



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128711 - FY24 Gardiner DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 Gardiner DMO Plan
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Grantee Contact: Terese Petcoff
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Contract Dates

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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.

The small hamlet of Gardiner, known as “Nature’s Favorite Entrance to Yellowstone National Park”, is located in southwest Montana at the North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Nestled between the Absaroka-Beartooth and the Gallatin Mountain ranges, Gardiner is surrounded by approximately 10 million acres of public lands. The community enjoys year-round access to the Yellowstone River--the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. Since the early 1880's, Gardiner has served as the original entrance to Yellowstone National Park and is graced by the historic Roosevelt Arch, dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.

Our community's small-town Montana charm, natural splendor, and abundant wildlife make it a unique "home on the range" for our nearly 900 residents. Year-round access to Yellowstone’s Northern Range truly differentiates Gardiner from other Yellowstone gateway communities. The community also enjoys a rich history as the original entrance to Yellowstone National Park, which has left a flavor of Old West heritage evidenced by historic buildings and the Roosevelt Arch.

Strengths: Our charming small town offers relaxing hospitality while providing full-service amenities. Many Gardiner restaurants offer local and sustainably grown produce and Montana raised beef. Visitors will find a diverse selection of accommodations including modern hotels and inns, rustic cabins, quaint cottages, relaxing B&B's, and vacation rentals. Our all-inclusive guest ranches offer our visitors horseback riding and fishing by day, and cowboy cookouts and campfires by night.

Year-round access to Yellowstone National Park and easy access to Forest Service and BLM lands provide visitors with an array of recreation opportunities. These include whitewater rafting, ziplining, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, photography, wildlife watching, hiking, fishing, and soaking in hot springs.

Challenges: When analyzing Gardiner’s challenges, it is important to not only look at 2022 but the years leading up to it as well. When comparing June 2019 to June 2020 through June 12, 2022 one will see that Gardiner experienced significant impacts both economically and in terms of visitation. In part this is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as people sought open spaces and recreational opportunities like never before. However, as the country has begun to transition into a new post-pandemic normal, in 2021 our area’s visitation continued to rise bringing unanticipated challenges. Specifically, the North Entrance recreational visit counts from April – November were up 36.7% year over year when comparing 2020 to 2021. Yellowstone experienced their highest visitation on record in 2021 with 4,860,537 recreational visits, of those visits 1,006,375 or 20.7% came through the North Entrance of Gardiner. Additionally, when comparing North Entrance recreational visit counts from July – November 2019 to 2020 visits were up 21%, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. With higher visitation, Gardiner experienced a new type of traveler(s), many that had never come to a national park before, many that did not plan ahead, and many that were unaware of how to properly respect the landscape and how to recreate responsibly.

This new type of traveler has been a challenge within itself. The overuse of the recreational areas surrounding Gardiner has resulted in problematic behavior of dispersed and non-dispersed campers that included leaving human waste, camping in hazardous roadways, illegal camping, illegal fires, and trespassing. As campgrounds filled in Yellowstone, they also filled outside the park, in response to this all campgrounds in YNP have moved to reservation

only and, our most popular local campground operated by the USFS moved to reservation only as well. We anticipate that this change to reservation only will help mitigate the negative actions of others, however, communicating this to change to visitors could be a challenge as more and more travelers, from our experience, are not planning ahead.

Additionally, the workforce has been dramatically reduced for the Gardiner area. In part this was due to the inability to hire foreign J-1 employees in 2020 and 2021. However, the lack of affordable, residential, and year-round housing continues to be the biggest threat to hiring and retaining employees. In the winter and shoulder seasons, the lack of year-round staffing and a much lower visitation rate make it difficult for businesses to remain open resulting in a shortage of accessible visitor amenities. Undoubtedly, the lack of a strong workforce has directly impacted the visitor experience in these months.

