

Wyoming Tourism Master Plan Recommendation Updates

The Wyoming Tourism Industry Master Plan has 69 recommendations. The following is a status update on the recommendations that are being worked on currently.

Key:

Wyoming Office of Tourism – WOT

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources – SPCR

Wyoming Game and Fish Department - WGFD

- 1.1 Create a consistent and systematic approach to identify and fund new product development activities.
 - This recommendation has been taken on as an interim topic by the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Committee.
 - The WOT is still gathering information regarding this recommendation and plans to conduct a survey to further understand the potential demand for a program of this nature.
 - Survey has been conducted. Demand matrix has been created to understand the potential demand for a program of this nature. Next steps are being evaluated.

- 1.3 Develop more events and festivals
 - The Wyoming Arts Council (WAC) began an Arts Festivals Grant category in FY11 in response to requests from constituents to expand the Folk Art and Arts Access festival categories. Since the beginning of this new Arts Festivals category, we have awarded 46 grants for a total of \$113,012 in FY11 and so far in FY12.
 - SPCR continues to expand the Wyoming Kids Extreme program. Every staffed state park and historic site is required to host at least one Kids-X program per year. These programs continue to grow in popularity. For example the Summer Outdoor Slam at Curt Gowdy State Park had over 800 children and the Fire and Ice Festival in Cheyenne had over 1,000 children participate.

- 1.9 Develop a state park to interpret ranching
 - SPCR has been offered the LX Bar Ranch. SPCR is working with the legislature to exempt this ranch. Draft legislation will be introduced during the 2012 legislative session. Additionally, SPCR is working with the Lincoln County Commissioners to evaluate a historic ranch in Star Valley.

- 2.1 Develop a “best in class” tourism industry website.
 - Created a new industry web site that launched in 2010 (www.wyomingofficeoftourism.gov). The site contains information about all tourism programs, research, reports and staff and board directories.
 - Future enhancements include an upgraded interface and back end upgrades for ease of updating the site.

- 2.3 Establish a “Marketing/Product Development Council” for state/federal agencies
 - Council consisting of representatives from the Wyoming Office of Tourism, State Parks and Cultural Resources and Wyoming Game and Fish meet regularly exploring ways to cross-promote various initiatives and coordinate on marketing and product development opportunities related to shared areas of interest.

- 2.4 Expand incentive and cooperation to further develop the film industry.
 - Currently concentrating on expanding the production infrastructure and growing the crew base in Wyoming.
 - Provided resources to develop the film production program curriculum at Central Wyoming College.
 - Sponsor film training workshops through Wyoming Community Media and film festivals throughout the state.
 - SPCR is working with the Wyoming Territorial Prison to move several buildings from Frontier Town at the prison to a new location. These buildings can be used as a background or prop for filming a western town.

- 2.6 Develop additional events and programs to involve young people in outdoor recreation activities including hunting and fishing.
 - WGFD is developing a pilot program to test how "Family Workshops" could be used to educate people and generate interest in hunting and fishing. These weekend programs will be hosted by WGFD in different parts of the state and would be family focused. Content would involve learning to shoot, fish, and hunt, as well as other outdoor skills. Participants will also learn about the value of conservation in maintaining these outdoor traditions.
 - Producing a 13-episode TV show focused on kids in the outdoors. A different youth hunter/angler is selected to participate in each show and participate in a hunting or angling trip in Wyoming. The show will air nationally on the Sportsman Channel beginning in January 2012.
 - Working with Non-Governmental Organizations and other agencies to develop a formal mentoring program that would match up qualified mentors with kids interested in learning to hunt and fish. Reviewing a successful model from Kansas.

- 3.1 Develop a program to engage residents of Wyoming on the importance of tourism in supporting the overall economy as well as understanding the benefits of the tourism industry in the state.
 - Expanded National Tourism Week efforts statewide through the incorporation of five signature community events and the first ever REACH Awards (Rare and Exceptional Achievement in Customer Service and Hospitality). Participating communities in 2011 included Rock Springs, Cody, Buffalo, Casper and Cheyenne.
 - SPCR has conducted an economic impact study for state parks and historic sites. SPCR has a total annual economic impact of \$78.1 million, creates 1,123 jobs, and generates over \$3 million in state and local taxes.

