

# Application Summary

**Application:** FY26 DMO Plan - Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.

**Applicant:** Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.

**Funding opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

## Application Responses

**Organization Name:** Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.

**First Name:** Robin

**Last Name:** Hoover

**Street Address 1:** PO Box 3048

**Street Address 2:**

**City:** Bozeman

**State:** MT

**Zip:** 59772

**Funding Opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

**Amount Requested:** 3,881,340

**TAC Approved Budget:** 3,881,340

## General Description Information

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

### **1a. Destination:**

Montana's Yellowstone Country is the region just north of Yellowstone National Park, encompassing five counties in south-central Montana and including three of the five entrances to the park. This region is made up of an array of communities, four state parks, three major ski areas, and rich arts, culture, and history destinations.

It encompasses stunning landscapes, vast public lands, pristine lakes and rivers, and a plethora of outdoor recreation.

Western lifestyle is alive and well with rodeos; cattle, sheep and horse drives; agritourism opportunities; and a host of guest and working ranches. It's a culturally rich region, home to Montana State University, live music year-round, museums and galleries, and a multitude of festivals, concert series and live theater.

From historic mountain towns like Cooke City, Silver Gate and Red Lodge, to luxury accommodations in Big Sky and Bozeman, Yellowstone Country has a diverse array of offerings that has made our region into one of the most sought-after vacation spots in the West.

### **Who we wish to attract:**

Montana's Yellowstone Country's goal is to attract high-value, low-impact visitors to promote sustainable tourism that not only enriches the local economy but also preserves the unique culture and environment of the destination. These visitors seek authentic experiences, valuing cultural immersion and local traditions while minimizing their ecological footprint. By encouraging travelers who prioritize respect for the land and its people, we foster a partnership that benefits

both the community and the tourists, creating memorable experiences that highlight the beauty and richness of the locality without compromising its integrity.

### **Why they'd come:**

Montana's Yellowstone Country offers a diverse range of activities and lodging options that cater to various preferences and interests. Visitors can enjoy outdoor adventures such as hiking, horseback riding, whitewater rafting and world-class fishing, making it an ideal destination for both thrill-seekers and nature enthusiasts. Additionally, non-outdoor adventures abound, including relaxing in natural hot springs, taking in scenic drives through breathtaking landscapes, and exploring charming small towns that showcase local culture and history. In winter, activities like skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling attract those looking for seasonal fun.

Accommodation options are equally varied, ranging from cozy cabins and rustic lodges to luxury resorts and campgrounds. Travelers can choose to stay in charming bed-and-breakfasts that offer a personal touch or opt for modern hotels with luxury amenities to enhance their experience. This diversity in activities and lodging ensures that visitors can tailor their trip to match their individual tastes, whether they're seeking adventure, relaxation or to explore our vast art and cultural offerings.

Getting here is easy by air or by car: Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport offers 20+ nonstop flights to cities across the United States, and our central location makes it an easy drive for visitors from Montana, the Dakotas, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington.

### **1b. Strengths:**

What most defines Montana's Yellowstone Country are our vast landscapes. From towering peaks along the Beartooth Highway to the rolling hills outside of Big Timber, our natural assets are the main draw to our area. The region abounds with year-round outdoor recreation opportunities — alpine and Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife watching, water recreation, ice climbing, hiking, snowshoeing, and soaking in one of the region's hot springs are just a sampling.

From a management and stewardship perspective, residents of Montana's Yellowstone Country take pride in our area and actively participate in the recreation and cultural opportunities provided. As such, there is a strong willingness to preserve our assets and our way of life.

### **Natural Wonders + Captivating Landscapes**

- **Yellowstone National Park:** America's first national park is the anchor to the Montana's Yellowstone Country region.
- **Beartooth All-American Road:** Once dubbed the "most beautiful highway in America" by an early travel/brand influencer, this epic drive continues to be a major attraction and a destination of its own importance.
- **Open Lands:** Travelers and residents enjoy access to Bureau of Land Management lands, U.S. Forest Service land, and national and state parks within a short distance from any point in the region.
- **Four Montana State Parks:** The four state parks in the region are Cooney Reservoir, Missouri Headwaters, Madison Buffalo Jump and Greycliff Prairie Dog Town.
- **Scenic Drives:** Picturesque routes take travelers up to high mountain vistas, along country backroads, and winding through our charming communities.

