



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128707 - FY24 West Yellowstone DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 West Yellowstone DMO Plan
Grant Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-025
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Grantee Contact: Katrina Wiese
Award Year: FY24
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:			
Contract Dates:	Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed
Project Dates:	06/13/2023 Proposal Date	07/01/2023 Project Start	06/30/2024 Project End

Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number 24-52-OOT-DMO-025
Award Year FY24

Contract Dates

Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed	Contract Legal
---------------	-------------------	-------------------	----------------

Project Dates 07/01/2023

06/30/2024

Project Start	Project End
---------------	-------------

Comments Amendment Comments

DMO Plan Narrative

1. Describe Your Destination

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why they would come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges.

As the closest entrance to Old Faithful and Grand Prismatic in Yellowstone National Park, West Yellowstone has identified itself as the central location, and the closest location, for exploring the Park and surrounding area. Sharing a border with Yellowstone and surrounded on all other sides by the Custer-Gallatin National Forest, the town is the heart of amazing adventure, in all seasons. Clean air and water, abundant wildlife, scenic beauty, geothermal wonders, abounding outdoor recreational opportunities, and historical reference have made West Yellowstone a national and international destination of small-town charm and welcoming hospitality.

Who We Wish to Attract: High-value, low-impact travelers who seek genuine experiences in a location, where they can reconnect with each other and enjoy outdoor recreation and overall value our natural resources.

Why They Come: West Yellowstone offers visitors an amenities-rich, safe platform for breathtaking experiences. Visitors can fish blue ribbon trout streams, hike in pristine wilderness, experience real western horseback riding, go whitewater rafting or mountain bike on hundreds of miles of single track and forest service roads. In the winter months there are over 50km of groomed ski trails for Nordic skiing and over 400 miles of groomed snowmobile trails for recreation, including snowshoeing and sled dog rides and races.

Those looking for fun, family-friendly activities can visit the Yellowstone Giant Screen Theater, presenting a six-story high screen with stereo surround sound or the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center, open 365 days a year, offering an educational experience and viewing area for visitors to watch live grizzly bears, wolves, raptors and a world-renowned riparian exhibit with river otters and other native wetland species in their own natural habitat. We like to say, this is the only place we can guarantee that you will see a live grizzly! Seasonal events like the 4th of July, Music in the Park concerts, the Annual Rod Run, Nordic Ski Races, Dog Sled Races, Kids'N'Snow and an Ice Fishing Tournament enhance visitors' experiences.

The Museum of the Yellowstone, located in the original Union Pacific Depot, features the history of visitation and transportation to our nation's first national park. The Museum is open daily from the middle of May through the middle of October. Visitors can also experience early West Yellowstone through the free, self-guided historic walking tour – just follow the green bear tracks through Town! Nearby other historic attractions include the 1959 Madison River Canyon Earthquake Area & Visitor Center, Nevada and Virginia Cities, and the Nez Perce Trail.

Having the west entrance to Yellowstone National Park mere blocks from downtown funnels over two million visitors annually through West Yellowstone. We continue to develop ways to entice these travelers to stop and enjoy the amenities our town has to offer, before moving on to other locations. One way we secure visitor experience and entice those visitors to enjoy all that West Yellowstone has to offer is through our Visitor Information Center, where visitors can speak directly with local residents, pick up printed planners, plan their trip and experience the genuine hospitality our Town offers. Our VIC plays host to over 200,000 visitors annually – making it the busiest VIC in the state!

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITES

- West Entrance to Yellowstone National Park

- We are seen by some visitors as synonymous with Yellowstone Park and can effectively market ourselves as —Yellowstone Plus!
- Close proximity to Teton National Park and situated on the primary corridor between Glacier and Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Park
- Access to outstanding natural assets such as mountains, lakes, rivers and trails, all which provided amazing outdoor recreation opportunities
- A nationally recognized, well-developed groomed system of winter snowmobile and Nordic ski trails, many of which have both Regional and International recognition
- Ideal family vacation spot - fun, educational, clean, safe with a variety of activities
- Seasonal airport served by two regional carriers, offering daily jet service mid-May through mid-October
- Proximity to Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport with year-round service.
- Home of the Museum of the Yellowstone
- A host of year-round and annual events
- Central location to area downhill ski resorts
- Additional community marketing resources and partnerships. Town of West Yellowstone Marketing & Promotions grant fund, West Yellowstone Tourism Business Improvement District, West Yellowstone Economic Development Council, West Yellowstone Foundation, etc. Tourism partners – Gallatin County, chambers, regions, Yellowstone Teton Territory

CHALLENGES

- Perception that West Yellowstone is only a gateway into the Park and not a destination
- Perceived distance and lack of easy access from major population centers
- National and world event impacts on tourism (ex: terrorism, infectious diseases, and natural disasters)
- Negative press (ex: wildlife, climate, natural events and Park access)
- Perceived limited or lack of restaurants, nightly entertainment & family friendly activities/events
- Visitors and traffic flow management during peak warm season
- Campgrounds, trails, and public lands access in the national forests
- Legislation and public policy decisions (budget cuts, work visas)
- Effective means of communicating with visitors passing through
- Fluctuating lodging prices
- Fewer RV space and services
- Non-resident ownership and partnerships, resulting in limited community involvement
- Public transportation regionally and through the Park
- Market competition in neighboring communities and states
- Affordable housing
- Workforce shortages
- Childcare service shortage
- Slow recovery of international travel