- 3.4 Ongoing customer service/hospitality training programs
 - The WOT continues to offer the Destination Marketing Specialist Program. It is available online or in person. Over 60 individuals have participated in the program in the past year.

- 3.6 Conduct tourism industry listening sessions annually throughout the state.
 - WOT Director, Diane Shober, has completed community meetings throughout the state. Sessions are built to engage local tourism organizations, community leaders and provide information on WOT efforts and garner feedback.

- 3.7 Expand educational participation programs related to outdoor recreation, habitat and wildlife.
 - Currently revising WGFD school curriculum to bring it in line with state and national standards. This curriculum (Outdoor Recreation Education Opportunities) is focused on educating students about wildlife and outdoor recreation. Teachers can get certified to teach the OREO Program (Outdoor Recreation Education Opportunities) at our annual teacher's camp at Whiskey Mountain.
 - SPHST has developed several programs to work with and educate students about outdoors, wildlife and recreation. For example, SPCR staff is working with teachers from Fremont County to develop an outdoor education and activity guide. SPCR has also developed a program called Trees for Wyoming. This program pairs SPCR staff with local teachers to educate students about the importance of trees and how to plant and care for trees. The students then go into a park and plant trees.

- 4.1 Develop a comprehensive database – federal, state, local, all events, activities and attractions.
 - The WOT website is run by a comprehensive back end database including business listings, events, activities, attractions, federal partners, visitor services and much more.
 - This will hopefully be addressed through the WAC's new Communications Plan.

- 4.2 Continue to develop "best in class" Wyoming tourism consumer website
 - The WOT issued an RFP seeking a new web development partner. Through this new partner, a complete redesign will be undertaken for the website with scheduled launch in 2012.
 - New partner has been selected. Kick off meetings have been held and production has begun. Tentative timeline for launch of new site is June 2012.

- 4.3 Develop meaningful mobile strategies, applications and services that would provide real time information to travelers and recreationists.
 - QR codes in the State Museum are being implemented as available.
 - Part of the new website development strategy for the WOT website is to create a robust mobile site for travelers on the road.

- 4.4 Continue and expand enhanced GIS/GPS systems for all of tourism
 - All requested data layers are live on the tourism website except for OHV trails. The data simply isn't available from the trails program to completely offer this layer on the

tourism site as of yet. Updates and maintenance to the GIS data are ongoing by the University of Wyoming GIS department.

- SPCR has a fulltime GIS/GPS specialist. This person continues to gather data on state parks, historic sites and trails. This information is then used to develop maps for the public, such as, the state snowmobile maps, state ORV maps and state park reservation maps.
- 4.5 Create “loop tours” covering the whole state in consultation with local tourism communities and organizations.
 - Currently there are 27 total road trips/itineraries on the WOT website that have recently been updated with video and relevant cultural information.
 - The WOT also recently entered into a partnership with Gowalla for a location based promotion in 2012 with a gas card sweepstakes. Any time a visitor checked in at one of 21 locations throughout the state, they were registered to win. The goal was to get visitors off the beaten path into lesser known areas and to garner additional exposure on Gowalla.com for Wyoming as a vacation destination.
- 4.6 Develop improved content coordination between website and travel guide.
 - Developed a complete content development plan incorporating the Official Travelers Journal, website and e-newsletter. Much of the content, while written for a specific medium, gets re-purposed for multiple mediums.
 - Launched a new iPad app version of the Official Travelers Journal.
- 4.10 Develop marketing programs to increase the number of hunting and fishing licenses and develop new marketing program to increase hunting and fishing opportunities throughout the state.
 - No additional funding or positions to do any formal marketing in this area. Utilizing existing resources to conduct a pilot marketing project to increase fishing license sales in partnership with the Recreation Boating and Fishing Foundation.
 - Newly established social media sites on Facebook and Youtube to market and promote WGFD programs and products.
- 4.11 Expanded International marketing
 - For a number of years, the WAC has been funding grants to Vista 360 in Jackson to promote an exchange between the Mountain areas of Jackson and other mountainous countries outside of the U.S.A. Candra Day is involved in this, and we can certainly get you more information on it. Anne Hatch has met with Candra about this ongoing project.
- 5.2 Increase aggregation of wildlife content and information sources for websites – user based.
 - Building a brand new website for the WGFD that will be more user focused, user friendly, and professional looking. Launch is scheduled for January 2012.

