



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128708 - FY24 Southwest Montana DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

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Comments
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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.

Southwest Montana, the cradle of Montana history, features copper barons, feisty outlaws, gold miners, Lewis and Clark explorers, hardworking cowboys, adventurous frontiersmen, and a Nez Perce Battlefield all set in the backdrop of 21 wildlife-filled mountain ranges, blue ribbon streams, 3.3 million acres of forest land, natural hot springs, a stalactite filled cavern, sapphire mines, 316 species of birds, and a dozen mining ghost towns and ghosts offering a lifetime of adventure.

Southwest Montana attracts an active mature/boomer audience with a focus on soft adventure. The region is a big draw for heritage and culture enthusiasts. We have a large nationally recognized heritage corridor running from Butte to Anaconda. Our 2022 visitors were mostly repeat visitors with 81% of groups being repeat visitors to the state and 83% plan to return within two years. First time visitors made up 13% of our groups. **75% of our nonresident visitors travel alone or are in a group of two.**

Mission: Create collaborative marketing and development strategies to connect visitors to the richness of Southwest Montana's natural beauty, recreational opportunities, culture, and historical attractions.

Strengths – Beauty, History, Culture, Natural Resources

- **Location** – centrally located between Glacier and Yellowstone national parks.
- **Along the Continental Divide** – including four gateway communities and many trailheads
- **Beauty and scenic drives** – including mountain ranges, streams, lakes, rivers, stars and the night sky, national forests and public lands, Continental Divide, wildlife, filming and photograph
- **Historical opportunities** - including ghost towns and ghosts, historic sites, location between the national parks, Lewis & Clark sites and museums;
- **Cultural opportunities and events**- mining history and ghost towns, western heritage, Native American history, live theatre, concerts, rodeos, fairs, local celebrations, cattle drives, working ranch experiences, historical & cultural tours, trolley tours, pow-wows, farmers' markets, ghosts and more
- **Natural resources** – in additions to mountains and rivers and streams; hot springs, radon health mines, rockhounding for gems, Lewis & Clark Caverns, fly-fishing, rafting, blue ribbon rivers and streams, hiking, biking, outdoor trails, downhill skiing, and ski joring.
- **Outdoor adventure** – hiking, biking, fly-fishing, ziplining, off-road trails, skiing, snowmobiling, floating, ski joring, photography
- **State Parks** – 11 including Lewis and Clark Caverns, Bannack, Spring Meadow
- **Not as crowded** and still have amenities

Opportunities

- Develop niche markets of history, ghosts, outdoor activities including multiple trail opportunities, and scenic drives throughout the region
- Partnerships with our communities, CVB's, and other regions
- Attract filming and photography opportunities
- Look at bringing a younger audience
- Educate our businesses on the importance of marketing and customer service
- Work with state to make it easy to find data and keep it updated

- Strategic Planning and potentially using resiliency planning information as we get results

Challenges

- Transportation concerns
- Employee shortage
- High gas prices and the unknown fluctuation
- Fluctuating hours, days, weeks, and seasons of attractions and off-season closures of attractions
- Limited cell phone coverage
- Poor economic factors
- Potential environmental situations such as fires, smoke, flooding, viruses, and potential influence of world conflicts
- Need for touring companies as many travelers prefer someone to take them to the attractions and take the guesswork out of their planning
- Shortage of meetings & convention facilities limits the ability to draw on these groups for potential revenue throughout the year and particularly in the off-season.
- Shortage of labor resources is taxing many small tourism businesses.
- Getting businesses and attractions to update their information on the state website
- Engaging board members to in-person meetings; since Covid this has been more of a challenge.
- Education – most small businesses and attractions can't afford a marketing person and people making the local marketing decisions are often untrained in the field. Marketing is frequently the first line item that is cut and this can create a problem of diminishing returns. The people who make decisions are often unaware of the consequences and so many are volunteers and don't realize the importance of getting informed on this crucial issue to their businesses. Even when opportunities are offered at free or extremely low cost; the people who would benefit often are unable to attend because they are occupied in the job or otherwise; and also because of an underestimation of how important marketing applies to businesses.
- Customer Service – This is another issue that many companies don't realize the need for employees and sometimes even management level. When Superhost was active it did very well for those who came. As time went it became a problem getting people to participate– shortage of employees, employers not wanting to pay employees to get this training and not feeling it is necessary.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

More spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

Southwest Montana has 21 mountain ranges, 3.3 million acres of forest land, 6 million acres of public lands, numerous blue ribbon rivers, lakes, streams, and hot springs. The region also has over 3000 miles of motorized and non-motorized trails on public lands and over 4000 miles of trails on the Continental Divide. In addition, visitors can go to a variety of 19 Wildlife Management Areas. Lewis & Clark Caverns, sapphire mining, rockhounding and geology are also offered in abundance in the region.

Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders.

