



**Grant Details**

**108656 - FY22 Region/CVB Marketing Plan**

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**113971 - FY22 Missouri River Country Marketing Plan**

**DOC Office of Tourism**

**Grant Title:** FY22 Missouri River Country Marketing Plan  
**Grant Number:** 22-51-006  
**Grant Status:** Underway  
**Comments:**  
**Applicant Organization:** Montana's Missouri River Country  
**Grantee Contact:** Carla Hunsley  
**Award Year:** FY22  
**Program Area:** DOC Office of Tourism  
**Amounts:**  
**Contract Dates:** Contract Sent 06/16/2021 Contract Received 07/01/2021 Contract Executed 06/30/2022  
**Project Dates:** Proposal Date 07/01/2021 Project Start Project End 06/30/2022  
**Grant Administrator:** Barb Sanem  
**Contract Number:** 22-51-006  
**Award Year:** FY22  
**Contract Dates**

Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed	Contract Legal
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**Project Dates** 07/01/2021  
 06/30/2022

Project Start	Project End
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**Comments**  
**Amendment Comments**

## Community & Brand Support

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*Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges. How does your destination align with Montana's brand pillars?*

The FY22 Missouri River Country Marketing Plan will lead us on a path to promote our region as a destination for visitors and, in turn, increase overnight stays at our motels and support for our local businesses and communities. We serve eight counties including the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, and our region borders ND to the east and Canada to the north. We plan to move forward from 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic cautiously and with a positive attitude towards travel. According to Destination Analysts, people are showing overall optimism toward travel and the summer is looking promising as more people are getting vaccinated, feeling safer, and wanting to get out and go somewhere more than ever before. We think Missouri River Country can be the destination that offers people a safe and socially distanced escape. In 2020 we saw large numbers of recreational vehicles staying at campgrounds and spending their vacations in Missouri River Country where we have "More Room to Roam." In 2021 it will be our goal to bring more visitation to our motels, while still practicing safety guidelines. We look forward to the Canadian border opening so we can once again welcome them into the region to attend our events, explore our landscapes and visit our communities.

### Montana's Brand Pillars

Missouri River Country is a distinct region unto itself. The wealth of opportunities for adventure amidst the spectacular, unspoiled nature can't be overstated. We offer big water recreation, wildlife viewing, prairie topography, wild country paleontology, and uncluttered views that go on forever. On top of outdoor recreation, we have 27 vibrant and charming small towns, some of the darkest skies and brightest stars in the lower 48, and sprawling landscapes that give you more room to breathe and more room to roam.

- **Spectacular, Unspoiled Nature:** Missouri River Country has some of the most spectacular river breaks, badlands and unspoiled landscapes. If Lewis and Clark traveled through today as they did 200 years ago, they would still recognize much of what they viewed back then.
- **Vibrant and Charming Small Towns:** Our small towns are filled with friendly, welcoming people. Expect a hand wave as you drive through each community, and make sure to save time to stop in for some of our signature hometown hospitality.
- **Breathtaking Experiences by Day and Relaxing Hospitality at Night:** Whether it's hiking the badlands, visiting our museums or spending time on the lake, Missouri River Country has what it takes to have a breathtaking experience. In the evening, visitors can hang out with friendly locals at one of our breweries and enjoy Missouri River Country's hospitality.

### INTRODUCTION

Montana's Missouri River Country is a destination for outdoor adventurers, geotourists, history buffs, families, Native American culturists, dinosaur trail followers, fishermen and women, and overall recreationists. Here visitors will find spectacular nature, charming small towns, exceptional wildlife watching, and breathtaking experiences. Missouri River Country is home to Fort Peck Lake, four national

wildlife refuges, two Montana state parks, and 27 charming communities. Visitors come here to experience perfect solitude in nature, gain opportunities to spend genuine, uninterrupted time with their loved ones, and take advantage of more room to roam. We believe that in the 21st century, as people become more and more engulfed in the hustle and bustle of daily life, what visitors now crave from their vacation is a chance to unplug and reconnect. Less people and less traffic means more time to focus on real experiences, so we have chosen to take advantage of our amazing open spaces in our marketing campaign: More Room To Roam.

More Room To Roam holds many meanings to us. It means that there are more opportunities to have an authentic, meaningful experience in Montana. It means there is more room to connect and more space to explore. We are proud of our campaign because it allows our target audiences to reflect: what would more room mean to me? Maybe that means time with family or friends, or more moments to sit still and observe the incredible biological diversity on our prairies and waters. Maybe it means getting lost—on purpose. We know that it means something different to everyone, but the message is clear: you can find whatever you are looking for in Missouri River Country, and we want to help you along the way.

**Less people and less traffic means more time to focus on real experiences.**

## **IDENTITY**

Montana is an incredibly diverse state that is synonymous with the West. Our history is vast, same as our landscapes, and wide-open spaces surround our friendly, small communities. This is a side of our state that few see, but all who experience it fall in love with Montana all over again.

We understand that many visitors who come to Montana come to experience the two national parks in our state, and for that reason much of our visitation comes from drive-through travel. However, Missouri River Country has many attractions that bring in visitors directly to our towns, waterways, and wide-open spaces. Missouri River Country is a hub for outdoor recreation including hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, boating, ATVing, and ice fishing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter. Thanks to the remoteness of the region, the best show in Montana can be seen each night in Missouri River Country's beautiful night skies, unpolluted by light from large cities and towns. The Missouri River, which was an integral part of the Lewis and Clark route, runs through our district and attracts history and culture buffs. Uniquely, dinosaurs once roamed this vast landscape and the remains of these giants can be seen at museums throughout the region, including some of the full-sized fossils discovered in Northeast Montana.

A distinct region unto itself, this place of the Great Plains harbors unique landforms. Grand scenes intermingle with smaller bits of geologic wonder. Space, much of it undisturbed, is our greatest commodity, and an unending sky delivers a feeling of freedom with no borders or confinement. Missouri River Country is truly the land of wide-open spaces—of opportunity and spectacular nature. You can see for miles, stretch your arms, breathe the fresh air, and sleep under the starry night sky. It's not the destination but rather the experiences had in Missouri River Country that are truly breathtaking.

## **STRENGTHS**

### Hunting

Visitors here spend less time hunting for open space and more time hunting! According to the 2020 ITRR report, hunting was the 12th reason to visit Missouri River Country, and we believe that this is thanks, in large part, to our less-populated nature. No matter where you go in Northeast Montana, you are surrounded by wildlife, from trophy elk on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge to Big Horn Sheep South of Malta. Hunters come from all over the US to bow hunt and/or rifle hunt for big game. The skies above are filled with upland gamebirds and waterfowl. Our wide-open spaces are home to

pronghorn, mule deer and whitetails. Our corner of Montana is not only an exciting place for hunting adventures, but a land of unrivaled beauty and wonder.

#### Fishing & Fort Peck Lake

In the summer, marinas are filled with fishermen and women looking to wet a line and pass the day on the water. Defined by sandstone formations, fields of grain and fertile river bottoms, Missouri River Country is a place where shorelines go on for more than a thousand miles and fish grow to more than 100 pounds. This is the land where men built a dam across the mighty Missouri River and created the largest body of water in Montana. This is the land of Fort Peck Reservoir, which boasts over 1,600 miles of shoreline (more than the California coast!) and an impressive variety of fish. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 38% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country visited Fort Peck Lake on their trip, which shows how immense of an attraction Fort Peck Lake truly is during all seasons. In the winter, Fort Peck Lake freezes over and makes way for some great ice fishing fun, which makes fishing a four-season activity in our region and opens up outdoor activities all year long for visitors. Summer water activities include fishing, tubing, water skiing, wake boarding and swimming, and during spring and fall, fishing and boating opportunities still abound. In addition to Fort Peck Lake, many rivers and dams in Missouri River Country provide fishing opportunities, such as Nelson Reservoir, the Missouri River, Milk River, and Yellowstone River.