### **Exploration + Outdoor Adventure**

- **Alpine Ski Resorts:** Bridger Bowl, Big Sky and Red Lodge Mountain are three of the top ski resorts in the state.
- **World-Renowned Snowmobile Areas:** Cooke City, West Yellowstone and the Gallatin River Corridor all draw serious snowmobilers.
- **Nordic Skiing:** Rendezvous Ski Trails, Lone Mountain Ranch, Crosscut Mountain Sports Center and Red Lodge Nordic Center all offer exceptional trails, with a multitude of other trails across the region.
- **Three Hot Springs:** Bozeman Hot Springs, Chico Hot Springs and Yellowstone Hot Springs are all located in our region, with additional hot springs within a short drive.

## **Vibrant Communities + Western Hospitality**

- **Yellowstone National Park Gateway Communities:** Three of the five entrances to Yellowstone National Park are in Montana's Yellowstone Country, including the only year-round entrance at the North Entrance in Gardiner, the Northeast Entrance at Cooke City-Silver Gate and the most-accessed West Entrance at West Yellowstone.
- **Western Culture and History:** From American Indian heritage, dinosaurs, mining, ranching and mountaineering, the region offers a unique blend of western history and culture, including:
  - The Lewis and Clark Trail and the Bozeman Trail, which both passed through our region.
  - Bozeman's Museum of the Rockies, which is an anchor facility in the statewide Montana Dinosaur Trail.
  - Native American homeland ties including the original Crow Agency site, Madison Buffalo Jump and the headwaters of the Missouri River, all of which hold significant cultural and historical value.
  - Rodeos that take place in over 16 locations, many with multiple performances.
- **Rich Art, Food and Music Culture:** Montana's Yellowstone Country is home to fantastic restaurants — including several James Beard Award finalists — art galleries, music venues and live theater.
- **Annual Signature Events:** Local festivals and events, farmers markets, fairs, community rodeos and seasonal celebrations take place year-round.

## **Responsible Recreation + Essential Preservation**

- **Education and Outreach:** Educating our visitors on responsible recreation and best practices is a shared value among our DMO partners.
- **Resident Pride:** Residents feel a deep sense of pride in our natural assets, our history, and our way of life and prioritize protecting these values.

## **Infrastructure + Ease of Transportation**

**Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN):** As the busiest airport in the state, BZN offers nonstop service from nine airlines to over 20 destinations across the U.S.

- **Ease of Access:** With Interstate 90 running through the region and well-developed highways throughout, communities and attractions are easily accessible by vehicle year-round.
- **Destination Lodging and Meeting Facilities:** Several communities in the region have properties and facilities that can accommodate small to mid-size meetings and conventions. Bozeman and Big Sky also have full-service entities with the capacity to host larger groups.

## **Strong Local Partnerships**

**Regional Partnerships:** Montana's Yellowstone Country maintains close ties with both public- and private-sector partners throughout the region, which enables us to better promote an area or activity in area locales.

- **Statewide Partnerships:** Partnering with the Montana Department of Commerce and the other DMOs for specific joint ventures has always been an integral part of our strategy. Additionally, partnering with state agencies and other entities remains a priority. We will continue to work with the Montana Film Office, Montana State Parks and

other entities as opportunities present themselves.

### **1c. Opportunities:**

In addition to our exceptional outdoor recreation, Montana's Yellowstone Country has an impressive array of art and cultural opportunities, festivals, events and unique things to do. Promoting these offerings to targeted flight markets, as well as regional and drive markets, can help fill hotel rooms during non-peak times of the year. In addition, we have the opportunity to educate our residents, nonresidents and stakeholders about the importance of tourism to our economy and the value of recreating responsibly.