Southwest Montana provides a direct route between Glacier and Yellowstone National parks and has many vibrant and charming small towns. Visitors can explore the fishing mecca of Ennis (also known for its great art scene) or take a trip to the Sweet Palace located in Philipsburg (noted as being one of the "Prettiest Painted Places in America"). Distilleries and craft breweries are found throughout the region. From the sophistication of the capital city, Helena, to historic Butte, America, and everything in between, the region offers visitors a variety of options when it comes to small town charm.

Breathtaking experiences by day, and relaxing hospitality at night

World class fishing, varieties of wildlife, twenty-two mountain ranges, outfitters and guides for all types of activities, loads of history, ghost towns and ghosts, hiking, biking, zip lining, photography, old west history, Native American history including the Nez Perce Battlefield, Lewis and Clark history, Gates of the Mountains tour, lots of art and culture, festivals, farmers markets, lots of scenic drives and Scenic Byways are all great experiences for our visitors.

Friendly local accommodations as well as breweries, distilleries, cookouts, live music and varieties of food and cuisine are available throughout the region.

Brand Vision: Enchant the visitor with adventures filled with scenic beauty, history, nature, excitement, indelible personalities and stimulate a desire to return.

Some of our taglines are:

“Ghost towns, Road Trips and Hiking Trails. The Rest is History.”

“Landscapes, Legends, and Lore. The Rest is History.”

“Mountains, Rivers, and Rodeos. The Rest is History.”

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

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

Destination Marketing, Destination Development

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

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

Destination Marketing – This is the great majority of what we do and we incorporate multiple strategies to implement marketing.

Destination Development – This category would apply to our work with the Continental Divide Trail and keep us open to other potential. We are creating a printable map for daytime hikers along with community events and offerings. We will have stories, photos, and more details on our website.

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

Demographics

- Active mature/boomer audience with a focus on soft adventure.
- Travelers with time and interests in culture and heritage.
- Anyone interested in history including mining, cowboy and cattle, Nez Perce, trails, and art.
- Adventure visitors wanting to hike and bike trails such as Continental Divide. Affluent visitors willing to fly and seek out activities and attractions.

Geographic

- Visitors going to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks
- Montanans
- Regional travelers and visitors from Washington, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Texas
- Canadians – focus on Calgary

Psycho-graphic

- History, heritage and culture enthusiasts.
- Hikers, bikers, wildlife enthusiasts, photographers.
- People interested in exploring ghosts in the region.
- Visitors without deadlines and willing to spend time exploring.
- Ghost enthusiasts.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

ITRR- 2022 Nonresident Visitors to Southwest Montana

- 26% Visit Yellowstone National Park
- 26% Visit Glacier National Park
- 13% Virginia City / Nevada City
- 12 % Ghost Towns
- 81% of all groups are all repeat visitors
- 83% plan to return within 2 years.
- 42% visitors are 65-74 years old; 39% are 45- 54 years old; an additional 14% being over 75 years old.
- 22% travel by themselves
- 53% are 2 travelers

Destination Analysis-April 2023 Report

- 70.6% of people will take a leisure trip in the next 3 months
- 19.3% will travel over 30 days in the next 12 months
- 39% of boomers or older have over 30 days available for leisure travel
- 41.1% of boomers use websites via search engines for information sources for travel
- 38.1% of boomers use email for information sources for travel
- 22.3% of boomers and 38.8% of Gen Z's use online content for travel information
- 15.8% of boomers use visitor guides for travel information

Expedia Media -2022; Inclusive Travel Understanding Traveler Values & Opportunities for Marketers

- 43% of travelers want Information on how to best engage with local cultures and communities at or near a destination when planning a trip
- 74% of consumers would choose a travel option that support local cultures and communities, even if it was more expensive.

AAA – 2023 Documentary; Travelers want Maps in their hands to view as opposed to using maps on the I-phone

MMGY - Boomers plan to spend the most of any generation: at least \$4,000 on travel in the next 12 months

Solo Traveler- On average, excluding airfare, 30% travelers aged 55-64 spend \$1500-\$2500 on a one-week trip

Governor's Conference on Tourism – Helena; 2023 Allison Whitmore; Yellowstone 1923 dropped \$22 million directly into Butte, Mt. This doesn't include the benefits to the surrounding areas.

3c. What are your emerging markets?

