Converge Media

Content creators, producers, writers and local news reporters, specifically for the Northwest's Black community. *We believe that the Black community deserves authentic representation, a focus on our community's issues, and equitable access to elected officials, leadership, and governmental information.* Their Support Black Business program profiles Black businesses across the PNW.

Friends of Waterfront Seattle

Friends of Waterfront Seattle (Friends) is the nonprofit partner to the City of Seattle responsible for helping to fund, steward, and program the park. It is an exemplary model of an anchor attraction in a city supporting the surrounding community members. Every dollar of philanthropy through Friends of Waterfront Seattle leverages $6 in public funding for a $1 billion community-driven vision for Seattle's waterfront. The organization is committed to anti-racism and inclusivity in its operations and the public spaces they operate. This is reflected across its diverse community cultural, education, recreation programs and events.

Miles Hike Club

BIPOC-owned and led guided hiking company based in Seattle offering experiences around Washington. *Miles Hike Club aims to enlighten, inspire, and foster memorable bonds as we unlock the adventurer in those exploring the great outdoors.*

Miles Hike Club offers customized guided hikes based on hikers' experience level and interests and is open to all levels including beginners. They also offer corporate group experiences.

Outdoor Afro (Seattle Chapter)

Outdoor Afro is a nonprofit organization that celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature. The network also connects Black people with lands, water, and wildlife through outdoor education, recreation, and conservation. Some examples of Outdoor Afro's year-round activities range from fishing, hiking, biking, kayaking, gardening, skiing, etc. It is the largest network of its kind with 60 cities participating across the country. The Seattle Chapter uses Facebook and Meetup platforms to set up outings.

Latinos Outdoors Chapters in Seattle and Yakima

Latinos Outdoors mission is to inspire, connect and engage Latino communities in the outdoors. Programs include the *Vamos* Outdoors group outings, *Yo Cuento* Outdoors storytelling and communications program, and *Crecemos* Outdoors leadership training. Supported by volunteers and donations.

Outdoor Asian Washington Chapter

Outdoor Asian's mission is to create a diverse and inclusive community of Asian & Pacific Islanders in the outdoors – Washington chapter meet-up events. Supported by volunteers and donations

Traveling While Black

Travel blogging Seattle-based couple that review destinations within Washington and provide fun and honest ratings on their experiences, including ease of arrival, 'fun-o-meter' and comfort meter for Black travelers. They are a great resource for destinations seeking content production but also for reviews and recommendations for improving experiences to be more inclusive.

SEA Potential

Sea Potential's mission is to transform the maritime industry with representative and inclusive workplace culture as well as foster youth connection to marine ecosystems. Their services include curriculum design, youth programs, executive coaching, organization assessment services, building strategic partnerships, and more.

Washington's National Park Fund

Washington's National Park Fund is the official philanthropic partner to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. Funding projects that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Washington's national parks, to make them more accessible for all. Projects include a variety of efforts for conservation and restoration as well as improving DEI & A – including Tribal Youth Develop a Native Conservation Corps Program, Supporting Internships for Diverse Youth, Bilingual Rangers to Welcome Spanish Speakers, and more. They have also funded Latino Outdoors' women's leadership training.

Courtesy of Miles Hike Club

Courtesy of Traveling While Black

Environmental Stewardship in Washington Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

Washington's history and base of environmental stewardship and conservation throughout the state, from smaller volunteer-led organizations to larger state-level organizations is strong. The sector is focused on preserving and restoring nature, connecting people to nature to develop and inspire long-term commitments to environmental protection, and increasingly, to improve access for all. Most organizations include educational components, events, and volunteer programs and several work with youth organizations and educational institutions to involve youth in outdoor recreation as well as citizen science and environmental conservation programs.

Each organization is on a path to improve accessibility and inclusion and most include policies, public statements, as well as activities to move their organizations along this path and to improve diversity and inclusion in the outdoors throughout the state. There are opportunities for improvement in terms of coordination and inclusion of Indigenous-led conservation and messaging around use and impacts of lands from an Indigenous perspective.

There is also an opportunity for tourism organizations to learn from and work with environmental organizations to engage visitors in understanding how to recreate responsibly and protect nature and wildlife while visiting, but also to take part through the development of new experiences that focus on restoration and protection, which also directly contributes financially to the organizations doing the work to maintain the environment all Washington tourism depends on.

Washington Organizations to Partner With and Learn From

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

A conservation organization for North Central Washington, the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust works with local groups, businesses, and people to safeguard valued natural spaces, the economy, clean air and water, wildlife, and the freedom to enjoy them. It began in 1985 by volunteers. Now it has over 2,500 members, focused on saving natural areas in the region. Their guiding principles and commitment to DEIA includes collaborations with Indigenous Tribes in region and Latin community. They are primarily focused on conservation of habitat, improving quality of life through conservation, and connecting people to nature, providing field guides, trails info and funding stewardship and land protection projects. They offer volunteer events such as work parties, citizen science projects, and field trips to discover stewardship up close.

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

The Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area is a geographic corridor made up of connected ecosystems and communities spanning 1.5 million acres from Seattle to Ellensburg along Interstate-90 in Washington state. It is a coalition-based organization that leads and inspires action to conserve and enhance this special landscape, ensuring a long-term balance between people and nature. They hold events, volunteer and environmental education programs including tree-planting as well as outdoor recreation activities to connect people to nature in the region. They also provide career resources for BIPOC, internships, diverse/representative marketing. Workforce Development provides resources to help self-identified Black, Indigenous, and People of Color break into guiding and conservation careers at varying skill levels. They provide resources on First Peoples of the area including links to each Tribe.

Olympic NPS

Olympic National Park encompasses nearly one million acres with 95% of the park designated as wilderness. The National Park Service strives to make the park as universally accessible as possible and offer a wide range of facilities and experiences for all visitors. Provides accessibility listings for park services for people with mobility and hearing disabilities.

Washington Organizations to Partner With and Learn From

The Mountaineers
Nonprofit with mission to help people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands of the PNW. Volunteer stewardship, education programs on outdoor recreation, and advocacy programs. Free activities (after membership fee). Stewardship program led by members and volunteers to repair trails, restore shorelines, etc. They run several youth programs and camps and partner with 40+ youth organizations to custom-design outdoors programs (Scholarships available) and operate a gear library to increase access to equipment.

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and USDA Forest Service
The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is a large and diverse landscape, encompassing 3.8 million acres along the east slopes of the Cascade Range in Washington. It is managed by the USDA Forest Service.
They conduct Visitor Use reports which track use for visitor management purposes which can be accessed here.

2022 Equity Action Plan Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, requires the head of each agency to prepare a plan for addressing any barriers to full and equal participation in programs, services, procurement, contracting, and other funding opportunities.

Pacific Northwest Trail Association
The mission of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association is to protect and promote the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNNST), and to enhance recreation and educational opportunities for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

The PNTA performs over 80% of maintenance and construction on the Pacific Northwest Trail with youth and young adults from trailside communities and schools near the PNT. Volunteers and donors contribute to trail maintenance. The organization provides Know before you go resources, how to be safe, protect wildlife, etc.

Conservation Northwest
Nonprofit conservation organization Washington affiliate of National Wildlife Federation, dedicated to wildlife conservation and nature restoration, working across Washington and into British Columbia.

The Wildlife-Recreation Co-existence program aims to *reduce outdoor recreation impacts on species and habitats through applied science, advocacy and outreach and strive to advance sustainable outdoor opportunities while also standing up for Indigenous cultural resources, values and Treaty rights, including First Foods.*

Some materials provided in Spanish including commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion plus list of resources for anti-racism, allyship and supporting Black-owned businesses.

Reflections

- **What are the main challenges related to tourism in your community or organization?**
- **What are the biggest future threats to tourism in your community or to your organization?**
- **Do you have any relationships with or tourism initiatives in place with Indigenous communities?**
- **What is the status of inclusivity in your organization or destination? And where would you like to get to?**
- **What organizations would you like to reach out to and support or engage for advice?**

Rosario Park, Jason Hummel Photography,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Your Organization and Community's Context

Previous sections have provided a detailed outline of challenges, Washington context and resources, as well as an overview of current thinking and key movements within the tourism sector. This section will help you to think about how to frame this information within the context of your organization and will support you to lay the groundwork for developing an action plan.

What Do You Want Tourism to Achieve in Your Community?

This is a good time to reflect on what you think the main goals and outcomes of tourism should be in your community. You might want to engage in some 'blue sky thinking' and map out what perfect tourism looks like for your organization and your destination, or what the ideal contribution of tourism would be in your community without any barriers.

This can be a useful tool for drawing out what the main inhibitors are to your vision for tourism or areas where tourism is not resulting in a net benefit. It will be useful to think about ideal outcomes from environmental, social, economic and cultural angles and for each sector of the tourism industry.

What are important aspects of your community's identity that, if gone, would change the character and 'sense of place' for residents, and would undermine the very reason people started visiting in the first place?

In their book Senses of Place, anthropologists Steven Feld and Keith Basso define sense of place as: "the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested and struggled over.'" Elizabeth Becker, author of Overbooked, once described this intangible thing in a tangible way. She referred to a historic bookstore in a city that if gone – if pushed out by souvenir stores or other ubiquitous and generic shops that often happens in tourism hot spots – that the essence of that city, what makes it what it is, would be gone, and mark a tipping point in the place's tourism life cycle.

What are You Already Doing Across Your Destination and Within Your Organization?

Before making decisions on what actions to take or creating an action plan, take a little time to research and understand the wider context. This will help you identify what is already happening in inclusivity, sustainability, and responsible outdoor recreation that you can plug into, build upon or contribute to. For example:

- **Does your local government have climate commitments or an existing sustainability plan?**
- **Are there any local organizations already working on climate action or DEIA in tourism?**
- **Who are the organizations working to preserve and enhance sense of place?**
- **Internally, review any strategic, marketing, business or environmental plans and document the existing goals or actions directly or indirectly related to sustainability. This may include climate, energy, waste, water, transport, food, supply chain, built environment, ecosystem protection and regeneration, guest communications, responsible travel and recreation messaging, equity and livelihoods, supporting underrepresented communities, etc.**

Don't worry if you only have access to a limited number of the above. The goal is to consider what you already have and begin thinking about how you could use resources and processes already at your disposal.

You may also find it useful to take a look at some other organizations' plans, to get ideas and inspiration for your own. Please refer to Annex 1 of this handbook for links to planning documents, strategies and visions from a range of organizations that are already prioritizing sustainability and climate outcomes and are taking a destination stewardship approach to tourism management.

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #12
Proctect Sense of Place

Encourage tourism policies and business practices that protect natural, scenic, and cultural assets. Retain and enhance destination identity and distinctiveness. Diversity of place is the reason for travel.

Taking action on sustainability can feel overwhelming at times, and it can be hard to know where to start. That said, it is highly likely that you are doing more than you think and are already taking some meaningful steps towards integrating sustainability and building resilience into your operations. The most important thing is to make a start from wherever you are right now and build from there. Even if you haven't previously thought very much about planning for this, you're probably already doing more than you think. For example:

- Does your business already have a sustainability or responsible travel policy in place? If so, what

---

<div style="background-color:green">

Destination Stewardship Plans: Aiming for Balance

</div>

Tourism destinations seeking to guide tourism decision-making in their communities using an approach that centers community priorities are turning to destination stewardship planning as a method to identify priorities, plan collaborative actions, and allocate funding. The following are the visions from destination stewardship plans published in 2022-2023 in the iconic outdoor recreation communities of Lake Tahoe, Vail, and Jackson Hole. Each of these communities has a multi-sector destination stewardship council to coordinate and cooperate on plan implementation.

Jackson Hole Sustainable Destination Management Plan – Community Vision:
Teton County, Wyoming, is a leader in balancing the needs and aspirations of community members, businesses, and visitors by actively integrating the viability of the tourism economy with the regeneration of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and enhancement of quality of life. Read the Plan

Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan – Shared Vision:
Tahoe is a cherished place, welcoming to all, where people, communities, and nature benefit from a thriving tourism and outdoor recreating economy. Read the Plan

Vail's Stewardship Roadmap – Vision:
Vail is the world's premier sustainable mountain resort community, renowned for its quality of life, inspiring experiences for all, and stewardship of nature. Read the Plan

---

PROCOLOMBIA

In 2020, the Colombian government passed a new Sustainable Tourism Policy into law. The policy prioritizes environmental protection and social justice and promotes best practices that integrate the voice of local communities into tourism decision-making and conserve Colombia's natural and cultural heritage. It is one of the only countries in the world with this kind of policy and legislation in place.

"Sustainable tourism is the future of our industry. Now more than ever, travel must actively help and strengthen the communities and ecosystems within a destination, and we are embracing this at ProColombia. We recognise sustainable tourism as a transformative tool that has the power to protect our incredible landscapes, conserve our natural resources and contribute to our fascinating locals."

does it include? Do you have any targets relating to reducing carbon emissions? Do you have targets on other mitigation-related activities such as energy efficiency, sustainable purchasing, waste management, conservation?

- Does anyone in your organization already focus on sustainability / climate / resource efficiency/ community engagement / responsible recreation, as part of their job?
- Do you have any plans or policies in place relating to DEIA?
- What are you already doing on sustainability, social responsibility, or climate action or DEIA? For example, do you have any energy efficiency / saving measures in place? Do you take steps to reduce food waste or the use of single use plastic? Do you encourage staff to walk, cycle, take public transport or car-share to work? Do you have inclusive recruitment and hiring or marketing policies? Do you support conservation in your community? What actions are already underway?

Applying Destination Stewardship 'Lenses' To Decision-Making And Planning

It is useful and highly effective to start thinking about your operations from different perspectives, such as climate, DEIA, or destination stewardship, in order to determine what actions to take next.

For example, imagine that you are about to develop a new nature hiking experience in your destination.

What considerations would be different if you design it with your climate 'lens' on? Perhaps you could ensure that all food supplied is locally sourced, or that hikers are driven by bus or shuttle to the start and end of the hike in a group rather than in individual vehicles.

What else might you consider if you put a DEIA 'lens' on? Perhaps you could choose to prioritize collaborating with an Indigenous community or Black-owned business, to develop and lead the hike. You might consult a disability specialist for accessibility recommendations. And perhaps you could subsidize the cost of the hike for marginalized or underrepresented groups and target your marketing towards them? You might also consider publishing the activity or event in additional languages, to show different cultural communities that they are welcome.

What else might you consider from a destination stewardship perspective? Perhaps you could spend more time collaborating with local community groups, wildlife specialists or other non-profits focused on trail preservation, for example, when designing the hike in the first place. Or you could choose to measure the success of the hiking experience using holistic indicators such as community satisfaction, knowledge transfer to participants about conserving protected areas, uptake of participation from marginalized groups, etc.

Applying these different 'lenses' is a good tool to help build the resilience of your destination when you are designing and delivering tourism activities.