- **Entice a Younger Demographic:** There is an opportunity to promote the region to those seeking outdoor recreation and rich cultural experiences.
- **Highlight Unique Things to Do:** We can maximize visitation from our drive markets during shoulder seasons by highlighting the region's one-of-a-kind offerings and experiences.
- **Vast Arts and Cultural Opportunities:** Creation of a new arts and culture product will help guide visitation.
- **Outreach and Education for Both Residents and Nonresidents:** Our new Benefits of Tourism video can be used to educate communities on the benefits of tourism and the work of Montana's Yellowstone Country.
- **A Resident Handbook:** A publication — currently under development — will be distributed to new residents to help them better understand the nuances and challenges of living in our region.
- **Seasonality:** While this is also a challenge, seasonality presents an opportunity to develop and/or grow our tourism product in very distinct seasons.
- **Increasing Air Service to New and Existing Markets:** BZN now has [over 20 nonstop flights](#) to major cities in the U.S.
- **Rural Communities and Areas:** Even though it is the smallest geographic region in the state, Montana's Yellowstone Country is still largely rural, giving us the opportunity to move visitors from the heavily congested areas into the more rural outreaches by promoting day trips, scenic routes and activities. [Montana's Great Wide Open](#) partnership is a great product to promote these areas.

### **1d. Potential Challenges:**

Our biggest challenges lie in dispersing visitation and helping to fill hotel rooms during winter and shoulder season. We are doing a number of things to offset this:

- Promoting the Great Wide Open itineraries and other rural areas to disperse visitation during the busy season.
- Targeting specific demographics (such as younger, avid skiers) in direct flight markets to increase winter visitation.
- Emphasizing drive markets whose residents who can visit during the shoulder seasons.
- Implementing targeted recreate responsibly and community-focused campaigns to help encourage visitation to our vibrant communities and offset the public perception that federal layoffs are impacting Yellowstone National Park and the U.S. Forest Service.

Waning resident sentiment toward tourism is also a concern, prompting our organization to increase our outreach and education efforts around the importance of tourism to our economy. Our new "Benefits of Tourism" video can be utilized to help spread this message alongside our Recreate Responsibly campaign.

### **Current Challenges:**

**Challenges Around Federal Layoffs:** National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service layoffs could affect services as well

as public perception around whether national parks and forests are open.

- **Growing concern around a potential recession.**
- **Crowding/Overuse in Yellowstone National Park and Specific Areas of the Region:** Over-capacity issues.
- **Accommodations Cost and Overall Affordability:** Perception that accommodations in certain areas are expensive. Actual average daily rate implies otherwise, but hotels are most expensive during the busiest times of the year when the majority of people are visiting.
- **Seasonality:** Weather, amenities/service availability and staffing all have an impact on the potential growth of visitation during shoulder seasons.
- **Political Climate:** The current political climate can cause insecurity.
- **Workforce Issues:** Wages, housing and availability contribute to workforce shortages.
- **Transportation Issues:** Public transportation, seasonality of service, lack of electric car charger stations in rural areas.
- **Set-Jetting:** TV shows such as “Yellowstone” are a challenge because they lead to incorrect visitor perceptions. In addition, long-held welcoming attitudes may be waning due to growing populations in our area.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** We are committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible destination where everyone feels welcome. We acknowledge that people of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals may perceive a lack of visibility and representation in Montana, and we actively work to combat these feelings by promoting diverse voices and experiences.

#### Ongoing Challenges:

- **Economic Climate:** Reduced promotion funding, recession, inflation and gas prices.
- **AI for Travel Planning:** Travelers are increasingly using programs such as ChatGPT for travel planning purposes, with our owned media being crawled and generated back, and traditional search engine searches are diminishing. Not all demographics use travel planning tools the same, so it is a challenge to provide information across all demographics.
- **Climate Change:** Affects recreation (such as fishing and skiing), the economy (tourism-related jobs) and our environment.
- **Inclement Weather Conditions/Natural Disasters:** Wildland fires, floods and lack of snow can all inhibit visitation.
- **Infrastructure:** As the number of visitors continues to increase, infrastructure issues are a concern.
- **Competition:** Travelers can choose any destination in the competitor set, so it becomes our challenge to reach those most likely to choose our destination.
- **Public Health Issues:** Including communicable viruses.
- **Government Closures and Restrictions:** Federal and state government-mandated closures and restrictions.
- **Increased Hotel Inventory:** Significant increases in planned hotel inventory in the Gallatin Valley over the next few years have prompted concerns of oversaturation during winter and shoulder seasons.