- The newest emerging market is "Ghosts." We have had paranormal film crews in the region and the response we are getting is quite astounding. We are creating a printable ghost map with paranormal narrative and tours and we are adding more information to our website as we accumulate stories and photos. The variety of ghost tours offered in Butte, Deer Lodge, Helena are usually sold out very quickly and they cost a premium to attend. We also have many ghost tours in our area around the region including Dillon, Bannack, Virginia City, as well as a few others. We have had several influencers on the tours and have partnered with the state on a couple as well. Our website statistics have skyrocketed in this area since we started this as an emerging market. Our goal is to provide extra information to keep our paranormal seekers interested and continue to offer more information as it is accumulated. We also have many haunted houses during October which add to the allure of the ghost seekers. We will continue to monitor this through our website and social media statistics.
- We are also adding the Continental Divide Trail as we have four Gateway Communities in Southwest Montana. This has been quite a bit of effort in seeing how to fit with what is already out on the trail. We will have a printable map with community information and trail head information. We will beef up our website to include more details as well. We also have increased our photos, stories, and essays regarding the trail and communities.
- We are adding a partnership with Glacier Country and Yellowstone Country on the Glaciers to Geysers program. We will feature motorcycling, snowmobiling and museums. This has already proven effective for the other two regions and we are now looking at filling the gap in the middle with information on Southwest Montana.
- We are considering working with more tour buses. We will research how, where, and when to work this market and if it is a go. If we invest in this segment, it will be an ongoing market. It usually takes a minimum of three years to start seeing the effects of working with the bus tour groups. It usually takes this long for the tour operators to build trust with a company and for them to offer new routes. The bus tour groups tend to be popular with the older age group which is what the majority of our visitors are. We think there is potential in this and will look further into the viability of it.
- We are trying out a Chocolate Lovers Trail. Summer of 2023 is a test market for this project that was brought forward by a couple of members. The board was willing to give this a try and our goal is to get visitors moving around the region and give them another reason to take their time and visit many communities. We will get feedback from our participants on how things worked for them and on how it worked for the visitors. We will evaluate if it is a worthwhile project based on the feedback and

the number of passports turned in to Southwest Montana. At that point we will decide if we continue with the project, if it needs adjustments, or if we drop it altogether.

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.

1. Increase visitors to the region. *Destination Marketing*
2. Provide information to assist locals, travelers, and aspiring travelers to the region. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development*
3. Offer our rural and regional partners cooperative marketing and connecting/ collaborating opportunities. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development*
4. Increase our film, video, and photography inventory. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development*

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

A. Increase travelers to the region. Destination Marketing

1. Produce and distribute Southwest Montana Travel Guide around the state, and to Spokane, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho Falls, and Salt Lake City.
2. Use multi-media marketing including print, online, and digital.
3. Use social media including our blogging to entice the potential traveler.

B. Increase information to assist and inspire locals, travelers, and aspiring travelers to the region. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development*

1. Along with the travel guide, produce and print easy tear-off maps with scenic drives and attractions around the region.
2. Produce and print birding brochure, ghost map, Continental Divide Trail information.
3. Keep website updated with information, maps and events.
4. Use Butte Chamber as call center.
5. Use Certified Folder to distribute travel guides and birding brochures.
6. Offer cooperative marketing opportunities in the early fall and in early spring with our rural and regional partners.
7. Add photos, videos to increase appeal and allure to our potential visitors.
8. Partner with University of Missoula graduate students to gather photos and write essays and stories on the communities, rivers, mountains and ecology of Southwest Montana. We are working toward covering all communities, mountain ranges, and geological aspects of the region.
9. Begin the process of bringing in buses to the region. -We see this as a potential as we are a major drive-through market between the National Parks. We will begin by finding companies and how to work with them to pull their buses through our region.
10. Have one - twos fam tour of frontline workers and members to inform them of the attractions in Southwest Montana.
11. Push out our attractions to get written in publications.

C. Offer our rural and regional partners, connecting / collaborating opportunities, and cooperative marketing. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development*

1. Have meetings to share information.
2. Bring in speakers.
3. Gather content for our website and social media channels.
4. Marketing opportunities through our cooperative marketing funds.
5. Add Glaciers to Geysers regional tour collaboration.
6. Work with Strategic Planner to help determine what is best for the region.
7. See how the Resiliency Plan will benefit the region and how to incorporate where beneficial.
8. Work with Voices of Montana to continue educating people on importance of tourism.



Optional: Add attachment Here


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Do you want to add an attachment?

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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<p>Destination Marketing, Destination Development</p> <p>Offer our rural and regional partners cooperative marketing and connecting / collaborating opportunities. We have now increased this to two time periods.</p> <p>Continue expanding our inventory of stories and photos of all the communities in Southwest Montana. The expansion of the photos and</p>	<p>Provide two cycles of cooperative marketing to our regional partners.</p> <p>Increase inventory by 7 stories and 15 photos.</p> <p>Become a partner in the Glaciers to Geysers winter booklet and marketing.</p> <p>Build relationships around the region and include at least seven board members</p>	<p>Cooperative Marketing - We did three cycles of cooperative marketing. Information in the narrative.</p> <p>Stories and Photos - We had nine new blog posts with more than 15 coordinating images and videos for each story.  Blog postsravel Blog Page 1 of 28</p> <p>Glaciers to Geysers -We did partner with GlacierCountry and Yellowstone Country to do the Glaciers to Geysers Snowmobiling and winter promotioin. Glaciers To Geysers </p>	<p>Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful. yes, we will do again. Our cooperative marketing gives us a way to help our partners with marketing their projects. We are able to help many with their marketing, brochures and delivery. They are very appreciative and this helps create goodwill in the region.</p> <p>Yes, met the objective metric for this project and will continue with blog posts and images around the region. In FY24, the Visit Southwest Montana blog told stories of the region. Each of these blog posts featured</p>