Understanding Your Organization's Context, Mandate, And Sphere Of Influence

When starting an action planning process, it is useful to think about your own context as this will help you to understand the main areas that you are responsible for and where your sphere of influence is. For example:

- To what extent are you able to make decisions about and implement taxes or other fees?

- Do you have the authority to put up information signs on trails or in recreation areas, or is it the responsibility of another agency?

- Is your organization in charge of its procurement and recruitment policies or are they tied to another agency's protocols?

- Is your funding tied to specific activities and outcomes?

- Have you meaningfully consulted with the Tribe whose ancestral lands are being impacted by the project or plan?

The answers to these kinds of questions are likely to influence the priority actions you take or plan for; however, they are not designed to limit your ambitions. For example, if you have no authority to implement a tourist tax to collect funds for regeneration projects, this probably shouldn't be one of the central targets of your action plan. That said, you can still set a goal related to this, for example to collaborate with the agency that does have the authority to implement these policies in order to advocate for a new 'tourism regeneration tax' or some type of visitor contribution to conservation, well-being, or other community priority.

Identifying Potential Partners and Collaborators

Take some time also to map out a wide range of community members and leaders, identifying those entities or individuals whose buy-in and engagement will be vital for creating and implementing any new plans, or who will play an important role in supporting you to solve challenges. Consider how you can collaborate with and proactively engage other community members to achieve your sustainability goals - within your local area, as well as across the sector in which you operate. You can use the table below to help you think about key individuals, businesses, local government agencies, Tribes, and other organizations to connect and work with.

Identify leaders within your organization/partner organizations or externally who will champion sustainability initiatives or collaborate on a plan and provide necessary guidance and input. What are their current activities related to sustainability and resilience? What is their anticipated level of influence, impact and interest?

Identify Potential Tribal Government Partners

When mapping potential partners, it is essential to identify the local Tribal government in your location. Indigenous peoples and Tribal governments are not stakeholders, but holders of rights and title as sovereign governments. It is important to review tourism activities and aims with them to gain approvals and perspectives regarding potential impacts to cultural traditions and practices as well as land and resources that may be important to the Tribe or may be sensitive to certain tourism activities. For example, what kinds of events take place on the land and waters in

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #3
Collaborate in Destination Management

Seek to develop all tourism through a collaborative management structure with equal participation by government, the private sector and civil society organizations that represent diversity in communities.

the area? What can you do to ensure any activities your organization develops are in line with what is acceptable, and beneficial to Indigenous peoples (vs negatively impacting lands or cultures and ways of life)?

See Indigenous Peoples and Tourism in Washington section for more detailed information and links to Tribal websites and more guidelines in this area.

Resident Engagement

In the past residents were almost always left out of the tourism conversation. From planning to events to sales and marketing, tourism was seen as separate to local life. Over the years, with a convergence of an increased interest in local life from visitors, as well as an upsurge in anti-tourism sentiment in places suffering from overtourism, resident engagement in tourism has been on the rise. Often it is still confined to consultations related to new developments. And, more recently, gauging sentiment toward tourism became more common during the pandemic as tourism

Map Potential Partners & Collaborators	Who could we collaborate with?	What could we do together?
Local (e.g., Tribal governments, other local government agencies, businesses, local associations, resident & community groups, political representatives, government agencies, NGOs, social enterprises, educational institutions, chambers of commerce)		
Regional / national (e.g., DMOs and other tourism organizations, trade association, funders)		
Across the sector (e.g., professional organizations such as specialists in DEIA, communities of other destinations and tourism businesses across geographies)		

managers wanted to know if residents were comfortable opening their communities to visitors, particularly when tourism began opening up, but infections were still widespread. Some tourism destinations began engaging residents to better understand the place – in an exercise called placemaking – which helps to create new experiences, for locals and visitors alike.

Art by Fire, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association announced its new name and strategy in 2022 as the North Tahoe Community Alliance. The organization's mission shifted in 2022, and its efforts focused on promoting responsible travel during off-peak seasons, stewardship education, and collaborating with regional stakeholders to identify and implement solutions to issues that impact residents, businesses and visitors. The income earned from tourism taxes in their community is primarily aimed at reducing negative impacts and improving benefits. Spending is allocated to responsible marketing messaging in low seasons, micro transportation to connect the community to recreation sites, affordable housing programs, waste management and more.

VisitFlanders, the regional DMO for the Flanders region in Belgium, pioneered deep resident engagement which led to setting new community-centered goals for the tourism organization, created new experiences steeped in local traditions and recreation activities – from historical preservation to road cycling – and the development of a sentiment tracker, inspiring similar models now seen in other places around the world.

Elephant Head Trail Lake Chelan, Courtesy of Traveling While Black

49

Resident Engagement vs Resident Sentiment

As many organizations continue to use surveys to gauge resident sentiment, it is important to recognize the difference between gauging sentiment and a deeper engagement that influences decision-making. It is important to track resident satisfaction with tourism's impacts on their quality of life, on infrastructure, on amenities, as well as the management of tourism and its impacts to the environment and the balance between costs and benefits. Conducting more involved engagement can help to reset goals and strategies that center community wellbeing. There are many ways, including new and innovative methods to reach residents and attention must be made to reaching diverse and underrepresented community members. This includes language and cultural considerations for surveys and workshops and events, as well as seeking out organizations to partner with that are active in communities you wish to reach, rather than expecting they come to you. The initiative *Time for DMOCracy* worked with destinations across Europe and North America to develop a toolkit and guidelines for community engagement that provides a range of options for organizations to consider. Access the Time for **DMOCracy Community Engagement Toolkit here.**

Reflections

- **Do you have a tourism plan or strategy document? If so, how up to date is it?**

- **Could you make any immediate changes within your organization's structure and operations to improve sustainability?**

- **Do you have policies in place to improve diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility? Can you think of any changes you could make in your organization that would widen opportunities for marginalized or underrepresented groups?**

- **What other groups or organizations in your community could you engage with to strengthen existing plans/develop a new plan?**

- **What are your long-term goals or ideal outcomes that you would like to work towards, building on the immediate actions you are considering?**

8 Community Funding and Participatory Budgeting

1 Resident Sentiment and Citizen Science

7 Volunteering for Tourism Welcome

2 Strategizing and Ideation

6 Placemaking by Community

3 Digital Engagement and Online Participation

5 Participatory Place Branding and Storytelling

4 Citizen Assemblies, Councils and Panels

Understanding, Measuring and Managing Tourism's Impacts

Before knowing where you want to get to and how, it's also critically important that you have an understanding of where you are right now. Do you have the right information around which to make informed decisions? Are you dealing with issues like overcrowding, or stretched infrastructure, on a proactive or reactive basis? Is tourism really bringing genuine and equitable benefits to your community?

The Role Of Data In Measuring And Monitoring Impacts

While you will already have an idea of the main issues affecting your community and organization, up to date data is helpful for understanding the current situation and making informed decisions about which destination stewardship actions are most required to build resilience. Data can be primary and sourced from community members via surveys you may conduct yourself, as well as secondary and sourced from agencies that collect data in your region. Establishing a baseline plus ongoing measuring and monitoring are all essential activities for assessing whether your plan is working and also as a basis for communicating the impacts of tourism in your community. Some of the data you require is likely to already exist; therefore, before investing in your own primary data, it is worth seeking out available data from other sources such as through local government agencies.

What data should you be sourcing and tracking on a regular basis?

Depending on the size of your organization and what might be feasible for you, you may want to invest directly in a system that will help to monitor and measure impacts to help inform future management needs. Monitoring and measuring will be covered in more detail in the final section on action planning; however, some data sources

are listed here as an introduction to what sources would be useful and what might be needed in the future.

- Visitor satisfaction
- Booking trends and revenues by source market
- Visitor flows, volumes and behavior patterns
- Visitor spend data by type and location of business, on existing and new products e.g., small businesses' revenues
- Economic development indicators
- Resident satisfaction with the impacts of tourism and their level of engagement in tourism decision-making
- Public health/wellbeing and services indicators e.g., accessing of services, emergency response
- Environmental indicators e.g., air and water quality, health of habitats, species populations, energy use, waste generation, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.

Each of these will be more easily obtained via collaborative structures and networks. Based on the experience of the Travel Foundation, this requires understanding the importance of data sharing among community members and businesses alike. It is also important that the mechanisms for sharing data are simple to use. Communication around impact management, i.e., the importance of understanding impacts, and need for data, should be part of the process, in order to facilitate buy-in for data collection (and responses) from all sources, and to lead to effective impact monitoring.

Balancing the positives and negatives

As introduced during this section of the guide, any course of action is likely to have both negative and positive outcomes and therefore engagement with a broad range of community groups is vital for ensuring that these are understood. This will help to raise areas of concern which can then inform the development and adaptation of impact management tactics.

What data is most critical to building destination resilience?

Data requirements can be categorized into two types: situational and resilience. It is recommended that data covering both are used to conduct a situational analysis.

Future of Tourism Guiding Principle #6
Reduce Tourism's Burden

Account for all tourism costs in terms of local tax burdens, environmental and social impacts, and objectively verifiable disruption. Ensure investments are linked to optimizing net-positive impacts for communities and the environment.

Situational – Data needed to understand where the positive and negative impacts of tourism have been greatest

Resilience – Data needed to understand changing market needs and how to best adapt for the future

Situational Data

Understanding the current situation in your destination can benefit from investigating the scale of impacts through various data sources. Once data sources have been identified it will be easier to conduct measuring and monitoring activities in the future. The framework below is designed to help you to consider the impact areas and various lines of data inquiry that could be pursued.
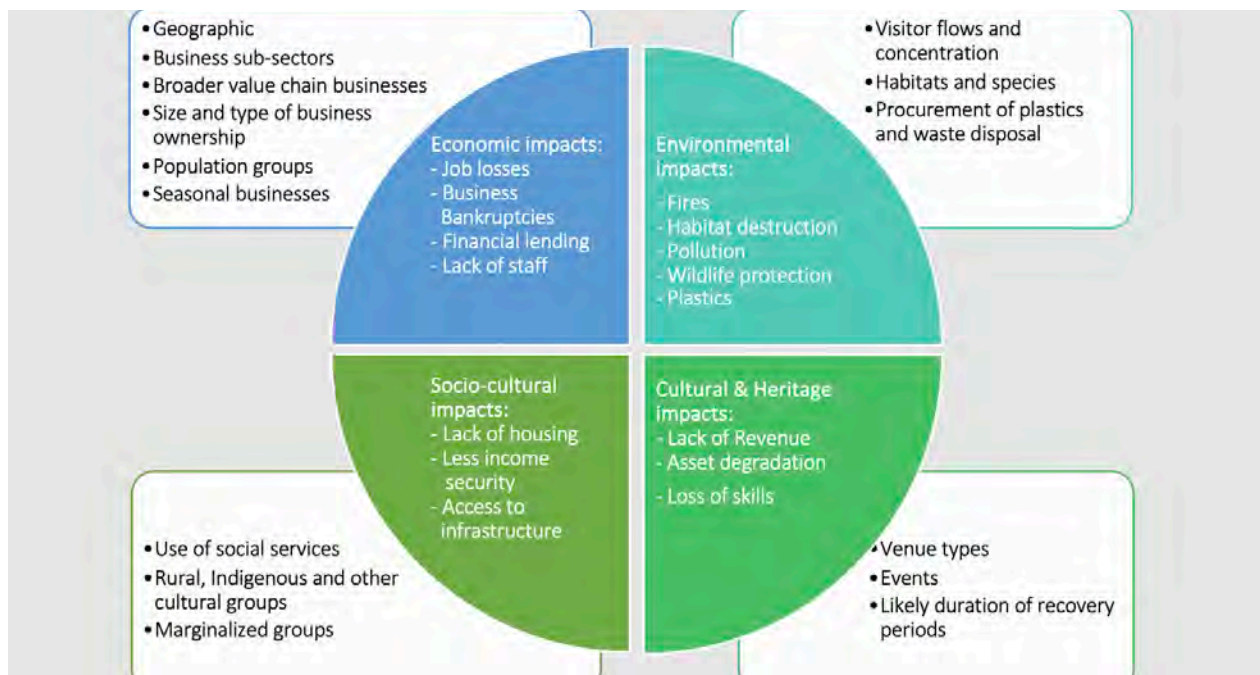
The following list of questions and considerations is not exhaustive but does illustrate the types of inquiries that will help to ensure that a range of impacts are identified. Gathering evidence of impacts will help you to prioritize your actions and targets.

Economic Impacts

- **What is the current distribution of visitor arrivals in your region?** Was this impacted by the pandemic? Has it changed since? For example, destinations

SEDONA
ARIZONA

Sedona Arizona's Sustainable Tourism Plan includes tactical and dynamic metrics. Tactical metrics are measures for every tactic in the sustainable tourism plan, monitored and reported by the sustainable tourism action team. Dynamic metrics include perceptions of sustainability from three audiences: visitors, businesses, and residents. These are based on the four pillars of the plan including Environment, Resident Quality of Life, Quality of the Economy and visitor Experience. Learn More

most dependent on international and out-of-state markets, especially urban ones, may have experienced a significant decrease in arrivals, while more remote and rural destinations and natural areas may have experienced episodic increases in visitors. And currently you may be undergoing another shift in volume patterns.

The economic impacts of existing and evolving visitor numbers and revenue should be analyzed not just from the perspective of businesses that provide a direct

- Geographic
- Business sub-sectors
- Broader value chain businesses
- Size and type of business ownership
- Population groups
- Seasonal businesses

Economic impacts:
- Job losses
- Business Bankruptcies
- Financial lending
- Lack of staff

Environmental impacts:
- Fires
- Habitat destruction
- Pollution
- Wildlife protection
- Plastics

- Visitor flows and concentration
- Habitats and species
- Procurement of plastics and waste disposal

Socio-cultural impacts:
- Lack of housing
- Less income security
- Access to infrastructure

Cultural & Heritage impacts:
- Lack of Revenue
- Asset degradation
- Loss of skills

- Use of social services
- Rural, Indigenous and other cultural groups
- Marginalized groups

- Venue types
- Events
- Likely duration of recovery periods

It is not possible to make sound decisions without data. Basing a plan on assumptions is likely to result in the inefficient and/or ineffective allocation of resources and it will not be possible to monitor the results of your actions.

tourism service but also those along the supply chain who provide supplies or complementary services to tourism businesses, and often depend on tourism for their survival.

- **Which types of businesses are likely to require more support for sustainability and resilience-planning in the short vs. medium vs. longer term?**

  For example, were destinations whose tourism product is more tailored to non-local markets (including theme parks, souvenir shops, accommodations, remote activities & experience providers, etc.) hit harder by the pandemic? Did they require more immediate support to pivot their marketing in order to be able to attract a more diverse group of visitors that will help build their resilience against future shocks? Equally, some businesses in rural areas may also have experienced an economic downturn, despite increases in visitor numbers, due to changing tourist profiles and spending e.g., day trippers spending less.