The lack of dining options in Gardiner has also become a considerable challenge. On July 14, 2020, Gardiner's downtown was severely impacted by a devastating fire that started in the kitchen of one of our dining establishments. It destroyed 4 buildings, 8 businesses, many jobs, and residential apartments. There were three dining establishments destroyed (two of which held liquor licenses), and in an already small community with limited dining and beverage options, the loss of these establishments severely impacted the visitor experience in town. In addition, the amount of rooms has steadily rose over the last two years bringing in more guests who also wish to dine out on their vacation. Pairing the effects of the fire with increased rooms and visitation, workforce shortages, and nationwide supply chain delays have led our dining establishments to, at times, have sporadic hours leaving visitors and the establishments themselves feeling frustrated.

Furthermore, public/private wildlife controversies are an added challenge for Gardiner and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem as a whole. While wildlife issues are not a new challenge, they can cast a harmful shadow to the area's tourism economy when they arise. For example, when a change in Montana Legislation (February 2022) allowed an unlimited wolf hunting and trapping quota, nearly all of Yellowstone's Phantom Lake Pack was killed. This led to national coverage of the area that for the most part was in an unfavorable light. Additionally, the harsh winter of 2022 - 2023 led Yellowstone Bison (which have historically roamed outside of the park's Northern boundary into Gardiner and beyond) to travel out in record breaking numbers. With more Bison outside of the park this led to a higher culling of the animal and more exposure than ever on the controversial hunt and park sending them to slaughter casting yet another harsh spotlight on our area.

In 2022 as Gardiner businesses prepared for what reservations were forecasting to be the busiest season to date. All businesses were forced to pivot their businesses practices. Businesses built more or created employee housing, gave significant raises to those currently employed, and increased starting pay to maintain, attract, and expand their workforce; some leased sections of their land to food vendors; others expanded their activity and retail offerings – this was all done in effort to meet not only the needs of increased visitation but improve the overall visitor experience. Then on June 13, 2022 our small community's economy came to a virtual standstill when unprecedented flood levels of the Yellowstone River and its tributaries damaged homes, bridges, highways in Yellowstone and along US HWY 89, and more. It's damage was so severe that access into Yellowstone via the North Entrance Road from Gardiner was cut off from June 13 until the eventual reopening of a newly constructed road that reopened on October 30, 2022. Reconnecting Gardiner back to Yellowstone National Park for unlimited visitor access was crucial for our gateway community and we are incredibly grateful for the reconnection, but the flood and it's ensuing damage has brought countless challenges that continue into 2023. One being economic stress to businesses by limiting the capital needed to restart in full for the 2023 season. Another, and perhaps one of the hardest for businesses to control, is combatting misinformation. Ensuring that all potential visitors to Yellowstone know that Gardiner is open, with unlimited access to Yellowstone National Park, and that while a once in 500 year flood did severely impact our community, the physical damage was not what one would expect, as most all areas of Gardiner remain unchanged from what they looked like prior to June 13, 2022 – has proven incredibly challenging especially when many businesses have limited staffs, budgets, and resources. Finally, due to the impacts on the waste water system to YNP specifically the Mammoth area,

the Mammoth Hotel and many Mammoth visitor services and amenities that are typically open in both the winter and summer season have remained closed, in turn potentially impacting visitation to Gardiner from the hotel's guests.

Opportunities: When considering the challenges of 2020, 2021, and 2022 Gardiner finds its biggest opportunities. While we will not dwell on the unfortunate and at times stressful events spanning from 2020 - 2022 they do give Gardiner the unique opportunity to showcase our community's resilience through vastly different demands. From visitation levels that pushed our community's services to their limits to nonexistent visitation our community was reminded of the significance of the traveler to Gardiner. Highlighting this appreciation and communicating to visitors that their dollar goes further in a town comprised of small family businesses is a focus of the coming year.

Even while looking at how 2020 and 2021 visitation exceeded expectations, we still see the largest opportunity for tourism growth in Gardiner to be in the winter and shoulder seasons. According to National Park Service in 2021 recreational visits, December through March, only contributed to approximately 9.6% of the total North Entrance visits for the calendar. The primary goal of our long-term marketing efforts will continue to be focused on attracting more visitors in this time frame. However, this marketing effort must be done in a way that manages visitor expectations.

