



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128705 - FY24 YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY DMO Plan
Grant Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-006
Grant Status: Underway

Comments:
Applicant Organization: Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.

Grantee Contact: Robin Hoover

Award Year: FY24

Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:

Contract Dates:	Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed
Project Dates:	06/13/2023 Proposal Date	07/01/2023 Project Start	06/30/2024 Project End

Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem

Contract Number 24-52-OOT-DMO-006

Award Year FY24

Contract Dates

Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed	Contract Legal
---------------	-------------------	-------------------	----------------

Project Dates 07/01/2023

06/30/2024

Project Start	Project End
---------------	-------------

Comments

Amendment Comments

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.

Who We Are:

Organization: Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc. (YC, YCMI, Montana's Yellowstone Country) is the recognized DMO organization formed to promote the five-county region (Gallatin, Park, Sweet Grass, Stillwater and Carbon) of Montana as a year-round destination to resident and nonresident visitors.

Purpose: Since its inception, the primary purpose for the organization has been marketing. However, in today's changing world, there's been a significant shift in the roles and responsibilities of DMO's. While marketing continues to be a major role, we recognize the necessity of also working with other stakeholders in the realm of destination management, development, and stewardship to ensure that we protect our assets for the future. To that end, we will be adding campaigns, programs and partnerships that help us to achieve sustainability of the tourism industry.

Who We Wish to Attract: High-value, low-impact travelers who seek an authentic sense of place experience, and wants to spend time in our in our destination while respecting our residents, assets, and way of life.

Why They Come: *The Yellowstone Country Differentiator*—YELLOWSTONE IS MORE THAN A PARK. IN MONTANA, IT'S AN ENTIRE COUNTRY! It's the "**Beyond Yellowstone**" experience that can be found throughout the YC region.

We live in a special place. Simply being perched on the edge of Yellowstone National Park would be enough to make that claim – but there's more. A lot more. Throughout the entirety of what we call Montana's Yellowstone Country are landscapes and experiences that can forever change those who encounter them.

STRENGTHS

- **Yellowstone National Park**-America's first national park, anchor to 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.
- **YNP Gateway Communities:** Three of the five entrances to Yellowstone National Park are in Montana's Yellowstone Country region, 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.
- **Scenic Drives:** Picturesque routes take travelers up to high mountain vistas, along country backroads, and winding through our charming communities.
- **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, Gallatin River Corridor
- **Nordic Skiing:** Montana's Yellowstone Country is a Nordic utopia, with West Yellowstone's Rendezvous Ski Trails, Boundary Trail, and Riverside Ski Trail and Bozeman's Crosscut Ranch, Big Sky's Lone Mountain Ranch and Red Lodge Nordic Ski Center serving as Nordic skiing hubs. Additionally, the five Montana counties that make up Yellowstone Country are crisscrossed by literally thousands of kilometers of skiable terrain, much of it

augmented with established Nordic trails. Over-the-snow tours and Nordic skiing in the world's first national park enable visits to areas otherwise inaccessible. And what's better than gliding across a super volcano?