#### **Fort Peck Reservoir is over 1,600 miles of shoreline (more than the California coast!)**

#### Dinosaurs

Millions of years before the formation of the Missouri River in Montana, dinosaurs made this once lush wetland their home. Northeast Montana has provided a wealth of world class fossil discoveries and according to the 2020 ITRR report, 9% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country participated in activities related to dinosaur attractions. Visitors can experience dinosaur digs at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum in Malta and learn about the prehistoric nature of our dramatic landscapes. At the Fort Peck Interpretive Center & Museum visitors can view "Peck's Rex," a skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus rex found near Fort Peck in 1996. The Fort Peck Power House Museum has a Triceratops skull on display, along with numerous fossils that were discovered during the digging of the Fort Peck Dam. The Phillips County Museum features fossil discoveries from the nearby Judith River Formation including a late Brachylophosaurus, one of the best articulated dinosaur skeletons ever found. The Great Plains Dinosaur Museum offers the public an intimate look into a working paleontological institution. Their Brachylophosaurus fossil, "Leonardo" is in the Guinness Book of World Records "best preserved dinosaur," and the museum has the best growth series of this dinosaur anywhere. The Garfield County Museum displays a full-scale model of a Triceratops, which was found about 35 miles from Jordan in 1964.

#### History & Culture

Our history is just as vast as the rolling landscape in Missouri River Country. Lewis and Clark history buffs come here to experience the landscape that has remained virtually unchanged since the days of westward expansion. Lewis and Clark may have been early visitors to Missouri River Country, but when they arrived the region was already home to the Assiniboine people. Members of the Sioux nation also call our corner of Montana home, and their cultural heritage continues to be celebrated today through such events as pow wow and dancing ceremonies. Annual pow wows are held on the Fort Peck Reservation, where traditional dance, song, and tribal ceremonies can be experienced. Missouri River Country has many museums, cultural centers, visitor centers and historic downtown regions that attract history and culture buffs to our corner of Montana.

#### Outdoor Recreation & Wildlife

While we are most known for our hunting and fishing, there is a plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities in Missouri River Country. Hikers can enjoy

total trail solitude in the Little Rocky Mountains, birders will be amazed by the uninterrupted views, wildlife viewing is plentiful, and boating and ATVing opportunities abound. RV and tent campers make their way to Northeast Montana to take part in a Montana adventure found only here. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 23% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country participated in wildlife watching, and scenic drives attracted 64%. This is probably due to the pandemic, people stayed safe in their own vehicle while enjoying our spectacular nature. Between four national wildlife refuges, the American Prairie Reserve, Fort Peck Lake and other riparian areas, and the elk rut areas, visitors have vast opportunities to participate in wildlife viewing and scenic drives. Slippery Ann Elk Viewing Area is one of the best places to view elk in the fall, and visitors are consistently enamored with the raw nature found in Missouri River Country. Bikers can stop in Glasgow at the Bike Bin at Smith Park, featuring a bicycle repair stand and bike wash station conveniently located near camping and showers at the adjacent Shady Rest RV Park. In the winter, visitors can bring their cross-country skis and explore our wide-open prairies on the snow, which is a fun and unique experience for locals and visitors alike.

#### Charming Communities

27 charming, small communities dot Missouri River Country, offering visitors authentic Montana character. Museums, outfitters and shops offer a taste of our history and culture. Visitors can pan for gold or go on a dinosaur dig based out of our communities, and then return to spend the night in our motels and cabins. We have five microbreweries in the region and many wonderful dining options serving up delicious burgers, steaks, locally grown produce and so much more. Visitors have the chance to experience local farmers markets in the summer and festivals throughout the year. One of the best parts of our region is the people who call Missouri River Country home and get to share our beloved landscape with visitors.

#### Affordability

Compared to other vacation destinations, Missouri River Country offers affordable options for travelers. Lodging, food and drink is less expensive in Missouri River Country than our neighboring regions. Affordable and free activities like wildlife watching, hiking, museums, fishing and dinosaur digs are more abundant compared to other areas in the state, and we offer a family-based mentality. We know that our affordability is a great resource for travelers and plays a role in our attraction to visitors as they choose where to spend their hard-earned vacation dollars.

#### Wide Open Spaces

There is more room to roam in Missouri River Country, and this is a huge draw for our visitors. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 61% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country were very satisfied with our open space/uncrowded areas. Oxford University scientists used population data and analytics to find the true “middle of nowhere,” and their results determined that the top three spots were all in Missouri River Country: Glasgow took the top spot with Scobey and Wolf Point coming in second and third, respectively. The Washington Post published an article on Glasgow being “in the middle of nowhere.” From that article, Glasgow gained momentum in the press with an NBC article that interviewed community members, airing on the NBC Nightly Newscast. The American Prairie Reserve calls Northeast Montana home as well, and it’s a great place to view the plains and the animals who thrive here, including the national mammal, the American Bison. We believe that our being in “the middle of nowhere” is exactly what certain tourists are looking for in a vacation—a place to escape from the city, get away from traffic, and find themselves in the middle of nowhere (or in the middle of everything, depending on how you look at it).

#### Dark Skies

Missouri River Country is one of the most remote regions in the country, with the closest major city being 4 ½ hours away. For this reason, our skies remain unpolluted by light and allow visitors to have a truly out-of-this-world experience beneath some of the darkest night skies and brightest cosmos in the lower 48. We believe that our dark skies are a huge strength and provide visitors with a unique, starstudded experience that is fun for families, couples and retirees alike.

## Events Calendar

Our charming communities host a wide variety and large quantity of events each year which provide visitors with an authentic taste of our region, all while boosting our local economies. In 2020 many events had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but 2021 is looking more promising for our region's annual events. In the summer, each of our eight counties host a county fair, many complete with live concerts and rodeos. Additionally, the PRCA Rodeo Circuit comes through Northeastern Montana, including the Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede, the oldest rodeo in Montana, and the Match Bronc Ride in Jordan, along with several other PRCA rodeos during the warm season. Pioneer Days in Scobey is a huge annual event where visitors can experience what life was like in the years of the pioneers, and local pow wows provide insight into Native American culture and traditions. Fishing tournaments (in the summer and winter months!) attract sportsmen and women from all over. Visitors can easily access our events calendar and plan their visit through the events page on our newly redesigned website, and businesses can add their events directly to the calendar.

## CHALLENGES

### Drive-Through Status

Missouri River Country has historically been and continues to be a drive-through region, meaning that visitors are “just passing through” to destinations with more widely recognized icons. Last year, 67% of visitors to Missouri River Country came in a truck or a car, and 25% of visitors were only passing through. We must continue to educate travelers about the many activities and points of interest throughout the region.

### Accessibility

While being located in “the middle of nowhere” is a strength of ours in terms of providing visitors with uninterrupted solitude with nature, this continues to be a challenging factor for Missouri River Country. Some of our towns are 4 ½ hours driving distance from any major city and accessing our region by air service is difficult. We are fortunate to have Essential Air Service in Sidney, Wolf Point, and Glasgow, but while these flights are beneficial, our challenge is getting them to connect with other flights. They are small planes that can only accommodate 9 passengers and fly solely into Billings. Rental cars are also a challenge here in Missouri River Country. Malta currently has no rental car locations and the only other towns with car rental service is Wolf Point, Glasgow and Sidney.

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure is one of Missouri River Country's biggest challenges. In certain months, roads to attractions like U.L. Bend National Wildlife Refuge and Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge are impassable or closed, and ruts in roads can deter tourists from visiting certain areas. Maintaining motels, cities, and roads will continue to be an issue in our region with limited funding. Lack of revenue from camping on Federal property and primitive camping also remains a challenge.

### Access to Information

We know that once people are in Missouri River Country, they fall in love with our wide-open spaces, friendly communities and access to outdoor recreation. However, compared to other parts of Montana, information about Missouri River Country is harder for potential visitors to get a hold of. With limited funding and numbers of people, getting the proper representation can be challenging. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 26% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country used information from friends or relatives living in Montana, 45% used no sources, and 40% used search engines. Our redesigned website is working to combat these gaps in information by adding pages specific to activities, events, and accommodations as well as updated blogs to inspire visitors. We also know that word of mouth from friends and family living in Montana is important to visitors, so increasing awareness of Missouri River Country to the people who live in Montana is also important for

spreading information about the many opportunities found in our region. According to ITRR's 2020 Residents Attitudes Towards Tourism 4th Qtr. Report, our own Missouri River Country residents don't see the full value and benefits that tourism promotion brings to our communities, which shows that more education is needed through local outreach as well.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Amtrak**

Missouri River Country is fortunate to have Amtrak stops in Wolf Point, Glasgow and Malta. We believe that a unique opportunity lies in attracting visitors to stop over in Missouri River Country on their way from the Chicago and Minneapolis areas on route to Glacier National Park. We also believe that there is untapped potential for families from cities to the east who can easily access our charming communities and have authentic Montana experiences with less train-time than riding all the way towards Glacier National Park.