Pairing this messaging with what we most looked forward to in FY23 – adding an element of education and management to ensure that our landscape remains intact for future visitors to enjoy to our messaging – is an area that we are very excited to build upon.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

Brand Pillars: Gardiner aligns perfectly with the state's brand pillars. Located at the heart of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Gardiner is surrounded by unspoiled nature with beautiful vistas and landscapes that are home to some of the most abundant and diverse wildlife in North America. Gardiner prides itself as the historic gateway to Yellowstone's natural wonders. Our messaging focuses on the area's abundant wildlife, destination management and education, authentic and local hospitality, and year-round recreational activities as the only year-round entrance to Yellowstone National Park.

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 Development

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

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

The target market for both increasing visitation and managing our destination remains the geo-traveler (defined below). Efforts will target promoting the outdoors to the authentic experience seeker and wildlife enthusiast, incorporating educational messaging toward responsible recreation, managing visitor expectations, and highlighting the resilience and distinctiveness of our community.

Geo-traveler:

The National Geographic Society defines Geotourism as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.”

Specific to our area, the geo-traveler is a visitor who supports local businesses, respects our residents and wildlife, understands the potential challenges of our environment (weather, travel time, etc.), and seeks out experiences unique to the area. They place a high-value on preserving the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and assist in its preservation by having a low-impact themselves and educating others on the importance of responsible recreation practices.

Adventurous Couples or Families:

Couples and families, ages 35-54

College-educated

United States: typically from California, Texas, Utah, Washington, Colorado and the Midwestern Region.

Household Income \$80,000 + per year

Interested in traveling to areas rich in outdoor recreational experiences, especially in the winter.

Mature Nature-Based Travelers:

Median Age 60

Interested in visiting Yellowstone National Park and partaking in activities such as scenic driving, day hiking, wildlife watching, and nature photography.

United States: from Washington, California, Idaho, Colorado, Illinois, and Utah

Household Income \$75,000 + per year

May travel in groups and/or in couples.

Young/Midlife Success

Couples & Families, Ages 25-54

Household Income of \$75,000 +

Have a secure homebase

Focused on family/relationship, may have children under 18 in the home

Most completed a college degree

Understand evolving technology and use social media and digital platforms as main trip planning resources and inspiration

Interested in "bucket list" destinations, national parks, and outdoor recreation

Drive Markets

Travelers residing in Canada, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

Attachment: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_Internal.pdf; Contains:

- FY23 Social Media Yearly Report Visit Gardiner MT
- FY22 Social Media Yearly Report Visit Gardiner MT
- FY21 Social Media Yearly Report Visit Gardiner MT
- FY23 VisitGardinerMT.com Google analytics
- FY22 VisitGardinerMT.com Google analytics
- FY21 VisitGardinerMT.com Google analytics
- 2022 Yellowstone Country VIC Grant Completion Summary
- 2021 Yellowstone Country VIC Grant Completion Summary
- 2020 Yellowstone Country VIC Grant Completion Summary
- FY22 Google Keywords Camping Online Campaign Results
- FY22 Spring Awareness Google Online Campaign Results
- FY21 Spring Online Campaign Results
- VisitGardinerMT.com Google Ad Campaign Results Overview
- FY23 VisitGardinerMT.com Google Analytics Emerging Markets US Cities
- Gardiner Chamber of Commerce Building w Current Branding

Attachments: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_External.pdf; Contains:

- Yellowstone National Park Visitation December – March 2022 vs. 2023
- Yellowstone National Park Visitation April – November 2021 vs. 2022
- Yellowstone National Park Visitation December – March 2021 vs. 2022
- Yellowstone National Park Visitation December – March 2020 vs. 2021
- Yellowstone National Park Visitation April – November 2020 vs. 2021
- Yellowstone National Park Visitation July – November 2019 vs. 2020
- The Earned Media Opportunity
- “Montana’s Silent Yellowstone Flood: When Tourist Leave” – The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- “Mass Yellowstone Hunt Kills 1,150 Bison” – The New York Times
- “‘Unprecedented killing’: The Deadliest Season for Yellowstone” – The Washington Post
- “Yellowstone: Wolf hunt altered behavior, damaged research” – Wyoming File

Supporting Research: General

Montana Residents: Attitudes Towards Tourism 2021

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development – Tourism Spending

The Impact of DMO Visitor Guide

Yellowstone National Park Visitor Study Report

Gardiner, Montana: Resident Perceptions Before and After Development

Supporting Research: Challenges

“Montana’s Silent Yellowstone Flood: When Tourist Leave” – The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (in Attachment: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_External)

“Mass Yellowstone Hunt Kills 1,150 Bison” – The New York Times (in Attachment: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_External)

“Unprecedented killing’: The Deadliest Season for Yellowstone” – The Washington Post (in Attachment: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_External)

“Yellowstone: Wolf hunt altered behavior, damaged research” – Wyoming File (in Attachment: FY24 Visit Gardiner MT_Supporting Research_External)

Supporting Research: Social Media

How DMO Social Media Drives Travel Decisions

Social Media and Its Impact on Travelers to Montana

Global social media statistics research summary 2022

Global social media stats

Supporting Research: Website Development

The Impact of DMO Websites

3c. What are your emerging markets?

Visitors with novice experience of recreating in the outdoors and have not planned far in advance for their trip.

Beginning in 2020 Gardiner experienced a new type of traveler(s), many that had never come to a national park before, many that did not plan ahead, and many that were naive of how to properly respect the landscape and how to recreate responsibly. This continues into today’s market as stated previously with Yellowstone’s record breaking visitation in 2021 of 4,860,537 recreational visits, and 1,006,375 or 20.7% coming through the North Entrance of Gardiner. In tandem with Yellowstone the GCVB also broke records with over 83,000 visitors passing through our doors from May – September 2021, when comparing this to 2020 and 2019 this is almost three times the amount of visitation.

It is important to highlight some differences in operations. In 2019 the GCVB was able to have door counters installed, giving us a valuable insights to our overnight vestibule (public restroom access) visitation and a more accurate number of visitors opposed to the previous hand tallying method. However, these counters were not fully installed until late August. Then in 2020, our visitation numbers were limited because we had to keep vestibule open exclusively

during business hours to abide by the health guidance at the time. In 2021 an automatic lock allowed us to keep the doors open from 4:30am to 12:00am, enabling us to track after hour visitors. For these reasons, we could be seeing a disproportionate increase from 2019/2020 to 2021.

Domestic Visitors interested in Yellowstone National Park

Domestic visitors particularly from Denver, Chicago, New York, Phoenix, and Los Angeles.

VisitGardinerMT.com Google analytics data from FY23 supports this information; it shows that users from these domestic locations were up significantly compared to the previous year time period – Denver + 69.23%, Chicago +166.05%, New York + 155.49%, Phoenix + 547.90%, and Los Angeles +104.90%.

The US Cities in the top ten of VisitGardinerMT.com website traffic for the comparing time period of FY22 (April 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022) were: Salt Lake City, UT, users with out their location data on, Gardiner, MT, Dallas, TX, Seattle, WA, Bozeman, MT, Ashburn, VA, Denver, CO, Billings, MT and New York, NY. When considering this information it should be noted that Chicago, Phoenix, and Los Angeles were all new to the top ten for FY23.

International Visitors interested in Yellowstone National Park

International visitors particularly from Germany, Canada, Netherlands, and Singapore appear to be an emerging market for Gardiner, Montana.

VisitGardinerMT.com Google analytics data from FY23 supports this information; it shows most international website users were from the aforementioned countries – Germany with 3,944 users (+ 921% yoy), Canada with 3,293 users (+ 152% yoy), Netherlands with 2,550 users (+ 1,324.58% yoy), and Singapore with 2,132 users (+ 4,534.78% yoy).