- **Culture and History:** From American Indian heritage, dinosaurs to mining, ranching and mountaineering men, the region offers a unique blend of history and culture.. The Lewis and Clark Trail and the Bozeman Trail covered areas of the region. Yellowstone Country is a partner in the statewide Montana Dinosaur Trail, with Bozeman's Museum of the Rockies as an anchor facility. Tippet Rise is a world-class sculpture and music venue. Many American Indian tribes have homeland ties to the area, with the original Crow Agency site, Madison Buffalo Jump and Headwaters of the Missouri all holding significant cultural and historical value for Indian Country.
- **Annual Signature Events:** Local festivals and events, farmers markets, fairs, community rodeos, Independence Day celebrations, winter carnivals and more, fill all seasons on the calendar.
- **Outdoor Recreation:** 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.
- **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.
- **Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport:** As the busiest airport in the state, BZN offers service from nine airlines to 22 destinations.
- **Open Lands:** Access to BLM lands, US Forest Service land, national and state parks, all just a short distance from any point in the region.
- **Four Montana State Parks:** Cooney Reservoir, Missouri River Headwaters Madison Buffalo Jump and Greycliff Prairie Dog Town
- **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 MOTBD and the other Regions/CVBs for specific joint ventures has always been an integral part of YC's 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, etc. as opportunities present themselves.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Seasonality:** While this is also a challenge, seasonality presents an opportunity to develop and/or grow our tourism product in the very distinct seasons. Winter in Yellowstone Country continues to grow, and in places like Big Sky, it is the "premier" season; however, there is still ample room for growth in winter. There is also opportunity to promote the spring and fall seasons to Montana residents, empty-nesters, and singles.
- **Opportunity to Entice a Younger Demographic:** There is an opportunity to promote the region to those seeking outdoor recreation and rich cultural experiences.
- **Increasing Air Service to New and Existing Markets—BZN** now has direct flights to metro areas such as Boston, Austin, Charlotte, and south Florida which provides an opportunity to promote this region to travelers from those markets.
- **Outreach and Education for Both Residents and Nonresidents:** An opportunity exists to implement an ongoing outreach program for residents while implementing an awareness factor into the marketing mix for non-residents.
- **Rural Communities and Areas:** Despite being the smallest geographic region in the state, Yellowstone Country is still largely rural, and the opportunity exists to move visitors from the heavily congested areas into the more rural outreaches by promoting day trips, scenic routes, and activities in these places.

CHALLENGES

- **Inclement Weather Conditions/Natural Disasters:** Wildfire, floods, etc. *The historical 2022 floods in the Yellowstone Country region and Yellowstone National Park created an unforeseen catastrophe of epic proportions that will take years to recover from.
- **Climate Change:** Affects recreation (such as fishing), the economy (tourism-related jobs) and our environment.
- **Transportation Issues:** Public transportation, seasonality of service.
- **Economic Climate:** Reduced promotion funding, recession, etc.
- **Infrastructure:** As the number of visitors continues to increase, infrastructure issues are a concern.
- **Crowding/Overuse in YNP and Specific Areas of the Region:** Over-capacity issues.
- **Seasonality:** Weather, amenities/service availability and staffing all have an impact on the potential growth of shoulder seasons.
- **Increasing Diversity Issues:** We work diligently to maintain an inclusive and accessible destination where all are welcome.
- **Competition:** Travelers can choose any destination in the competitor set, so it is a challenge to make sure we give them the differentiation reasons to choose this destination.
- **Public Health Issues:** Including COVID-19 variants and other communicable viruses.
- **Workforce Issues:** Wages, housing, availability, etc. Staggering Number of Job Openings Threaten Travel Industry Growth | U.S. Travel Association (ustravel.org)
- **Federal & State Government-mandated Closures and Restrictions**
- **Resident Negative Sentiment Towards Tourism: ITRR Resident Attitudes Study-** Concerning how the overall benefits of tourism stack up against the negative impacts, residents agreed that the benefits outweighed the negative impacts, with 71% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement. When analyzed by travel region, Central Montana (81%) and Southeast Montana (80%) were in the strongest agreement, followed by **Yellowstone Country (78%)**, Southwest Montana (69%), Missouri River Country (66%), and Glacier Country (62%). www.itrr.umt.edu Although attitudes towards this question were still overwhelmingly positive with nearly three quarters of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, the overall agreement level of 71% represents a 5% decrease from 2020 and the lowest agreement level recorded since 2007.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

MONTANA BRAND AFFILIATION

Yellowstone Country aligns effortlessly with Montana's Brand. There is an abundance of spectacular, unspoiled nature, breathtaking experiences, renowned hospitality, and vibrant, unique, welcoming, and charming communities.

Additionally, in 2022, Montana's Yellowstone Country completed a rebranding process. We developed our own brand pillars and value statements that will serve as the foundation for everything we undertake:

1. **NATURAL WONDERS + CAPTIVATING LANDSCAPES-** The landscape of Montana's Yellowstone Country can be hard to process at times. The land itself is teeming with natural wonders and the wildlife that roams freely can seem like a vision lost a long time ago. Quite frankly, there is nowhere else like it in the country.
2. **VIBRANT COMMUNITIES + WESTERN HOSPITALITY-** Sitting in the midst of such a spectacular setting, it's no wonder the communities of Yellowstone Country are special in their own right. As Montana's gateways to

Yellowstone National Park, they not only offer comfort and respite for the traveler but are destinations unto themselves.