  Consider seasonality or sudden changes in visitor flows: Businesses that are constrained by seasonality may not be able to recover costs until the next season if they are impacted by external shocks such as extreme weather events. For example; coastal, lakeside and/or mountain destinations with a high dependency on seasonal visitation as well as dependency on a reliable climate may be most vulnerable and require more resilience planning.

Environmental Impacts

- **What are the biggest environmental impacts from tourism across your community? How does tourism impact carbon emissions or waste generation?** During the extreme lockdown period of the pandemic there was a reduction in tourism-related carbon emissions, as well as reports of habitat/species recovery in previously overcrowded tourist areas, leading to the assumption that the pandemic lockdown had been good for the environment. However, many rural areas globally, including in Washington, experienced the opposite; visitor behavior patterns evolved and transferred many problems such as overcrowding to rural areas, especially protected ones, as people moved away from urban experiences to outdoor and rural ones.

- **Where are the carbon emission hotspots?** What is the main transport infrastructure used by visitors in your destination? Is it dependent on fossil fuels? Are there alternative, more sustainable forms of transport that could serve the tourism sector? Do tourism businesses prioritize sourcing local supplies of food and drink? Sourcing local food is not only appealing to visitors but is also likely to result in a lower carbon footprint as the storage requirements and transportation distances will be greatly reduced.

- **Has there been an increase in visitor flows?** Increased visitation to natural and protected areas has led in cases to carrying capacities being exceeded and infrastructure being inadequate to manage these visitors.

- **What impact does tourism have on waste generation in your community?** How many businesses are using reusable, recyclable or compostable products rather than single-use items that go to landfill? Is there sufficient capacity to respond to changing visitor flows or potential future shocks? Did COVID-related health and safety protocols lead to an increase in waste generation? For example, some businesses increased the use of single-use plastic items and chemicals from cleaning and sanitizing, leading to increased land and water pollution.

- **What evidence exists of changes to environmental/conservation practices?** Visitor behavior, especially from an influx of visitors to rural areas, or simply visitation that exceeds the infrastructure capacity, may damage fragile environments and habitats. For example, increases in illegal camping, human and dog

waste, unauthorized use of walking and cycling trails, fires, etc., have been experienced in many destinations.

Socio-Cultural Impacts

- **What are the socio-cultural impacts of tourism within the community?**

    Are there tensions between residents and visitors? Does tourism impact negatively on residents' ability to access or enjoy public spaces, services, amenities, natural areas, etc.?

- **Are the benefits of tourism felt equitably across the population?**

    Are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and women-owned businesses integrated into the tourism value chain? Do they have equal opportunities to access the tourism market?

- **What is the impact of tourism on housing availability and affordability for residents?** Have residents been impacted by an increase in cost of living, short-term rentals, and potential decrease in available housing?

- **Are specific segments of the population disproportionately impacted by extreme events?** Marginalized members of the population are likely to have been severely impacted by the pandemic, particularly if they lack access to resources and support mechanisms. This is typically the case in economic recessions as well as other weather-related closures such as due to wildfire smoke.

Culture & Heritage Impacts

- **What proportion of tourism in your destination is linked to Culture and Heritage attractions and experiences?** Culture and heritage were likely to have been severely impacted by the pandemic. This sub-sector of the tourism economy faced many of the harshest operating constraints (particularly in relation to events and indoor experiences) and the lack of revenue was an issue for a longer period then. The pandemic was particularly hard on Indigenous communities and businesses, especially in more rural areas with less health infrastructure. Many were challenged with seeking a balance between protecting elders and continuing to accept visitors from outside the community.

- **Which sub-sectors are at high-risk for sustained periods?** The rise in remote working looks set to be a more fundamental and more permanent shift in working patterns beyond the impact of the pandemic. While there has already been some recovery, the meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE) market is still reduced as more work continues to take place remotely and as more businesses reduce their travel budgets in line with carbon reduction commitments. This is likely to affect both hotels and conference venues as well as the broader value chain, e.g., catering services.

Impacts To Tribal Rights And Indigenous Cultural Resources

- **Are Indigenous peoples and lands in your region adversely impacted by tourism? What is the impact on Indigenous lands and waters, including wildlife habitats in your region, from events, tourism activities and developments? What is the impact on Indigenous cultural traditions by tourism in your community?**

    Tribal governments are often not consulted for their perspectives on tourism development, activities, and events in the regions near and even on, their lands or lands that are important for their communities to conduct cultural activities and traditions. Events can impede access to lands, wildlife, and waters and development can affect habitats important to Indigenous ways of life. It's important to be proactive to understand the potential harm that could be caused, as well as the potential benefits that could be realized, by engaging with Tribal governments and Indigenous community leaders around tourism management.

Burl Tree House, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Reflections

- **What insights do you already have on the environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism in your destination?**
- **How were these affected by the pandemic?**
- **How might they be impacted by climate change and extreme weather events?**
- **What existing data is available to better understand these impacts?**

Impact Management

Understanding previous impacts of tourism in your community and planning for the implications of changes ahead in visitor flows, behavior and spend, as well as unpredictable shocks due to climate change, will be key to determining the right impact management techniques for you. This section of the handbook will highlight the

Visitor Management Techniques

Techniques to manage visitor flows are increasingly used to manage visitor peaks including:

- Caps on visitor numbers for given periods and group sizes
- Allocated visitation timeslots
- QR codes to access and register attendance, place orders for goods and services
- Contactless payments
- Real-time visitation dashboards including web-cams
- Odd/Even car registration plate entry restriction
- GEO location targeted advertising and messaging to visitors in real-time
- Increased resources for visitor information centres to help disperse visitors

various considerations and techniques available for increasing the spread of positive benefits and mitigating negative impacts.

Understanding the negative impacts that tourism has in your community is a key part of moving forward so that the same mistakes are avoided. This will involve collating, and potentially gathering, data as outlined in the previous section – including ensuring resident satisfaction is monitored. It is important to acknowledge that some negative impacts of tourism are inevitable, and that tourism development is always a trade-off between benefits and costs. What you should be aiming for is an optimization of the benefits and effective management (or mitigation) of costs or negative impacts to enhance the sustainability and resilience of your destination or business.

Destination weaknesses and vulnerabilities, likely to have been exacerbated by the pandemic and coupled with new and worsening threats such as climate change and economic instability, must be considered.

- The past few years have exposed the fragility of the tourism sector to global shocks and highlighted the speed at which situations can change on a local and global level. This underlines the importance of collecting ongoing 'real time' data on impacts to be able to respond to a constantly evolving situation so that everyone has a clear picture of the issues.
- Impacts - including degradation - can happen at short notice and over the long term. Disasters that lead to closures of transportation corridors or borders (as seen during the pandemic) or changes to source markets, leading to closures of businesses and dispersal of visitors to different areas, need to be quickly managed. Not everything can be forecasted but planning ahead based on knowledge of evolving trends and visitor patterns will help manage impacts as they arise, as well as to be proactive to prevent degradation over time.

Managing Changes In Visitor Spend And Behavior Patterns

Visitor flows and behavior

Domestic visitors are more likely to have visited popular attractions before, may be looking for experiences in less visited places and are likely to self-drive which can create congestion, overcrowding, pollution and degradation in new areas. Ironically, visitors looking to escape the crowds sometimes end up in more crowded spaces that are unable to cope with a spike in demand.

- Dispersal and timing strategies that encourage a more widespread flow of visitors as well as temporary infrastructure could help address this.
- Developing more walking and cycling routes may help to alleviate the impacts of congestion and would also result in lower carbon emissions, positively supporting your destination to reach net zero.

New and evolving market segments

Ongoing and increasing demand for new outdoor experiences and visitation to protected areas means that more visitors from new market segments are attracted to these areas.

- Safety and conduct protocols and communication mechanisms may urgently be required to manage the risks to environmental and wildlife safety.

  While day visitors may be less likely to spend money in local communities, overall increased demand for rural areas may also create opportunities for local food, beverage and accommodation providers.
- Targeted investment in building up the local supply

Loving Nature to Death

Yellowstone National Park, USA reopened and was overrun with visitors.

- 'Newbies' to nature flocked to outdoor public spaces across Wyoming.
- Camping demand soared and exceeded capacity resulting in illegal campgrounds, dangerous campfires, and a disregard for 'leave no trace' principles.
- Physical distancing was difficult to achieve and not observed by many visitors.

(Sources: The Guardian, 2020; National Park Service, 2020)

Norway's Bold Plan to Tackle Crowding

The problem:
- How to protect natural communities suffering from littering, human waste and "overzealous Instagrammers" due to exponential tourism growth, while preserving the 'freedom to roam' concept?
- For example, Trolltunga (pictured above), had 90,000 visitors in 2018, up from just 1,000 a decade ago meaning a sharp contrast between the Instagram illusion and the reality of a 2hr queue.

The solutions:
- Investments to strengthen existing trails and build new ones to supply increased visitor numbers.
- Development of Innovation Norway: a sustainable destination national standard (covering 6 sustainability themes, 45 criteria and 108 indicators –GSTC recognized).
- Each destination creates a plan, including energy-saving initiatives, projects that promote local food and culture and building infrastructure. Upgrades are monitored before receiving accreditation.

"Earning a sustainable grade through the accreditation process isn't about being sustainable. It's that you've taken responsibility as a destination to address sustainability issues, everything from social well-being to nature and climate to the economic well-being of businesses."
— Ronny Brunvoll, tourism adviser

(Source : Outside Online, 2019)

chain of tourism enterprises could also help attract and retain these market segments who will continue to boost the livelihoods of rural business owners.

Increased demand for 'common pool' resources

Growing preferences for private, self-catering accommodation can place additional pressure on services designed for residents, cause undesirable living conditions, push up the costs of living and cause housing shortages.

- Data on booking trends and visitor behavior will be key to managing this and specific licensing and regulation may be required. For example, Amsterdam limits vacation rental hosts to renting 30 days per year.

Tackling the Housing Issue in Cornwall

Cornwall's residents have experienced a lack of affordable housing for years. This is partly due to the increase of second homes and short-term rentals.

Solution 1: Principal-residence policy

- In May 2016, in a referendum , residents of St Ives voted to introduce a 'principal-residence policy', which prevented newly built houses in the town from being used as second homes. Many other towns followed suit.

- As a result, demand has decreased and house prices are 13% lower than they were projected to be at the normal growth rate. However, there has also been a slump in the construction of new homes.

During the 'urban flight' (people moving from cities to towns/villages during the pandemic), landlords started to evict tenants to sell houses. This led to many families being forced to leave the county as they could no longer afford to live there. The number of people needing urgent housing in Cornwall doubled.

Solution 2: Short-term: purchase of temporary homes

- During the pandemic, vacant hotels were used as temporary housing

- Since tourism re-opened, the council began purchasing park homes and self-contained cabins to be located on pop-up sites to provide temporary housing.
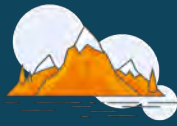
Solution 3: Medium-term: Regulation and planning laws
Local tourism authorities and councils are currently considering further measures including

- Declaring a housing emergency and urgently re-allocating funds to build affordable homes

- Planning restrictions for Airbnb and similar companies (in line with traditional accommodation)

- Increased tax collection for Airbnb and similar (in line with traditional accommodation)

(Sources: Cornish Stuff and BBC, 2021)

Future of Tourism
Guiding Principle #10
Contains Tourism's Land Use

Limit high-occupancy resort tourism to concentrated areas. Discourage resort sprawl from taking over coasts, islands, and mountain areas, so as to retain geographical character, a diverse economy, local access, and critical ecosystems.

Snowshoeing, Carina Skrobecki Swain, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Planning Impact Management Responses

The following table summarizes some common changes in visitor behavior and spending, associated impacts and potential management techniques.

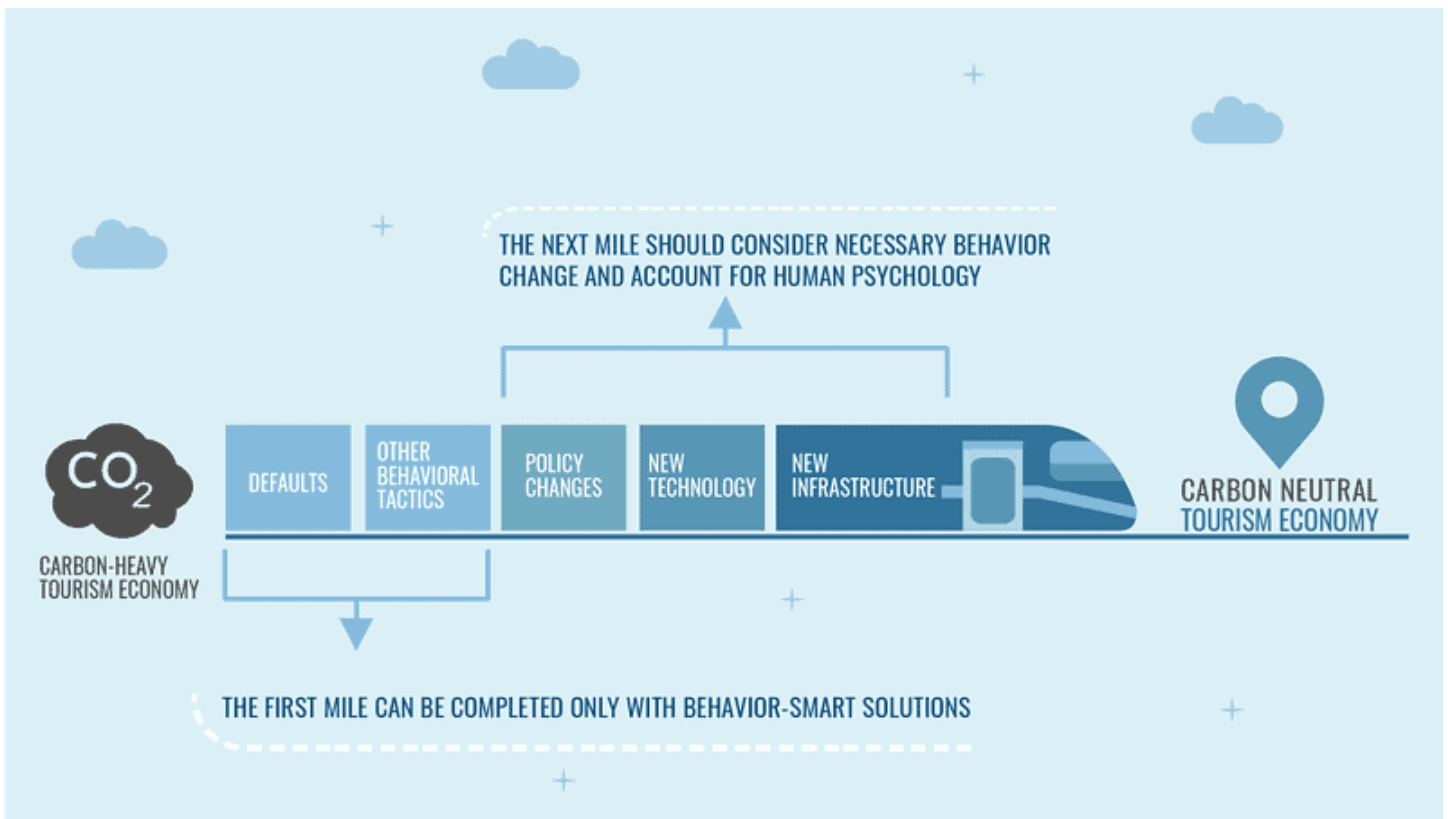| Potential changes in visitor, flows, behavior and spending patterns	Potential positive (+) and negative (-) impacts of changes	Potential management techniques
New and evolving market segments + Increased demand for rural and protected areas	Overcrowding, damage to the environment,	• Management of flows (e.g., increase start/finish points, manage entry, use of Wi-Fi/Bluetooth monitoring, ticketing according to capacity) • Dispersal to less popular areas (e.g., combined tickets to complementary attractions) • Create supporting experiences (e.g., Stonehenge's visitor center reduces pressure on the stone circle) • Information for visitors (e.g., temporary information desks, maps, signage, real time crowd data, routes for different visitor-types) • Investment in infrastructure (e.g., free park and ride bus schemes, portable toilets, trash cans) • Regulate as part of holistic solution (e.g., % of tourist vs local homes, parking for locals, quiet zones, curfews, rent protection for local small businesses)