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#### 2. Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana brand or describe the Brand strategy for your DMO.:

Yellowstone Country aligns effortlessly with Montana’s brand. The region offers abundant spectacular, unspoiled nature; breathtaking experiences; renowned hospitality; and vibrant, unique, welcoming and charming communities. We have used the core tenets of the Montana brand to create our brand pillars for continuity with the state’s efforts.

**Brand Idea:** Yellowstone is more than a park. In Montana, it’s an entire country.

**Content Strategy:** Show the “Beyond Yellowstone” experience.

### **Natural Wonders + Captivating Landscapes**

Showcase the region’s scenic attractions and spectacular sites.

Primary Action: Learn more about Yellowstone Country.

Montana Brand Alignment: More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

### **Exploration + Outdoor Adventures**

Highlight the four-season recreation opportunities within the region.

Primary Action: Consider a trip to Yellowstone Country.

Montana Brand Alignment: Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders.

### **Vibrant Communities + Western Hospitality**

Provide information on the accommodations, cuisine, events and culture throughout the region.

Primary Action: Book a trip to Yellowstone Country.

Montana Brand Alignment: Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.

### **Responsible Recreation + Essential Preservation**

Promote being good stewards and leaving no trace while vacationing in Yellowstone Country.

Primary Action: Leave no trace.

Montana Brand Alignment: More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

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**Destination Marketing:** ☒

**Destination Management:** ☒

**Destination Stewardship:** ☒

**Destination Development:** ☒

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

**Destination Marketing:** Promoting Yellowstone Country to attract visitors

**Destination Stewardship:** Emphasizing responsible management of resources and community interests

**Destination Management:** Coordinating Yellowstone Country’s tourism experience

**Destination Development:** Strategic planning and enhancements to support tourism growth

### **Geographic:**

#### **Drive:**

Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia

ITRR nonresident visitation studies for 2024 show that most of our visitors are from drive markets, with 69% entering via auto or truck and 16% entering by RV or trailer.

Visit Bozeman contracted with Future Partners to conduct a regional sentiment study in 2024, which included visitors from Montana, Wyoming, eastern Idaho and eastern Washington. The study found that 2/3 of regional residents and ¾ of Montanans plan to visit the area in the next two years.

## **Fly:**

Seattle/Tacoma, Portland, Boise, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Phoenix/Mesa, Denver, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Atlanta, Nashville, Charlotte, Washington D.C., New York, Newark, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul

Throughout 2024, Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport welcomed a record-breaking 2,642,707 passengers, which is a 7.2% increase over the 2,464,325 passengers recorded in 2023. This increase reflects the airport's pivotal role in providing reliable and efficient air travel for our market's continued demands. To support the growing number of passengers, the airport is undergoing a second expansion that will include three new baggage claim carousels, three new boarding gates, and concession areas.

ITRR nonresident visitation studies for 2024 show that 13% of nonresident travelers enter via air.

## **Primary Consumer Audiences, Destination Marketing**

### **Warm**

#### **On-the-Go Families**

##### **Psychographic:**

This audience uses vacations and trips to find quality time together. They like trips that can keep the group busy and offer experiences everyone can enjoy. Specifically, these families gravitate toward outdoor activities and recreation, along with visiting destinations with rich history.

##### **Demos:**

Age 35-49, \$80,000+ HHI, children in the home

ITRR Statewide Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024:

- Q2 and Q3 Travel Group Type: immediate family (20%)
- Q2 and Q3 Reasons for Trip: vacation, recreation, pleasure (61%)
- Q2 and Q3 Activities on Trip: scenic driving (52%), day hiking (44%), wildlife watching (35%), visiting other historical sites (18%), visiting Lewis & Clark sites (10%), fishing/fly fishing (11%), visiting museums (13%)

#### **Outdoor Adventurer**

##### **Psychographic:**

The travelers in this audience are outdoor enthusiasts looking for new adventures that meet their interests and values. These travelers are not necessarily looking for the “extremes” of outdoor recreation but are typically self-outfitted and want to experience outdoor activities, history and culture, and local cuisine.