3. **YEAR-ROUND EXPLORATION + PREMIER OUTDOOR ADVENTURES-** Yellowstone Country has no off-season. From the quiet springs to the golden autumns, the quintessential summer adventures to the world-class winter recreation that comes from being home to three of Montana's biggest ski areas, there is always something to do in this part of Montana.
4. **RESPONSIBLE RECREATION + ESSENTIAL PRESERVATION-** Although they are landscapes of incredible ruggedness, our outdoor spaces are also incredibly fragile. Promoting responsible recreation is paramount to preserving both our natural assets as well as our cherished communities. Our commitment to promoting travel and tourism that takes into account its impact is in Montana's best long-term interest.

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

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

Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Stewardship, 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 Target Audience

CONSUMER

Montana's Yellowstone Country identified a core group of target audiences in FY17 and has continued marketing to them in subsequent years, while also adding in new markets identified through evaluation of research data, campaign tracking, social media analysis, locations where there's new/increased air service to Montana and media outreach.

Geographic Markets

California (Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Orange County)

Illinois (Chicago)

Oregon (Portland)

Colorado (Denver)

Texas (Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston)

Georgia (Atlanta)

Minnesota (Minneapolis/St. Paul)

Washington (Seattle)

Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)

Utah (Salt Lake City)

Massachusetts (Boston)

New York (New York)

Tennessee (Nashville)

North Carolina (Charlotte)

South Florida

Secondary Geographic Markets (dependent on traveler access)

Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, CANADA

*These markets were identified based on direct inquiries (including website inquiries, live chats, and incoming calls), available research data, Visitor Information Centers visitor data, and \ direct flight metro areas.

Key Demographic Markets

City dwellers (i.e., not rural, not suburban)

Affluent with a household income over \$80k

Well-educated

Married with children

Key Psychographic Markets

Social Class: middle to upper class (in terms of disposable income)

Lifestyle: active, outdoor-recreation oriented, frequent travelers

Opinions: interested, but primarily influenced by the desire to experience things for themselves

Activities and Interests: outdoor activities, history and culture, foodies

Attitudes and Beliefs: environmentally conscious, adventurous spirits, like nature

Technology-savvy: using mobile devices in all stages of planning and travel

Families: Family travel

Destination Management Target Audience: consumers, destination managers and marketers

Destination Development Target Audience: consumers, destination stakeholders, partners

Destination Stewardship Target Audience: consumers, destination stakeholders, partners

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

Yellowstone Country receives and analyzes data from the following resources:

- Destination Analysts
- nSight
- VisaVue
- Arrivalist (shared by partners)
- AirDNA
- Cision

- Skift
- RMI
- USTA
- US Bureau of Economic Analysis
- MLHA/STR
- Nativo
- Epsilon
- VICs
- Internal Campaign Analysis
- Research/Surveys
- MOTBD/Regions/CVBs/Local Chamber Data
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport
- Montana Tourism Data-Card Spend report (on brandmt.com)

Key ITRR 2021 data

- Average # of nights spent in YC region—5.8
- 38% of visitors to MT spent at least one night in YC
- 52% of visitors to the region came for vacation/leisure, 19% to visit family/friends, and 5% for business/conventions/meetings
- 83% of visitors plan a return trip within 2 years
- 81% of visitors to the region are traveling in group sizes of 2 or more
- 61% of travelers to the region have an annual income greater than \$75,000.00
- Top 10 activities visitors to the region participated in:
 1. Scenic driving (50%)
 2. Day hiking (45%)
 3. Wildlife watching (35%)
 4. Nature photography (35%)
 5. RV/camping (29%)
 6. Shopping (23%)
 7. Visit local breweries (20%)
 8. Visit other historical sites (17%)
 9. Visit local museums and Lewis & Clark sites (tied at 13%)
 10. Visit dinosaur attraction/Museum of the Rockies (10%)

Key Bozeman Yellowstone International 2022 data (provided by BZN)

- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport Shatters All-Time Passenger Record in 2022 with 2.26 Million Passengers Traveling Through Montana's Busiest Airport
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN) experienced another year of record-breaking passenger growth and infrastructure development.
- BZN handled an all-time record 2,264,424 passengers during 2022. This is a passenger increase of 16.7% over the previous record of 1,940,191 set in 2021. Over 40% of passengers traveling by air to or from Montana traveled through BZN in 2022.
- BZN is the seventh busiest airport in the seven-state Northwest Region of the country (region including Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) and the 92nd busiest airport in the nation in terms of passengers.