<p>stories are then available for our rural area to use.</p> <p>Collaborate with Yellowstone Country and Glacier Country on Glacier to Geysers project.</p> <p>Build relationships with partners from around the region. Today it isn't easy to pull people from their daily duties and obligation. The strategic planning will take many extended meetings to develop and we have found that a consistent smaller group can help to accelerate and target the forward progression of these meetings. We will want input from members around the region to help us set goals and plans so that we are meeting the needs of as many as possible in the region.</p> <p>Partner with Voices of Montana to continue education on tourism to partners throughout the state.</p>	<p>in the strategic planning process to learn how to best market, manage, and develop the region.</p> <p>Have at least two meetings in the region that educate participants on the importance of collaboration and tourism.</p>	<p>Build relationships strategic Plan with board members. No, we did not meet our objective, no, we were not successful; yes we will try to do this in the next fiscal year. Since we had to do a request for proposal for a new ad agency we felt it would be better to hold off on this project to make sure we were going to work with the agency of record to develop this. We moved these funds to the next fiscal year.</p> <p>The collaboration shifted more to Resiliency Plan as Dax was the main point of contact between the Coraggio Group and the regions. We met with Dax Schieffer, in Helena and had several zoom calls.</p>	<p>various businesses and destinations across the region; 9 such posts included the following topics: Nevada City Museum and Music Hall, suggestions to spend a weekend in Butte, Montana Learning Center, Myrna Loy Theatre in Helena, the Old Salt Co-Op, Helena's Historic Tour Train, St. Patty's Day in Butte, Philipsburg's Opera House Theatre, and a Victorian Christmas at Grant-Kohrs Ranch.</p> <p>Each blog features a story about the destination and images—a mixture of new images and those from the Southwest Montana archives. Utilizing Crowdriff Photo Asset DAM, it is easy to upload and share new and existing photos with members and partners, increasing the region's collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Relationships and strategic plan - No, we did not meet our objective as this project has been moved to next fiscal year. We wanted our plan to align with the Resiliency Plan which was not ready until later. Also, since we were going out for request for proposal for an ad agency, we wanted to make sure the agency of record would be a major contributor for the next strategic plan.</p> <p>Yes, we met our goal, yes we were successful and yes, will do again. All our meetings are educational and include collaboration. The collaboration shifted more to Resiliency Plan as Dax was the main point of contact between the Coraggio Group and the regions. We met with Dax Schieffer, in Helena, had several zoom calls, and he does regular newsletters. Voices of Montana Tourism and Dax Schieffer has great educational information on tourism and gives us updates on the region. He is a great speaker and keeps us engaged and informed.</p>
<p>Destination Marketing: Increase Visitors to the Region through multi-media and public relations.</p>	<p>Increase lodging tax collections for the year by 2%.</p> <p>Use multi-media to attract visitors to the region: We optimize for cost per thousand impression and cost per click. We also track lead generation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital: \$1.50 average cost per click 	<p>Bed tax collections decreased 4.88% from FY23</p> <p>The digital campaigns deployed by Windfall, the agency of record shows an average CPC of \$.36. Please see attachment.</p> <p>Leads were from Yellowstone Journal 7,742 and Glacier Country 10,000 for a total 17,742.</p> <p>Circulation 1,632,000 Ad Cost: \$69,299.71 Cost/\$23.55</p> <p>Facebook engagement over FY23 was an increase of 187%  Facebook</p>	<p>No. Visit Southwest Montana did not achieve the objective of increasing visitors to our region as measured by bed tax collections. These methods will continue to be used to promote the assets of the region to visitors. We did meet all our other goals and yes, we will do the projects again.</p> <p>Bed tax collections during FY24 decreased partly due to the loss of the Paramount production of 1923 filming due to the Writers Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild strike, negative publicity about "Hoot Owl" fishing restrictions, as reported by fishing guides and lodge owners in the region, and</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate at least 12,000 leads. • Print advertising to reach over 300,000 under \$40 average cost per thousand • 15% increase in Facebook Engagement over FY23 • 20% increase in Instagram followers over FY23 • Publish at least two stories of Southwest Montana 	<p>Instagram followers increased 10% over FY23  Instagram</p> <p>Stories: https://www.kpax.com/news/western-montana-news/helmvilles-mannix-ranch-hosts-second-old-salt-festival https://www.kpax.com/news/western-montana-news/tana-the-elf-busy-shopping-for-santa-at-some-of-southwest-montanas-hidden-gems</p> <p> Boulder Story  Silver Star Story</p>	<p>leveling of lodging rates after strong increases following C19. While bed tax dollars decreased, the promotional campaigns deployed saw success based on the metrics provided when creating the marketing plan.</p> <p>Yes, Visit Southwest Montana met the measurable metric for digital placements in FY24. It achieved 17,164,030 impressions in mixed media strategies, including banner campaigns, E-Newsletters, E-guide pageviews, Programmatic Carousel Ad Units, social promotional ads driving traffic to the website, geographic and interest-targeted campaigns, and event campaigns.</p> <p>Our leads from Yellowstone Journal and Glacier Country were a great success and very important to bringing attention to potential visitors to the region. They are the biggest feed into our region and in addition help with return visitation to Montana.</p> <p>Our print advertising helps to expose Visit Southwest Montana to a variety of areas and niche markets. This gives us great exposure and inspires trips to our region.</p> <p>Facebook continues to have the largest social media presence and sits at the center of the social strategy. The majority of the social media efforts targeted Facebook with significant results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar posting strategy to FY23 was maintained, increasing the number of posts made by 2.5% year over year. • A continuation of emphasis on engaging with our audience on Facebook, replying to comments, asking questions, and reacting to comments/shares. <p>The region will continue engaging on this platform through FY25, with an increased focus on vertical short-form videos to improve engagement and increase the number of followers.</p> <p>Stories grab peoples attention and brings focus to a variety of attractions and events to our region.</p>
<p>Destination Marketing, Destination Development</p> <p>Provide information to assist locals, travelers, and aspiring travelers to the region. We will travel around the region to deliver a variety of literature and introduce ourselves. This will</p>	<p>Make two trips around the region handing out literature to the businesses that don't have Certified Folder deliver to them.</p> <p>Print and distribute Southwest Montana travel</p>	<p>Five trips were made around the region connecting with local businesses and giving out travel guides and brochures.</p> <p>We printed 130,000 Travel Guides, did two more printings of the Birding Brochure, and printed the Haunted History Map.</p>	<p>Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful, yes, we will do again. Local businesses were especially appreciative to the the information for their visitors. This is a great way to connect with many of our local campgrounds and places that don't receive literature from Certified Folder. The people</p>