##### **Demos:**

Age 30-65, \$80,000+ HHI, travel with significant other and/or friends

ITRR Statewide Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024:

- Q2 and Q3 Travel Group Type: couple (52%) and self (16%)

- Q2 and Q3 Reasons for Trip: vacation, recreation, pleasure (61%)
- Q2 and Q3 Activities on Trip: scenic driving (52%), day hiking (44%), wildlife watching (35%), nature photography (26%), recreational shopping (25%), visiting local brewery (17%), visiting other historical sites (18%), visiting Lewis & Clark sites (10%), fishing/fly fishing (11%), visiting museums (13%)

## **Park Goers/Return Visitors**

### **Psychographic:**

The travelers in this audience have visited Yellowstone National Park at least once and are familiar with Montana. They enjoy open space, fewer crowds and a slower pace. They seek events, attractions and communities that provide an authentic Montana experience. They have an adventurous spirit and a respect for nature.

### **Demos:**

Age 30-65, \$80,000+ HHI, travel with significant other and/or friends

ITRR Statewide Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024:

- 63% of visitors are attracted to Montana for Yellowstone National Park
- 69% not first-time visitors, 12% some first-time visitors, 19% all first-time visitors

## **Winter**

### **Avid Skiers**

### **Psychographic:**

This audience includes experienced downhill skiers and powder chasers who are looking for new ski adventures when the conditions are good.

### **Demos:**

Age 25-44, \$80,000+ HHI, may have children in the home but not necessarily in the traveling party

ITRR Statewide Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024 — average annual ski visits for the 2023-2024 season:

- Big Sky Resort: 320,749
- Bridger Bowl: 194,910
- Red Lodge Mountain: 100,114

### **Soft (and Cozy) Adventurers**

### **Psychographic:**

The travelers in this audience enjoy winter activities with less experience needed. They are looking for well-rounded trips with shopping, dining and leisure activities in addition to winter recreation.

### **Demos:**

Age 35-65, \$80,000+ HHI, children in the household or empty nesters



#### ITRR Statewide Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024:

- Q1 and Q4 Activities on Trip: recreational shopping (24%), visiting local brewery (14%), visiting other historical sites (12%), attending other events (10%), viewing art exhibits (8%), visiting museums (8%), attending performing arts (11%)

### **Niche Markets**

#### **Road Trippers**

The road trippers market encompasses families and empty nesters. Specifically, these travelers gravitate toward outdoor activities while enjoying small-town offerings, local food and drink, and historic sites.

#### **Culture Seekers**

Culture seekers are passionate individuals who are driven by an insatiable curiosity to uncover and understand the stories that shaped our world. They value authenticity and often seek out historical sites and museums that offer a deeper insight into different cultures and eras. Additionally, they frequently attend local festivals, art exhibits and community performances, seeking to immerse themselves in the vibrant cultural fabric of their surroundings.

#### **Moto Enthusiasts**

A dynamic and adventurous group, moto enthusiasts are united by the freedom of riding. They thrive on the thrill of exploration, seeking winding routes and scenic landscapes that showcase the beauty of remote locations. This audience values spontaneity and discovery, always looking for their next adventure and the memories created in less-traveled areas. This group enjoys various types of motorized travel, including ATVs, UTVs, motorcycles and snowmobiles.

#### **Wildlife Watchers**

Animal enthusiasts are dedicated naturalists who find joy in observing and studying various animal species in their natural habitats. This passionate community values patience and mindfulness, often spending hours in quiet observation, whether in parks or remote wilderness areas.

#### **International**

International travelers from countries like Canada, Germany, and Australia are adventurous explorers drawn to diverse experiences that showcase the beauty and culture of new destinations. This enthusiastic community values authentic interactions and seeks opportunities to connect with local traditions, cuisines and landscapes. They often engage in activities such as hiking through breathtaking national parks, immersing themselves in vibrant city life or discovering hidden gems.

#### **Film**

Montana's Yellowstone Country provides filmmakers with a wild paradise brimming with diverse landscapes for one-of-a-kind cinematic opportunities. In a 2024 study by the Montana Department of Commerce, the five counties in Montana's Yellowstone Country see between \$14 million and \$98 million in total economic impacts due to film production in the region.