### **Dark Skies**

Missouri River Country has some of the darkest skies in the continental United States. With our distance from major cities, most of our region is considered "dark sky" country, and we believe that this presents a big marketing opportunity. We believe there is huge potential in positioning Missouri River Country as a place for astrotourism and eventually designating an International Dark Sky Park at Brush Lake State Park. The Northern Lights and amazing views of the Milky Way can be seen here and marketing these dark sky opportunities presents a unique opportunity to draw visitors to our region.

### **Conventions**

Conventions and meetings have not been a focal point for our region, but we do acknowledge that these events are a huge economic boom to communities. For this reason, marketing and outreach from communities in Missouri River Country to host these events is a worthwhile endeavor that we will strive to support and assist as needs arise. For instance, Sidney is a great location to promote conventions due to their new motels and added capacity for visitors. It's a challenge right now with the COVID-19 pandemic, but we will continue to watch for and pursue opportunities in this area as pandemic concerns subside.

### **Close Proximity Visitors**

We believe that Missouri River Country can become a weekend destination for close proximity travelers, including flight traffic from Billings. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 20% of our non-resident visitors are coming from ND. Our region offers a unique and affordable escape for families, couples and individuals looking to experience a different side of Montana, wide-open space and the authentic West. Visitors have the chance to attend new events, take part in outdoor recreational opportunities such as hunting and fishing, experience truly dark skies, and so much more, all in a long weekend for those living in close proximity.

### **Motorcyclists**

We believe that the wide-open spaces and wide-open roads of Missouri River Country are a natural attraction to motorcyclists. This combined with friendly communities, expansive natural areas, wildlife viewing opportunities, and attractions along the way make our region a perfect fit for motorcycle tourism. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 4% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country entered Montana by motorcycle. In addition, 6% of visitors to the region participated in motorcycle touring, while 64% said they were interested in scenic driving. Each year, the Big Muddy Motorcycle Rally in Plentywood brings in many motorcyclists, and the BMW Rally in nearby Great Falls is an excellent chance for motorcyclists to pass through, or make their way towards, Missouri River Country on either end of their trip. For this reason, we developed specific travel itineraries for

motorcyclists on our website, which allows for ease of planning and opportunities for multiple trips for visitors traveling by bike.

#### Video

In this age, video is the best way to catch the eye of visitors and encourage them to spend their hard-earned vacation dollars here rather than anywhere else. We believe that better focusing on and integrating video into our marketing campaigns and social media presence is a fantastic way to increase interest in, and visitation to, Missouri River Country.

#### Repeat Visitation

ITRR indicates that in 2020, 96% of visitation to Missouri River Country comes from repeat visitors. This leads us to believe that awareness of our activities and attractions is lacking. When visitors experience our hunting, fishing, history, open spaces, nature and culture, they want to come back. We strive to attract first time visitors, and once they experience our region, we believe they will spread the word to their home communities and come back again and again.

#### **Missouri River Country has some of the darkest skies in the continental United States.**

#### Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs

A very exciting opportunity lies in the newly developed Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs and Resort. ITRR indicates that state visitors ranked “hot springs” as a reason for visitation to Montana, and we believe that spreading awareness of our remote hot springs has the potential to increase visitation to our region overall.

#### Brewery Tour

The craft beer industry has been rapidly growing over the past decade, and many tourists incorporate craft beer tours and tastings into their vacations. According to ITRR’s 2020 report, 31% of visitors to the state visited a local brewery. Missouri River Country is home to five craft breweries: Blue Ridge Brewing in Malta, Busted Knuckle Brewery in Glasgow, Docz Missouri River Breaks Brewing in Wolf Point, Meadowlark Brewing Company and 1035 Brewing in Sidney. By marketing our breweries as an option for travelers and encouraging visitors to visit all breweries in the region, Missouri River Country can open our region to a new type of tourist market.

#### Rockhounding

Rockhounding and gold panning are two activities for which Montana is known for, and Missouri River Country provides opportunities for visitors to have an authentic experience in both. Gold panning kits are available for rent in Zortman, where visitors can explore the Little Rocky Mountains and search for gold nuggets in the waters outside of town. Missouri River Country provides access to the Yellowstone River for rockhounding as well. We believe spreading awareness about these activities is a huge opportunity for garnering interest in our region.

#### Dinosaur Digs

In Missouri River Country, visitors not only have the opportunity to learn about the paleontological history of Montana and to see fossils and replicas of dinosaurs, they also have the chance to be real-life excavators at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum where they can accompany experts on dinosaur digs. This opportunity is unique to a very limited number of places in North America, and we believe spreading awareness about this fun activity is a great promotion of our region.

#### Fort Peck Reservation-Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch

When the Missouri River Country Board of Directors toured the Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch, we were very impressed with the ranch and the possibility of creating a partnership between the Fort Peck Tribes



and Missouri River Country. We will explore options to help both entities and bring more visitation to Northeast Montana.

#### Eastern Montana Initiative

Missouri River Country is excited and confident in the potential for new and increased visitation to Eastern Montana through the Eastern Montana Initiative. We are hoping funding will continue for this needed Initiative.

**Describe your destination.**

### **THREE PHASES OF TRAVEL**

It is easy to fall in love with Missouri River Country. Our rolling sea of prairie stretches for miles below big blue skies that come to life with the stars at night. Missouri River Country will follow the State's three phase travel strategy of inspiration, orientation and facilitation to provide world-class experiences and unforgettable memories.

Stunning photography of our landscape *inspires* people through advertising and social media. It is hard to see bright green landscapes and giant blue skies and not want to learn more (or come see it for yourself!). Our open spaces and abundance of wildlife and recreational activities will draw interested visitors and make people want to learn more about Missouri River Country.

Once we have inspired people to learn more, we will *orient* them to our region with information about specific activities, lodging, events and opportunities. Using print marketing, trade show opportunities, social media outlets (ie: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) and informational blog posts, we will provide valuable information to our interested visitors. We recently built a state-of-the-art website which is responsive to mobile devices and will serve as an immeasurable tool in delivering the message about opportunities in Missouri River Country to the public.

We will *facilitate* visitors through continued hospitality. From the moment of interest to their last day of vacation, Missouri River Country staff and marketing teams will provide nothing but excellent information, service and resources. The new website is proving to be a huge asset in ensuring that visitors have an encore experience in our region, and our informational print materials such as travel guides, hunting and fishing guides, brochures and maps will help visitors experience all that Missouri River Country has to offer. In addition, promoting traffic to the visitor's center will enable us to have a hands-on approach to facilitating the experience of our visitors.

**Optional: Include attachments here**     Brush lake night skies low res.jpg

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psychographic).

## **TARGET MARKETS**

### **GEOGRAPHIC**

Strategically targeting certain geographic markets will enable Missouri River Country to stretch the impact of our marketing dollars. Missouri River Country will target the following geographical markets, which provide our current base of visitors and potential for increased visits by high-value, low-impact tourists: Minnesota, Washington, California, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, South Dakota, North Dakota, Texas, Oregon, Michigan, Ohio, Saskatchewan, Canada, Alberta, Canada. We also know that many Montanans visit Missouri River Country as a close-to-home, quick trip in our state. When it comes to Montana residents, we market the chance to fall in love with Montana all over again in a fresh, new region of the state.

### **North Dakota ranked first for nonresident visitors to Missouri River Country in 2020.**

### **PSYCHO-GRAPHIC**

Missouri River Country will target the visitors that present a high impact and opportunity, such as history and culture buffs, hunters and anglers, and the families or couples that are interested in the many things Missouri River Country has to offer. Many visitors seek hunting and fishing opportunities here and bring their families to visit museums and/or to recreate around the lakes, rivers and streams. Other families follow the Montana Dinosaur Trail throughout our region. The 50+ permanent RVer's are becoming popular in our area as well, as these travelers love to get away to wide-open spaces and stay in our campgrounds. When the state "Montana" is mentioned, people get excited—we see this consistently at our trade shows and in reactions through social media. The beauty of Missouri River Country is in the expansive outdoors, authentic charm, and quiet, peaceful solitude.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC**

In addition to geographic targeted marketing, Missouri River Country strategically targets prime demographic groups who have an inclination and reason to visit our region. Strategic marketing includes social media posts, ad placements, and trade shows.

