

**TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7-8, 2019
HELENA, MT**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Glenniss Indreland, Chair—Bozeman	Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish	Brian Sprenger—Belgrade
Katie Grice, Vice Chair—Big Sky	Rachel Gregg—Missoula	Alger Swingley—Great Falls
Lindzy Roth—Kalispell	Sandi Luckey—East Helena	Steve Wahrlich—Billings
Jeff Ewelt—Billings	Bill McGladdery—Butte	Joe Willauer—Twin Bridges

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Tami Burke—Glasgow	Dr. Kenneth Ryan—Poplar
Patricia McGlynn—Kalispell	Sandra Thares—Great Falls

DEPT. OF COMMERCE (DOC) and MT OFFICE OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MOTBD) STAFF

Tara Rice—Director, DOC	Susan Joy—Made in Montana Program Manager
Jan Stoddard—ISO Bureau Chief	Carmen Levick—Tourism Outreach Coordinator
Kev Campbell—Business Development Specialist	Barb Sanem—Compliance Specialist
Michele Cushman—Tourism Grant Manager	Kate Siberell—Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Dan Iverson—Tribal Tourism Officer	Patty White—Marketing Bureau Chief
Todd Jackson—DOC Communications	

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair Glenniss Indreland called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:02 a.m. Introductions of Council members, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) staff and the audience followed.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

No changes to the agenda were requested.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of the June 10-11 TAC Meeting Minutes

Steve Wahrlich moved to adopt the consent agenda. Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. With no request to remove an item from the consent agenda, the consent agenda was adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eastern Montana Tourism Partner Initiative—Glenniss Indreland announced that the MOTBD team that is working on the initiative recently won the Governor's Award for Excellence for their efforts and work on the project.

TAC MEMBER ROUNDTABLE

Updates and information of happenings in Montana were given by TAC members. Discussion included:

- Great Falls had some struggles in September with early snowfall. Central Montana working with communities on campaign. Great Falls hosting BMW motorcycle rally for June 2020.
- Makoshika State Park had record numbers for visitation. TBEX Conference in Billings was a great event. ZooMontana was recently accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

- Air service continues to grow across the state. More air service expansions are expected in 2020 with seasonal and year-round flights being added.
- Bozeman approved \$1.2 billion in growth project adding new businesses, hotels, high school, dorms, etc. Public/new high school, dorms and air service.
- Whitefish tourism economy doing well and occupancy up in Whitefish area. The number of short-term rentals is growing. Trail usage in Whitefish growing in both local and visitor use. Housing plan to address needs/zoning, etc.
- Missoula was fortunate to have a beautiful summer. Growth happening and multiple partnerships for planning, etc. Destination Missoula working with all groups to collaborate and work together. Three new hotel properties.
- Livingston and Bozeman both have new lodging facilities. Livingston CVB Executive Director, Leslie Feigel is the new chair for MACE (Montana Association for Chamber Executives).
- West Yellowstone now has live otters at the Grizzly / Wolf Discovery center. Yellowstone Hot Springs near Gardiner is popular for locals, and also working to promote it to visitors as alternative to the boiling river.
- New facilities at Big Sky with a lot of expansion. Visit Big Sky community event committee formed. Opportunity to come together for consistent messaging.
- Strong festival season in Butte. Events were well attended. Trolley tours demand is growing. Redevelopment of Stodden Park has increased people coming to Butte to use the facility.
- New film tax incentive is bringing more interest to locations across the state.

Department of Commerce Director, Tara Rice thanked everyone for their attendance stating that service and participation is so important for tourism and Montana's economy.

TAC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee—Glenniss Indreland, Chair

Glenniss gave a recap of the TAC Retreat that was held on Sunday, October 6. Items of discussion included SJ24 (Interim Study of Lodging Tax Use), how to work with the Department of Revenue for more transparency regarding short-term rentals and the request for MOTBD to make the Strategic Plan for Tourism and Recreation a priority.

Marketing Committee Updates—Katie Grice, Chair

The Marketing Committee recommended final approval for the following FY19 audits:

Central Montana—Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the FY19 Central Montana audit as submitted with \$0.28 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Missouri River Country—Jeff Ewelt moved to approve the FY19 Missouri River Country audit as submitted with \$0.79 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.

Southeast Montana—Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the FY19 Southeast Montana audit as submitted with \$82,438.26 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Southwest Montana—Rachel Gregg moved to approve the FY19 Southwest Montana audit as submitted with \$0.55 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Yellowstone Country—Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the FY19 Yellowstone Country audit as submitted with \$0.86 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Lindzy Brunson seconded. Motion passed.

Belgrade CVB—Bill McGladdery moved to approve the FY19 Belgrade CVB audit as submitted with \$12.13 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

Visit Big Sky CVB— Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY19 Visit Big Sky CVB audit as submitted with \$13.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Bill McGladdery seconded. Motion passed.