Potential changes in visitor, flows, behavior and spending patterns	Potential positive (+) and negative (-) impacts of changes	Potential management techniques
New and evolving market segments + Increased demand for rural and protected areas	- Negative resident sentiment	• Consult residents (e.g., listen to and investigate concerns to understand facts – who is impacted, how, why, how much, etc.?) • Take quick action (e.g., look for quick wins and simple solutions that can be acted upon immediately) • Put a strategy in place (e.g., develop tourism in a way that benefits the community, respects and empowers local people) • Invest in the community (e.g., through tourism taxes/donations)
	+ Demand for new products	• Product development (e.g., walking and cycling routes, glamping accommodation)
Increased demand for 'common pool' resources such as increases in private rental accommodation	- Resident dissatisfaction, gentrification effect, unsuitable locations	• Licensing and regulation • Communication with residents and visitors • Invest in affordable housing in rural communities (e.g., Moab, Utah Housing Task Force)
	+ Increased tourist footfall and spend in quieter, lesser-known areas	• Product development (e.g., walking and cycling routes, glamping accommodation) • Support linkages with local businesses (e.g., development of rural tourism directory on website)
	+ Increased revenue and tax contributions	• Communicate the benefits • Invest tax revenues to reduce negative impacts of tourism in the community

beSmart

Behavior-Smart is an organization dedicated to helping solve large, complex challenges using behavior science and The First Mile ™ approach which starts by changing defaults in destinations to facilitate desirable behaviors and outcomes. For example, what if the front desk staff of a hotel can make 10% of the guests walk instead of taking a taxi to places of interest simply by changing the way they make recommendations? And what if a tour operator can nudge its guests to go for local food options simply by adjusting its itineraries and pricing tactics? Read More

Reflections

- **What are the main negative visitor impacts in your community? Do you have any strategies to minimize these impacts?**
- **Do you have tools in place for tracking the flow of visitors in your community?**

CO_2

CARBON-HEAVY TOURISM ECONOMY

DEFAULTS

OTHER BEHAVIORAL TACTICS

POLICY CHANGES

NEW TECHNOLOGY

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

CARBON NEUTRAL TOURISM ECONOMY

THE NEXT MILE SHOULD CONSIDER NECESSARY BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND ACCOUNT FOR HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

THE FIRST MILE CAN BE COMPLETED ONLY WITH BEHAVIOR-SMART SOLUTIONS

Product Development

Responding To Evolving Market And Consumer Demand

The following section outlines evolving consumer and market demands that are relevant to the tourism landscape in Washington with ideas for how you can respond to these shifts and embed sustainability and resilience into your product offering. Given that consumer demands and market trends are constantly evolving it will be important for you to understand and monitor changes in your own key source markets. The State of Washington Tourism can support with relevant data via its partner services and resource center – find out more at https://industry.stateofwatourism.com/tourism-resource-center/ and by getting in contact.

There is also advice on how to respond to these shifts with your destination stewardship, climate, and DEIA 'lenses' on.

Sustainability is good for business

Taking the time to develop and promote sustainable and regenerative products will be key to strengthening the resilience of your destination… And it makes business-sense: MMGY Global's 2019-2020 Portrait of American Travelers found that consumers are becoming increasingly conscientious about the impacts of their travel decisions:

- 60% stated that concerns over climate change will likely inform where they travel in the next 5-10 years; and
- 47% agreed that overtourism will also influence their choices

MMGY's 2023 *Spring Edition* found this to be of continued importance with 6/10 active leisure travelers willing to pay more to travel service providers that demonstrate environmental responsibility.

- *Younger generations specifically are more willing than older generations to make monetary commitments to help fund sustainability programs, while older generations are willing to change their travel behaviors if it doesn't increase the cost.*

Source: MMGY Travel Intelligence

Sustainable and Regenerative Experiences

Growing awareness of the impacts of the pandemic on small businesses and livelihoods increased awareness and concern amongst customers about how their travels impact and support local communities. Added to this is an increased demand for companies to demonstrate their sustainability credentials across all areas of their operations.

"Covid-19 has also escalated the overall concern about sustainability and social issues. Consumers will be looking to travel in a more responsible and meaningful way." —Sébastien Bazin, CEO, AccorHotels (Source: Globetrender, 2020)

This desire to support local livelihoods is also leading to visitors prioritizing spending with small businesses. Increasingly, tour operators are incorporating a way to give back to the community into their tours that goes beyond just paying for an excursion and providing jobs.

The growing demand for tourism that supports local communities is being reflected in traveler decision-making. According to Booking.com, more than half of travelers want to see how their money is going back into the local community.

Meetings and event companies who fulfill sustainability and local procurement criteria, are likely to have a competitive advantage and differentiate themselves in a market where clients are more likely to purchase services from companies that have sustainability policies and practices in place. Forward-thinking companies are already responding to this demand. Hilton, Accor and NH Hotels are all reporting on the volume and value of local purchasing. Hilton has also made a commitment to "double our sourcing spend from local, small and medium-sized enterprises and minority-owned suppliers for managed hotels and corporate offices".

Consumer demand for sustainable travel has not only increased, but the emphasis has also changed; travelers are becoming more discerning about what sustainable travel can encompass, demonstrated by a growing awareness of the social, as well as the environmental impacts of travel:

- Social impact has moved to the top of the agenda, taking its place alongside environmental sustainability (World Travel & Tourism Council: To Recovery & Beyond 2020)

Regenerative tourism goes beyond minimizing the negative impacts of tourism to a focus on ways in which tourism can contribute to the sustainable development of communities and leaving it in a better state than before. In this way, it promotes collaboration between tourism organizations and travelers who have a shared responsibility for improving the environmental, economic and social health of destinations.

This represents a change to the status quo and provides solutions to rethink and rebuild the tourism industry with a focus on harnessing local innovation and creative solutions to address destination needs.

Examples of regenerative tourism include visitors working with local organizations to learn about and help protect local wildlife and ecosystems, conserve forests or restore degraded land, improve equity in the destination, such as working with community gardens, supporting diverse tourism entrepreneurs, and more.

TIPS

- **Can you use your convening potential to bring together public, private, and NGO sector organizations to find ways of linking tourism products to existing initiatives that benefit local communities?** E.g., training/employment programs for residents to be employed in the tourism sector, partnerships between educational institutions and nature-based experiences in order to implement regenerative practices for combatting environmental degradation.

- **If pursuing any employment/training-related initiatives, have you considered how inclusive they are? Can you identify opportunities to make them more accessible to marginalized and underrepresented groups in society e.g., flexible hours, supported application processes, accessible buildings, etc.?**

- **Can you implement a certification or incentive scheme that would promote tourism businesses that are leading the way in terms of sustainability/zero waste/carbon reduction practices?**

- **Can you work with businesses to adapt existing products to reduce CO_2 emissions?** E.g., cycling instead of driving tours, discounts for visitors that attend an attraction using public transport.

- **What new products can you develop to offer to visitors who are looking for sustainable and low-carbon experiences?**

- **Are you able to implement or advocate for the implementation of additional visitor fees/levies in protected areas that could collect funds to be used for conservation and regeneration projects?**

- **Do you have tourism products and experiences in your destination that correspond to the above definition of regenerative tourism?** It is highly likely that these products already exist, but you may not have considered them as examples of regenerative tourism before now. If so, it is worth making sure that they are described and promoted in this way in your marketing materials.

The increased awareness of sustainability and the desire to support local communities creates opportunities for supporting employment in your destination:

- **Can you find ways to collaborate with the private sector and local government authorities to leverage funding and initiatives that can offer support to help new (tourism) businesses, and adapt existing ones, to strengthen your destination's product?**

- **Can you identify opportunities to engage guests/visitors in biodiversity restoration/protection so that they can form a connection to the unique environment they are visiting and behave appropriately?**

- **Could you offer staff and/or visitors paid opportunities to participate in regeneration projects?**

Please see the next section of this handbook for more information on how destination management organizations, chambers of commerce, and trade associations can support tourism businesses to embed sustainability into product offerings.

The Great Outdoors

The pandemic-inspired increase in appreciation for nature and the great outdoors has spilled over into travel preferences and has boosted demand for all sorts of outdoor activities from nature-based experiences to extreme adventure products. Yet higher numbers of visitors spending time outdoors also carries significant risks for the destination if it is not managed sustainably; for example, overcrowding, congestion, pollution, littering; all of which can lead to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, as well as diminishing the visitor experience.

TIPS

Consider the environment, as well as local communities, when you are developing and promoting products.

- **Can you encourage boat operators to spread out the timings of their tours and excursions to minimize marine and noise pollution at peak times?** A quieter, less congested tour is likely to be more popular with customers and this may provide a more unique experience. Equally, can you work with tour operators to support the development of new routes and excursions which visit less crowded areas/hot spot attractions? The same strategies can be applied to walking tours.

- **Can you support the development of tours that only use sustainable transport options?** E.g., setting up partnerships between vineyards and transport operators to create a cycling tour linking several wineries in an area.

- **How can you support small & medium tourism enterprises (SMEs) to respond to a changing climate?**

If climate change continues to result in higher average annual temperatures, how might this affect the availability and type of outdoor products and experiences on offer in your destination? Winter sports seasons may be shorter in the future. How can you plan ahead and minimize the impact of this for small businesses focused on winter sports?

Tribal Parks Allies: How First Nations fee programs can support equitable & decarbonized tourism communities

Since 2018, Allied Certifications Ltd. has been supporting the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation to establish a first-of-its-kind, certification-based First Nations Fee program entitled Tribal Parks Allies. This program recognizes participating tourism operators in Tofino, British Columbia, as 'Allies' in exchange for meeting certification criteria, including helping to act as ambassadors to the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks and collecting a 1% fee on behalf of the Nation. Tla-o-qui-aht allows Allies to display their logo, signaling to guests that they are an ethical business, and offers education and support (including media support) services to staff and management of local businesses. These services are helping Tourism Tofino to transform their destination marketing to be more supportive of the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation's interests. Participating businesses say that being labeled 'Allies' is great for their brand and helps attract visitors who are more conscientious of tourism impacts.

Since the launch of the Tribal Parks Allies program, Allied Certifications Ltd. has recruited over 100 Tofino businesses, who collectively contributed over $275,000 in Tla-o-qui-aht's 2022 Fiscal Year. Ally-generated revenues fund the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Guardians Stewardship Program and other regional services. The Tribal Parks Guardians serve and protect the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, which encompass the largest intact coastal temperate old-growth rainforest remaining on Vancouver Island. These forests and coastlines are home to the richest biodiversity in Canada, sequester over 100,000,000 tCO_2, and attract a $240,000,000 visitor economy to the idyllic West Coast community. The Tribal Parks Guardians program creates Tla-o-qui-aht employment, supports the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation's governance and stewardship priorities, and enables important ecological restoration work like restoring salmon-bearing rivers & cleaning up beaches and waterways.

Celebrating the success of the Tribal Parks Allies program they developed, Allied Certifications Ltd. has begun offering its services to other communities. They partnered with 4VI in 2022 to encourage other First Nations in the Vancouver Island region to establish their own First Nations Fee programs.

Tribal Parks Allies

- **Do you know of any local businesses or organizations that are implementing nature-based solutions to support biodiversity or restore local ecosystems?**
- **Can you identify opportunities to link this to tourism, if it isn't already?**
- **How can you support tourism operators running outdoor activities to improve the accessibility of their experiences?** E.g., host (and fund) a specialized training session for these operators.

Please see the previous section of this handbook for more detailed information and guidance on managing visitor flows and behaviors to reduce crowds and congestion.

Trying a local dish came second in a 2019 Booking.com **survey that asked customers to list the activities they had planned for their next trip.**

For 71% of travelers, eating 'local' food is now an important component of the holiday experience (Booking.com 2021 Travel Predictions**).**

A Pinterest survey found that searches for vegan and vegetarian travel options went up by nearly 200% from 2018 to 2019 (The New York Times, 2019**).**

Nature-based solutions comprise actions to protect, sustainably manage, or restore natural ecosystems as well as biodiversity, access to fresh water, improved livelihoods, healthy diets and sustainable food systems.

Food, Glorious Food!

Gastronomy or culinary tourism was witnessing a big surge in popularity before the pandemic and demand for local produce is at the forefront of this wave. Indeed, the state's food and beverage scene, with the abundance of local products from seas and farms to coffee, wine and beer, is one of the top motivators for travel to and within Washington State according to the State of Washington Tourism (SWT Marketing Plan). Culinary tourism ticks many boxes for customers as it provides an immersive and authentic experience that enables them to learn about the history and culture of a destination through its cuisine and unique delicacies. It is also being driven by a desire to support local businesses and reflects a growing consumer demand for health and wellbeing products.

The promotion of local food sourcing for tourism businesses and visitors is essential for enhancing the sustainability and resilience of your destination. In addition to being increasingly popular among visitors, it can also contribute to decarbonization efforts as it reduces food transportation and storage times and costs, that are often reliant on fossil fuels. Furthermore, it is a great way of pointing visitors to locally owned businesses and ensuring that visitor revenues are directly benefiting local communities, as well as can encourage visitation during low seasons. Washington wine regions of Walla Walla and Yakima Valley promote visiting wine country during the fall and likewise other agricultural regions promote the harvest season as a unique way to experience Washington outside the summer recreation months.

Tranche Winery, Walla Walla, Courtesy of Traveling While Black

TIPS

- **Do you have an inventory or directory of local businesses that specialize in local ingredients or dishes?**

If not, consider collating this information to share with visitors (and locals alike!). It could be designed as an interactive map on your website. You could promote a 'local food' logo for display in the businesses.