Passenger totals in and out by airline brand in 2022 were:

Delta Air Lines – 622,232	United Airlines – 588,474
Southwest Airlines – 446,867	Alaska Airlines – 227,304
American Airlines – 220,087	Allegiant Air – 102,203
JetBlue – 36,925	Sun Country – 14,675
Chartered Airline Flights – 5,657	

Bozeman Resident Sentiment Study (Destination Analysts & Prime Media Communications-provided by Bozeman Area Chamber/CVB) Prime Visit Bozeman - Resident Sentiment Study_Memorandum of Findings[150045].pdf

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)-- Travel and Tourism | U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)- Outdoor Recreation | U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

National Travel and Tourism Office Projects Inbound Travel Will Fully Recover by 2025 | U.S. Travel Association (ustravel.org)

Montana Tourism Data-Device Locations Tourism Research - Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (mt.gov)

DA_State of American Traveler Reports

ITRR Card Spending Reports

Blogs:

<https://blog.smartvel.com/blog/dmos-discovering-the-new-destination-marketing-tactics>

<https://www.orioly.com/tourism-destination-marketing-strategies/>

<https://crowdriff.com/resources/blog/lessons-from-creative-dmos-11-successful-destination-marketing-campaigns>

<https://bullmoosemarketing.com/dmo-download/these-destinations-are-implementing-effective-marketing-strategies/>

<https://www.treksoft.com/en/blog/best-destination-marketing-strategies>

<https://stampdestinations.com/good-work/insights/5-mistakes-to-avoid-in-dmo-marketing/>

<https://www.destinationanalysts.com/research/official-visitor-guide-readership-conversion-study/the-value-of-dmo-visitor-guides/>

The importance of DMOs in a Crisis

**Placements with Epsilon and Nativo in FY23 gave us great feedback on what consumers are reading and clicking on:

Nativo

Epsilon

3c. What are your emerging markets?

EMERGING MARKETS

Entertainment Seekers

Visitors who are coming to Montana continue to seek live entertainment (i.e., concerts, festivals, rodeos, etc.), which provides us the opportunity to encourage them to stay longer and do more while in the area. As venues, such as Bozeman's The Elm, continue to grow their offering, additional audiences will be drawn to Yellowstone Country for entertainment.

Western Culture Seekers/ Outfitting & Guiding

With a wide variety of ranch-style accommodations spanning from working dude ranches to five-star venues, there are ranches to suit every visitor's idea of the perfect western vacation. Similarly, outfitters provide hands-on, genuine experiences in Yellowstone Country. Interest in guided excursions and activities continues to increase in the Yellowstone Country region. With many visitors drawn to an authentic Montana experience, this is a market that has potential for considerable growth.

International Visitors

With international travel returning, we expect increased interest to our area. As international travel begins to recover, we will continue to assess this as an emerging market; if feasible, we will develop a marketing strategy and campaign focused to this audience.

Urban Areas

We will continue selecting urban areas of focus in relation to our identified key geographic target markets. At a state level, anticipated markets include return trips to additional urban areas in California and Texas, in addition to new markets in New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

Group Travel:

Conferences and Meetings: As our lodging property capacity continues to expand, there's an opportunity to market to meeting planners. Yellowstone Country will consider opportunities to partner with other DMOs for a presence at travel trade & consumers shows. The region has been approached by state/regional DMOs and private businesses to include this market moving forward in 2024. Re the USTA Marketing Outlook Forum's recent conference, **meeting planners are optimistic** for continued group business growth, with the focus to be sustainability. Three Key Takeaways from the Travel and Tourism Research Association's Marketing Outlook Forum | U.S. Travel Association (ustravel.org)

Tour Groups/Tour Operators: Historically, group travel and tours groups have been limited to the gateway communities in the region (primarily West Yellowstone); however, there is interest from regional partners in marketing other communities to these groups as well.