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

West Yellowstone is synonymous with the Montana Brand:

SPECTACULAR UNSPOILED NATURE, VIBRANT & CHARMING SMALL TOWNS AND BREATHTAKING

EXPERIENCES

With Yellowstone Park in our "backyard" and our "front yard" composed of three national forests, *we can offer* more spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48. As the west entrance to Yellowstone National Park and geographically located adjacent to the National Forests, just two miles from Wyoming and 12 miles from Idaho, we are uniquely positioned to be a vibrant and charming small town that serves as a gateway to natural wonders.

Our messaging is similar to the guidelines laid out by Destination Analysts: honest and genuine, focusing on adventure and activity-based niches, unique experiences and access to unspoiled nature with modern comforts.

We differentiate our value proposition by featuring direct access to the First National Park and events and activities specific to the different seasons to offer breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

Select all that apply: Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Stewardship, Destination Development).

Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Development

Based on the strategic role you serve, provide the following information.

3a. Define your audience(s) (demographic, geographic, and psycho-graphic).

Destination Management & Development Target Audience: hotel developers, tour operators, business owners, government officials, local, regional and state partners including the town staff and council, downtown development advisory board, TBID, West Yellowstone Foundation, Custer-Gallatin National Forest, Yellowstone Airport, Yellowstone National Park and others concerned with the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism destinations.

Destination Marketing Target Audience: We use our marketing funds to focus mainly on the family travelers and winter enthusiasts, incorporating niche messaging into our shoulder season campaigns. With our public/private partnerships, we are also able to penetrate some international markets.

CONSUMER

As a result of the Destination Analysts Study, Destination Think Tourism Sentiment Survey, and others we have received specific to West Yellowstone, we learned that the Geo-Traveler spans multiple generations and characteristics and has now morphed into a general profile of the high-potential visitor, with high-value niches.

Further research has shown us that our demographics are relatively split between male and female, skewing slightly depending on the season, average ages of 35-64. By using demographics, consumer behavior and geographic data, we are able to break these traveler demographics down even further to the four most valuable life stages: Midlife Success, Accumulated Wealth, Young Accumulators and Mainstream Families (source: Amplified). Based on the data, these groups are most appropriate for targeting the products and services West Yellowstone offers.

Midlife Success

- Ages 25-44

- HHI of \$69,918
- 39.6+% Homeowners
- Mostly with Children
- Some College or More
- Prefer Vibrant Social Scene & Nightlife
- High Tech Adoption
- Research and purchase products online
- 9% of US Households

Accumulated Wealth

- Ages 35-54
- HHI of \$99,701
- 88.1% Homeowners
- Kids Under 18 in the Home
- Mostly College Graduates
- Love Travel & Fine Dining
- High Tech Adoption
- Own the Latest in Tech Trends
- 11% of US Households

Young Accumulators

- Ages 25-54
- HHI of \$74,901
- 78.2% Homeowners
- Kids under 18 in the home
- Most with some college
- Focused on Family
- High Tech Adoption
- Lean on social/digital review
- 8% of US Households

Mainstream Families

- Ages 25-54
- HHI of \$61,890
- 71% Homeowners
- Kids Under 18 in the Home
- High School Educated or More
- Look for bargains & deals
- Medium Tech Adoption & Usage
- Tend to Shop National Brands
- 9% of US Households

Target Geographic Markets

West Yellowstone's primary geographic target markets have historically included:

- Top states: Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Texas, Idaho, North and South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, Florida, and Minnesota. (Fluctuates seasonally)

- Top countries: Canada, UK, France, Germany, Australia, Mexico & China.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

Destination Yellowstone DMO utilizes many different research resources when planning and executing our DMO Marketing Plan. The different resources listed below help us to gauge campaign engagement and statistics, verify our demographic, geographic and psychographic markets and gain insights on new industry trends. This list includes, but is not limited to:

- **Destination Yellowstone.com Website** – Analytics measure users (current and new), session times, campaign stats, email leads and travel planner downloads.
- **Local Resort Tax Collection Reports**
- **Yellowstone National Park Service Visitation Statistics**
- **Yellowstone Airport & Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport Monthly Visitor Data**
- **Google Analytics**
- **Zartico** – Provides spending, traffic and travel origination & patterns of visitors
- **Placer.ai** – Provides real time geofencing for data capture
- **Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research**
- **Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development**
- **Destination Analysts** – State of the American Traveler Yearly & Monthly Reports provide travel insights, outlook and industry updates
- **Destination Marketing Association of the West**
- **Center for Responsible Travel**
- **Leave No Trace**
- **Destination Think**
- **Longwoods International** - Travel Sentiment Surveys & Research
- **Skift Travel Research** – Global Travel Outlook
- **Smith Travel Research Report** – Monthly STR Reports
- **US Department of Commerce, Office of Travel & Tourism Industries**
- **US Travel Association**
- **Voices of Tourism**

3c. What are your emerging markets?