- **Can you implement an incentive program to encourage more tourism businesses to improve their supply chains and food sourcing?** Or some kind of competition to adapt local dishes and develop new ones made from local ingredients. Businesses who are leading the way or making meaningful changes could be rewarded with enhanced promotions.

- **How can you support gastronomy tourism to be more inclusive and climate-friendly in your destination?**

To ensure that culinary tourism in your destination is inclusive, it is worth working with local tourism businesses to ensure that they are providing alternative and diverse options to cater for a range of dietary requirements such as Halal, Kosher, and vegan and vegetarianism, which are on the rise globally. Furthermore, plant-based or flexitarian diets are important for reducing the carbon footprint of the global agriculture and food sectors and are, therefore, also supporting the transition to net zero.

A Rise In Domestic Tourism

"After lockdown, the first response to the pandemic was for consumers to default to domestic tourism, driven by the desire to catch up with friends and family, as well as take advantage of nature and open space after staying indoors for months.

The [Culinary Tourism Alliance](#), a non-profit organization, works with communities globally to support the development of culinary tourism. For example, they have supported destinations with peak seasons in summer to develop new food-based experiences during the winter season.

Oregon Food Trails

Travel Oregon's [Oregon Food Trails](#) introduce visitors to the distinctive food and drink of different regions through self-guided trails that showcase local farms, breweries, fisheries, and restaurants.

While perceived not to be as glamorous as international travel, domestic trips are all part of building a resilient and thriving tourism industry, especially one that it is not restricted to seasonality and in the short-term acts as a necessary economic buffer." (Euromonitor, 2020).

Domestic tourism has always made a significant contribution to the tourism market in Washington and one of the few positive impacts of the pandemic was a rise in people taking the time to discover what is on their doorstep. Destinations all over the world witnessed increases in tourism from the domestic market as international travel ground to a halt. This was a crucial support for local businesses and the local tourism sector and domestic visitors remain a key market for contributing to the long-term resilience of destinations. The rapid increase in domestic tourism in some places also exacerbated existing challenges such as managing surges in visitors to hot spots, traffic and transport pressures, as well as understanding how to balance corresponding decreases to other types of attractions or communities.

Organizations can leverage the potential of domestic tourism to offset these risks, for example by launching targeted marketing campaigns to encourage locals to visit lesser-known attractions. You can also help to balance visitor numbers across seasons by using marketing to optimize the mix of international and domestic visitors across hot spots in the region.

TIPS

- **Have you considered promoting the use of geolocation apps which allow visitors to track crowding at key sites in your destination?**

  You could encourage visitors to download and use a specific app or you could post live updates on your own website. This will enable visitors to choose to experience popular sites at less busy times which will facilitate a more balanced flow of visitors between popular locations, likely resulting in a more positive visitor experience as well as reducing congestion, pollution and littering, and improving resident sentiment and satisfaction.

- **Can you subsidize entry fees for domestic visitors (or local residents) at off-peak times or during shoulder seasons?**

Additional questions to consider to boost the sustainability of your tourism product:

- **To what extent is your destination's unique selling point (USP) defined by a single product or product type?** 'Flagship' products e.g., a key attraction can play an important role in driving visitors to a destination and differentiating it from others but over-reliance on flagship products can increase destination vulnerability. Over visitation of flagship products can cause a deterioration of the product and decreased visitor and resident satisfaction. To mitigate this, some destinations are diversifying their product offer, which also creates new opportunities to spread the economic benefits of tourism more widely.

- **To what extent are tourism revenue flows concentrated in particular geographic areas?** Related to the above, this also creates vulnerabilities if these regions become 'closed' to tourists. Crises such as natural disasters can close down certain regions, as can pandemics. A resilient destination should not be reliant on particular 'honeypot areas' to generate tourism revenue and should be able to offer visitors a range of alternative places to visit. For example, Colorado's 'Re-start & Re-imagine' recovery plan and programs aim to drive tourism related economic development to the less visited and more rural parts of the state.

Reflections

- **Can you make any immediate tweaks to your products that would increase the benefits for local people and/or the environment?**
- **What longer-term changes can you make to the way you design and package tourism products and experiences in your community?**
- **Do any of your existing products tap into the demand for local and sustainable products and experiences?**
- **Can you think of any new products that you could develop that would align to this demand?**
- **Are you defaulting to "bucket list" marketing?**

Lake Sammamish State Park, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Wenatchee, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Responsible Marketing & Communications Strategies

Reviewing Your Current Marketing Strategy

For longer-term resilience-building, this is a good time to invest in building and/or strengthening your organization or destination's unique selling proposition and ensuring that you are targeting the most appropriate markets for the future. It is important to recognize that incorporating more 'management' into your organization's activities doesn't mean that marketing goes away. The need to address impacts and become more resilient for the future is an opportunity to leverage marketing expertise to achieve these new goals. Marketing has an important role to play in promoting local cultures and businesses, promoting responsible and climate-friendly ways to visit, NOT promoting over-visited and overcrowded sites or experiences, enhancing destination accessibility and inclusion, and increasing benefits to community members, showcasing tourism's ability to deliver value to residents when done right.

Marketing provides the opportunity to really connect with your audience on the issues that are important to them and showcase the features that will appeal while helping to achieve the right impacts for your destination.

The Thompson Okanagan 7 Generations Pledge

The 7 Affirmations for 7 Generations Pledge was created by the Thompson Okanagan regional destination management organization out of a need to develop guidelines for sustainable tourism and conscious travel within their tourism region. Based on the Seven Generations Principle, rooted in Indigenous philosophy: The decisions we make today will have an impact for as many as seven generations to come.

It serves as a guide for travelers but also is used by the DMO for industry events and across the region in united responsible travel messaging efforts.

It will be useful to consider the following when reviewing your marketing strategy:

To what extent does your marketing strategy align with evolving consumer trends and shifts toward sustainability? For example, are you positioned to respond to the increased demand for local food and for businesses to demonstrate their social impact in the local community? Do your target markets perceive you as such?

How can you demonstrate that you take sustainability seriously and attract visitors that are looking for a more a 'responsible' or 'sustainable' experience? What are you doing to spread the benefits of tourism and showcase your environmental and cultural assets to visitors?

Do you know which of your target markets generate the highest net benefit? Marketing strategies and budgets should be aligned with the market segments that deliver the most value (and not just economic value).

How can you nurture long-term relationships with climate-conscious Gen Z travelers, which could pay dividends in transitioning to a more sustainable tourism economy?

How can your marketing and promotional strategies help to disperse visitors, attracting them to certain areas at optimum times of the week or year?

How can you tweak your marketing (or view it through a climate and DEIA lens) to highlight activities that have low environmental and climate impacts, and positive benefits for communities?

How can you promote responsible, respectful behaviors through your marketing messaging?

Optimizing Visitor Spend

Different market segments have different spend patterns

Understanding the potential impacts associated with different visitors is useful in order to optimize visitor spend through targeted marketing and business support. For example, international and out-of-state visitors, who arrive by airplane, are likely to stay for longer, do more, and spend more, but will also have higher associated carbon footprints. International family markets typically spend more on attractions, while younger markets spend more on sporting activities and in bars and clubs. Tourists staying in 5-star accommodations are likely to spend the most in total than other visitors yet visitors in 3-star accommodations often spend more in local businesses (e.g., shops, restaurants) and so they are more 'valuable' in terms of contributing to the local economy.

The Travel Foundation conducted a study for Tenerife, Spain, to analyze behavior patterns of different market segments and identified that higher spending visitors to the island had higher costs related to resource use as well as lower economic impacts because of leakage – their spend tended to be higher in businesses that are not locally owned and therefore much of their spend was leaving the island. The study also pointed to segments that would support local employment and those with a lower carbon footprint, enabling the destination to make more informed decisions about marketing and product development.

Optimizing Visitor Spend: Key considerations

The highest spending market segment does not always lead to the most benefits for the destination. A more nuanced approach is required based on an examination of existing spend data and alignment with your sustainability goals. When assessing how you want to optimize visitor spend, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- Which spend supports small businesses/equity and inclusion/the local economy (vs leakage)?
- Which spend supports the most jobs?
- Which spending is most reliable/resilient to shock?
- Which spending is distributed well across time and place?

Future of Tourism
Guiding Principle #4
Choose Quality Over Quantity

Manage tourism development based on quality of visitation, not quantity of visitors, so as to enhance the travel experience while sustaining the character of the destination and benefiting local communities.

It will be useful to look at the specific spend data of different market segments to your business or destination in order to adapt product and marketing strategies to attract more or less of certain segments, according to your vision and goals.

Relating to the themes above, responsible marketing and communication strategies should include:

- **Driving visitors towards less-visited products and places and away from the more 'saturated' ones** and showcasing new products that are designed to influence visitor flows: cycling, walking and self-drive routes that also promote local food, lesser visited cultural heritage, and local experiences. Geo-location targeted advertising can also be implemented to influence visitor flows and behavior. (Note: This will need thoughtful planning to mitigate any adverse effects for less-visited communities)

- **Adapting current products to reduce their carbon footprint:** plastic-free tours, cycling instead of driving routes, farm to table / low food mile gastronomy experiences, other human-powered activities.

- **Showcasing travel options which minimize carbon emissions** e.g., 'slow' travel options and human-powered activities like hiking, kayaking, cycling, walking, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing, etc.

- **Stimulating visitor spending on products and experiences that benefit local suppliers and producers** including diverse, marginalized and underrepresented groups.

- **Messaging provides practical information to visitors about how they can responsibly visit** and have the most positive impacts on the local community and environment.

- **Linking good visitor management techniques with visitor safety** will show that places are safe to visit and easy to access e.g., how to book ahead and have a seamless experience at popular attractions.

True to Nature

In 2022, State of Washington Tourism launched a new destination brand centered the destination name The State of Washington. The launch followed 18 months of extensive listening to local communities, tourism industry businesses, recreation and conservation leaders, local officials, Tribes, and myriad statewide stakeholders. The result was a decidedly values-based brand and a strategic marketing position with the goal of positioning Washington not as mass-market, but as a destination for responsible travelers interested in listening to, understanding and aligning their experiences with Washington's diverse communities.

The brand's first integrated marketing campaign, True to Nature, targets an audience coined "The Pathfinder." The Pathfinder seeks experiences that are as unique and as independently-spirited as they are themselves. Pathfinders inherently care about leaving places better than they found them and enhancing and sustaining local and indigenous communities and outdoor environments.

The campaign inspires both travelers and residents to elevate their ambitions while also spreading awareness of the importance of stewardship.
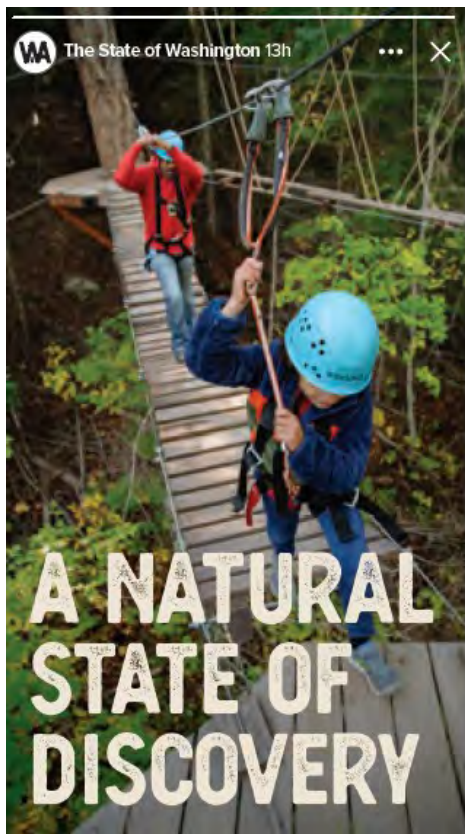
Where smaller group sizes are required, the benefits of personalized experiences can be highlighted. Many destinations are using apps that allows visitors and residents to see how busy a venue or restaurant is to ease pressure points, making the experience safer and more enjoyable while also supporting the private sector.

- **Multi-attraction tickets and partnership packages** can help to raise the profile of a range of different attractions and suppliers across the supply chain. For example, 'stay and play' packages that include accommodation and attraction tickets. This really benefits from a collaborative approach and can lead to some very innovative and creative partnerships!

Just like the pivot that everyone went through during the pandemic to address new health and safety protocols, such as enhancing online sales capabilities, creating new products and experiences and targeted messaging for domestic visitors, it is important to think about other adaptations that may be necessary into the future.

In addition to international visitation, encourage robust domestic tourism, which may be more resilient in the face of crises and raise citizens' perceived value of their own natural and cultural heritage.

Reflections

- **What is the visitor profile of the biggest market segment for your business or destination?**
- **Would different types of visitors provide more value? Could you make any changes to your products to attract different types of visitors?**
- **Do you have strategies in place that target specific visitor groups who are more environmentally conscious?**
- **Can you think of any small tweaks you can make to your marketing and communications that would boost the sustainability and resilience of your community?**
- **Do you have marketing strategies in place that boost the profile of sustainable products and experiences? E.g., cycling tours, local-food products, experiences that support local businesses or underrepresented groups, or social enterprises?**

Vineyard Grapes, Courtesy of Visit Walla Walla

Riverside State Park, Ben Matthews,
Courtesy of Visit Spokane

Supporting Businesses to Adapt and Build Resilience

By now, you should have had time to reflect on and analyze the impacts of tourism in your community. This will provide you with a better understanding of the businesses, communities and groups that require the most support to embed sustainability and build resilience. For example, certain sectors may have been hit harder by pandemic restrictions and continue to require recovery support, whereas others may be experiencing the negative impacts of increased congestion in rural areas and require support to better manage crowds and visitor flows. Still others may be seeing more frequently occurring impacts from climate change. This will also enable support mechanisms to be better targeted, making sure that the right support goes to the right people at the right time. This section of the guide will highlight the different types of support and assistance that can be provided to businesses to adapt and build resilience.

Depot Park, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Financial Support

The main types of financial assistance and stimulus provided by governments and umbrella organizations are detailed below:

- Direct monetary assistance to support revenue loss via emergency funds, loans, or funding of incentive-driven campaigns to support business recovery.
- Assistance to reduce operational and variable costs via tax relief, waivers of mandatory fees and licenses, and debt/loan cancellation or delays.
- Provide (or direct businesses to) financial planning and advisory support seminars and practical information.
- Waive or postpone collection of fees e.g., membership fees or operator licenses.

- Offer (or direct businesses to) financial and legal advice and support designed to manage and encourage rebooking over cancellations and minimize economic loss and unemployment.
- Facilitate communication with other agencies to resolve issues (e.g., staffing or housing).
- Support tourism, recreation and hospitality businesses to adapt their marketing to reduce seasonality, increase support for diverse local suppliers, improve DEIA, and support climate and regenerative tourism initiatives in the region.

Technical Support

The different types of technical support required to build resilience are wide-ranging and the most appropriate types will depend on the local situation. There are, however, key themes that should be considered by all destinations.