OTHER TARGET MARKETS (may fit under one/more of marketing, management, development or stewardship endeavors)

Earned Media/Publicity

Yellowstone Country has focused and will continue to focus on family-travel journalists and influencers, as well as those who specialize in outdoor recreation. Yellowstone Country will also continue to leverage journalists and influencers with many followers on Instagram to continue to grow its audience on that platform.

Our strategy is to work with journalists and influencers who match our consumers both psycho-graphically and geographically.

Events

Yellowstone Country will continue to place an emphasis on its events through promotion of its events calendar and blogs via the website, email marketing and social media.

Film

Yellowstone Country will continue to look at partnerships on film projects on an individual basis.

NICHE MARKETS

In-State Residents

We will continue our in-state 'staycation' campaigns for Montanans, promoting the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Messaging will encourage locals to take advantage of Montana's beauty and adventure, all while escaping the crowds of peak seasons.

The focus of our marketing efforts to both in-state and regional drive markets (WY, the Dakotas, UT, ID, WA, etc.) will be to promote our more rural areas and under-served communities to help spread visitation across the entire region. ITRR 2021 data shows regional drive markets of WY, WA, MN, CA, and UT are where the largest # of travel groups to the Yellowstone Country region

originate from.

Family Travelers

Family travel continues to be a growing market to all of Montana, and Yellowstone Country is no exception. Yellowstone Country's natural attractions and proximity to Yellowstone National Park make it a likely fit for family vacationers. ITRR data: 25% of visitors to the Yellowstone Country region are family travel, with 44% of those being couples.

Western Ski Audiences

Direct marketing to skiers who frequent western ski resorts (i.e., Colorado and Utah), in addition to a continued presence in select flight and drive markets, promoting Yellowstone Country's accessibility and adventure.

History Audiences

Travelers are often natural history lovers, with a yearning to learn about the world, its people, places, and cultures; this is an emerging and/or growing market for us, so FY24 will include continued promotion of this project with the possibility of added partners and projects. ITRR 2021 data: 17% of visitors are visiting historical sites, 13% are visiting museums and 13% are visiting Lewis & Clark sites.

Motorcyclists

Motorcycle travel continues to be a growing niche market that provides ample opportunities for targeted messaging within the region, and potentially in partnerships with neighboring regions. Opportunities include itineraries and maps featuring unique and appealing roadways, targeted media buys and a combination of in-state (drive) and out-of-state (fly-ride) messages. We will continue our motorcycle-specific targeting with our Glaciers to Geysers joint venture with Glacier Country Tourism.

Snowmobilers

Snowmobiling continues to be a strong segment for Montana's Yellowstone Country region. Between guided trips and the option to go sled on your own, there is something for everyone. Snowmobiling campaigns could be focused within the region, or potentially in partnership with other regions. Like the motorcycle audience, snowmobile campaigns will include itineraries, maps, targeted media buys and a combination of in-state (drive) and out-of-state (fly-ride) messages. We will also continue using snowmobile-specific targeting with the Glaciers to Geysers joint venture with Glacier Country.

Birding Enthusiasts

Birding has become a valuable niche activity, and there are plenty of locations within the region, and in neighboring regions, that continue to draw this group. Yellowstone Country created our own birding mapguide, and regional VIC managers' report it is one of their most in-demand publications.

Craft Beverage Enthusiasts

Craft beverage venues (breweries, distilleries, wineries, cideries) have a growing following and are found frequently throughout Montana. We see an opportunity to connect with statewide partners to promote this segment and raise awareness of Montana as a destination for our craft beverage consumers. ITRR data: 20% of visitors to the YC region are visiting local breweries.

Direct Flight Markets

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport now has 22 non-stop flights to 21 destinations across the country. The addition of Southwest Airlines in 2021 has made Bozeman a "hub" for people from neighboring cities and states to fly out of Bozeman. Our strategy will be to create awareness around direct flights and entice travelers to consider Yellowstone Country as their next destination.

Current Direct Market Flights include:

Atlanta	Austin
Boston	Charlotte
Chicago	Dallas/Fort Worth
Denver	Detroit
Houston	Las Vegas
Los Angeles	Minneapolis/St. Paul
Nashville Newark	New York (La Guardia and JFK)

Oakland	Philadelphia
Phoenix	Portland
Salt Lake City	San Francisco
Seattle/Tacoma	

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.