#### **Hunters & Anglers**

This group includes hunters and fishermen and women from Montana and other states who would visit Missouri River Country for specific recreational opportunities. This demographic is heavily skewed as an affluent male audience. Census statistics suggest that 15% of the general US population 16+ years of age go fishing, and 10% of that same demographic hunt. These people most likely come into the region to recreate and do not travel elsewhere in the state once they are here. 8% of visitors to our region listed hunting as an attraction while 7% listed fishing.

#### **History & Culture Buffs**

This group includes adults 30+ years of age who are traveling with or without children. These travelers are interested in a variety of history, arts and culture and are likely to visit at least one historical site during their vacation. They will most likely pair their trip to include other historical regions of Montana. 10% of visitors to our region listed Lewis and Clark as an attractant to Montana.

#### Couples

This group includes adults 30+ years of age without children. These people are interested in history, culture, arts, museums, soft adventure, wildlife viewing and birding, dinosaurs and scenic attractions.

#### Traditional Family Travelers

This group includes adults traveling with children. These travelers participate in scenic driving, nature photography, camping/hiking, museums, wildlife viewing and birding and dinosaur activities. They are interested in creating a relaxing and memorable experience together.

#### RV & Camping Travelers

This group consists of adults traveling with or without children. These travelers participate in camping, hiking, visiting historic sites, sightseeing, photography, wildlife viewing, birding, outdoor recreation and dinosaur activities.

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

This group consists of adults who are traveling with or without children. They enjoy participating in outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, birding, wildlife watching, dinosaur activities, ATVing, motorcycle riding and water recreation.

#### Sports Travelers

This group consists of adults 25+ years of age traveling with children to sporting events such as basketball, baseball, hockey, football and track and field.

*b. What are your emerging markets?*

### **EMERGING MARKETS**

Missouri River Country has isolated the following emerging markets that we believe are a perfect fit for our attractions. We plan to market directly to their travel desires and needs.

#### Young Outdoor Enthusiasts

This market includes young travelers between the ages of 18-30 who are interested in traveling for outdoor adventure. These travelers are more likely to camp at least one night of their trip, and they are looking for access to hiking, climbing, water sports, wildlife viewing, photography and camping experiences. These users are also highly active on social media, so we believe that targeting these audiences within our drive markets through social media channels will be an impactful way to reach this group.

#### Retirees

According to the 2020 ITRR report, a high number of couples ages 65-74 are traveling through Missouri River Country. We believe that retirees are a great group to target, as they are traditionally financially stable, traveling without children and looking to engage in soft adventure and historical and cultural experiences.

#### Amtrak Riders

Missouri River Country has three Amtrak stops in Wolf Point, Glasgow and Malta. We believe that a

unique opportunity lies in attracting visitors to stop over in Missouri River Country on their way from the Chicago and Minneapolis area on route to Glacier National Park. We also believe that there is untapped potential in families from cities to the east who can easily access our charming communities and have authentic Montana experiences with less train-time than riding all the way to Glacier National Park.

#### Craft Beer Enthusiasts

Craft beer tours are becoming increasingly common, with some larger breweries serving as the single reason visitors take trips to specific areas. The Brewers Association found that 18% of craft beer drinkers visit three or more out-of-town breweries each year. Montana has the second most breweries per capita of any state in America, and we believe that promoting Missouri River Country as a brewery destination to the craft beer market would increase visitation to towns where craft breweries are present.

#### Montana MADE Shoppers

Local, sustainable crafts and products are on the rise, and visitors appreciate the pride of local craftsmen and women. We believe that by promoting the Montana Made artisans and goods in our region, we can attract visitors to seek out our fairs, markets, and shops.

Compared to other vacation destinations, Missouri River Country offers affordable options for travelers.

#### Astrotourists

80% of Americans can't see the Milky Way anymore due to light pollution according to a 2016 study, and astrotourism is on the rise worldwide as city dwellers or people living in condensed population areas long to see the uninterrupted night sky. Since Missouri River Country has some of the darkest night skies in the country, we should be directly promoting our region as a destination for dark sky enthusiasts and photographers alike. We have long-term aspirations to create International Dark Parks. We plan to use target campaigns to show off our dark skies and grow awareness around the astrotourism options in our region. We are more than halfway through the application process of Brush Lake State Park becoming an IDSP. We also believe that promoting visitation to Hill Ranch Oasis, a bed and breakfast near Mosby, will allow for visitors who would prefer to sleep indoors the chance to take in the uninterrupted skies—an opportunity specific to this particular place as opposed to other accommodations in towns. Efforts continue to develop a "Night Sky Trail" in Eastern Montana, a partnership with Central MT and SEMT.

#### Agritourists

Agritourism centers around tourists who come from cities and want to get a taste of rural farming and ranching communities. Agritourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of global tourism with an economic impact of more than \$1 billion in many US states and countries, and we believe that Missouri River Country is a no-brainer for agritourism activities in the state of Montana. Agritourism activities that can be found in Missouri River Country include farmers markets, horseback riding, and shopping for local honeys, breads, and other handcrafted items. We believe our small, charming rural communities make us an ideal travel option for agritourists. All eight counties in Missouri River Country are home to an annual county fair, where opportunities for agritourism abound, from rodeos, 4H competitions, petting zoos, live music and dancing, and so much more.

#### Digital Detox Travelers

We are living in the age of technology overload, and we believe that promoting our "no cell service, no worries" attitude towards travel can be a huge attractant for Digital Detox Travelers, a group of people looking to get away from the over-stimulus of our digital world. According to the 2020 ITRR report, 61% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country said that they were

very satisfied with Montana's open space and uncrowded areas. With more room to roam and more time to disconnect, Missouri River Country is a natural fit for these visitors. According to Intrepid, bookings to locations in this category were up significantly in 2018, and Darshika Jones, Intrepid's director of North America, explained that they saw "an increase in those more remote destinations where you get that opportunity to unplug and reconnect."

**Optional: Include attachments here.** Bradley C. landscape.jpg

c. *What research supports your target marketing?*

## **SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Institute for Tourism & Recreation, University of Montana, 2020

Destination Analysts

MOTBD-Former Arrivalist Data-UberMedia

ITRR- Residents Attitudes Toward Tourism 4th Qtr. 2020

"Stairway to the heavens: astro-tourism on the rise worldwide." LonelyPlanet.com.

Amtrak Train Routes. Amtrak.com.

Agritourism is growing in America. SustainableAmerica.org

80 Percent of Americans Can't See the Milky Way Anymore. National Geographic

One Green Planet. Onegreenplanet.org

Local Food Trend Keeps Farms at Center of Tourism Strategies. Skift

Tourism on tap: Beer Related Travel. Travel Weekly

Skift Megatrends. Skift

With the opportunity to receive updated UberMedia from MOTBD, formerly known as Arrivalist Data, Missouri River Country will be able to see where our visitors are coming from, how long they are staying and how many are coming into our region. This data is separated out by counties and will be useful in our marketing strategies.

## **GOALS**

Our primary marketing goals are to increase visitation and communicate a cohesive and effective marketing identity. We will follow the MOTBD's 2013-2017 Strategic Plan, incorporating the plan into Montana's Missouri River Country's FY22 Marketing Plan. We will support the Montana brand with our charming and unique towns, spectacular nature and breathtaking experiences. In addition, we will continue taking advantage of partnerships with MOTBD, other tourism regions/CVB's, local chambers, and tribal entities, working together to more effectively promote our area as a tourist destination. The following are the goals for Missouri River Country in FY22:

**Increase arrivals and encourage extended stays and increased expenditures** from our frequent repeat visitors by focusing promotions and advertising in the warm season.

**Increase overall visitor awareness** of Missouri River Country's attractions and activities.

**Promote and support Missouri River Country's newer attractions** including: Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs & Resort, Fort Peck Interpretive Center & Museum, the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum, the Children's Museum of Northeast Montana, World Wildlife Exhibit, the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the Northeast Montana Birding Trail.

**Promote microbreweries in the region** including: Blue Ridge Brewing in Malta, Busted Knuckle Brewery in Glasgow, Docz Missouri River Breaks Brewing in Wolf Point, Meadowlark Brewing and 1035 Brewing in Sidney.

**Seek joint venture and co-op marketing opportunities** with the State of Montana and other appropriate entities.

**Increase awareness of Missouri River Country** and the organization's role in regional tourism development.

**Promote our unique outdoor recreation activities** including hunting, fishing, dark sky viewing, Brush Lake State Park, Hell Creek State Park & Campground, camping, easy outdoor access and additional public amenities and state parks.