- 5.3 Development of extreme sports venues and/or events
 - SPCR has developed a world class mountain biking trail system at Curt Gowdy State Park. This summer a free ride/downhill area and lineal trials area were completed at the park. The park has received considerable national coverage, including articles in Mountain Biking magazine, Freehub magazine, Outside Magazine and Men's Journal, as well as, winning national awards. The park hosts numerous trail related events and next summer will host the regional championships for the Exterra. SPHST is working on developing an even larger and better trail system at Glendo State Park.

- 5.4 Expand interpretative programs for outdoor recreation and wildlife
 - SPCR has an extensive interpretive program and continues to develop new, improved and expanded interpretative experiences at all of our state parks and historic sites. This summer SPHST completed the restoration and interpretation of the Piedmont Charcoal Kilns and Legend Rock. SPCR also developed new interpretative exhibits at numerous parks and historic sites and developed an interpretative kiosk at the Pine Bluffs visitor center.

- 5.6 Develop and promote more non-consumptive wildlife festivals, events and programs.
 - WGFD hosted the 30th anniversary celebration of the rediscovery of the black-footed ferret in September 2011 in Meeteetse.

- 5.8 Develop three and/or seven day non-resident fishing licenses
 - This issue has been presented to WGFD staff. An internal team has been established to explore different license options (hunting and fishing) that might appeal to our customers.

- 6.1 Develop and Promote more Wyoming Products and Crafts
 - The Governor's Capitol Art Exhibition has had a web site where art works can be purchased.
 - The WAC's Artist Image Registry is about to "go live" once Mike Corso is ready. This will provide through our web site information about any Wyoming artist who is registered. This has been a "work in progress" for the past two years. My hope is to get EVERY Wyoming visual artist to register for this marketing opportunity.
 - Ongoing & in progress – the Museum Store carries made-in-Wyoming products (more than half of the inventory)

- 6.3 Opportunities with Tribal Governments
 - In FY11 and the first part of FY12, the WAC has awarded 18 grants, from all WAC grant categories to projects primarily serving Native American populations, including Individual Artist Professional Development Grants (2) and Folk Arts Mentoring Grants (3 in FY11. FY12 Mentoring Grants will be reviewed by the WAC Board next week. 4 were recommended for funding by the panel.

- 6.5 Oral History Programs
 - The WAC has supported, in a variety of ways, the new heart Mountain Interpretive Center. The oral histories available through this project are incredible.
- 6.7 "Niche" Marketing Programs to support Culture, Heritage and Arts.....
 - The WAC can create a list of galleries across the state, as well as Artist Studios that are willing to receive visitors and arts attractions, Arts Festivals, Arts Facilities and Public Art installations.
- 6.8 Create a Cultural Coalition and Develop a Statewide Annual Culture and heritage Tourism Summit
 - The beginnings of a "Cultural Coalition" came together at the recent Convergence gathering of Wyoming's cultural entities in Cody. Regional meetings are now being set up in some areas.
- 6.9 Sesquicentennial Celebration
 - The WAC Folk & Traditional Arts Program is working towards holding a statewide Folklife Festival in 2015, the year of Wyoming's Quasquicentennial (125 years) of becoming a state. We hope to tie into Tourism's programs/support for this event. Discussions have been held about taking Wyoming Folklife representatives to a National Folklife Festival in Washington, DC at some point in the future.

Updates of the plan will continually be posted as they become available. For questions about this plan, please submit them to Alan Dubberley – alan.dubberley@wyo.gov or 307-777-8561.