Goal 1: Continue to increase Yellowstone Country Brand Recognition: Promote Yellowstone Country as a premier year-round leisure destination, using the “Yellowstone is more than a park. In Montana, it’s an entire country!” to inspire visitation by residents and non-residents. (Destination Marketing)

- **Objective:** Implement a multi-layered winter campaign that targets our desired winter audience. This campaign would showcase the multitude of winter recreation activities available in the region.
- **Objective:** Participate in a minimum of 3 Joint Venture campaigns with other BrandMT/DMOs.
- **Objective:** Develop 1-2 cooperative campaign options in which public/private partners have an opportunity to collaborate with Yellowstone Country.

Goal 2: Work to increase tourism product offering across the region. (Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Development)

- **Objective:** Complete the Badlands-Breaks-Beartoothsscenic route project with Southeast Montana, Central Montana and Missouri River Country.

Goal 3: Encourage and participate in stakeholder engagement & efforts to help address sustainability and capacity issues. (Destination Management, Destination Stewardship)

- **Objective:** Work with CVBs to host a minimum of one community outreach event focused on sustainability topics.
- **Objective:** Conduct a research project, with the goal of soliciting feedback from visitors pertaining to their experiences in the region. This data would then be used to help develop strategy and specific projects that are paramount to address. This survey would be sent to our social media audience, our website users, and our direct email database.
- **Objective:** Continue to participate in stewardship programs such as Leave No trace and Recreate Responsibly, implementing the appropriate messaging & tactics into our campaigns and programs.

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

Methods to be used in Destination Marketing, Management and Development efforts:

Administration	Agency Services
Cooperative Marketing	Earned Media/Tourism Sales
Education/Outreach	Joint Ventures
Marketing Resources	Opportunity Marketing
Paid Media	Product Development
Research	Travel/Trade Shows
Visitor Services	Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)

-

Destination Marketing PROJECTS & TACTICS

TACTICS:

YC will continue to leverage our hashtags/taglines to embody the spirit of visitors. **Examples: #BoldlyGoMT, #BeyondYellowstone, The Yellowstone you haven't seen yet, Winter is Waiting and Back to Adventure** in our advertising and publicity efforts.

-Marketing campaign messaging and imagery are specifically designed to address the Inspiration phase to targeted audience segments. This messaging inspires visitors and potential visitors to view themselves, and their destination, through the lens of Montana's Yellowstone Country brand...free-spirited, adventurous, genuine, and captivating.

CONSUMER ADVERTISING:

- Online/Digital
- Print
- Video/Photography
- Website/Electronic
- Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM
- Out-of-Home
- Social media (organic and paid)
- Joint Ventures
- Printed Materials /Travel Guides
- G2G Content

PUBLICITY:

- Media Outreach
- Press/Influencer FAM Trips

- Email Marketing
- Blogging
- Travel/tradeshows (planning to collaborate with BrandMT & DMOs both in the region & across the state)

ORIENTATION AND FACILITATION/SUPPORT projects The Yellowstone Country website, call center, travel guide and scenic road map are the primary resources for helping travelers with the orientation and facilitation phases, although all have functions during the inspiration phase as well. These innovative resources are designed to make the travel planning process as easy and efficient as possible.

- Website
- Travel Guide
- Scenic Road Map
- Call Center & Fulfillment
- Visitor Information Centers Support
- DMO Training/Support
- Community Outreach
- Cultural Tourism grant program
- Family Adventure Guide
- Birding Guide

-Tourism Industry Partners—Montana's Yellowstone Country will continue collaboration with tourism industry partners. Current, and still developing, partnerships include:

- **Brand MT Joint Ventures:** (On the Snow, Sojern, Teads, Jun Group)
- **Montana State Parks:** Weekly Park Showcase Promotion
- **DMO Collaboration:** Glaciers to Geysers (GC), Montana Dinosaur Trail (SEMT, MRC, YC, CM), **Travel Guide/Website Promotions** (GC, SEMT, Red Lodge, Big Sky, West Yellowstone),
- New for 2023/24: **Breaks to Badlands to Beartooth's (BBB)**

Additionally, Yellowstone Country offers co-op opportunities for regional partners that are not a CVB, working to provide an opportunity for partners to advertise nationally. We are offering annual, winter-specific, and warm-season specific co-ops, with great participation from private sector businesses, such as Sage Lodge and Red Lodge Mountain, as well as our traditional CVB partners.