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

When referencing Yellowstone National Park North Entrance visitation numbers from 2021 v 2022, we wish to increase shoulder season visitation from October through March. With a particular focus on when Yellowstone National Park roads are open to over-snow travel respectively Mid-December though end of February.

GOAL #2

When referencing Yellowstone National Park North Entrance visitation numbers from 2021, in the peak season of April through November, we wish to garnish visitation number within 7% of these records. Meaning that we would consider it a successful season even if North Entrance visitation is down 7% for 2023 compared to 2021 figures.

GOAL #3

Educate and encourage responsible recreation to residents and visitors alike including but not limited to: leaving no trace, planning ahead, packing their patience and being kind humans, building an inclusive outdoors, and respecting wildlife by practicing the proper behaviors advised by Yellowstone National Park Service.

GOAL #4

Improve the visitor experience at the Gardiner Visitor Information Center/VisitGardinerMT.com/Visitor Gardiner MT operated kiosks by updating signage with the current Visit Gardiner MT branding, installing uniform displays, and making handouts downloadable via QR code in turn pushing more traffic to VisitGardinerMT.com and reducing paper waste. Additionally, hiring a semi-year round employee with the primary responsibility of improving the visitor experience through related projects and community engagement.

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

GOAL #1 & #2

We will achieve this by heavily utilizing partnerships and joint venture opportunities with Yellowstone Country and Brand MT, executing targeted online digital advertising campaigns that drive potential visitors to VisitGardinerMT.com, highlighting events and/or activities unique to the area in the respective winter/spring seasons on VisitGardinerMT social media platforms, building relationships with interested parties through targeted email marketing with leads received from National Park Trips Media Planner, contracting/hiring/working with an agency to help with marketing creative and campaign implementation, and possible participation in a FAM trip with Brand MT or Yellowstone Country if they are in the area.

GOAL #2

Tactics include, if funds allow, creating and distributing recreate responsibly kits (postcard w/tear off, utensils, baggie), distributing flyers and signage, placing print media, targeted digital campaigns, and installing a camera that integrates into VisitGardinerMT.com and provides visitors with a real-time look of conditions. If funds allow tactics would also include developing short educational videos to engage across social media platforms and obtaining a billboard on the HWY 89 corridor between Livingston and Gardiner, MT with recreate responsibly messaging,

GOAL #3

Tactics include contracting/hiring/working with an agency to create and install updated signage at the Gardiner Visitor information Center, purchasing lockable display cases for the vestibule to display messaging e.g. QR codes, area event flyers, maps; researching and potentially purchasing a digital informational display if it fits within budget, and updating VisitGardinerMT.com with handouts that are not currently downloadable. Additional tactics include hiring a semi-year round local employee with the primary responsibility of improving the visitor experience through related projects and community engagement.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES

Collaborate with other CVBs, tourism organizations, or other appropriate entities, especially within Yellowstone Country, to develop and set common goals and foster partnerships.

If collections exceed forecasted projections, expand photo/video library to reflect Gardiner's current state, capture area events, and images of shoulder season offerings.