A few factors are front and center for FY24 that we are giving extra consideration to when looking at new markets:

- Flood aftermath continues, resulting in us marketing during the summer to continue to help support our businesses and help support and drive local traffic and bookings.
- Geographic markets continue to fluctuate with international travel starting to come back finally after the pandemic. New international market: India & new domestic/regional markets: California, Colorado & Georgia.
- New residents to the state and region, plus those from urban areas have continued to expand our niche activity-based outdoor enthusiast markets, including this year, fall season motorcyclists.

4. Define and describe your overall goals.

A goal is an idea of the future or desired result that a person or group of people envisions, plans and commits to achieve.

Destination Yellowstone's overarching goal is to attract visitors by communicating an image consistent with our long-term vision as a vacation destination and one that places high value on existing assets, amenities and natural resources of the region. This year especially we need to continue to communicate that we are open and focus our attention on actively marketing to eliminate the passthrough town impact that we have begun to see. We set these goals to help us balance our focus between destination marketing, destination development and destination management. We continue to encourage both residents and visitors alike to travel safe, recreate responsibly, leave no trace, focus on wildfire safety, and of course continue our "Be Patient, Be Kind, Be Cool, Be Responsible" campaign.

4a. Describe proposed tactics and projects as related to overall goals and controlled by the organization in its financial statements.

Tactics include:

- Expanding our marketing effectiveness and social media reach and interaction by joining our efforts with those of marketing partners. Incorporate the Montana brand pillars and initiatives whenever possible. We will continue to participate in joint ventures, leveraging our funds.
- Creating media and messaging around traveling respectfully and responsibly, leaving no trace and overall wildland fire safety. We are incorporating the Leave No Trace principles into our messaging.
- Provide support and funding to our visitor information center both in staffing and projects to improve both the services available and the visitor experience. If we see more funds during the year, over our original forecast, this is an area where we will increase funding, as visitor experience enhancements is an important part of our plan.
- Enhance the visitor experience and educate them on the activities and events taking place within West Yellowstone. Help visitors route in and around West Yellowstone and the surrounding areas of Montana to experience all that our State has to offer.
- Educate staff through professional development & educational opportunities, including seminars, trainings on emerging trends and new products, and conferences.

**Optional: Add attachment
Here**

**Optional: Add attachment
here**

**Do you want to add an
attachment?**

Do you want to add an attachment?

Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<p>#1 - Destination Marketing: Track the effectiveness of our marketing programs by monitoring and reporting on our paid and earned media, social media, website usage, travel planner distribution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% increase in Lodging Tax Collections over FY2019 – the last year of a “normal” collection, before the pandemic and flood. • Increase website usage by 10% • Social Media growth of 5% • Increase Travel Planner digital downloads by 10% • Increase email subscribers (leads) by 8% 		
<p>#2 – Destination Management: Promote responsible travel and recreation messaging to both visitors and residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host two Leave No Trace trainings for local residents and businesses. • Incorporate “Travel Like a Local” messaging and graphics into our website, write 2 blogs and into our 45,000 Travel Planner. • Incorporate the Leave No Trace principles into our printed materials and distribute them into our community to educate residents and visitors. 		
<p>#3 – Destination Development: Improve the visitor experience by providing exceptional visitor interface with the staff of local businesses and the visitor information center, provide accurate and consistent information through our website, printed materials and brochures and maintain and improve the visitor information center.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% increase in participation at the Front Line Training. • Create 10+ short form videos to help expand visitor experience and education. • Help begin the process of the visitor information center bathroom remodel. 		

DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$85,000.00	19.0	\$0.00	0
Agency Services	\$20,000.00	4.5	\$0.00	0
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$8,000.00	2.0	\$0.00	0
Education/Outreach	\$10,000.00	2.3	\$0.00	0
Joint Venture	\$10,000.00	2.3	\$0.00	0
Opportunity Marketing	\$100.00	0.04	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$161,882.00	37.36	\$0.00	0
Marketing Personnel	\$20,000.00	4.5	\$0.00	0
Product Development	\$10,000.00	2.3	\$0.00	0
Research	\$18,000.00	4.0	\$0.00	0
Travel/Trade Shows	\$10,000.00	2.3	\$0.00	0
Visitor Services	\$50,000.00	11.4	\$0.00	0
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$35,000.00	8.0	\$0.00	0
	\$437,982.00	100.00	\$0.00	0.00

Narrative Evaluation

DMO Plan Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
--------------------	------------------	------------------

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
FY24 Marketing Budget Approval - BOD Meeting Minutes	BOD Minutes 4.11.2023-FY24 Marketing Budget Approval.pdf	230 KB
Bylaws	By-Laws_05.03.2022-Signed.pdf	4.1 MB
FY24 Certificate of Compliance	FY24 CVB Certificate of Compliance.pdf	282 KB
FY24 Marketing Plan Approval - Email Vote by Board of Directors	Re_ FY24 Marketing Plan for Approval-MSP_4.28.2023 Approved.pdf	218 KB