Sharing market intelligence

Sharing market intelligence regularly is important for the whole sector to understand source market trends and evolving consumer needs. This helps to identify the right type of technical support that can be accessed to help the sector to adapt. Whether a business directly interacts with visitors or is a supplier, understanding the

**Future of Tourism
Guiding Principle #13
*Operate Business Responsibly***

Incentivize and reward tourism businesses and associated enterprises that support these principles through their actions and develop strong local supply chains that allow for higher quality products and experiences.

market is essential for being able to adapt products and operations appropriately. The case study below from Turismo Portugal is an excellent example of how this can be achieved.

Helping businesses to adapt

Sub-sectors need guidance on how to develop or adapt their products to ongoing and future challenges such as the climate crisis, changing market trends, digitalization, etc. This can be delivered via workshops for small businesses, hotels, tour operators and attractions. Many different resources are being created internationally: New Zealand's Tourism Transition Program delivered advice to tourism businesses on how to adapt to domestic and Australian markets. British Columbia's Tourism Resiliency Program provided advice through a funded Digital Literacy Program to businesses to shift online by receiving tech support in 2021 and 2022. In 2023 it evolved to a Tourism Sustainability Program to offer support to destination organizations for sustainability planning.

TURISMO DE
PORTUGAL

Expanding educational and business advice services

- Since March 2020, Turismo de Portugal has provided a specialised online support service, provided by 60 trainers from its official Hotel and Tourism Schools to help provide advice to companies in dealing with specific operational issues and helping to minimise the impact of Contingency Plans for COVID-19.

- The organization, which runs 12 official schools in the country, opened its online courses for free in June 2020, to enable all professionals in Portuguese-speaking countries in the world to benefit from online educational content.

- The organization provides a daily update of market information (air transport, reservations, tour operators and travel restrictions) for tourism businesses, submitted by the offices of Turismo de Portugal worldwide and publicly available on Turismo de Portugal's knowledge management platform, Travel BI.

(Source: European Travel Commission, 2020)

The following training topics are useful to consider:

- How to adapt existing products: including understanding the growing demand for sustainability, improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, enhancing technology capabilities, dealing with reduced/increased volumes, and the opportunities for more personalized experiences.

- Diversification to build resilience to future shocks e.g., diversify customer base, product offerings, and revenue streams.

A Strategic Approach To Upskilling And Re-Training

- **Upskilling and re-training packages need to be made available to address skills gaps** that evolving market trends create e.g., developing sustainable travel products and strengthening local supply chains. The provision of support in this area should be based on evidence and align with the overall destination strategy. An analysis of skills required, and current gaps will be key.

- **Consider what programs could be created to build local knowledge and skills and a strong workforce for the future.** E.g., based on the evolving trends, will more people be needed to work in the sub-sectors of outdoor/leisure, protected area management and maintenance? What can be done to address labor shortages and attract people to work opportunities and diversify employment in the tourism sector? In an increasingly competitive labor market, sustainable and inclusive businesses are more likely to attract and retain the best staff.

- **Consider how to stimulate innovation and the creation of new business start-ups.** E.g., the provision of grants/loans and other financial packages for start-ups could prioritize businesses that contribute to the development or strengthening of the destination and meet changing visitor demand. For example, rural areas that have experienced increased demand from day-trippers may provide opportunities for new accommodation businesses, including glamping or ecolodges, to encourage more overnight stays. Does your destination have the products to meet this demand?

Mariposa Country in California, for example, developed a new Airstream campsite in order to attract visitors to stay longer, not just for the day as an add-on to Yosemite National Park (Yosemite 2021).

Bridging the digital gap in Australia

The "Tourism Exchange Australia" is a digital platform that provides small businesses with the same opportunity to market their products as the big hotel and resort chains. The platform acts as a matchmaker between local suppliers and intermediaries to create innovative and diverse packages that allow the flexibility to adapt to new trends. The platform draws on live availability and provides an invaluable tool for customer searching for travel products online.

(Source: Tourism Exchange Australia, 2023)

Tackling staffing issues in Canada

A Canadian hotel school points to an interesting shift in hiring policy, based on experience learned from big-tech companies like Google.

"These employers have learned to shift their hiring focus from education and experience to skills and demonstrated competencies — a hiring innovation, says Joe Baker. He says hotels need to get similarly comfortable with non-traditional talent pools and soft skills such as communication, cultural sympathy, personal resilience, empathy, persistence and confidence"

(Source: Hotelier, 2019)

Strengthening Collaboration And Partnerships

The pandemic demonstrated the interdependence of the tourism community and there is an opportunity now to build on these connections, helping to manage negative impacts, support recovery and increase the resilience of the sector. When communities turned to each other throughout the pandemic to gauge how best to adapt and respond, it proved to be a great source of innovation and shared learning, enabling destinations to navigate the many uncertainties, including how to adapt marketing and support businesses. This model can and should be continued with the aim of tackling tourism (and humanity's) greatest challenges yet – climate change and equity. No one entity can solve these challenges alone and much is to be gained from working together.

The Circular Economy: Pulling together to create shared value

There are many opportunities across the tourism value chain to create greater efficiencies, increase income and spread the benefits of tourism more widely. For example, initiatives that link hotels, restaurants and producers can bring multiple benefits to the local economy and environment while capitalizing on increased demand for local, authentic and healthier food. The following diagram illustrates an approach for collaboration between food producers, hotels and restaurants, with a goal of reducing food waste and creating efficiencies.

AK Mercado, Visit Walla Walla

A circular economy model refers to a more sustainable system of production and consumption, promoting ways to extend the use of products such as through reuse, sharing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials for as long as possible to extend their lifecycle and to minimize waste. In this way, it reduces emissions from fossil fuels as less demand is created for new products to be made and less energy is required to dispose of products after minimal usage.

A good example from tourism is the switch away from using single-use products to reusable ones in an increasing number of businesses and destinations. For example, many hotels, restaurants and tour operators now implement deposit programs which require customers to pay upfront for a reusable drink container. The money is reclaimed when the container is returned at the end of their stay/activity/experience or, alternatively, the customer may be given the option to pay extra to keep it for personal use. This cuts waste and encourages more sustainable practices within businesses and among visitors.

Collaborate on low-carbon, seasonal and healthy menu design, sustainable packaging and circular economy solutions

Producers supply and promote restaurants and hotels that sell their products

Hotels and restaurants promote supplier products and related tourist experiences

Food waste minimised and re-distributed

A range of initiatives can be used to strengthen value chains for the future; thinking about them while considering actions that will help to capitalize on the interdependencies within your community and focus on building resilience.

Pooling resources

Here are some suggestions for how you could pool resources with other organizations and promote partnerships between businesses:

- Cross-promotional initiatives between accommodation and attraction sectors – 'stay and play' packages.
- Multi-attraction / experience tickets to pool marketing budgets.
- Collective purchasing across hotels to reduce costs for small businesses and create economies of scale.

Procurement practices that support local suppliers

- Sharing information on changes in consumer demand (e.g., for gluten-free food or plastic-free products) with local suppliers will help them in adapting their products to better meet the needs of the travel industry.

Ensuring That Strategies Are Inclusive And Equitable

Further opportunities exist to repurpose tourism to better support communities. It is therefore important to consider where and how there is capacity to deliver

Upcycling Food Waste in California

The One Kitchen Collaborative was funded by the City of Oceanside and is a program of the non-profit organization Soul Foundation. Its programs include professional food storage and production for catering and food security, using perishable food destined for landfill.

One Kitchen Collective

Turn away from the use of disposable plastics by tourism businesses, and transition to circular resource use.

more inclusive opportunities particularly among youth, women, rural, Indigenous and other underrepresented groups. The pandemic also highlighted the potential of the tourism sector to support society via its infrastructure and these synergies can help to prepare for future crises.

Partnering with community organizations

There is so much to gain from broadening partnerships across sectors in your communities – with Tribes, non-profit organizations and cultural organizations, social benefit organizations, conservation organizations, and more – all of those working to keep the place you love and share with visitors, what it is. The most memorable and experiences for travelers are those that provide learning opportunities and meaningful encounters with local people.

Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Seattle Paraglide, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Rescuing Restaurant Food in Finland

A restaurant food waste program started in Helsinki now across Finland cities helps restaurants repackage and resell food that would go to waste for a discount. Customers use the RES-Q Club App to order and pick up meals.

ResQ-Club

Indigenous Tourism Business Support in BC

Indigenous Tourism BC has supported local Indigenous tourism businesses through a variety of measures including

- An Emergency Relief Fund to help businesses stay solvent and pivot to long-term recovery.
- An Indigenous Alignment Strategy: 3-year plan to rebuild and expand the Indigenous tourism sector.
- The Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund for market-ready Indigenous tourism businesses that continue to experience disruption and financial loss.

(Source: Indigenous Tourism BC)

Duthie Hill, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Here are some examples from around the world:

A Social Enterprise Model	Amsterdam has developed projects to help visitors give back to neighborhoods and contribute positively to the city during their visit through its Untourist Guide that connects tourists with experiences outside of the mass tourism offer whilst creating value for local enterprises. (Source: The Untourist Movement Amsterdam, 2020)
Supporting Black-owned Enterprises	Visit California has developed resources to signpost visitors to support California's Black-owned businesses by curating collections of restaurants, boutiques, and experiences. (Source: Visit California, 2020)
Connecting Infrastructure Capacity	Lisbon's 'Renda Segura' (Safe Rent) program incentivizes the conversion of short-term rental apartments to become affordable housing for residents. It allows vacation-rental owners to rent out their property as affordable accommodation to the city authorities in exchange for a guaranteed income. The homes are then rented by the city authorities to people on low and medium incomes who would otherwise be unable to live in the city center. In this way, the program contributes to restoring the balance in the use of property, following a sharp increase in speculative purchases of holiday flats in recent years. (Source: European Travel Commission, 2020)
Social Enterprise Examples – using tourism to benefit people and planet	Cafe Reconcile: *Featuring soul-filled local dishes, Café Reconcile is a destination lunch spot for a wide cross-section of New Orleanians as well as visitors from all across the country. Reconcile New Orleans supports young adults, ages 16-24, as they transform their lives by encouraging their personal growth, providing workforce development and training, and equipping them with tools to achieve their potential.* Visitors to the café therefore directly support the advancement of the social mission of the organization.
	Coral Reef Restoration Foundation is the largest coral reef restoration program on the planet, located in Florida. Their OKCoral citizen science programs engages visitors in direct data collection and reef restoration activities.
	Explore Songhees Songhees Nation offers a range of tourism activities including accommodation, events and catering as well as cultural tours to share their Indigenous culture with visitors and direct revenues back to the First Nation government. Partner hotels offer tour packages to provide guests with meaningful experiences and increase market access for Explore Songhees' products.

See the Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism in Washington section for a host of organizations across the state to support, partner with and learn from.

Planning Business Resilience Support

This section of the guide has illustrated the different support mechanisms available and how working collaboratively can help businesses to pool resources, support each other and create a more resilient tourism value chain.

The following table provides a set of considerations and ideas for how you could support businesses with sustainability and resilience in the immediate and longer term:


Highlands Drive Pedestrian Bridge, Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

Phase	Support Mecahnisms	Considerations	Capacity building activities
Immediate	Financial	• How to raise awareness of available support • How to ensure access to this support • Measures specifically to help ease impacts on tourism businesses	• Workshops and resources to inform and support with access
	Collaboration	• Advice on how sub-sectors / competitors can support each other • Ensure the broader value chain is represented including small suppliers	• Establish working groups
Medium and ongoing	Technical	• How to share market intelligence • How to address gaps in product • How to address skills gaps and build knowledge	• Capitalize on existing resources from international tourism community • Training programs to transfer knowledge and skills • Leverage local and national expertise and institutional capacity
	Collaboration	• Advice/support on how to facilitate partnerships • Advice/support to encourage circular economy models	• Workshops to share ideas and transfer know-how • Establish circular economy networks

Reflections

- **What existing financial support mechanisms are available? Are they being accessed by businesses?**
- **What new knowledge/skills might be required to improve the sustainability of tourism in your community or to respond to future challenges?**
- **What skills gaps are there?**
- **Where are the labor shortages?**
- **How can these needs/gaps best be addressed?**
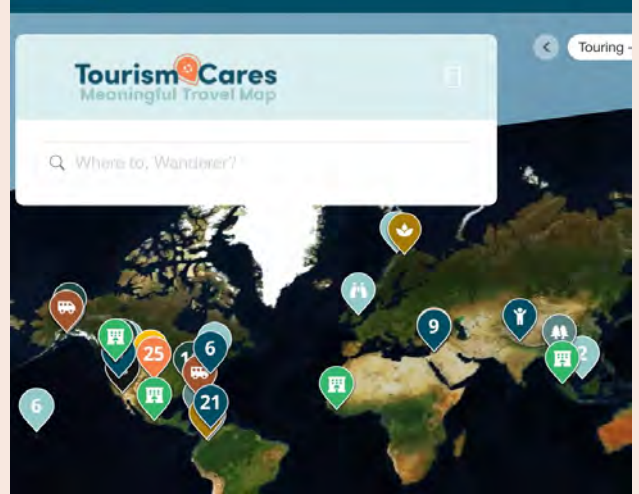
[Tourism Cares Meaningful Map](#)

Tourism Cares aims to connect the travel industry with community organizations and social enterprises around the world to increase benefits realized by communities. Their Meaningful Travel Platform provides learning [resources](#) for industry as well as the Meaningful Travel Map. As an ongoing project, new map locations and impact partners are being added all the time, in partnership with destinations who want to shine a spotlight on the organizations in their communities working for the benefit of the people, cultures, nature that tourism depends on.

Lime Kiln Point State Park, Jason Hummel Photography, Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Vineyard, Courtesy of Visit Walla Walla

Creating an Action Plan: Setting Targets to Measure and Monitor Progress

Learning is the first step toward taking action. Incorporating new action ideas into an existing plan or creating a new plan – even a simple work plan – to get started on making changes, is an excellent way to see results soon, as well as over the long term. The information and guidance up to now, combined with the accompanying workbook exercises, should mean that you are now in a position to set out a list of potential goals to include in your action plan. When this list has been agreed on and signed off by colleagues and other key individuals and entities, you can begin to write up a plan, setting out your goals and targets and the actions you will take to achieve your targets.

Decide what format you would like to use for your plan. You may find the structure of sustainability or general action plans produced by other businesses well-suited to your needs, or you may create your own template based on other existing organizational plans. For example, you could set out short/ medium/ long-term actions or group them by action area; such as, product development/ marketing/ environmental, social, etc.

Step 1: Clarify Your Vision And Ideal Outcomes To Create Goals

Why do you want tourism? What's your vision for tourism in your community? How do you want it to contribute to your place or business? What is the change you wish to see?