Yellowstone Country will partner with regional CVBs and businesses for several press trips and video shoots throughout the region each year. These are highly successful for us because they not only raise awareness of the region, but we gain content and assets to use for our other promotional efforts.

-Trip Advisor, Network Programmatic banner and video, in-state digital and national print cooperatives have given the entire region a presence, with the intention of continued growth and development of future options. Using this model, Yellowstone Country has been able to offer digital and print packages to in-region partners at a fraction of the cost of the overall placements.

-As stated in the previous section, two of the ongoing cooperative partnerships we are involved in have been very successful for us & will be continued and/or expanded in FY 24: The Joint Venture Glaciers to Geysers with Glacier Country Tourism and the Montana Dinosaur Trail.

-Research: Yellowstone Country participates in the FY 23 BrandMT Research Joint Ventures (Zartico, credit card spend data), and will participate again in FY 24. Additionally, we will invest in a vetted research resource that can help us to best identify our visitor profiles, such as Destination Analyst, Datafy, Zartico, etc. This will either be an independent buy for YC, or we will do so as a collaboration with other DMOS.

Destination Management PROJECTS & TACTICS

Tactics:

Yellowstone Country has administered a VIC Staffing grant program for over 25 years. In that timeframe, we have seen tremendous growth in the use of VIC services by travelers as our visitation numbers continue to climb. VICs are managed by chambers and other non-profit organizations, and having limited funding, they are challenged in trying to hire and retain quality travel counselors, so this program provides the solution. Given the substantial increase in visitation over the past two years, Yellowstone Country has identified this program as being a crucial part of visitor services.

The call center will help supplement destination management efforts by helping orientate and facilitate visitors to avoid crowded areas in a similar fashion as a VIC. The substantial increase in visitation over the previous two years necessitates the continued use of the call center to help visitors navigate Yellowstone Country. In 2023, we will add additional call center services to help support the greater demand from visitors who seek to include both Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks in their travel plans, as the call center manager has indicated an increase in inquiries from interested two-park visitors - many are considering flying into Bozeman, Kalispell, or Missoula, and heading to both parks on their trip plans.

Destination Development PROJECTS & TACTICS

TACTICS:

In 2022 Yellowstone Country implemented a VIC Enhancement and Improvement grant program to collaborate with communities to improve the visitor experience at our funded VICs. The response from eligible VICs has been very good for the entirety of the program, so we will continue, as many of the VIC facilities have a backlog of small maintenance & improvement projects.

Yellowstone Country provides a Cultural Tourism grant program specifically focused on supporting new events and attractions and/or helping already established ones to grow and enhance their product. This program has been highly successful, and there is an opportunity to expand this program even more with the return of signature events and the willingness of communities to develop new tourism product.

The collaborative product development project between four of the regions (Yellowstone Country, Southeast MT, Central MT, and Missouri River Country) to develop a travel connection between the Badlands-Breaks-Beartooths, with the objective promoting the more rural areas of each of the four regions. This collaboration received a BrandMT match grant in FY 23 (the project is yet unnamed, as we work through the development phase). In addition to the grant portion of the work, in FY 24 Yellowstone Country will begin gathering and producing content for our own regional promotion efforts, as well as for use in the partnership project.

Destination Stewardship PROJECTS & TACTICS

Tactics:

Yellowstone Country will use the Resiliency Strategic Plan (when completed) to help identify & implement specific actions, programs, initiatives, partnerships, etc. that address the ongoing challenges of managing our assets in conjunction with encouraging visitors to come to the region. As a result of the catastrophic flooding in the region, for an example of these type projects, Yellowstone Country was asked to take the lead in providing a Crisis Management Plan template for communities and/or organizations to adapt for their own use, since many of the smaller, rural areas do not have this type of information in place.

- Leave No Trace/Recreate Responsibly- create content and awareness campaigns.