**Promote regional conventions, community events, sporting events and shopping.**

**Gain feature stories in regional and national consumer publications** about events and attractions that highlight our region's unique appeal, with particular emphasis on expanding dinosaur opportunities.

**Develop both online marketing and online resources** to increase visitor interest in the region and make it easy for visitors to find and use information that will inspire planning.

**Gain increased exposure** of Missouri River Country online through web-based public relations, keyword placements on search engines, online packages, social media, apps and related tactics.

**Implement the three state brand pillars:** 1) More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48; 2) Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders; 3) Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.

**Seek opportunities to promote the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Indian Reservations** and work with tribal leaders to promote cultures of the tribes and tourism activities.

*a. In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?*

## **JOINT VENTURES**

Seeking co-op opportunities and building relationships with other partners in the industry is a vital part of our marketing strategy. Missouri River Country recognizes that budgeting is a limitation on our marketing efforts. For this reason, joint ventures with MOTBD is a valuable opportunity for us. FY21 was a difficult year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and MOTBD cancelled all their joint venture opportunities, which Missouri River Country usually benefits from when affordable. In FY20 Missouri River Country participated in Sojern and Parenting Magazine with MOTBD. We see value in these joint ventures and would like to continue them into FY22.

Alicia Nelson Hell Creek.jpg

**Optional: Include attachment here.** Riding horses on the prairie.jpg

*b. In what other types of co-ops would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)*



Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	MRC will continue to do regular E-Newsletters using Constant Contact to promote our area events and attractions. These newsletters provide information about attractions and events to entice a potential visitor to MRC. We realize the importance of e-newsletters in this technology age whether by computer or mobile. The Marketing Personnel director sends out these newsletters on a regular basis using Constant Contact. This is cost saving and effective. We will follow the requirements according to 15.2.4 in the Regulations and Procedures.	MRC sends out our E-Newsletters to a growing data base of 5000+ recipients with an average of 13% opens. According to Constant Contact the average open rate is 20%, but can fluctuate from 15% to 50% with an open click rate of 6%. We are currently seeing an average click rate of 4%. Email automation ensures that everything you have to say or offer to potential visitors reaches them automatically and immediately. Sending emails drives significant results according to Quick Facts-Constant Contact.	MRC will measure the success of our e-mail efforts by increasing our data base by 50 and receive at least an open rate of 15% and click through rate of at least 5%. A copy of the newsletters and the number of people it was sent to will be provided on the evaluation report.	\$900.00		
Consumer	Print Advertising	MRC will place print advertisements on sites and publications where we feel that we can maximize our reach to our target and demographic markets according to our narrative. Our print advertisements will focus on the pillars of MRC's attractions: dinosaurs, history and culture, outdoor recreation, hunting/fishing, night skies and charming small towns. We will continue to use our "More Room to Roam" tagline. We will follow the requirements on 15.2.6 in the Regulations and Procedures.	MRC received 7504 inquires in FY20 from our print advertising. According to <a href="https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/4-reasons-why-print-advertising-stillworks">https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/4-reasons-why-print-advertising-stillworks</a> , print advertisements have a significant impact on converting prospects into customers, or in our case visitors. It also states that printed ads have much more influence on buying or visiting decisions than electronic advertisements, if the correct target demographics are used and bought by the target audience. Each year we carefully determine the right placements for our advertising.	MRC will measure success by tracking the effectiveness of our advertising with a goal of under \$5.00 CPM and will strive to receive at least 5000 leads/inquiries per year. We will also plan to increase our website visits by 10% and add 9000 more unique visitors, since our print advertising lists our website and also allows potential visitors to sign up for a travel planner. We will follow our marketing plan when advertising in publications.	\$10,000.00		
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	MRC will attend trade shows that target our geographic, demographic and psychographic markets to the high-value, low-impact visitors according to the narrative	In a Consumer Show survey done by ITRR it was noted that two regions that exhibited at a show were able to highlight the entire state and help in visitation. When we do shows people are interested in MT and we provide them with the information to plan their trip. We didn't attend any shows in FY21 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. A	MRC will measure success by tracking the attendance, with a goal of at least 10,000 attendees and interest shown at	\$6,000.00		



		<p>of our plan and provide them with information about our region. We will purchase giveaway items for an additional attraction to our booth, such as agates, and novelty items, not to exceed \$1000 of the budget. At our sports shows we have interest from people seeking outfitters and guides. We supply the information to them and will bring home any leads and distribute them to the appropriate businesses. With the recent Covid-19 Pandemic we probably won't be able to do as many shows and we will focus on a Regional Market, such as in-state, North Dakota and South Dakota. We will also consider a show in Regina, which would be a close driving distance if the borders open. The Washington and Minnesota markets are within our top 5 states according to 2020 ITRR reports. At this time it's unknown which shows we will do in FY22, but it will be within our target markets. We will follow all the requirements according to 15.2.11 in the Regulations and Procedures when attending these shows.</p>	<p>couple years ago we marketed in ND and according to 2020 ITRR report ND is our top state where visitors come from. According to the Uber Media MRC had 86 more Domestic Out-of-State visitors in 2020 than 2019. According to ISE (Internationl Sportsman Expo) "the biggest advantage Destination Exhibitors have is putting a smiling and informed face in front of the hundreds of attendees who come to shows. MRC is one of Montana's Ambassadors. Folks stop by with questions about what Montana has to offer, and they get answers. The internet is a wonderful thing but it only leaves a momentary impression."</p>	<p>the shows and the information handed out. A goal of at least 300 MRC travel planners at each show, along with 100 each other misc. brochures and information. We will purchase agates and give-away items, not to exceed \$1000 and track the distribution of the items. A report will be given after the show to see if it was successful or not and whether we should continue to do shows at that destination.</p>			
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	<p>MRC has an ongoing need for photos and videos for our marketing projects and social media. We will utilize the MOTBD photos in Web Dam to use where there is a need, but those photos are limited and don't provide any videos. Photography and video are critical in inspiring potential visitors to plan a trip to MRC. It is vital that</p>	<p>MRC purchases photos and develops videos in our marketing efforts. The photos have been used in print and online advertising and our Travel Planner. Photos play an important role in the attractiveness of advertising our charming and breathtaking wonders. Research shows that pictures tell the story. Photography helps utilize the social media platforms for marketing. The brain usually can only process limited information at a time. Photos are images to make the potential traveler have a better understanding of what we have to offer. According to <a href="http://www.guttulus.com">www.guttulus.com</a>, "Good photography commands the attention of customers. No matter how great your product or</p>	<p>We will measure success by increasing our photo library with wildlife, nature, night skies and people photos to use in our travel guide, creative and website. We will also work on promoting MRC with video footage to show at trade</p>	\$2,000.00		

		we are able to maximize our budget while still obtaining high quality photos and videos of our region. Our Travel Planner designer lets us use his photos for other projects which really helps with our limited budget.	the service that you offer is, without impressive imagery that communicates, potential customers are more likely to ignore the product." Or in our case look for other places to visit. We believe good photography sells us, as we have some of the most spectacular nature and some of the darkest, beautiful skies. According to 2020 ITRR nature photography is 30% of the reason people visit our region. We realize they take their own photos, but showing what we have entices them to come and do their own photography.	shows and on our website and promote MRC's spectacular nature, contributing to at least 1 new video and 5 new photos.			
Consumer	Printed Material	MRC will print and update as needed, our promotional brochures such as Canoe/Kayaking, L &C, hunting & fishing, calendar of events, rock hounding, astronomy locations, brewery trail, birding and dinosaurs. We will also print and design a useful resource map of MRC showing attractions, roads, trails and points of interest. Any printed material that we do will include shipping costs that will be invoiced accordingly. We will distribute an allocated amount of these brochures throughout MRC, at trade shows, and send out upon request. We will also purchase a few brochure racks where brochures are needed to be distributed. MRC doesn't have a paid distribution service, therefore paid staff will deliver the brochures and travel planners within and on the outskirts of MRC. Mileage will be paid at state rate to deliver the brochures. We will follow all requirements when printing these brochures according to 15.2.15 in the Regulations and Procedures.	These specialty brochures are handed out at trade shows and requested through our website. They are delivered to area brochure racks. We usually hand out around 200 each at our trade shows. We were running low on several of these brochures so the demand has been high. According to <a href="http://naturalnewsblogs.com/-8-reasons-brochure-still-important-marketing-tool-business">naturalnewsblogs.com/-8-reasons-brochure-still-important-marketing-tool-business</a> , "they give a clean look to your readers" "Brochures are the best for marketing products as they offer a simple and clean look to a design and it is easier for the viewers to find relevant information about your business or products. In other words, your readers are able to scan critical information about your products and its features without straining their eyes." Here in MRC we find them very useful for people that like to have a print piece in their hands.	MRC will print and distribute brochures as needed to replenish supply and track where they are distributed. When delivering these brochures we will note how fast they are taken off the brochure racks. A final product will be retained on file and another shall be submitted with an evaluation report upon completion.	\$2,500.00		
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	MRC will continue to do online advertising. We will continue to do banner ads and Facebook and	Website visits in FY20 were up 69% with the launching of our new website. MRC realizes websites are one of the most important ways to promote our area. According to	MRC will measure success by tracking our website visits with a goal of 10%	\$10,000.00		