also help build connections to Southwest Montana with businesses that aren't that aren't that familiar with us.

We will print our travel guide as it is the best way to get information on the whole region in the hands of our current and potential visitors. We worked with birding experts from around the region and state and built a successful birding brochure about 18 years ago. We periodically update it to keep it current. We print about 5000 birding brochures annually and run out every year.

We will continue with several joint ventures with the state.

We will continue to develop a Continental Divide website that highlights the four gateway communities.

If two of our new projects: Chocolate Trail and Book Trail are successful for 2023; we will continue with these projects.

We will continue updating our website and use our social media to reach a greater audience.

guides. Do another print of birding brochures and other literature as needed to meet the needs of our visitors.

Participate in at least three joint ventures with the state and or regional partners.

Create a Continental Divide website that highlights the four gateway communities that includes trailheads, attractions, trail information and photos.

Get feedback on the new Chocolate Trail by the number of passports and gifts given out.

Determine success on the Book Trail through survey results.

Increase our website traffic by 10% over FY23.

Increase our blog views by 7% over FY23.


 Travel Guide Link  Haunted History Birding Brochure is in attachments.

We participated in 4 Joint Ventures with Destination Montana: Sojern, Jun Group, Teads and Pinterest over April - May. Total cost of this Joint Venture was \$34,529 serving over 7.8M Impressions at a CPC of \$.48We participated in nine joint ventures with the state and regional partners.

Crown of the Continent updated and 50,000 copies were printed.

We collaborated with Yellowstone Country and Glacier Country on the Glaciers to Geysers project, although not in the printed booklet portion of the project. Website stats for Oct. - Sep.: 565,475 users with 597,015 sessions, 2.6M page views, 58.92% engagement rates, 9 minutes-16 seconds average engagement time.

Lewis and Clark National Park Brochure - had 5000 brochures printed and 3,548 Visitor Impressions of pages with SWMT content - 2,997 Unique Visitors - Average Time: 2:50

 Lewis and Clark Nat Park Brochure Analytics Please see attachments for SWMT Lewis and Clark Brochure.

All four Gatewat Communities on the website and more. **Continental Divide in Southwest Montana** For FY24, a couple of sections on the website received traffic for the CDNST with 6,671 page views.

Chocolate Trail - The Chocolate Trail had 5,567 website visits, printed an additional 3700 passports. 22 people had enough sigatures and received T-shirts or hats. See Attachment

Book Trail - 10,000 Passports and 10,000 Bookmarks were printed. At least seven stories were printed regarding the Book Trail, and the survey comments are in an attachment.

Website- FY24 saw a 24.9% increase in pageviews over FY23 and a 13% increase in total users over FY23  Visit Southwest Montana Website

Blog Posts- Blog views increased by 20.34% based on GA4 statistics  Visit Southwest Montana Blogs

are glad we make the connections and look forward to the next visit from us.

Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful, yes, we will do again. We are to market a nine-county region and the Visit Southwest Montana Travel Guide is a great way to get inspiration to all these areas. We use Certified Folder, website requests, lead requests from print advertising and also our regional local deliveries to get our literature distributed. Many visitors prefer the actual printed pieces and we have detailed information on them so they are to navigate to the areas with the information they have in hand.

Yes, the region met the measurable objective and will continue to work with Joint Venture opportunities in the future.