Before embarking on creating your plan, it is useful to reflect on what you think the main goals and outcomes of tourism should be in your community. It is worth opening up this discussion to colleagues in your organization, or those that you work closely with such as your board if you have one, so that you are including a wider range of perspectives. You could discuss it during a team meeting, planned brainstorming session, working lunch or in informal one-to-one or group chats with colleagues. To frame the discussions, it might be useful to think about what tourism would look like in your destination in a perfect world, i.e., with no barriers.

It is helpful to think about how tourism can contribute to the local economy, how it can protect and conserve the natural environment, how it can better celebrate diverse cultures, how it can contribute to community needs. You can also think about the changes you'd like to see across the sector including accommodations, activities, transportation, etc. The planning worksheet provides examples to help you generate ideas.

Ideally, this stage is informed by a broad, community engagement effort, to identify challenges, risks, opportunities and community priorities, and to develop a shared vision together.

Step 2: Map It Out

Your context

This stage is all about understanding the current situation. Taking note of all the impacts you have identified across economic, environmental, social and cultural areas – any challenges you are experiencing in your destination. Documenting current impacts, both positive and negative, are important, so that you can identify actions and solutions to both mitigate negatives and drive positives. Think about both tourism's impacts as well as external threats – or areas outside your control that you will still want to manage, in order to reduce risks. Refer back to Section 5, Understanding and Managing Impacts, and the planning worksheet to help you through this stage.

Courtesy of Woodinville Wine Country

What are you already doing around sustainability, destination stewardship and improving diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in your organization and across your destination?

This is a good time to take stock of what your organization is doing, has the scope to do, and who else in your community is working on initiatives that you may be able to support or partner with, in order to make progress on your goals.

At this stage it is important to take some time to map out key potential partners and collaborators, identifying those entities or individuals whose approval, buy-in and engagement will be vital for creating and implementing your plan, or who will play an important role in supporting it. Consider how you can collaborate with and proactively engage others to achieve your sustainability goals - within your local area as well as across the sector in which you operate.

Step 3: Prioritize Actions

Based on the goals for the outcomes you wish to see, and the context of your organization and community members, start brainstorming the solutions to the challenges and the specific actions you could take. Remember that changes to product and marketing strategies can be made by using 'destination stewardship lenses' including climate and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

It might be useful to focus initially on low-hanging fruit (low and no-cost options or easily implementable actions) to start without significant investment or organizational change. You should also include bigger, multi-year actions that will have much larger impacts and can be broken down into steps - and note any other initiatives to consider in the future, for example once funding is available.

Think about what you can lead, what you can partner on, and what you can advocate for. It might be helpful to categorize actions in this way.

Prioritize key actions by considering:

- **Impact:** How significant an impact would certain actions have in terms of building resilience to future shocks, reducing your carbon footprint, decreasing waste, increasing inclusion and equity, etc.?

- **Building momentum:** What could you make a start on today, that will make a difference tomorrow?

- **Capability:** Does your business have the resources (people, finance, time, skills) to deliver the actions? If not, how soon) could they be developed /recruited / raised? Think again about your organization's sphere of influence. If the main impact you can have is via marketing because that is your main activity, what could you change to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts – to your community, to residents, to your environment, to the climate?

Courtesy of Visit Issaquah

It is also important to set out how your plan will be implemented by documenting lead/responsible parties, possible collaborators, cost estimates, and potential funding sources.

Step 4: Set Targets with Key Performance Indicators to Monitor Success

What will 'sustainability and resilience' look like if successful, and how will you know if the plan has worked?

The core actions and goals of a plan must be measurable so that it is possible to check if your actions are working. This section will set out the key steps to take when putting together a plan and explore approaches to monitoring and measuring and different types of indicators balanced across economic, social and environmental areas, and will highlight the importance of continuous monitoring to successful planning.

"Development that's not sustainable is not, in fact, development. It's a short-term loan against a long-term debt to the future." Edward Norton, UN Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity

Changing the Goal

'Doughnut Economics' (Kate Raworth, 2012) is an alternative model for economic growth. The model provides a way of looking at how we can meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In 2022, Hartman and Heslinga published 'The Destination Doughnut', adopting this model to tourism to demonstrate effects of tourism impact overshoots and shortfalls.

- Before COVID, Amsterdam was experiencing over-tourism and were already working towards building longer-term resilience.

- The Netherlands has since adopted the principle of doughnut economics in setting out their tourism strategy.

- In 2023, Amsterdam capped visitor numbers to the city center.

(Source: City Nation Place, 2020, The Doughnut Destination 2022, City of Amsterdam 2023)

Perspective Destination Netherlands 2030

Perspective 2030, the vision for tourism in the Netherlands is about the changing role of tourism. The goal is for every Dutch person to benefit from tourism. Priorities for achieving this ambition are:

- Benefits and burdens are in balance, more benefits from tourism than burdens

- All of the Netherlands is attractive: put more cities and regions on the map as attractive destinations

- Accessible and achievable: accessible cities and regions

- Sustainability is a must: a living environment with less waste and pollution

- A hospitable sector: the Netherlands as a welcoming destination

(Source: Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions, 2019)

Defining what success looks like for your organization must be aligned with what 'successful tourism' in your community looks like. As this handbook has explored, if it is based purely on economic growth, how will you measure the costs to the environment? What does success in terms of biodiversity look like? In terms of inclusion? How important is resident well-being? To what extent are residents able to meet their needs? This handbook has provided information on how you can begin to assess and manage the impacts of tourism and begin thinking about what measures of success you want to prioritize in your action plan.

Types of Indicators

Your plan should have clearly defined goals, objectives and timescales that can be measured so that reported progress towards success is based on evidence.

It is useful to think of performance indicators at two levels:

	Purpose	Examples
Level 1 'Effort'	These types of indicators help to check that planned actions are taken.	E.g., Did businesses work together? Was the training delivered?
Level 2 'Effect'	These types of indicators help to test the effectiveness, i.e., the 'performance' or impact of strategies. Baseline measurements must be taken so that it is possible to track progress.	*Business support:* How many target businesses accessed support? What is the % increase in small businesses' income? *Product development:* How many visitors have used new cycling and self-drive routes? What are visitor satisfaction levels / how have they changed? *Inclusion:* Do more diverse groups visit? Do they feel welcome? Are there more accessible properties and activities available? Are there more diverse populations and enterprises benefiting from tourism? *Overcrowding:* How has resident satisfaction improved? How have visitor flows changed?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Selecting KPIs must reflect what is important in your community and should be based on what is meaningful for long-term sustainability, including key impacts identified as priorities to manage. Consultation and coordination with broader groups will be essential to ensuring that indicators for community and environmental benefits reflect community priorities.

What new, balanced measures of success can you put in place to assess the impact and value of tourism in your destination?

The following types of indicators may be useful to include across the action areas within your plan, where relevant:

- **Warning indicators** e.g., business bankruptcies, signs of environmental degradation, signs of resident dissatisfaction.
- **Status indicators** e.g. visitor numbers, visitor flows, small businesses' revenues, protected area visitation.
- **Indicators of effort** e.g., resources and support provided to organizations, visitor management systems in place.

- **Indicators of effect, results or performance** e.g., changed satisfaction levels, greater dispersal of visitors, reduced waste or litter, reduced energy use (and carbon emissions).

Being flexible

Change will continue to happen both in destination and in international markets, so it is important to develop a flexible strategy and conduct continuous monitoring to ensure you are on the right track. Following this approach to monitoring and measuring will help to ensure that even if there are significant shocks ahead you will have the data to help you make informed responses.

Step 5: Implement and monitor your plan

Think about how you make it clear to your colleagues and others how they should be involved in implementing the plan.

Develop a process to monitor KPIs and review plan progress frequently, perhaps monthly or quarterly. Make sure you have a clear reporting mechanism and timeline and know from whom you will need to gather data. Frequent touch points will allow for course corrections, consideration of challenges and opportunities, and accountability. Celebrate achievements publicly and communicate about implementation frequently, through newsletters, social media, and/or at events. Also report to your own audiences and be sure to share progress (and lack thereof, if applicable) internally.

Monika Wieland Shields Orca Behavior Institute, Courtesy of San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau

Decide on an appropriate process for updating your plan and integrate insights and best practices from others. Share your journey and connect with others who want to develop a plan or are on their journey and have lessons learned to share.

Successful implementation will depend on various factors including:

- The motivation and commitment of the group that will be responsible for the plan's implementation
- The ability of multi-sector partners in the destination to collaborate
- The flexibility to adapt the plan to the changing environment.

It is important to recognize that the size of your plan and the number of KPIs may be reflective of the size of your organization. Choosing a smaller number of achievable KPIs, appropriate for your organization's size and mandate, is better than trying to commit to something that is not feasible. Start with what's possible and you can make adjustments over time as your capabilities grow or funding increases, or mandates change.

Reflections

- **How will you define success?**
- **Do your chosen metrics address what is important?**
- **How much emphasis have you placed on effort vs effectiveness or impact?**
- **Have you planned for baseline data collection as well as ongoing monitoring and measuring?**
- **Can you easily adapt?**

Plan Preparation: Questions Checklist

Reflections and key questions from throughout the handbook are summarized here to help you prepare your plan:

Defining what successful tourism means to your community

- How do you define what successful tourism looks like in your community?
- How do you measure the impact of tourism?
- Have you made changes to your organization's priorities and procedures in response to recent global events?
- What is the status of inclusivity in your destination? And where would you like to get to?
- Do you consult or work with other groups in your community that make decisions about tourism? E.g., local government organizations, Tribes, resident/community groups, environmental groups etc.

Identifying challenges and threats

- What are the main challenges related to tourism in your community?
- What are the biggest future threats to tourism in your community?

Mapping what is already happening

- Do you have a tourism plan or strategy document? If so, how up to date is it?
- Does your business already have a sustainability plan or responsible travel policy in place? If so, what does it include?

- What are you already doing on sustainability, social responsibility, climate action or diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility?
- Could you make any immediate changes within your organization's structure and operations to improve sustainability?
- Do you have policies in place to improve DEIA? Can you think of any changes you could make in your organization that would widen opportunities for marginalized or underrepresented groups?
- What other groups or organizations in your community could you engage with to strengthen existing plans/develop a new plan?
- Do you have any relationships with or tourism initiatives in place with Indigenous communities?
- What organizations would you like to reach out to and support or engage for advice?

Identifying the impacts of tourism in your community

- What insights do you already have on the economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism in your destination?
- How were each of these areas affected by the pandemic?
- How might they be impacted by climate change?
- What existing data is available to better understand these impacts?

Managing impacts

- What are the main negative visitor impacts in your community? Do you have any strategies to minimize these impacts?
- Do you have tools in place for tracking the flow of visitors in your community?

Adapting products & experiences

- Can you make any immediate tweaks to your products that would increase the benefits for local people, diverse communities, and the environment?
- What about longer-term changes to the way you design and package tourism products and experiences in your community?
- Do any of your existing products tap into the demand for local and sustainable products and experiences?
- Can you think of any new products that you could develop that would align to this demand and shift toward sustainability?

Adapting Marketing strategies

- What is the visitor profile of the biggest market segment to your community?
- Would different types of visitors provide more value? Could you make any changes to your products to attract different types of visitors?
- Do you have strategies in place that target specific visitor groups who are more environmentally conscious?
- Do you have marketing strategies in place that boost the profile of sustainable products and experiences? E.g., cycling tours, local-food products, experiences that support local businesses or underrepresented groups or social entrepreneurs?
- Can you think of any small tweaks you can make to your marketing and communications that would boost the sustainability and resilience of your community?

Supporting businesses

- What existing financial support mechanisms are available?
- Are they being accessed by businesses?
- What new knowledge/skills might be required to improve sustainability and inclusion in tourism in your community or to respond to future challenges?
- What skills gaps are there?
- Where are the labor shortages?
- How can these needs/gaps best be addressed?

Olympic Peninsula Visitors Bureau,
Courtesy of State of Washington Tourism

Measuring success

- How will you define success?
- Do your chosen metrics address what is important?
- How much emphasis have you placed on effort vs effectiveness?
- Have you planned for baseline data collection as well as ongoing monitoring and measuring?
- Can you easily adapt?

A Checklist Of Questions To Ensure Your Plan Is Deliverable

This final section outlines some key questions that should be considered in reviewing your plan. Questions around capacity, resources and collaboration will help to ensure that the plans are both feasible and aligned at the destination level with other strategies.

Is everything in place to deliver your plan?

- Have residents, diverse community groups, important partners, and Tribal governments, and their priorities and perspectives been taken into account in developing the plan?

- Are roles and responsibilities for delivering and monitoring the plan clearly outlined, recognizing the contributions that the public and private sector will make?
- Is there sufficient capacity to deliver the plan– both in terms of staff resources and staff skill sets?
- Is there sufficient budget and/or access to finance to deliver the plan?
- Is the timeframe appropriate and are there key milestones to inform measuring progress?
- Are there ongoing communication mechanisms in place to ensure cross-sector alignment and collaboration (across the public, private and third sectors) to deliver the plan?
- Is the plan aligned with other community level strategies?

Once these key questions have been considered comes the most important step: the implementation of the plan! The plan should be considered a 'work in progress' that needs to be adapted according to the changing needs of the local community, the market, tourism businesses and ongoing national and global trends.