		<p>Social Media advertising to get the attention of the internet user due to the growing use of technology. These marketing efforts will drive more traffic to our website where they can receive more information on MRC. We will do joint ventures with MOTBD and other Regions when it fits into our budget and marketing strategy. MRC will place digital advertisements on sites and publications where we feel that we can maximize our reach to our target and demographic markets in our narrative. Our advertisements will focus on the pillars of MRC's attractions: dinosaurs, history and culture, outdoor recreation, hunting/fishing and charming small towns. We will follow the requirements in 15.2.2 in the Regulations and Procedures.</p>	<p>mindfirecomm.com, "banner ads first introduced in Global Network Navigator in 1993, few people understood the impact this would have on the advertising industry. To sum things up-it was a preeeeeetty big deal." As we all know it's a technology world and online advertising is the right direction to go when marketing our region. There are also countless ways to track the success</p>	<p>increase and 9000 more unique visitors to the site. We will also track CPM on our banner ads and online/digital advertising with a goal of under \$5.00. Our online digital ads shall include print or digital copies of the digital advertisements, click-through rates and number of delivered impressions.</p>			
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	<p>For several years MRC have leased billboards designed to reach out-of-state tourists traveling through our region, increasing awareness of the MT Dinosaur Trail. We did a new design in FY19 to attract visitors to the Dinosaur Museums and also other museums and attractions. These billboards are strategically placed along Hwy 2 by Wolf Point, Oswego and Dodson. We update the signs as needed.</p> <p>In FY21 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic some of the Dinosaur Museums didn't open as early as they usually do. On Sept. 15th at the MRC board meeting the BOD's reviewed the</p>	<p>ITRR's report showed that 3% of visitors used billboards as a source of information during their trip. According to Geopath, our three signs had a weekly average total of 25,686 impressions. Dodson-6,238, Oswego-6,762, Wolf Point-12,686. According to Yesco Sign Company, billboards deliver a timely message, convenient to the point of visitation, and impulsive visitation. They also state that there is a low CPM and high ROI on billboards. Profile types of people driving by our boards are Young &amp; Rustic, and Back Country Folks. The Wolf Point and Oswego boards have a very high percentage of people driving by it that fall into the "Young and Rustic" category. The description of these people are composed of restless singles and young families in the nation's rural areas. They enjoy the outdoors on their ATV's but are also big video gamers and follow NASCAR and monster trucks. This is based on survey data and cell phone data from Geopath.</p>	<p>We will measure success by driving traffic to Missouri River Country attractions and the Dinosaur Trail, ultimately contributing to 1% or more increased visitation to those facilities. In the final report we will include photos of the billboards and recent traffic counts if available.</p>	\$6,500.00		

value of keeping the billboards. We realize the importance of spending the funds wisely and if we can't receive a ROI then we knew we would have to transfer funding from the Billboard budget to other areas of our marketing budget. After speaking with the Dinosaur Trail partners we still see value in keeping the billboards and just because of a Pandemic year we didn't feel it would be a wise decision to cancel them and risk the chance of getting them back. The Fort Peck Interpretive Center strongly recommended that we keep them. She felt the signs keep the dinosaur trail on the forefront of resident's minds, therefore contributing to their out-of-town visitors to come to the museum. The Phillips County Museum also stressed the importance of these signs. The MRC board felt that by having one year where all tourism was down, they didn't feel it was wise to cancel them at this time.

These billboards will drive traffic to the four facilities in MRC and increase visitation to the MT Dinosaur Trail. The billboards are attractive and maintained and designate the MT Dinosaur Trail through MRC. We aren't cluttered with billboards in MRC so seeing billboards in Eastern MT isn't an eye sore, it's more of an eye catcher for something else to do out here in the "middle of nowhere". We will encourage the facilities to ask visitors if they saw the billboards and if that's what attracted them to the

		facility. We follow all requirements according to 15.2.8 in the Regulations and Procedures.					
Consumer	Travel Guide	MRC worked on designing our primary and informational travel planner in FY21. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and limited funding we decided to stretch the design out for 2 years and print in FY23. Travel planners are an important marketing piece that provides information, pictures, maps and tools needed by the visitor to plan their trips and spend more time in MRC. FY20 was our print year. This has proven to be very cost effective by doing an updated planner every 2 years, alternating years between design and print. We realized we had enough on hand and they aren't dated so we will carry them over another year. We will continue to distribute them at trade shows and mail to inquiry requests, chambers and VIC's, and distribute them in MRC and the surrounding area for visitors to pick up along their way. We will follow the requirements according to printed material 15.2.15 in the Regulations and Procedures. Shipping costs are included in the bidding process and will be invoiced accordingly.	In FY20 MRC distributed 10,729 travel planners through the mail, delivered to communities by the ED and MP, mileage paid at state rate, and taken to trade shows. First time visitor groups according to ITRR were 3%, and repeat visitors 96%. These statistics show that once visitors experience MRC they return. Travel guides have proven to help a potential visitor plan their trip and spend extra time in MRC. Uber Media shows visitors to our region are mainly from MT, ND and MN.	MRC will design and update our travel guide with a goal of having it completed by June 2022 and ready for print in FY23.	\$10,000.00		
Consumer	Joint Ventures	MRC sees the value of Joint Ventures and partnering with MOTBD and other Regions to reach the best market and leverage our marketing dollars. We will take advantage of match	A Joint Ventures line item will help with more accurate tracking. When partnering with MOTBD and other Regions our marketing efforts go further. According to Google, meaningful <b>partnerships</b> are the foundation for success. <b>Partnerships</b> is what enables many companies to make continuous improvements. By sharing with others, you can	MRC will measure success by interest shown in the MT dinosaur trail, Lewis and Clark, and other partnership projects. Reports and results will be	\$8,200.00		

		<p>funding opportunities when available and within our budget. Please see the narrative portion of our FY22 Marketing Plan to see where our Joint Venture Marketing funds were spent. New joint venture marketing will include Night Skies with other regions and a Glacier Country campaign to develop a dark sky landing page and blog posts that will contain information about the opportunities to observe and enjoy the dark skies of Glacier Country and Missouri River Country. We will continue to promote the MT Dinosaur Trail and L&amp;C Trail. The Eastern MT Initiative helped boost our marketing efforts with grants they provided and the extra marketing MOTBD did to promote Eastern MT</p>	<p>direct your resources and capabilities to projects you consider most important. In MRC, Joint Ventures are even more beneficial with our limited budget. We would like to see more affordable and regional opportunities.</p>	<p>given on all our JV projects to measure success.</p>			
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	<p>MRC has contracted with Windfall, Inc. as their Agency of Record. Windfall is a professional agency that excels in Marketing Strategies. The MRC board of directors are confident that Windfall will market MRC as a destination that will result in more visitation to our Region. They will provide a full media plan, marketing plan support, market research, social media support, digital leadership, search engine marketing and optimization, and website support. Windfall is also contracted by other tourism partners so they are knowledgeable to follow the MT brand.</p>	<p>Windfall, Inc. has contracted with 4 other tourism regions and 1 CVB. Research has shown that the previous regions and CVB have been successful with Windfall's marketing efforts. FY22 will be our 5th year contracting with them. We have confidence that they will provide the marketing strategies necessary to increase our bed tax revenue with a new and aggressive marketing, media and social plan. They have created new ads that are attractive and eye catching. According to Google, by partnering with an agency, you will gain unprecedented access to a considerable talent pool, which will ultimately save your business both time and money.</p>	<p>MRC needs the assistance of an ad agency to help market our region as a destination. They will provide us with the marketing necessary to bring more visitors and recognition to MRC. We will measure ROI and our success by tracking our website visits with a goal of 10% increase and 9000 more unique visitors, 100 more likes on social media channels and 5000 leads, CPC and CPM under \$5.00.</p>	\$12,000.00		
Consumer	Search Engine Marketing	<p>We now have a website that is state of the art. We realize Search terms</p>	<p>According to <i>marketingmo.com</i>, Search engine marketing is about gaining visibility on search engines when users search for terms that relate to</p>	<p>MRC will track our website visits with a goal of</p>	\$3,000.00		