The attached Media Performance Report from Windfall delineates descriptions, placements, and geotarget.


Joint Ventures: Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful, yes, we will do again.Crown of the Continent helps us to market the northern area of our region. It is also very popular with the people coming in through the state at our Lima rest area.

Yes, the metric was achieved for Glaciers to Geysers; however, due to budget constraints, not all parts of the program will be continued in the future.Visit Southwest Montana participated in several aspects of the G2G project, including summer travel itineraries, niche markets featuring museum stops, motorcycle scenic rides, cross-country, downhill skiing, and snowmobiling trips.

Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful, yes, we will do again.Lewis and Clark National Park Brochure - We partner with several of our region buddies on this brochure and Lewis and Clark has been our second most request for information for most of the year.

Continental Divide - Yes, we met our objective, yes, it was succussful, and yes, we will continue marketing the Continental Divide on our website. This is very popular on the website.

Chocolate Trail - No, we did not meet our goal, not successful, we will not do again. The people who did turn in the passports loved the trail; but we couldn't control the places that participated. With too much uncertainty and lack of control of participants we chose not to do this again.

			<p>Book Trail - Yes, we met our goal, yes, we were successful, yes, we will do again. Had many more bookstores that want to participate next year. With the free press and the many positive comments from the surveys, we feel this is a great project which includes many local businesses.</p> <p>Website - Yes, this metric objective was met, website was successful and the website will continue to be updated and promoted as website traffic increases yearly.</p> <p>Blog - Yes, this metric objective was met. Blogs will continue to be a part of the promotion for the region as blog views continue to see significant traffic, with a total of 137,631 page views in FY24. Due to Google Analytics reporting changes, the comparison timeframe used was Nov 15, 2023-June 30, 2024, to the previous year to calculate that increase.</p>
<p>Destination Marketing, Destination Development</p> <p>Increase our film, video, and photography inventory. Photos and videos are used for social media, blogs, advertising, website, printed materials, film site, essays, newsletters, public relation and more. This is what adds flare, color, credibility, and enhances all of our work. It also helps us connect to our local communities as we collect and push out the assets on a variety of platforms.</p>	<p>Add at least six videos, and fifteen high quality photos to our inventory from many areas around Southwest Montana.</p> <p>Obtain 40 assets from User Generated Content (UGC) for use on the website and social media.</p> <p>Gather at least 20 action photos of people at festival, rodeos, or attractions.</p>	<p>Sixteen events and communities were captured in photo and video content gathered in FY24.</p>  SWMT Videos	<p>Yes Visit Southwest Montana achieved the measurable metric. This method will continue to be used by the region to gather still and video content.</p> <p>Over the course of FY24, the photo and video team spent significant time throughout the region. All of these videos can be found on the region's YouTube Channel, published through FY24: Stargazing in Southwest Montana (x4); Big Hole Marathon, Sculpture in the Wild, Augusta Rodeo Weekend, St. Patty's Day, Grant-Kohrs Holiday Open House, Philipsburg Yule Night, Beaverhead Brewing, Townsend Fall Festival, Edgewater Farms, Goosebay Glassblowing, Rocking Z Guest Ranch, and the Big Hole Battlefield Commemoration.</p> <p>In addition to these videos, a wide variety of photo assets from the Summer Star Ranch in Helena, Old Salt Festival, Virginia City, Southwest Montana businesses, An Ri Ra Irish Festival.</p> <p>With photo shoots like the one organized with Summer Star Ranch outside of Helena, a stronger emphasis on featuring active people has been accomplished. This philosophy translated into the events captured throughout the year, whether it was a music festival or a Christmas stroll. The Southwest library of photo and video assets is robust and far exceeds 20 action photos.</p>

			Over FY24, the Crowdriff platform was used to request assets, update photo walls, and incorporate photo galleries throughout the Southwest Montana website.
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DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$193,344.00	14.86	\$172,125.27	89.03
Agency Services	\$70,000.00	5.38	\$61,725.00	88.18
Cooperative Marketing	\$30,000.00	2.31	\$12,885.42	42.95
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$13,000.00	0.5	\$10,777.00	82.9
Education/Outreach	\$14,000.00	6.07	\$10,625.76	75.9
Joint Venture	\$161,500.00	9.49	\$152,538.67	94.45
Marketing Resources	\$2,500.00	5.57	\$0.00	0
Opportunity Marketing	\$32,000.00	1.38	\$15,150.00	47.34
Paid Media	\$266,750.00	23.19	\$184,064.95	69.0
Marketing Personnel	\$47,000.00	5.77	\$27,026.14	57.5
Travel/Trade Shows	\$13,721.00	1.23	\$6,373.16	46.45
Visitor Services	\$370,000.00	17.54	\$273,372.62	73.88
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$87,250.00	6.71	\$74,966.25	85.92
	\$1,301,065.00	100.00	\$1,001,630.24	

Narrative Evaluation

*****SEE ATTACHMENT IN ATTACHMENTS COMPONENT FOR FULL REPORT*****

The visuals didn't show up on the copy here so it was forwarded to Barb Sanem.