Congratulations! We hope that the information in this handbook has been helpful in supporting you to think about the overall goals for your organization and your community and how you can start to develop an action plan to help you to achieve these goals, ultimately increasing sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience for the future. And remember, planning is an iterative process, something you'll visit time and again to update and revise and refine, but the important thing is you've committed to this process of creating a better future for tourism in your community, and that's something to celebrate!
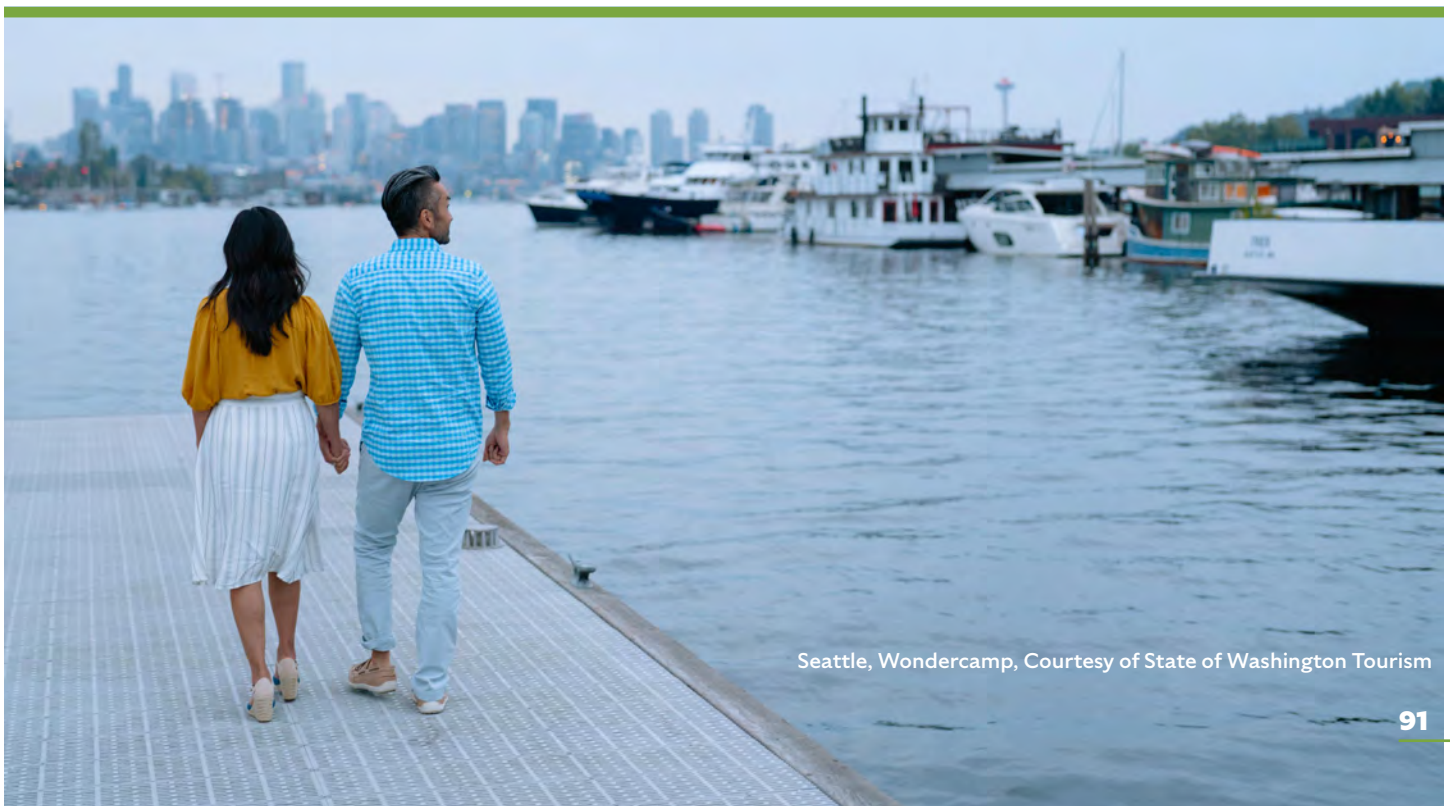
Acknowledgements

The Port of Seattle acknowledges tourism and recreation across Washington takes place on the homelands of Indigenous peoples, Tribes and Nations including: Chehalis, Colville, Cowlitz, Duhamish, Hoh, Jamestown S'Klallam, Kalispel, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater Bay, Skokomish, Snoqualmie, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Yakama - who have lived, and cared for their ancestral lands since time immemorial. We are grateful to live, work, and recreate as guests on these lands, and strive to do so as respectfully as possible.

The Port of Seattle, the Travel Foundation, and Tourism Cares wish to acknowledge the many individuals and organizations whose contributions, input, insights, reviews, edits, suggestions, images, and more, were instrumental in the development of this responsible travel handbook for Washington tourism organizations.

Organizations and specialists across the sector – including Tribal governments, tourism and recreation industry associations, destination marketing & management organizations, community and cultural organizations, environmental organizations, and specialists in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility – were invited to participate in four input sessions as well as individual interviews that took place from June to August 2023. The purpose of these sessions was to gather perspectives, understand current challenges and opportunities, and identify priority content for the handbook. The following individuals gave of their time and we thank them for helping to shape this important tool.

They are, in alphabetical order:

Adam Acampora, Woodinville Wine Country

Heather Bradshaw, Washington Wine

Chuck Carter, Visit Spokane

Joey Chapman, GSBA

Roni Freund, Cascade Loop

Christy Garrard, Visit Issaquah

Lindsey Gerhard, Visit Bellingham

Cara Jacobson, Visit Walla Walla

Liz Johnson, Visit Seattle

Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, Black Heritage Society of Washington State

John Kepley, Non-profit Communications Professional

Marie Kidhe, Friends of Waterfront Park

Anthony Love, Traveling While Black

Marlie Love, Traveling While Black

Mat Lyons, TREAD

Christy Maggio, Seattle Southside

Jaime Martin, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe

Megan McGuire, Seattle Southside

James "Booby" Miles, Miles Hike Club

Mike Moe, State of Washington Tourism

Taylor Morgan, Nordic Museum

Syren Nagakyrie, Disabled Hikers

Amy Nesler, Visit San Juan Islands

Matthew Ozuna, State of Washington Tourism

Annie Pitts, Experience Olympia

Alison Scott, WTC Seattle

Adam Stewart, Visit Yakima

Michelle Thana, State of Washington Tourism

Port of Seattle®

theTravel Foundation

Tourism Cares

Annex 1: Global Destination Planning Examples

Links to tourism strategy/planning documents from tourism destinations around the world.

Destination	Link
Banff, AB	Lead Tourism for Good: 10-year vision for tourism in Banff and Lake Louise
Breckenridge, CO	Destination Management Plan
Copenhagen	Copenhagen Tourism For Good: An Invitation to a Journey Towards Sustainable Tourism by 2030
Edinburgh, Scotland	Edinburgh's Tourism Strategy 2030
Finland	Visit Finland Strategy 2021-2025
Glacier Country, MT	Glacier Country Destination Stewardship Plan
Glasgow, Scotland	Glasgow Tourism and Visitor Plan 2023
Jackson Hole, WY	Jackson Hole Sustainable Destination Management Plan
Inverness, Scotland	Visit Inverness Loch Ness Climate Action Plan
Oregon Travel	Oregon 2021-2023 Strategic Plan
Oregon Coast, OR	Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience Plan
Palau	Strategy to make Palau a carbon neutral island
Netherlands	Destination The Netherlands: Perspective 2030
New Zealand	New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy
Norway	National Tourism Strategy 2030
Ottawa, Canada	Ottawa Destination Stewardship Plan
Queenstown, NZ	Queenstown Lakes Regenerative Tourism Plan
Sedona, AZ	Sedona Sustainable Tourism Plan
Tahoe, CA/NV	Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan
Vail, CO	Vail's Stewardship Roadmap
Valencia, Spain	Valencia Sustainable Tourism Strategy

Annex 2: References and Resources

4VI (formerly Tourism Vancouver Island) Impact Strategy 2022

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)

Amsterdam Untourist Guide (2020)

Becker, Elizabeth Overbooked (2013)

BehaviorSMART The First Mile

Blacks in Tourism & the Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance

BBC - British Broadcasting Company, (2021)

Booking.com, (2021), Sustainable Travel Report

B Tourism For Good Movement

Butler, Richard W. (2008) The Concept of A Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources

Café Reconcile New Orleans

City Nation Place (2020) Will your recovery plan be sustainable

Coastal Guardian Watchmen Program

Condé Nast Traveler (2017) Dubrovnik Is Clamping Down Harder on Tourist Overcrowding

Condé Nast Traveler (2021) Five Reasons Why Colombia Has Become A Model For Sustainable Tourism

Condé Nast Traveler (2021) How Iceland is Rethinking Tourism for the Long Haul

Conservation Northwest Resources for Racial Justice, Anti-racism, and Allyship in the Outdoors

Conservation Northwest Wildlife-Recreation Coexistence Program

Coral Restoration Foundation

Cornell Sustainable Destination Management (e-Cornell self-paced online course)

Cornish Stuff (2021) Declare a housing emergency in Cornwall

Crosscut (2022) Meet the BIPOC groups working to make the outdoors accessible

CrowdRiff (2021) 12 LGBTQIA+ Voices to Follow in Travel & Tourism Right Now

Culinary Tourism Alliance

Deloitte State of the Consumer Tracker

Destination BC Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy

Destinations International (2023) What is cultural competency and why it matters for your business

Destination Think (2020) These 5 DMOs Are On Track With Covid-19 Communications

Destination Stewardship Center's Destination Stewardship Report (2023) Indigenous Guardian Programs as a Destination Stewardship Tool

Dolomites Tourism Board (2020), Future Lab

Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (2020) Reliance, Reboot & Recovery Plan

Edinburgh Tourism Strategy Implementation Group (2020) Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030

European Travel Commission (2020) Covid-19 Recovery Strategies For National Tourism Organisations

Expedia Group (2021) Sustainable Travel Study

Explore Songhees

Feld, S. and Basso K. (1996) Senses of Place

Future of Tourism Coalition – Guiding Principles and Toolkit

G Adventures, Planeterra, International Institute of Tourism Studies at the George Washington University Indigenous People and the Travel Industry: Global Good Practice Guidelines

Good Life Goals (SDG Primer)

Global Sustainable Tourism Council GSTC Destination Criteria

Globetrender, (2020) Travel In The Age Of Covid-19

Globetrender (2021) Majority of Gen Z Consumers Want To Travel More Responsibly

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs

Green Destinations Tourism for SDGs Self-Assessment

(The) Guardian (2020) Not a mask in sight: thousands flock to Yellowstone as park reopens

Hartman and Heslinga (2022) The Doughnut Destination: applying Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economy perspective to rethink tourism destination management, Journal of Tourism Futures.

Hotelier (2019) Challenges and Opportunities: Staffing Struggles

Hud user Affordable Housing in a Rural, Tourism-Based Community

Indigenous Leadership Initiative

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada Media Guidelines: 12 Ways To Better Choose Our Words When We Write About Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Tourism BC Corporate (2021) Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund

Indigenous Tourism BC Working with Indigenous Communities

Jackson Hole Sustainable Destination Management Plan

Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan

Localhood, Wonderful Copenhagen

McKinsey and Company (2020) Reimagining the $9 trillion tourism economy – what will it take?

MMGY (2020) Capturing the Conscientious Consumer

MMGY (2023) Portrait of the American Traveler Spring Edition

Mountains to Sound Greenway BIPOC Outdoors and Conservation Careers Resource Guide

(The) Mountaineers Emotional Safety in the Outdoors e-course

National ADA Network online educational resources

National Congress of American Indians Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction

National Park Service (2020)

Native Land Territory Acknowledgement

(The) Nature Conservancy Indian Country 101 Training

Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions Holland Marketing (2019) Perspective 2030: Destination the Netherlands; A new vision for destination the Netherlands to benefit all Dutch people

(The) New York Times (2018) Vegan or Vegetarian? You Have More Travel and Dining Options Than Ever

Norton, E., Ford Foundation (2017) Edward Norton on inequality and ecology

North Tahoe Community Alliance

Northwest Lesbian & Gay History Project

One Kitchen Collective

Outside Online (2019) Norway's Bold Plan to Tackle Overtourism

Pacific Asia Travel Association Crisis Resource Center (2020) Destination Recovery Resource Kit – Tour Operator Resource KIT

Pathways Project

Port of Seattle: Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Port of Seattle Community Grants

Port of Seattle Anti-Racism Resources

ResQ Club

Sedona Arizona's Sustainable Tourism Plan

Skift Megatrends 2023

Skyscanner (2021) How to travel better: Make greener choices with Skyscanner

Smart Travel Lab & Kantar (2020) Anticipating the Future of travel

Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement

Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement Recreation Impacts on Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands

State of Washington Tourism Discover Washington's Native American Heritage

State of Washington Tourism Washington Tourism Resource Center, Grant Programs, Tourism Skillshop, Rural Tourism Support Program

Thompson Okanagan Regional Pledge Seven Affirmations for Seven Generations

Time for DMOcracy Community Engagement Toolkit

Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Platform and Meaningful Travel Map

Tourism Cares Sustainability Help Desk (SHED)

Tourism Diversity Matters

Tourism in 2030 Net Zero Infographic

Travel Begins at 40 (2021) Sustainable Tourism at the Heart of ProColombia

Travel Oregon Oregon Food Trails

Travel Agent Central (2018) Stats: 90% of Millennials Consider Company Ethics When Booking Travel

The Travel Foundation, Cornell University's Centre for Sustainable Global Enterprise and EplerWood International (2019) Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism

The Travel Foundation, Centre of Expertise in Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality, Breda University of Applied Sciences, the European Tourism Futures Institute, and the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions. Envisioning Tourism in 2030 and Beyond: The changing shape of tourism in a decarbonizing world

Travel Unity DEI Standards for Travel and Tourism

Travel Weekly (2021) 'Google data shows growing consumer demand for sustainable travel'

TREAD Map App

Tribal Parks and Allies Program

Tourism Exchange Australia – TXA (2020)

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

UNWTO, Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism

UNWTO, Transport-related CO2 emission from the tourism sector

UNWTO, Tourism for SDGs

United Nations Secretary General Statements and Messages (2020) COVID-19 Tourism Sector Collapse Requires Green, Equitable Rebuilding, Secretary-General Says at Policy Brief Launch

US Access Board

Vail's Stewardship Roadmap

Visit California (2020) How you can support California's black-owned businesses

USDA Forest Service Equity Action Plan

Visit California (2020) Travel California Respect California

Visit Flanders

Visit Raleigh (2020) 150 Ways to Support Local Businesses in Raleigh, N.C., by Shopping Online

Visit Seattle Seattle's Cultural Heritage

Visit Seattle Support Seattle's BIPOC-Owned Businesses

Visit Scotland (2021) Enjoy Scotland Responsibly Top Tips

Washington State Department of Natural Resources Wildland Fire Cost Recovery and Investigation Program

Washington State Healthcare Authority (on Medium) Land acknowledgements: A way to respect the first peoples of the land

Washington State Department of Commerce State Tourism Marketing Plan (2018)

Washington Tribes The Tribes of Washington (Map)

World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2023

World Travel and Tourism Council (2021) Destination Stewardship Framework

WTTC Diversity & Inclusion Guidelines

WTTC – McKinsey Travel Demand Recovery Dashboard

Yosemite Autocamp

Washington Organizations
(Referenced Throughout the Handbook)

Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition

Black Heritage Society of Washington State

The Burke Museum

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

Chinatown-International District BIA

Converge Media

Conservation Northwest

Disabled Hikers

Friends of Waterfront Seattle

Golden Bricks Events

GSBA

Latino Outdoors

Miles Hike Club

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

National Nordic Museum

Northwest African American Museum

The Mountaineers

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

Olympic National Park (Accessibility)

Outdoor Afro

Outdoor Asian

Pacific Northwest Trail Association

Sea Mar Museum of Chicano/a/Latino/a Culture

SEA Potential, Sustainable Seattle

Traveling While Black

Washington National Park Fund

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

Wing Luke Museum

Tribal Governments:

Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Cowlitz Indian Tribe

Hoh Tribe

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

Kalispel Tribe of Indians

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

Lummi Nation

Makah Tribal Council

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

Nisqually Indian Tribe

Nooksack Indian Tribe

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

Puyallup Tribe

Quileute Nation

Quinault Indian Nation

Samish Indian Nation

Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe

Skokomish Indian Tribe

Snoqualmie Indian Tribe

Spokane Tribe of Indians

Squaxin Island Tribe

Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians

Suquamish Tribe

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Tulalip Tribes

Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

Yakama Nation Confederated Tribes and Bands

Salmon Days 2022, Courtesy of Visit Issaqua