		are a way to drive traffic to the new MRC website and increase visitation from internet users. MRC sees a benefit in search engine marketing with the increasing use of the internet. We will keep a tight control on our keywords. Keywords drive more traffic to our website to use as a trip planning tool. We receive many inquiries from Google.	your business. For most companies, ranking highly in search results isn't luck – it's a result of solid effort of knowing your business. MRC will choose high impact keywords such as hunting/fishing.	10% increase and 9000 more unique visitors, and less than \$5.00 CPC.			
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	It is important to keep websites accurate and current, especially during these uncertain times. MRC will continue to do updates to keep the most important and current information available. With the recent completion of our new State-of-the-art website it has increased security and allows Missouri River Country to upload higher quality photos and we have a greater chance to inspire through imagery. This also gives visitors more of a chance to explore the options of our region and spend more time on the site. MRC will make updates as needed to our website to maintain the most current links, photos, and information. The website is designed to be informative to the visitor and encourage extended stays. We would like to put more content on the homepage, such as a map listing all the locations in MRC. This will depend on funding.	According to MRC website analytics we showed a 69% increase in website visits from FY19 to FY20. This shows the importance of having a current useful website. Also according to: <a href="https://www.thrivecreativelabs.com/blog/your-website-most-important-marketing-tool-you-have/">https://www.thrivecreativelabs.com/blog/your-website-most-important-marketing-tool-you-have/</a> <i>Your website is the most important marketing tool you have.</i>	MRC will continue to track our website visits through google analytics with a goal of a 10% increase and 9000 more unique visitors.	\$12,000.00		
Destination Management	Product Development	With the growing interest in dark starry skies in MRC and partnering with Central MT and SEMT to develop a night sky trail through Eastern MT, we	"Experiencing the <b>night sky</b> provides perspective, inspiration, and leads us to reflect on our humanity and place in the universe. The history of scientific discovery and even human curiosity itself is indebted to the natural <b>night sky</b> ." This statement	MRC will measure success by completing the first phase of the dark sky trail partnership with Central MT	\$800.00		

		<p>see the need and value of supporting programs on the dark skies. We plan to work with the Fort Peck Interpretive Center, and the Glasgow Weather Service to bring in a speaker to give a presentation on the dark skies of NE MT. We currently don't have much for programming due to funding and employees to help with the project. We feel more interpretation is needed, therefore we want to help in our push to get our dark skies well known and for the chance to bring more visitation to MRC.</p>	<p>is according to: <a href="https://www.savingourstars.org/darkskylighting">https://www.savingourstars.org/darkskylighting</a></p>	<p>and SEMT. We will also increase the overall interest in dark skies in NE MT. We have a stargazing page on our website and will plan to have developed a site for our partnership dark sky trail and have it completed by the end of 2021.</p>		
Events	Radio & Television Advertising	<p>MRC continues to see a benefit in advertising on the Outdoor Radio Show. The Captain, Mark Ward, knows our area and talks about MRC like he's lived here all his life. All advertising is done outside the area to attract people coming a distance in order to increase the nights' stay in MRC. The Outdoor Radio Show airs every Saturday morning from 6:00 - 8:00 am and targets the outdoor enthusiasts over the entire state of Montana. With the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, when it's safe for people to travel we will also focus more regionally, reaching out to the Bismarck, ND radio outdoor show with Jason Mitchell. Our 60 sec. ads will be aired every Saturday morning on the months that we have chosen. We will follow all requirements according to 15.2.7 in the Regulations and Procedures Manual.</p>	<p>Outdoor recreation supports and contributes to a high quality of life and attracts visitors from outside our immediate area. Outdoor recreation is the economy of the future. In MT, outdoor recreation generates \$7.1 Billion in annual consumer spending. The Outdoor Radio Show reaches thousands of outdoor enthusiasts on 28 radio stations throughout Montana and reaches 75 cities. Their page views are 3,347,224 per year on montanaoutdoor.com, plus over 14,978 likes on their Facebook page. We have worked with Jason Mitchell in the past on videos and he as proven successful to MRC.</p>	<p>MRC will measure success by continuing to advertise on the Montana Outdoor Radio Show with a goal of reaching out to 28 radio stations that will cover 75 cities. Our ads will be aired every Saturday morning on the months that we have chosen promoting our communities and the great outdoors. A copy of the ads will be kept on file at the MRC office.</p>	\$4,170.00	
Marketing	Outreach	MRC will contribute funds	Voices of Montana states, "As a leading industry in	We will measure	\$2,500.00	



Support		for educational use and Voices of Montana to help promote the tourism industry. Education is needed in our general area. Some people and businesses don't realize the value of tourists to their communities. Voices of Montana is a valuable resource for reaching more tourism success. Education is important for the business person to realize that tourism does support them and to give great customer service for return visits. MRC will also work to educate each of their communities.	Montana, non-resident tourism supports 59,380 local jobs, adds over \$3.7 billion to the economy annually, and contributes to the preservation of historical, cultural and recreational treasures. Voices of Montana Tourism exists to educate audiences on the importance of tourism promotion funding—which comes from a lodging tax paid by overnight guests. In a competitive marketplace, travelers have many options, Montana cannot take its success for granted. According to Residents' Attitudes Towards Tourism-4th Qtr. 2020 report by ITRR, MRC was the lowest % that believes tourism benefits their community economically. More education is needed.	success by supporting Voices of Montana and to engage in our communities, attending Chamber of Commerce meetings and educating them on the benefits that tourism provides to their area with a goal of attending 3 educational workshops or chamber meetings.			
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	MRC will continue to work with communities to help them promote their area or an event in their town. In the past we have done a 50/50 match with a community to print brochures, posters, signage and advertise an event on the radio, newspaper or TV. We will take advantage of the new Rules and Regulations that permit MRC to advertise Conventions. We would like to partner with the larger Chambers and communities with motels to accommodate convention attendees. MRC will plan to bring more Conventions to our region. MRC will follow all requirements according to 15.1.2 and 15.1.2.1 in the Regulations and Procedures Manual.	In previous years MRC advertised with Co-op Marketing funds with the Glasgow Chamber the MT Gov. Cup Walleye Tournament. Entries filled for the full 200 teams within an hour. Attendance for the event has increased also. A result of more advertising. Brochures from various communities have shown an increase in visitation to MRC and the community and their events. As stated in Joint Ventures, meaningful <b>partnerships</b> are the foundation for success. <b>Partnerships</b> are what enables many companies to make continuous improvements. By sharing with others, you can direct your resources and capabilities to projects you consider most important. By partnering with communities we leverage more dollars and increase the advertising of a community or an event. Therefore, increasing more nights spent in MRC.	MRC will measure the success of the co-op projects by tracking the visitation to an event or attraction in the community where a co-op project was held with a plan to increase visitation by 1%. We will use Uber Media to track visitation by county.	\$4,000.00		
Marketing Support	Administration	MRC supports the Montana Brand through our Administration efforts. We will continue to communicate a cohesive and effective marketing identity using the Montana Brand and	ITRR is a research tool that is useful for tracking success. Through ITRR we see where visitors come from, how long they stay and the reasons why they come and the sources used to plan their trip. The Uber Media helps with a breakdown of counties, which provides useful information especially for each chamber in a county. Administration is an operational method employed	We will measure success by staying within 20% of our total budget. We will file our quarterly compliance reports on time.	\$38,646.00		