- Yellowstone Country will work with regional partners on community outreach efforts, focused on engaging stakeholders about the value of tourism, and to also build relationships & partnerships that will help manage the destination. **Due to budget cuts (caused by the flooding closures), we did not meet all our objectives for this tactic in FY 23, but we fully anticipate being able to implement some type of community outreach program for FY 24.
- In an effort to raise awareness, Yellowstone Country will work to engage with residents and businesses throughout the region, telling our story about what our purpose & function is, providing information and examples of the work being done by the region.

**Optional: Add attachment
Here**

**Optional: Add attachment
here**

**Do you want to add an
attachment?**

**Do you want to add an
attachment?**

Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Implement a multi-layered winter campaign that targets our desired winter audience. This campaign would showcase the multitude of winter recreation activities available in the region. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased bed tax collections for the entire region by 2% over 2022 figures. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Participate in a minimum of 3 Joint Venture campaigns with other BrandMT/DMOs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. # of joint ventures we participated in. 2. We'll be able to track the analytics of each campaign/project to help determine success. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Develop 1-2 cooperative campaign options in which public/private partners have an opportunity to collaborate with Yellowstone Country. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. # of cooperative campaigns 2. Track the analytics of the campaign. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Complete the Badlands-Breaks-Beartooths scenic route project with Southeast Montana, Central Montana and Missouri River Country. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine complete/not complete status of the project. 2. Track the project status through the planned phases. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Work with CVBs to host a minimum of one community outreach event focused on sustainability topics. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. # of events held. 2. Determine if any sustainability projects are implemented at a local/regional level as a result of this outreach. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Conduct a research project, with the goal of soliciting feedback from visitors pertaining to their experiences in the region. This data would then be used to help develop strategy and specific projects that are paramount to address. This survey would be sent to our social media audience, our website users, and our direct email database. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of the research project. 2. Analyze research data received to help determine management & stewardship projects for Yellowstone Country to undertake. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Continue to participate in stewardship programs such as Leave No Trace and Recreate Responsibly, implementing the appropriate messaging & tactics into our campaigns and programs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yellowstone Country already participates in the Recreate Responsibly initiative, and is interested in participating in the Montana partnership with Leave No Trace, so we'll be successful if we're able to implement and/or blend both of these initiatives into our own stewardship efforts. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Collaborate with Glacier Country Tourism and Southwest Montana to jointly fund call center activities to help capture data from visitors to both national parks and the corridor in between. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generating data reports that can be used for strategic planning pertaining to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, and the areas of the three regions between them is key; success is measured by being able to implement this partnership. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Attend a minimum of one consumer tradeshow, and assist a minimum of 3 DMO regional partners to attend shows that meet our overall goals and target audiences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yellowstone Country attendance/participation in our strategic choice of consumer tradeshows. 2. A minimum of 3 regional DMO representatives attend a show. 		

DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$267,706.00	8.78	\$0.00	0
Agency Services	\$623,000.00	20.43	\$0.00	0
Cooperative Marketing	\$35,000.00	1.15	\$0.00	0
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$25,000.00	0.82	\$0.00	0
Education/Outreach	\$100.00	0	\$0.00	0
Joint Venture	\$330,000.00	10.82	\$0.00	0
Marketing Resources	\$45,000.00	1.48	\$0.00	0
Opportunity Marketing	\$100.00	0	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$1,100,000.00	36.08	\$0.00	0
Product Development	\$75,000.00	2.46	\$0.00	0
Research	\$20,000.00	0.66	\$0.00	0
Travel/Trade Shows	\$49,141.00	1.61	\$0.00	0
Visitor Services	\$467,094.00	15.32	\$0.00	0
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$12,000.00	0.39	\$0.00	0
	\$3,049,141.00	100.00	\$0.00	0.00

Narrative Evaluation

DMO Plan Attachments

Description

File Name

File Size

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
YCMI BOD meeting minutes-approved FY 24 DMO Plan Narrative & Budget	BM Minutes 4-18-23.doc	80 KB
FY 24 Certificate of Compliance	FY 24 Certificate of Compliance.JPG	704 KB
YCMI By-laws	YCMI By-laws Revision FINAL 1-2015 .doc	80 KB

