



JACKSON HOLE TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FAQs and MEDIA TALKING POINTS

BACKGROUND

What is the JHTTB's Sustainable Destination Management Plan (SDMP) project?

Since its inception in 2011, the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Joint Powers Board (JHTTB) has played an integral role in building a strong tourism economy for Jackson Hole and Teton County. The current Board recognizes the need to prioritize destination stewardship with a renewed focus on protecting the environment, enhancing residents' quality of life, and continuing to maintain a sustainable local economy.

In December 2021, the JHTTB announced an evolution of commitments to Jackson and Teton County's destination with an increased focus on the long-term function and prosperity of the wider community. To steer and support this process, the JHTTB contracted a consulting team from the [George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies](#) working with [Confluence Sustainability](#) to spearhead a Sustainable Destination Management Plan (SDMP) which will be designed to deliver a strategic operational management roadmap focused on the future of tourism for the community, destination, and the wider region.

What are Sustainable Destination Management Plans and why are tourism organizations using them?

SDMPs are a relatively new tool supporting tourism organizations, designed to take a holistic approach to overall assessment and strategic planning for developing a roadmap to support the long-term health of destinations and the well-being of host communities. The SDMP involves a **highly participatory** development process that includes all key stakeholder groups and members of the community, public, and tourism business sectors. This **strategic roadmap** will identify, amplify, and align shared community values in ecosystem stewardship, economic vibrancy, infrastructure investments, growth management, and quality of life enhancement for residents.

What is destination management?

Destination management balances the needs and expectations of visitors with the needs of local residents, businesses, and the environment. The goal of the SDMP is coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourism destination such as local governments, tourism industry stakeholders, enterprise leaders, nonprofit and social services managers, public land managers, residents, and the diverse county and

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neighboring community workforce. Destination management includes the planning, development, marketing, and monitoring of destinations as well as how they are managed physically, operationally, and financially.

Why is Destination Management a priority for Teton County?

We've reached a critical juncture for our community. Amid a global pandemic, when many destinations across the globe saw significant drops in visitation levels, the Tetons continue to see record-breaking numbers of visitors. This surge in visitation is putting pressure on natural resources and infrastructure, amplifying issues related to workforce and housing, and placing our residents and visitors at odds with one another.

What are the economic and employment benefits of tourism in Jackson Hole and Teton County?

The tourism industry supports a sustainable and prosperous local economy through visitor spending, increased tax revenue, economic opportunities, and sustainable employment for residents. In 2019, Teton County welcomed nearly 1.9 million domestic and international visitors who spent \$1.28 billion and generated \$34.4 million in state and local taxes. This tax revenue supports public infrastructure, such as streets and roads, fire and police protection, and many other public services. It is estimated that households would have to pay \$7,103 more in taxes for existing government services without taxes generated from the tourism industry. The industry also created 8,860 jobs which represent 26.7% of Teton County's total private industry employment.

What are the non-economic benefits of tourism in Jackson Hole and Teton County?

Tourism also provides non-economic benefits to Jackson Hole and Teton County including access to world-class outdoor recreation, cultural events, a wide variety of restaurants and retail shopping options, and availability of direct flights to numerous locations. Residents benefit from having access to millions of acres of exemplary public lands, which are managed and protected through federal funding and resources.

What is sustainable tourism?

Sustainable tourism is defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization as *"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities."* Sustainable tourism *"refers to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability."* (UNWTO).

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) defines sustainable tourism as sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. *"It is an aspiration to acknowledge all impacts of tourism, both positive and negative. It aims to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones."* (GSTC).

How is tourism measured?

To date, tourism has been measured primarily by economic performance indicators including business revenue generated, the volume of tax revenues collected, and the number of jobs created. Future success indicators can potentially include economic equity, community integration, resident quality of life, environmental stewardship, and holistic monitoring and evaluation.

What are examples of other Tourism Management Plans?

Some examples of current destination management plans include:

- [Aspen, Colorado Destination Management Plan](#)
- [Breckenridge, Colorado Destination Management Plan](#)
- [Park City Sustainable Tourism Plan \(in the process\)](#)
- [Hawai'i Tourism Authority Strategic Plan](#)
- [Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism](#)

How does the JHTTB's approach to creating a destination management plan differ from other approaches?

The central focus of this process and a key pillar of destination management is community stakeholder engagement to establish clear action plans that guide the apportionment of resources. The process is designed to build community-wide engagement, transparency, and trust throughout the process. To ensure full stakeholder participation, stakeholders from Jackson, Teton County, and neighboring communities will be invited to participate by providing input that will shape the future of tourism for the destination.