Optional: Add attachment
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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<p>Collaborate with other CVBs, tourism organizations, or other appropriate entities, especially within Yellowstone Country, to develop and set common goals and foster partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend 8 meetings/conferences resulting in 3 completed projects 100 % attendance of the GCVB representative(s) at the annual Montana Governors Conference on Tourism and Recreation 100 % attendance of the GCVB representative(s) at all required TAC meetings 	<p>-attended 8+ meetings, resulting in 0 completed projects</p> <p>-100% attendance at Governor's Conference on Tourism</p> <p>-100% attendance at all required TAC meetings</p>	<p>This objective was partially successful. GCVB representatives attended the annual conference, attended TAC meetings, and met numerous times with various partners, including Yellowstone Forever, the National Park Service, Communities that Care Coalition, and the local sheriff's department. Several projects are currently underway, but none are complete. For example, the GCVB is partnering with Yellowstone Forever, the National Park Service, the Greater Gardiner Community Council, Yellowstone National Park Lodges, and Yellowstone General Stores to implement a plastics reduction grant received from the National Park Foundation. Project planning began in the spring of 2024, the grant was awarded summer 2024, and implementation will begin early 2025.</p> <p>We will continue this objective.</p>
<p>Communicate responsible recreation practices to keep the GYE and Montana a safe and intact tourism destination for years to come.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and distribute 100 Recreate Responsibly kits Installation of live feed camera to VisitGardinerMT.com Placement of at least 1 print ads focused on responsible recreation messaging in a variety of regional, local, or national publications geared toward our target market. 	<p>-created and distributed 0 Recreate Responsibly kits</p> <p>-temporarily installed a live feed camera, but did not connect to VisitGardinerMT.com</p> <p>-0 print ads focused on responsible recreation</p>	<p>This object was not successful. While GCVB social media posts frequently focus on Recreate Responsibly and Know Before You Go, this was not organized into a full-fledged advertising campaign. Staff look forward to distributing Recreate Responsibly kits when visitation picks up December 15, 2025 and connecting a live feed camera to VisitGardinerMT.com with the implementation of a re-designed website spring 2025.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully run and complete a "Know Before You Go" (specific campaign name to be determined) online digital advertising/Google Keywords campaign to run May – September/October depending on performance and budget. The KPI can be measured on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The campaign materials including digital ads and Google keywords are launched The campaign's performance is assessed based on click-through rates, impressions, and clicks. A dedicated landing page is created that houses communication on what to expect when visiting, safety information, general trip-planning resources, various area handouts, etc. Campaign runs from May to September/October * It must be noted that this campaign can only be implemented as the budget allows and if collections do not exceed the forecasted projections it may not be feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not run and complete a "Know Before You Go" online digital advertising/Google Keywords campaign 	<p>We will continue this objective as funding allows.</p>
<p>When referencing Yellowstone National Park North Entrance visitation numbers from 2021 v 2022 we wish to increase shoulder season visitation from October through March. With a particular focus on when Yellowstone National Park roads are open to over-snow travel respectively Mid-December though end of February.</p>	<p>LODGING TAX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase lodging tax collections in October (2022), November (2022), and March (2023) by 3%. Increase lodging tax collections in December (2022), January (2023), and February (2023) by 5%. Being that reporting is on a quarterly basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing Q4 collections (October, November, December) 2023 to \$57,355.87 when compared to Q4 of 2021 Increasing Q1 collections (January, February, March) 2024 to \$54,387.03 when compared to Q1 of 2022 <p>DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q4 collections (October, November, December) 2023 increased to \$55,494, a 2% increase when compared to Q4 of 2021 Q1 collections (January, February, March) 2024 increased to \$53,109, a 1.1% increase when compared to Q1 of 2022 Completed one winter print cooperative with Montana's Yellowstone Country ended FY24 with 49,000 Facebook page followers ended FY24 with 10,500 Instagram followers 	<p>This objective was partially successful. Shoulder season lodging tax collections increased, but not to the degree outlined in the measurable metric. GCVB participated in a winter print cooperative and increased social media followers. We achieved the Instagram metric and almost achieved the Facebook metric.</p> <p>We will continue this objective and focus marketing efforts on the shoulder seasons.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete at least one online digital advertising campaign that focuses on the winter shoulder season and drives potential visitors to VisitGardinerMT.com <p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End FY24 with at least 50,000 Facebook page followers <p>End FY 24 with at least 10,500 Instagram followers</p>		
<p>Enhance the visitor experience with cohesive signage and displays that reflects the updated Gardiner brand and encourages environmentally friendly practices. And hire an additional semi year round employee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of signage at the Gardiner Visitor Information Center reflective of our current Gardiner branding. Installation of at least one display case either digital or traditional locking case in Gardiner Visitor Information Center Vestibule. Created a dedicated area resource landing page(s) on VisitGardinerMT.com that houses corresponding QR codes (that are trackable to informational downloads). Hire an additional semi-year round employee whose primary responsibility is improving the visitor experience through related projects and engaging with the community and appropriate partners. 	<p>- We did not install signage at the Gardiner Visitor Information Center reflective of our current Gardiner branding.</p> <p>-We did not install a display case in Gardiner Visitor Information Center Vestibule.</p> <p>-We did not create a dedicated area resource landing page(s) on VisitGardinerMT.com that houses corresponding QR codes (that are trackable to informational downloads).</p> <p>-We did hire an additional semi-year round employee whose primary responsibility is improving the visitor experience through related projects and engaging with the community and appropriate partners.</p>	<p>This objective was partially successful. The sign project has been ongoing for several years now and I'm happy to report that they will be installed November 25, 2024. GCVB staff updated QR codes leading to multiple "Know Before Your Go" digital resources on VisitGardinerMT.com and Forecast.Weather.Gov, for example. Staff distributed print materials with these QR codes for placement at local businesses and the Gardiner Visitor Center. However, there is not yet a dedicated landing page. GCVB hired a part-time Visitor Experience and Community Engagement Coordinator.</p> <p>We are continuing with these objectives.</p>
<p>If collections exceed current projections, expand photo/video library to reflect Gardiner's current state, capture area events, and images of shoulder season offerings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a combination of at least 15 photos/videos of Gardiner in the winter Obtain a combination of at least 15 photos/videos of Gardiner in the spring Obtain a combination of at least 15 photos/videos of Gardiner in the peak season (May - October) Obtain a combination of at least 15 photos/videos of the humans of Gardiner partaking in various area activities, events, dining, shopping, etc. 	<p>-the GCVB did not obtain any new photo/video assets of Gardiner</p>	<p>This objective was not successful. Staff did not make progress toward this objective during FY24, but will make significant progress in FY25 by hiring a local photographer who has worked for the GCVB in the past.</p> <p>We are continuing this objective.</p>

DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$14,931.00	16.61	\$15,156.20	101.51
Agency Services	\$800.00	0.89	\$0.00	0
Cooperative Marketing	\$1,250.00	1.39	\$1,250.00	100.0
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$2,160.00	2.4	\$281.94	13.05
Education/Outreach	\$1,800.00	2.0	\$2,003.43	111.3
Joint Venture	\$7,500.00	8.34	\$6,000.00	80.0
Marketing Resources	\$1,990.00	2.21	\$313.60	15.76
Opportunity Marketing	\$50.00	0.06	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$20,600.00	22.93	\$25,175.15	122.21
Product Development	\$15,000.00	16.69	\$0.00	0
Research	\$0.00	0	\$350.00	0
Visitor Services	\$18,500.00	20.58	\$15,299.58	82.7
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$5,300.00	5.9	\$1,450.00	27.36
	\$89,881.00	100.00	\$67,279.90	

Narrative Evaluation

After a difficult year during FY23, FY24 proved much more successful for the Gardiner CVB. Visitation picked up after the devastating flood of June 2022 and visitors' concerns about the disaster began to fade. Fully connectivity was restored to the greater Yellowstone area.

GCVB staff continued cooperative marketing efforts with Montana's Yellowstone Country and with the folks in Cooke City through the Northern Range Cooperative. The former Executive Director, Terese Petcoff, launched projects and partnerships that I'm continuing into FY25.

Several highlights of the year include hiring the Visitor Experience and Community Engagement Coordinator, finalizing Visitor Center sign production, and starting the Plastic Free YNP partnership.

The VECE Coordinator was an invaluable resource for visitors with her extensive knowledge of the region and passion for helping visitors get the most out of their trip. Fran was instrumental in bringing the Northern Rockies Nature Journaling 2024 conference to Gardiner.