Visit Billings CVB—Rhonda Fitzgerald moved to approve the FY19 Visit Billings CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Steve Wahrlich seconded. Motion passed.

Helena CVB—Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the FY19 Helena CVB audit as submitted with \$71.03 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Rachel Gregg seconded. Motion passed.

Red Lodge CVB—Brian Sprenger moved to approve the FY19 Red Lodge CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Joe Willauer seconded. Motion passed.

West Yellowstone CVB—Joe Willauer moved to approve the FY19 West Yellowstone CVB audit as submitted with \$0.00 remaining in uncommitted tax funds on hand. Glenniss Indreland seconded. Motion passed.

Research Committee—Rhonda Fitzgerald, Chair

Rhonda reported that in addition to the seven ongoing research projects, there were 23 new research project requests proposed for FY21. The Committee has selected 10 new projects for ITRR to analyze the method of research needed and an associated cost for each project. The Committee will make a recommendation for research projects to the full Council in February 2020. All research project information can be found at the ITRR website at www.itrr.umt.edu.

Heritage Commission—Jeff Ewelt, TAC Representative on the Heritage Commission Board

Jeff stated that the Heritage Commission is responsible for the preservation and management of Virginia City, Nevada City and Readers Alley. They have appropriated funds for housing updates, Methodist church will be renovated to serve as an event center and the Bale of Hay and Wells Fargo will be upgraded to be ADA compliant. Nevada City improvements include a fire suppression system and electrical upgrades. Department of Commerce Director, Tara Rice stated that this is all possible due to the passing of the bonding bill.

Tourism Grant Committee—Glenniss Indreland

Glenniss announced that the tourism grant cycle closed on September 30 and that the Department of Commerce hopes to announce awards by mid-December.

ITRR UPDATE/NEW REPORTS—Dr. Norma Nickerson, Director, ITRR / Matthew Petigrew, ITRR Data Analyst

Norma introduced new staff member Matthew Petigrew. Matthew gave an overview of the new ITRR interactive data portal, Tableau.

TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID) PANEL—Steve Wahrlich, Moderator

- John Brewer—Billings TBID
- Marysue Costello—West Yellowstone TBID
- Barb Neilan—Missoula TBID
- Daryl Schliem—Bozeman TBID

The panelists gave an overview of the TBID structure and the economic impact it can bring to communities.

MONTANA STATE PARKS UPDATE—Pat Doyle, Marketing & Communications Manager, Montana State Parks

Pat gave an update on Montana State Parks. SCORP public comment period open. Warm season May-August staff at 100%. August visitation was up 24%. Camping revenue/occupancy up. Earned revenue up 7% this year. Park fees make up large portion of state parks budget. Successful legislation this year. SB24 adds \$3 to the optional parks fee for license plate renewals. HB695—easement at Big Arm State Park. HB652—Bonding bill will add water at Makoshika for camp sites. Significant discount to veterans (Bill #?).

MOTBD UPDATES—MOTBD Staff

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) updates were given including staff changes, bureau updates, tribal tourism, marketing and research.

MEETING RECESSED

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019

Council Chair, Glenniss Indreland called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:35 a.m. She thanked the reception sponsors and staff for their hospitality.

DMO WORKFORCE, HOSPITALITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE PANEL—Jan Stoddard, Moderator

- Alyssa Voeltz—Visitor Services Manager, Visit Billings (CVB customer service training)
- Candace Strauss—CEO, Big Sky Chamber of Commerce & CVB (National tourism organizations including USTA)
- Racene Friede—Executive Director, Glacier Country Tourism Region (National DMO organizations and Glacier Country training/workshops)
- Rebecca Engum—Executive Director, Great Falls CVB (National DMO certification opportunities)
- Julie Jaksha—Director, Small Business Development Center for Headwaters RC&D (SBDC local programs)

The panelists talked about the benefits of various destination marketing organizations. Candace Strauss delivered her information by way of pre-recorded video. The panel also talked about the importance of workforce training and building relationships with local businesses to help promote the community or region for that area.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS—Bill McGladdery, Nominating Committee Chair

Bill McGladdery recognized Glenniss Indreland for the job she has done over the last two years of being the TAC Chair. The nominating committee recommended Katie Grice to be the TAC Chair and Rachel Gregg to be the TAC Vice-Chair.

Bill McGladdery moved to accept the recommendation of Katie Grice as TAC Chair and Rachel Gregg as TAC Vice-Chair. Brian Sprenger seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Steve Wahrlich asked MOTBD to address what role they will play in the Eastern Montana Tourism Partner Initiative after FY20 as there is no funding earmarked after that time.

UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS/FUTURE MEETING DISCUSSION, SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

- February 10-11, 2020—Helena (Delta by Marriott Helena Colonial Hotel)
- June 8-9, 2020—Helena (Best Western Great Northern Hotel)
- October 5-6, 2020—Location TBD

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.