Visit Southwest Montana deployed various promotional tactics and campaigns to achieve the goals stated in the Marketing Plan for FY24.

Goal 1: Increase visitors to the region – *Destination Marketing*

The region did not see an increase in bed tax collections over FY23, but bed tax collections for FY24 still exceeded FY22 numbers. Visitation to the region in FY24 was still considered vital.

We used multi-media marketing, including print, online, digital, and printed materials. Please refer to the attachments for placements, costs, statistics, and value-added programs. The programs deployed were successful, as reported in the Webgrants spreadsheet for FY24.

Calgary Outdoor Show was March 16 & 17; over 14K paid people attended this expo showcasing outdoor activities, locations, and equipment. Our booth at this show was larger as we put Butte and Helena on each side of the Visit Southwest Montana booth. The response was very good for our region.

We attended and met with travel writers in Missoula during the **Travel & Words Conference**, November 12-14, 2023. This was an opportunity to meet with 26 writers one-on-one. Part of the conference agenda included a seminar on ways to be a better writer. We are still working on the leads from this conference after following up with emails, letters, and calls. There is still interest.

We participated as a sponsor in the **Old Salt Festival** in Helmville. This year was the event's second year featuring locally sourced food and music. <https://www.oldsaltco-op.com/pages/about>

LIVESTOCK AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

Livestock make it possible to be agriculturally productive while maintaining and improving the fertility of land over time (i.e. capacity for water capture, hosting of robust microbial, vegetative and wildlife communities). Old Salt ranches monitor changes in key ecological indicators, working to discern the degree to which management is responsible and to continuously improve stewardship. The idea is to work with nature rather than fighting it with chemicals.

Ruminants convert grassland forage into nourishing and useful products, mimicking the symbiotic role that native ruminants had with grasslands. Livestock can also make valuable use of grain byproducts (e.g. hulls, screenings, brewers grain, etc) unfit for human consumption while fertilizing soil and terminating crops in place of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides that damage land.

Old Salt espouses husbandry that relies on handling skills and techniques to work primarily with an animal's mind rather than relying on force. Injecting growth hormones into animals unnecessarily risks detracting from overall well-being in the same way steroids would in humans. Consistent access to open space and adequate shelter is important for quality of life.

Furthermore, sub-therapeutics (i.e. antibiotics used for disease prevention instead of treatment) are avoided to prevent antibiotic resistance. Skillful balancing of genetics, feeding and management is key for raising livestock that produce exceptional nourishment at a good value.

Ultimately, animal-based agriculture has the power to produce nourishing food while maintaining and improving long term ecological health, leaving space for the wildlife that share the landscape. That's a win-win, that's Old Salt.

'Land is kin': Old Salt Festival celebrates local food and open landscapes

The Teads Agency hosted its **River Summit** in Ennis, Montana, in May. Jocelyn Dodge attended the event on behalf of our region. During this 2 day event, she could meet and converse with the following sponsors, experts, and brands.

River Summit Attendees
OFFICIAL SPONSORS

OnWater

Mustad
YETI
Visit Southwest Montana
FarWide Outdoors
Warriors & Quiet Waters

PRODUCT SPONSORS

Coast Products
Crazy Creek
Montucky

OTHER

Madison Valley Ranch
TREAD Agency

Attendee

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Alex Leone

Creigh Greene

Mike Duncan
Chris Eaton

Hilary Hutcheson
Ashley Brubaker

BRANDS

Hannah Kilbrade
Emily Ann Martin
Steve Raymond
Jocelyn Dodge
Alex Maier
Shane Stalling
Brian Gilman
Jesse LeNeve

MEDIA

Hilary Hutcheson
Amanda Caldwell
Rachelle Schrute
Doug Paton
Rihana Cary Stark
Garrett Gvyrigoyen
John Snow
Hannah Truby

STAFF

Dan Kahn
Beth Brennan
Ally Palmer
Sam Overturf - Videographer
Tyler McManus - Chef
Jackson Bland - Photographer

Affiliation

Public Land Water Access
Assoc.
Scout Arms, Repping
Mustad
Fishery Manager, Montana
FWP
Eaton Outfitters
Guide, Outfitter, AFFTA, BHA,
POW
Trout Unlimited

YETI
YETI
FarWide Outdoors
Visit Southwest Montana
OnWater
OnWater
Warriors & Quiet Waters
Warriors & Quiet Waters

Flyfisherman Mag
Content Creator
Gear Junkie
Men's Journal, Nat Geo
Content Creator
Content Creator
Outdoor Life
Mountain Gazette

TREAD Staff
TREAD Staff
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TREAD Staff
TREAD Staff
TREAD Staff

Goal 2: Provide information to assist locals, travelers, and aspiring travelers to the region. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development.*

We continued to print our travel guide, birding brochure, tear-off itinerary sheet, and paranormal map for visitors to use during their trip to make navigating the region more accessible. These printed pieces are popular and in demand, especially for the birding and paranormal niche markets. Campgrounds in the region use and continually request the tear-off itinerary sheets.