#### **Destination Stewardship Partners:**

Montana's Yellowstone Country will continue to work with our residents and stakeholders, including local chambers of Commerce, visitor centers, DMOs, Yellowstone National Park, Montana Department of Commerce, U.S. Forest Service and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, and other collaborative partners.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :

Data Sources:

- Klear
- Muck Rack
- Sprout Social
- GA4
- Zartico
- Montana Department of Commerce data dashboard
- VisaVue
- Destination Analysts State of the American Traveler
- Skift
- U.S. Travel Association
- Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
- Montana Ski Area Association
- Smith Travel Research STR data
- Epsilon
- Nativo
- VICs
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport
- State/region/CVBs and local chamber data
- ITRR
- Call center data
- [Sojern: State of Destination Marketing 2025](#)
- [Madden Media: The Top 6 Marketing Trends 2025Madden Media: The Top 6 2025 Marketing Predictions | Tourism Marketing Predictions You Need to Know.](#)
- [Env \(Envisionit agency\): 5 Top Travel Trends for 2025 That All Destination Marketers Should Know](#)
- [HubSpot: The State of Marketing 2025](#)
- [Quad: 20 Marketing Trends and Predictions for 2025](#)

ITRR Nonresident Travel Survey, 2024: Montana’s Yellowstone Country

Montana’s Yellowstone Country welcomed 6,984,000 visitors, 56.5% of the average annual nonresident visitors to Montana.

Point of entry to Montana’s Yellowstone Country

• U.S. Highway 191   U.S. Highway 287 to Yellowstone National Park	17%
• U.S. Highway 20 over Targhee Pass	15%
• U.S. Highway 89 to Yellowstone National Park and Gardiner	9%
• Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport	9%
• Interstate 90 over Lookout Pass	9%
• Interstate 94 to North Dakota	6%
• Interstate 90 to Wyoming and Lodge Grass	5%
• Montana Highway 87 over Reynolds Pass	5%

Visitors spend an average of 5.5 nights, mainly traveling in groups of 2, and 70% are ages 55+. 61% of visitors came for vacation/recreation/pleasure and 21% to visit friends and relatives. 69% were return visitors. Yellowstone National Park, mountains, open spaces, hiking, lakes, fishing, camping, rivers and wildlife are all cited as the main reasons to visit.

Visit Bozeman, regional sentiment study, 2024, Future Partners

This study surveyed Montana, Wyoming, eastern Washington and eastern Idaho visitors.

- Overall, regional residents feel positive about the area, with a strong likelihood to visit in the next two years.
- Access to warm weather, outdoor recreation and Yellowstone National Park were the biggest draws.
- Highlighting unique things to do that offer good value or appeal to families could help with conversion.
- Overall satisfaction is high, even though accommodation costs and overall affordability of the area rank low.

### **3c. What are your emerging markets?:**

#### **Wellness Travelers**

This audience seeks transformative experiences that nourish the mind, bod, and spirit while exploring new destinations. They prioritize holistic well-being by seeking out retreats, spas and wellness resorts that offer activities like yoga, hot springs and revitalizing treatments.

#### **Agritourism**

Agritourism enthusiasts seek authentic experiences that connect them to the land and the origins of their food. This passionate community values sustainability and local agriculture, often exploring working farms and ranches to learn about farming practices, partake in harvests and enjoy farm-to-table dining experiences. They appreciate the opportunity to engage with farmers and artisans, gaining insight into the processes that sustain rural economies and preserve cultural heritage.

#### **Foodies**

Craft beverage and food enthusiasts are passionate connoisseurs dedicated to exploring and savoring the rich diversity of artisanal flavors. They actively seek out unique breweries, distilleries and farm-to-table restaurants, valuing quality, creativity and authenticity in their choices. ITRR data from 2023 show that 19% of visitors to the Yellowstone Country region are visiting local breweries. Fine dining is also on the rise within the region, with the James Beard Foundation recognizing restaurants including Campione in Livingston, Little Star Diner in Bozeman and MontAsia in Fishtail.

#### **Group Travel**

As our lodging property capacity continues to expand, there's an opportunity to market to group travel, including meetings, conventions, weddings and reunions.

