

**TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2020
HELENA, MT**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Katie Grice, Chair—Bozeman	Glenniss Indreland—Bozeman	Dr. Kenneth Ryan--Poplar
Lindzy Brunson--Kalispell	Sandi Luckey—East Helena	Alger Swingley—Great Falls
Jeff Ewelt—Billings	Bill McGladdery—Butte	Steve Wahrlich—Billings
Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish	Patricia McGlynn—Kalispell	Joe Willauer—Twin Bridges
Alicia Harvey—Bozeman	Sabre Moore—Ekalaka	

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Tami Burke—Glasgow	Rachel Gregg—Missoula	Brian Sprenger—Bozeman
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DEPT. OF COMMERCE (DOC) and MT OFFICE OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MOTBD) STAFF

Tara Rice—Director, DOC	Susan Joy—Made in Montana Program Manager
Jan Stoddard—ISO Bureau Chief	Carmen Levick—Tourism Outreach Coordinator
Kev Campbell—Business Development Specialist	Barb Sanem—Compliance Specialist
Michele Cushman—Tourism Grant Manager	Kate Siberell—Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Dan Iverson—Tribal Tourism Officer	Patty White—Marketing Bureau Chief
Todd Jackson—DOC Communications	

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair Katie Grice called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:30 a.m. Introductions of Council members, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) staff and the audience followed.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Katie Grice announced that the Research Committee report would be moved to the first item under TAC Committee Reports.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of the October 7-8, 2019 TAC Meeting Minutes

Steve Wahrlich moved to adopt the consent agenda. Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. With no request to remove an item from the consent agenda, the consent agenda was adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Coronavirus—Wendy Swenson requested that there be emergency funding available for marketing due to the coronavirus.

TAC MEMBER ROUNDTABLE

Updates and information of happenings in Montana were given by TAC members. Discussion included:

- Gayle Fisher is retiring from her position as the executive director for the Central Montana Tourism Region.
- Due to mild winter, fishing has been pretty good for outfitters on the river.
- Welcome to new TAC members Sabre Moore and Alicia Harvey.
- Kalispell TBID has been renewed through June 2030.
- Discover Kalispell has spent time reviewing strategy and rebranding and has decided to evolve the Kalispell brand to be a destination as opposed to a hub for visitors.

- Montana Dino Trail had a great year with approximately 360,000 visitors which is an increase of 5% from the previous year. The passport program has been successful.
- Visit Billings is in the process of hiring a sports marketing person.
- Airport expansions in Billings.
- With new management at Metra Park, there could be some changes coming.
- Cultural sensitivity—Visit Billings and Dan Iverson should be commended in their response to concerns that were raised concerning a recent campaign.
- Events in Butte continue to be successful and well attended.
- New film studio in Butte as interest in Butte for movie location increases.
- Butte working on uptown community master plan.
- Improvements planned for Big Sky to add new rooms and meeting space.
- Whitefish is working on a sustainable tourism plan.
- Astrotourism and dark skies events growing interest in Missouri River Country and Southeast Montana.

ITRR OUTLOOK PRESENTATION—Dr. Norma Nickerson, Director, ITRR

Norma Nickerson gave an overview of the 2020 travel and recreation trends and economic outlook. A review of the Tribal Research Study was also given. For more information on research by topic or locations, please visit <http://itr.uvm.edu/>.

TAC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Research Committee—Rhonda Fitzgerald, Chair

The Research Committee recommended the following projects for FY21 with a total cost of \$1,038,360.00. The estimated available budget is \$1,039,010.00.

- Quarterly Nonresident Travel and Recreation Analysis
- 2020 Economic Impacts and 2021 Outlook
- Tourism and Recreation Monitoring
- ITRR Data Mining
- Emerging Issues
- Survey Kits
- Negative/Positive Press/Social Media Impacts on Travelers
- Impact and Usage of Short-term Rentals in Montana
- Visitor Use Monitoring-Assessing River/State Park Use
- Projected Impact of Visitation Caps in Glacier National Park
- Impact of Music Festivals and Concerts
- Analysis of Montana Museum Visitors
- Administration

There were three project requests that will be tabled for consideration for FY22. They are:

- Air Service Impacts
- Bicycling in MT: Supply-Side Review & Demand Profile
- Residents' Attitudes Toward Tourism and Impact/Challenge to Community Character

Sabre Moore moved to approve the recommendation of the Research Committee. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Executive Committee—Katie Grice, Chair

Katie gave a recap of the TAC Executive Committee conference call, which was held Friday, February 7. Items of discussion included:

- SJ24 (Interim Study of Lodging Tax Use)
- Short-term rentals

- Upcoming meetings—Katie stated that the Executive Committee felt that it is important for the meetings to continue taking place in Helena as it is cost effective and fiscally responsible. She also asked that people carpool to meetings when possible.
- TAC Representation on the Montana Historical Preservation Grant Program—Katie asked that anyone interested in taking on that role to let her know.
- Performance audits at DOC—Role of TAC and working with the ISO Bureau to address findings and improve some of the deficiencies. Discussion included:
 - Develop checklists and research guidelines.
 - Opportunity to enhance what the TAC is currently doing with the marketing plan and market method evaluation reviews and add a layer of mentorship as part of the responsibility of the TAC. Katie stated that she had sent a Google doc to Council members and asked that they select a Region or CVB that they would like to be a mentor for. Katie also sent some information regarding best practices and reporting information.
 - It is time to review the current Rules & Regulations for the Regions and CVBs. Rachel Gregg will be leading this process and taking into consideration regarding items that need to be adjusted per the recent performance audit findings.