New to the region in FY24 was the opportunity to fund **Visitor Information Center (VIC) staffing**. Butte, Virginia City, and Anaconda participated in this program. To be eligible for this program, each VIC had to track visitors' location of origination and information given out. Each VIC had to be open at least 6 days a week for 7 hours daily. We reimbursed payroll expenses with approved invoices and payroll reports. Due to future funding, this program will not be continued but was considered a success.

In FY23, the **Call Center** was awarded to the Butte Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Information Center. The call center is responsible for answering 800 numbers and sending information as requested by visitors by phone and email. The Call Center has personnel available Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm; however, in the warm season months, the Call Center phone is answered seven days a week.

Inquiries by Source

Bird Watcher's Digest	40
Box Orders	26
Glacier Country	2318
Misc Sources	4
Southwest Travel Guide	39
Southwest Website	2915
Yellowstone Journal	1580

Inquiries by Interest

Locations	
Anaconda	695
Boulder	
Butte	412
Canyon Ferry	34
Deer Lodge	109
Dillon	155
Ennis	99
Helena	320
Lincoln	
Phillipsburg	85
Virginia City	213
USA	4335
Canada	155
Total all	4490

We continued using **Certified Folder** to distribute our travel guide to 925 sites in Montana, Idaho, Eastern Washington, and Northern Utah.

On June 18, a **Frontline Tour** was organized from Butte to Virginia City. Highlights of the trip included St. Mary of the Assumption in Laurin, Nevada City Music Hall, a Firetruck Tour in VC, time to explore VC and lunches in various restaurants, and a quick stop at Norris Hot Springs. This tour was open to anyone seeking more information on this portion of our region. Another benefit of this excursion was sharing community events, new businesses, and happenings with others on the bus. We had 17 people on the trip. This type of tour will be organized again in FY25.

Goal 3: Offer our rural and regional partners cooperative marketing and connecting/collaboration opportunities. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development.*

Working with our Southwest Montana partners with limited budgets, we further spread their promotion monies with our Cooperative Marketing program. We had three grant cycles in FY24.

Communities and non-profits participating in FY24 were:

- Discover Anaconda - trails and tourism maps, winter boost, brochure & Certified Folder

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64a2fc51cb10ca11d3d55be9/t/662a6b841dc985096081446f/1714056095813/2024+quickguide>

<https://anacondatrails.com/resources/trail-maps>

- Boulder Area Chamber of Commerce – billboard

Copper Village Museum and Arts Center (Anaconda) - marketing dollars

The project includes advertising the special events on the radio and through an advertisement in an Anaconda Tourist Guide. This advertising will target both Montana residents and tourists. The project also helped build a website for the Copper Village Museum and Arts Center. Main Home - Copper Village Museum and Art Center. Expanded publicity included targeted emails.

- Montana Learning Center (Canyon Ferry) – event sponsorship

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64a2fc51cb10ca11d3d55be9/t/662a6b841dc985096081446f/1714056095813/2024+quickguide>

- Powell County Museums (Deer Lodge) – brochure and distribution

Total amount awarded in FY24: \$14,614.92.

In the spring of FY24, the region began a hard push to have more **events** placed on our website. This allowed all communities to promote, free of charge, happenings of interest to visitors. [Calendar of Events | Southwest Montana Tourism Information](#)

Goal 4: Increase our film, video, and photography inventory. *Destination Marketing, Destination Development.*

In FY23, we contracted with **Crowdriff**; this platform has made it easier to access and source the content needed for social and paid media platforms. With

Photographer Jim Ward was hired to get stills for the region, he gathered quality photos: 93 skiing at Discovery Basin and 163 motorcycle stills. All this content is on Crowdriff

Billboard for Virginia City, located near Ennis MT

Additionally

The **Marketing/Publicity Personnel** position was filled in February. We have already secured more stories and films and increased connections with our regional partners.

We worked with **Tim Montana** to feature Southwest Montana in his video for Devil You Know. Tim is a native of Butte and lives in Nashville and Wise River, Montana. He recently sang the National Anthem at a Pittsburgh Steelers football game.

(320) Tim Montana - Devil You Know (Official Music Video) - YouTube

DMO Plan Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Chocolate Trail Passport	Chocolate Trail Passport.pdf	11.4 MB
Lewis and Clark Trail Brochure	Lewis and Clark NW Brochure.pdf	5.7 MB
Book Trail Comments and Feedback	Montana Bookstore Trail comments highlights.docx	22 KB
Book Trail Media Links	Montana Bookstore Trail Media Links.docx	14 KB
Birding Brochure	Southwest-Montana-Birding-Brochure.pdf	5.8 MB
Visit Southwest Montana Travel Guide	Southwest-Montana-Travel-Guide-2024.pdf	57.2 MB
Media Performance	SWMT FY2024 Media Performance Final (005).pdf	3.2 MB
Narrative Evaluation Report	SWMT Narrative Evaluation.docx	1.2 MB