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

#### **OVERALL GOALS, STRATEGIES & TACTICS**

### **Destination Marketing**

#### **Goal 1: Increase off-season visitation.**

**Strategies/Tactics:** Targeted advertising campaigns, including niche audiences, content marketing, social media promotion, influencer marketing, earned media and owned media promotion. Asset production included to support the above.

Identify key audiences and create micro-targeted campaigns across paid, earned, social and owned media platforms.

- Advertising campaigns: Creating promotional materials across various media (print, digital, social) to attract visitors. This can also include joint venture and cooperative advertising opportunities.
- Website development: Designing and maintaining an informative and appealing website to showcase attractions, accommodations, and events.
- Social media: Utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube Shorts to interact with potential visitors and share content.
- Collaborative marketing: Partnering with influencers and thought leaders to broaden reach and attract diverse audiences.
- Content creation: Developing blogs, videos, and photography highlighting attractions, experiences, and local culture.
- Public relations: Engaging with media outlets to garner positive coverage and generate buzz around Yellowstone Country.
- Event promotion: Advertising and hosting events to draw visitors and showcase the destination's offerings.
- Market research: Gathering data on visitor demographics and preferences to refine marketing strategies.

## **Destination Management**

**Goal 2: Increase awareness of and visitation to rural communities.**

**Strategies/Tactics: Targeted advertising campaigns, including niche audiences, content marketing, social media promotion, influencer marketing, earned media and owned media promotion. Asset production included to support the above.**

## **Destination Development**

**Goal 3: Increase awareness of Yellowstone Country's arts and cultural offerings.**

**Strategies/Tactics: Targeted advertising campaign, social media promotion and owned media promotion. Asset production included to support the above.**

## **Destination Stewardship**

**Goal 4: Develop a long-term, strategic plan for Montana's Yellowstone Country.**

**Strategies/Tactics: Define key phases, determine timeline and budget, hire a consultant and hold board of directors and stakeholder workshops.**

**Goal 5: Enhance community awareness and support for Montana's Yellowstone Country as a Destination Management Organization.**

**Strategies/Tactics: Speaking engagements, educational workshops, information campaigns, content marketing and video content.**

**4b. How will the addition of LFST funds enhance your overall goals?:**

**The LFST funds will be used for PAID MEDIA PLACEMENT to augment planned media campaigns.**

**5. Define and describe your overall objectives. Objectives are formed from your goals. They are logical, attainable steps to achieve the goals and are able to be measured.:**

**Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation:**

OBJECTIVES	MEASURABLE METRICS FOR SUCCESS	REPORT THE METRIC ACHIEVED
Destination Marketing: Develop and implement targeted marketing initiatives that result in a 2% increase in lodging tax revenue across winter and shoulder seasons.	<b>KPI:</b> Increase off-season lodging tax collection Q1: +2% Q2: +2% Q4: +3%	
Destination Management: Develop and implement targeted marketing initiatives that increase visitation to and occupancy in rural communities.	<b>KPI:</b> Visitor number and occupancy increase	
Destination Development: Launch a dedicated product showcasing Yellowstone Country's arts and cultural offerings within the next fiscal year.	<b>KPI:</b> On-time launch.	
Destination Stewardship: Develop a comprehensive strategic plan incorporating Destination Marketing, Management, Stewardship and Development to implement in FY27.	<b>KPI:</b> Strategic plan approved by board of Directors.	
Destination Stewardship: Educate/inform our communities, partners and tourism stakeholders about the value tourism brings to our economy and the stewardship and management work the organization does across the region.	<b>KPI:</b> Increase in positive resident sentiment.	



		0.00%		\$0.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL LFST Budget</b>	<b>\$244,145.00</b>	<b>5.92%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$244,145.00</b>

<b>TOTAL LFUT &amp; LFST BUDGET</b>	<b>\$4,125,485.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,125,485.00</b>
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LFST Revenue Projection	244,145.00
LFUT Revenue Projection	3,881,340.00
Funds not spent during previous fiscal year	0.00
LFST Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
LFUT Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
Allocated Following Audit	0.00
<b>Budget total</b>	<b>4,125,485.00</b>

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**The Narrative Evaluation report is used to a) provide a written evaluation of the Objectives and Metrics section and b) provide a written summary of how the LFST Funds were spent and the metric(s) achieved.:**