Marketing Committee—Katie Grice, Chair

The Marketing Committee reviewed and approved 18 Region and CVB FY20 budget increase requests on behalf of the full Council (as outlined in the April 2019 Rules & Regulations).

The Marketing Committee recommended final approval for the following FY19 audits:

Glacier Country—Bill McGladdery moved to approve the FY19 Glacier Country audit as submitted with \$106.13 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Jeff Ewelt seconded. Motion passed.

Bozeman CVB—Rhonda Fitzgerald moved to approve the FY19 Bozeman CVB audit as submitted with \$43.95 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Alicia Harvey seconded. Motion passed.

Butte CVB—Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the FY19 Butte CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.

Dillon CVB—Rhonda Fitzgerald moved to approve the FY19 Dillon CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Bill McGladdery seconded. Motion passed.

Gardiner CVB—Jeff Ewelt moved to approve the FY19 Gardiner CVB audit as submitted with \$0.20 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Alicia Harvey seconded. Motion passed.

Great Falls CVB—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY19 Great Falls CVB audit as submitted with \$0.06 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Sabre Moore seconded. Motion passed.

Havre CVB—Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the FY19 Havre CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.

Kalispell CVB—Alicia Harvey moved to approve the FY19 Kalispell CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Livingston CVB—Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the FY19 Livingston CVB audit as submitted with \$0.60 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Kenneth Ryan seconded. Motion passed.

Miles City CVB—Jeff Ewelt moved to approve the FY19 Miles City CVB audit as submitted with \$0.18 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Bill McGladdery seconded. Motion passed.

Destination Missoula CVB—Alicia Harvey moved to approve the FY19 Destination Missoula CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Whitefish CVB—Bill McGladdery moved to approve the FY19 Whitefish CVB audit as submitted with \$164.82 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.

Glendive CVB—Sabre Moore moved to approve the FY19 Glendive CVB audit as submitted with \$0.11 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.

Helena CVB—Bill McGladdery moved to approve the FY19 Helena CVB audit as submitted with \$71.03 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

As part of the process for the budget increases approved by the Marketing Committee, Jan Stoddard reminded the Region and CVB organizations that their budget amounts and marketing methods need to be updated and reflected in WebGrants as soon as possible. She said that once that is done, the information will be updated on the MarketMT.com website on the Region/CVB page and will be noted that it has been revised.

Montana Heritage Commission—Jeff Ewelt, TAC Representative on the Heritage Commission Board
Jeff said that the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC) is responsible for the preservation and management of Virginia City, Nevada City and Readers Alley. They oversee about 248 registered historical landmarks in those locations and manage about 1.2 million artifacts.

He said that the MHC is drafting two bills for a request to the Governor's office. The first one is for a \$2 million allocation to conduct critical safety and building stabilization on revenue generating properties. Approximately \$1.6 million of that would be spent in Virginia and Nevada cities to update 4 vacation rental units and upgrade fire suppression systems throughout. About \$350,000 will be used in Readers Alley for masonry, roof and rain gutter repairs.

The second bill would ask for the MHC to receive a lodging tax allocation increase. Currently they receive \$400,000. They are asking to increase that allocation to \$640,000, to be more reflective of the current dollar value as the original allocation was in 1997. They are seeking to keep the allocation under the same operating formula. The approval of the proposal would help to address major preservation projects before the projects become cost prohibitive or become safety concerns. Virginia and Nevada cities produce \$74.4 million in economic output across Montana and employs 1,226 people each year. In 2019, they saw approximately 532,000 visitors making them the largest state-owned attraction in Montana.

Other updates included the five projects funded by HB652. The biggest one was the fire suppression system for Nevada City. Additional projects funded through that bill included housing updates, ADA upgrades at the Wells Fargo and Bale of Hay, and renovations at the Methodist church so that it can serve as an event center. Jeff also mentioned that MHC staff is being trained on fire suppression and EMT services.

MOTBD UPDATES—MOTBD Staff

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) updates were given including staff changes, bureau updates, tribal tourism, marketing and research.

UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS/FUTURE MEETING DISCUSSION, SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

- June 8-9, 2020—Helena
- October 5-6, 2020—Helena

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.