How will the SDMP complement the Jackson, Teton County 2020 Comprehensive Plan?

During Phase One of the project, the consulting team analyzed the 2020 Comprehensive Plan for all components related to tourism development and management. The final SDMP will be aligned to the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan with actionable items to address issues related to tourism presented in the Plan.

Who has a voice in the conversation to shape the future of tourism?

All voices in Teton County, Wyoming, and neighboring communities are considered in the development of the SDMP's vision, guiding principles, goals, and initiatives. Tourism impacts a diverse range of stakeholders across public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors, and therefore requires input and consideration from all. JHTTB is also working with partners Voices JH to ensure materials are translated into Spanish and outreach is conducted within the Hispanic community of Teton County and the surrounding region.

What types of visitor management strategies will be considered in the SDMP?

The SDMP will present a diverse set of strategies as well as initiatives that respond to the main issues identified from a review of the current situation and input from all stakeholder groups. These initiatives will be informed by examples of good practices implemented by destinations facing similar issues. Priority initiatives will be shaped by stakeholders and tailored to meet the specific needs of Teton County.

THE PROCESS

What is the process to create an SDMP?

1) Inventory of Existing Conditions: October 2021 - February 2022



What is the current status of tourism in Teton County, Wyoming?

During the first phase, the consulting team conducted desktop research on place-based circumstances and produced a draft situation analysis report. The report describes the impacts that tourism is having on the quality of life, quality of work, and quality of experiences as well as the enabling environment for tourism, destination level sustainability performance, and resource management. A resident sentiment survey was designed and deployed to better understand the community's perspectives on tourism and get their input for the SDMP. Furthermore, a social media listening pilot project was initiated that analyzed more than 9,000 reviews on TripAdvisor for nearly 25 tourism attractions and sites.

2) On-Site Assessment: March-April 2022

What are the priority issues?

The objective of onsite stakeholder consultations was to validate the Situation Analysis report and shortlist priority issues. The consulting team conducted in-person interviews, focus groups, and community meetings to share the results of the Situation Analysis Report and validate the findings and prioritize which issues are most important to various stakeholders. The results of the onsite visit provide a foundation for stakeholder visioning and planning.

3) Participatory Visioning and Planning: May-June 2022

What is the shared vision for tourism?

The consulting team will facilitate onsite vision and planning workshops, focus groups, and community meetings with community and industry stakeholders. The main outputs will include a collective vision, principles, key strategies, priority initiatives, and monitoring indicators for destination management.

4) SDMP Development and Validation: June - September 2022

How will the shared vision for tourism be achieved?

What are the Deliverables?

The SDMP will be a roadmap consisting of practical strategies and priority initiatives that address high-priority destination risks. The SDMP will include a detailed action plan that will outline priority initiatives, resource needs, and stakeholder roles. The SDMP will

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also include a proposed framework and guidance for the implementation success for tourism governance. The draft SDMP will be validated by stakeholders. A final SDMP will be finalized based on feedback obtained from community and industry stakeholders.

How long will the process take?

Typically, the development of an SDMP can take 12-18 months. Completion of Teton County's SDMP is planned for December 2022, with continued engagement and implementation support to occur during and beyond this timeframe.

Who is involved in the process of developing the SDMP for Jackson Hole/ Teton County?

Led by the JHTTB and contracted industry experts, the SDMP development process aims to foster greater collaboration and alignment between local government, tourism industry stakeholders, enterprise leaders, nonprofit and social services managers, public land managers, residents, and the diverse county and neighboring community workforce. An 18-member steering committee of community leaders meets monthly to track progress and approve deliverables. So far community engagement includes

- 4,795 residents have completed the resident survey
- 100 local residents attended two community meetings either in-person or through a live online forum
- 50 participated in focus groups
- More than 20 one-on-one interviews were conducted with community leaders and stakeholders
- 18 community representatives sit on the destination steering committee, which reflects a range of tourism businesses, land managers, elected officials, and other community stakeholders, and provides oversight on the SDMP process

The process is overseen by an 18-member **Steering Committee** of community stakeholders appointed by JHTTB which includes private sector and public organizations, non-profit organizations, public land managers, and community entities. The Steering Committee will provide oversight for the year-long planning process, as well as approval of project outcomes, deliverables, data collection, and communications plans. A key responsibility for this group of community stakeholders will be ensuring the implementation of the SDMP on completion.