		operate the Missouri River Country office with the help of the Executive Director and purchase supplies, insurance and fees associated with maintaining a professional office. MRC will stay within a 20% budget for administration and will follow the Regulations and Procedures when using Lodging Facility Use Tax Revenue.	by the organization in order to adhere to the state statute and governing rules and regulations.				
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	MRC will continue to provide visitors with a variety of information they request, including our Travel Planner, a current Calendar of Events and targeted brochures all supporting the Montana Brand. These efforts include our toll-free phone number, internet services, postage, fulfillment by the contractor, mailing supplies and storage to store our fulfillment pieces. MRC continues to use a fulfillment service to fulfill requests and provide potential visitors with our travel planner and information used to plan a trip to MRC. The Group Home is very efficient and allows the Executive Director more time to work on office duties.	MRC responded to 7504 inquiries in FY20. With the assistance of a Group Home located in MRC we mail out all information within a 72 hour time frame. Accurate records are kept to track mailings. Research shows that "a <b>fulfillment center</b> exists to get online orders to customers in a timely fashion and relieve ecommerce companies of managing this crucial-yet-challenging process."	MRC will measure success by tracking the number of inquiries and travel planners that are sent out each year with the help of our fulfillment services. We will strive to receive at least 5000 leads/inquiries per year and mail out at least 5000 travel planners.	\$20,000.00		
Marketing Support	Equipment	MRC needs to maintain a professional office. New equipment is necessary to keep up with the new technology and advancing society. We will only get new equipment when and as needed.	According to: <a href="https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/81634">https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/81634</a> . "Businesses existed before there were computers, fax machines, telephones and copiers, but few entrepreneurs these days would want to try to grow a company without the advantages modern information technology can bring. Merely having access to the internet--with its myriad opportunities for finding customers, building brands, researching suppliers and communicating with employees and others--can easily justify updating the technology in your office.	MRC will purchase equipment as needed.	\$1,000.00		

Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	TAC and Governor's Conference meetings are important for the Region Director to attend to stay informed on tourism trends, updates, rules and regulations, and useful marketing tools. These meetings play an important role for the director to attend, to accomplish MRC's goals in the tourism industry. More travel time and mileage is allowed for this budget due to distances to travel to meetings.	These meetings are informative and a necessity in operating a cohesive organization and staying informed of the rules and regulations in tourism. MRC has not had any issues of misuse of bed tax funds brought before the TAC within the last 16 years. According to <a href="http://getminute.com/importance-of-meetings">getminute.com/importance-of-meetings</a> , meetings are the best way to collaborate and build strength with your team.	Success will be measured by attending required meetings as stated in the rules and procedures manual.	\$3,500.00		
Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	MRC's ED will commit to marketing obligations outside the normal scope of responsibilities outlined in the current job description. No overtime will be received between the two positions and hours will be tracked and recorded for this position. Duties will be directed at marketing MRC as a destination. The duties of MP will include but not limited to plan and host FAM tours for qualified journalists, plan and attend trade shows, implement educational workshops, prepare press releases, prepare the annual Marketing Plan, prepare tourism marketing presentations, attend marketing meetings, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and social media opportunities, photography, website, creating calendar of events, promotional brochures, design ads, newsletters, trade shows Co-op Marketing, and Joint Ventures, FAM tours and to visit the communities in Missouri River Country and talk about the options that are available to market their	In FY20 MRC's website visits were up by 69%, bed tax was down 13%, but that was due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. People either weren't traveling or if they were they were coming in campers. Our consumer advertising CPM was under \$5.00. These all contribute to the efforts of the marketing personnel position. Our new website has been launched, but work continues to do updates and keep current information. We are expecting an increase in FY21 for website visits to our site. We realize the importance of having an updated website, but it doesn't come without continual work. According to: <a href="https://movingtargets.com/blog/business-marketing/why-marketing-is-so-important">https://movingtargets.com/blog/business-marketing/why-marketing-is-so-important</a> , "Marketing is an important strategy to ensure the growth of your business."	MRC will measure success by completing all other methods in this plan through monthly, quarterly and year-end reports.	\$30,000.00		

		businesses as a destination. MRC will follow all requirements according to 15.2.17 in the Regulations and Procedures Manual.				
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	Throughout the year MRC may take advantage of opportune projects to promote MRC that we weren't aware of at the time of creating our annual marketing plan. Some of these projects that we have done in the past are publications, print, online, social media, signage, insertions, motorcycle ad books, and videos. While opportunity projects are unknown at this time MRC would make sure they fall within the scope of our overall promoting efforts and follow the Rules and Regulations.	Research would be obtained for an Opportunity Project when we know what the project would be. We would use ITRR or Uber Media or whatever resources would apply to the project.	This method will be determined if a project is implemented upon TAC marketing committee approval.	\$518.00	
Publicity	Press Trips	MRC will host Press/FAM Trips, allowing us to reach more writers and ultimately generate more publicity. In the past we have coordinated FAM's with MOTBD and other regions. We would plan to continue this joint venture to increase awareness of our region of nature, hunting, fishing, dinosaurs, history, birding, Native American Culture, recreation/outdoors, night skies, outlaws, boating, canoeing, ice fishing and anything thing that would make MRC a memorable place to a visitor.	Our recent Press Trips with Jason Mitchell Outdoor Television on mule deer hunting, ice fishing, walleye fishing, and lake trout fishing have produced several articles in publications such as Midwest Outdoors, In-Fisherman and MN Sporting Journal. They are still producing inquiries because he runs the TV shows several times throughout the year. Earned media/Press Trips, are viewed by the public as the most credible source used. 75% of journalists say fewer than a quarter of the pitches they receive are relevant. Knowing that, it's important to get the right message out there. <a href="https://earnedmediarising.com">https://earnedmediarising.com</a>	MRC will measure the success of our FAM's by increasing awareness of MRC through publications, social media, videos, and television, with a goal of at least one print article for a print media FAM and at least one post daily for Social media influencers while in our region. We will list all earned media generated by the press trips and we will follow all requirements according to 15.2.18 in the Regulations and Procedures manual.	\$2,500.00	
Publicity	Social Media	Social Media is growing and becoming a popular	We currently have 15,581 likes on Face Book. We have gained 1558 in the past year, and we	MRC will measure success by tracking	\$2,500.00	

		<p>way of advertising. MRC will continue with the social media venues, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube and Pinterest, to capture the audiences to attract visitors to MRC. While much effort is put into Social Media, MRC struggles with likes and followers. We continually increase and will increase with our continued efforts, contests and giveaways. The MP will contribute to most of the social media marketing efforts. We will follow the requirements according to 15.2.9 in the Regulations and Procedures Manual.</p>	<p>will continue to grow our likes with social media campaigns. We have 1238 followers on Instagram, an increase of 103 and, 399 followers on Twitter, an increase of 28. Research shows that we have increased on all Social sites. "Social media is an essential piece of your business marketing strategy. Social platforms help you connect with your customers, increase awareness about your brand, and boost your leads in sales", according to marketinginsidergroup.com.</p>	<p>our "Likes" and "Followers" with a goal of 100 new likes on all Social Media channels. We will also try to do a minimum of 2 posts a week.</p>		
					\$193,234.00	

### **Marketing Method Budget**

<b>Marketing Segment</b>	<b>Marketing Method</b>	<b>Bed tax funded budget</b>
Consumer	Printed Material	\$10,000.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$22,000.00
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	\$16,000.00
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$20,794.00
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	\$900.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$31,706.00
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	\$7,000.00
Consumer	Travel Guide	\$10,000.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$18,200.00
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	\$12,000.00
Consumer	Search Engine Marketing	\$13,000.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$17,000.00
		\$178,600.00
Destination Management	Product Development	\$2,000.00
		\$2,000.00
Events	Radio & Television Advertising	\$8,340.00
		\$8,340.00

Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	\$9,000.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$38,646.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$30,000.00
Marketing Support	Equipment	\$5,000.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,562.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$3,500.00
Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	\$35,000.00
Marketing Support	Outreach	\$3,000.00
		\$125,708.00
Publicity	Press Trips	\$10,000.00
Publicity	Social Media	\$10,000.00
		\$20,000.00
		\$334,648.00

### ***Miscellaneous Attachments***

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<b>Description</b>	<b>File Name</b>	<b>File Size</b>
FY22 Marketing Plan	FY22 Marketing Plan.pdf	15.3 MB
FY22 Pie Chart Methods	FY22 MRC Pie Chart Methods.xlsx	19 KB
FY22 Pie Chart Segments	FY22 Pie Chart Segments.xlsx	14 KB

## ***Reg/CVB Required Documents***

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<b>Description</b>	<b>File Name</b>	<b>File Size</b>
Pledge of Understanding, Application for Lodging Tax Revenue, Cert. of Compliance, Minutes approving Marketing Plan and Budget	FY22 MRC documents.pdf	2.4 MB