To assist in the development and execution of the final SDMP, the JHTTB has contracted locally-based [Riverwind Foundation](#) to serve as the project's **Sustainability Coordinator**. Riverwind Foundation's innovative work promoting environmentally and socially conscious business practices has galvanized Teton County to achieve international certification of Jackson Hole as a sustainable destination according to accredited destination sustainability standards. The RWF team provides coordination within the JHTTB Team, Steering Committee, the consulting team, and the community at large.

The contracted **Consulting Team** from the [George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies](#) and [Confluence Sustainability](#) are providing the overarching framework for the SDMP and facilitating the participatory planning process. This team has developed destination management plans for many global destinations including mountain-resort and gateway communities and has been at the forefront of shaping global sustainable destination certification standards.

The **JHTTB Board** and **Executive Director** provide input throughout the process and give final oversight on the final SDMP. A key outcome of the plan will be a definition of an assembly of stakeholders, such as a destination steering committee, that will oversee and monitor the implementation of the plan. This group of leaders will not be an authority or governing body. Their main purpose will be to monitor the progress of those entities that do have the authority to implement changes such as federal, state, and local governments and land managers.

Who is responsible for approving and implementing the final plan?

The final SDMP will be validated by stakeholders and approved by the JHTTB. The JHTTB will serve as steward of the SDMP and ensure sustained stakeholder engagement, cooperation, and collaboration for SDMP implementation. The SDMP's action plan will include identifying leading and supporting specific initiatives. Tourism is not managed by a sole entity, and the success of the SDMP will require leadership across all sectors, private, public, NGOs, and community.

How can Jackson Hole and Teton County community members play a role in the future of tourism?

This project is designed to be participatory, to give all community members a voice and a role to play in the future of tourism. The community is invited to become educated as the project progresses by visiting [TETON COUNTY ENGAGE](#) for more information and to attend community meetings organized during on-site visits. More than 4,700 residents shared their insights about tourism in Teton County through a resident sentiment survey deployed from February 23 to April 5, 2023.

What is the mission of the JHTTB and how is it funded?

The Jackson Hole Travel & Tourism Joint Powers Board is dedicated to developing a healthy economy that preserves Jackson Hole's natural capital, provides a quality visitor experience, and enhances the well-being of the community. The JHTTB is a seven-member volunteer board appointed by elected officials from the town of Jackson and Teton County. In the state of Wyoming, a 5% lodging tax is collected on every visitor's hotel, motel, or rental property stay; 3% is managed by the Wyoming Office of Tourism, and 2% stays in Teton County. 60% of these funds are managed by the JHTTB for destination marketing, tourist education, events, and other tourism-related initiatives as outlined in the Wyoming Statutes. The 40% balance is managed by the town of Jackson and Teton County, primarily to mitigate the impacts of tourism on infrastructure and services.

SUSTAINABILITY IN TETON COUNTY

Teton County is on a critical path to creating a sustainable destination management plan for tourism, and as the community journeys through this process, JHTTB intends to build upon the 20 years of well-established and pioneering work of valued community partners with a commitment to a long-lasting Jackson Hole.

What is the history of sustainability and what are other sustainability initiatives that support tourism in Jackson Hole?

- Passed a Town-County resolution for Jackson Hole to be "a world-leading sustainable community and destination" (2017)
- Inclusion of sustainability principles, policies, and strategies in the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan (2020 update)
- Led nationally with a countywide Zero Waste goal to divert 60% of county waste by 2030.
- Trained and assisted over 400 businesses and organizations in sustainability planning and practices
- Doubled RRR Business Leaders to 200 and created the Business Emerald Sustainability Tier (BEST) local certification and recognition program for higher levels of sustainability business performance
- Published & distributed the Sustainable Business Guide to 5,000
- Created & distributed the Jackson Hole Sustainability Code of Conduct to over 100,000 visitors
- Created & distributed issues of Green Matters in Jackson Hole to over 8,000 per issue
- Created & distributed the first annual Jackson Hole Sustainability Report Card to 7,800+
- Obtained international recognition for Jackson Hole/Teton County's sustainable tourism activities and achievements, including from:
 - World Travel & Tourism Council as a 2018 Tourism for Tomorrow Award Destination Leadership Finalist
 - National Geographic as a 2017 World Legacy Award Destination Leadership Finalist
 - Green Destinations as a Top 100 Sustainable Destination in 2016, 2017, and 2018
- Many major tourism attraction and hospitality providers are also certified to a variety of international sustainability standards (e.g., International Organization for Standardization– ISO– 14001 for environment management, 18001 for health and safety, 9001 for quality management) and have considerable depth in their sustainability commitments and successes

More information on sustainability initiatives can be found at:
<http://www.sustainabledestination.org/>

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