

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



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ExploreWY
ROCK SPRINGS
& GREEN RIVER

EXPLOREWY.COM



OUR MISSION:

TO ENHANCE THE ECONOMY OF SWEETWATER COUNTY BY ATTRACTING AND RETAINING VISITORS.

BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

FRONT ROW

TAMARA MUSGROVE
Board Member

MEGAN WARNER
Marketing & Operations Manager

DAWN DALE
Flaming Gorge Bus Tour Guide

JENISSA MEREDITH
President & CEO

JULIA RUBLE
Board Member

MELISSA HUTCHINSON
Board Member

AINHOA FERRER
Board Member

BACK ROW

ANGELICA WOOD
Board Secretary

DEVON BRUBAKER
Board Treasurer

CORY GARDNER
Board Vice-Chair

MARK LYON
Board Chair

DOMINIC WOLF
Board Member

JESSICA FLORENCIO
Board Member

ALLISON VOLCIC
Industry Relations Manager

KIM STRID
Board Member

NOT PICTURED

LUCY DIGGINS-WOLD
Flaming Gorge Bus Tour Guide



THE LODGING TAX

The Sweetwater County Local Option Lodging Tax was originally approved by Sweetwater County voters in 1991. Since then, local voters have approved the renewal of the tax every 4 years. It was on the November 2022 general election ballot and passed with 81% support. The purpose of the tax is to promote and enhance local travel and tourism for the benefit of the local economy. *The lodging tax board is required to commission an audit of financial records by a CPA annually and has consistently received a clean and successful audit report every year since inception.*

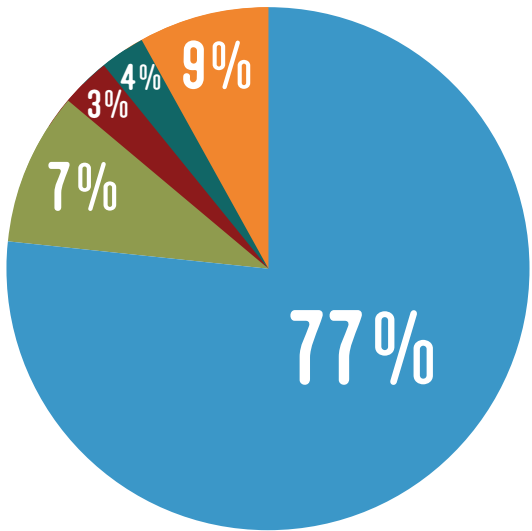


LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism operates the Explore Rock Springs & Green River Visitor Center at 1641 Elk Street in Rock Springs. Elk Street (Hwy 191) is the perfect location to offer information and encourage travelers to spend more time in Rock Springs and Green River as they travel to and from the Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.



BUDGET BREAKDOWN



-  MARKETING PLAN
-  EVENT GRANTS
-  CHAMBER BLOCK GRANTS
-  SEC BLOCK GRANT
-  ADMINISTRATION

LODGING TAX COLLECTION

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL	% CHANGE
2016-17	\$851,170	-11%
2017-18	\$889,207	4%
2018-19**	\$1,009,161	13%
2019-20	\$1,062,309	<1%
2020-21	\$980,538	-8%
2021-22	\$1,292,540	32%
2022-23	\$1,265,384	-2%

** 9 months @ 3%, 3 months @ 4%

BLOCK GRANTS

GREEN RIVER
WYOMING
Chamber

Operational Costs and Staffing

Rock Springs
CHAMBER
Operational Costs and Staffing

Sweetwater
EVENTS · COMPLEX
The Happenin' Place

Out-Of-County Marketing and
Event Recruitment

EVENT GRANTS

Any organization holding an event resulting in overnight stays at a Sweetwater County lodging property is eligible for T&T advertising and marketing or sponsorship funding. Grant hearings are held in March, June, September, and December.

THE TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD COMMITTED FUNDING TO THE FOLLOWING 2022 & 2023 EVENTS:



SWCTT SPONSORED & DISTRIBUTED COWBOY DONUTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIRSTREAM RALLY



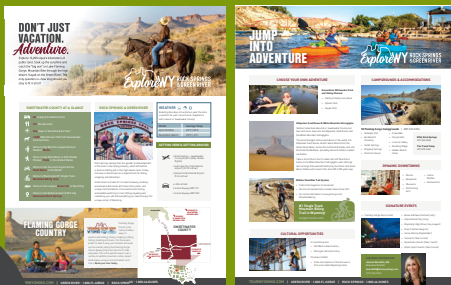
2022

- GREEN RIVER KNIGHTS INVITATIONAL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
- SWEETWATER BLUES & BREWS
- ART ON THE GREEN
- RUDY GUNTER MEMORIAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RODEO CHAMPIONSHIPS
- RIVER FESTIVAL
- RED DESERT ROUNDUP RODEO
- SNOWMAN STROLL
- DECEMBER DUNK BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- QUILTING ON THE GREEN
- BUD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- SHIVER IN THE RIVER SWIM MEET
- SWEETWATER CLASSIC AQHA & OPEN SHOW
- WYOMING DENTAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SESSION
- AMERICAN LEGION WYOMING CONVENTION
- FLAMING GORGE DAYS
- SWEETWATER USMS WESTERN REGIONAL
- ARTEMBER
- ROCK SPRINGS ENCORE - WY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- 4A STATE GOLF TOURNAMENT
- THE ROCK CHALLENGE SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- 4A REGIONAL TENNIS
- WYOMING SUMMER COUNTY ASSESSOR'S MEETING
- JR. COWGIRLS ALL OUT BALL OUT BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- USA YOUTH SWIMMING DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS
- SWEETWATER MIDMOUNTAIN REGIONAL & SHOOTOUT

2023

- GREEN RIVER KNIGHTS INVITATIONAL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
- SWEETWATER BLUES & BREWS
- MULE DEER DAYS
- ART ON THE GREEN
- RUDY GUNTER MEMORIAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- TRIPLE GOLD QUALIFIER BMX RACE
- BATTLE IN THE SPRINGS SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RODEO CHAMPIONSHIPS
- NATIONAL TRAPPING ASSOCIATION WESTERN REGIONAL CONVENTION
- WYOMING CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- STATE LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
- RIVER FESTIVAL
- BABE RUTH 13-15 ALL-STAR BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
- RED DESERT ROUNDUP RODEO
- CO-ED TOUGH TURKEY VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
- SNOWMAN STROLL
- DECEMBER DUNK BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- QUILTING ON THE GREEN
- BUD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- MUSIC FOR VETS
- SHIVER IN THE RIVER SWIM MEET
- WESTERN WYOMING DISTRICT SWIM CHAMPIONSHIPS

EVENT & INTERNATIONAL TOUR RECRUITMENT



Since 2010, SWCTT has worked with several local partners to successfully recruit numerous events which have brought thousands of visitors to the area. These events include the 2013 & 2014 State Boys and Girls High School Soccer Tournaments, as well as the WY State High School Speech and Debate Tournament 2012-14, 2017 and 2020. **SWCTT recently recruited the 2023 & 2024 State 3A & 4A Boys and Girls Soccer Tournaments, which will generate a \$6 million economic impact for Sweetwater County.**

COMMITTEES & BOARDS

JENISSA MEREDITH CEO INVOLVEMENT

WYOMING HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
COALITION
BOARD VICE-CHAIR

SWEETWATER COUNTY OUTDOOR
RECREATION COLLABORATIVE
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

SWEETWATER COUNTY LODGING
ASSOCIATION
CHAIR

SWEETWATER COUNTY
EVENT RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE
CHAIR

ROCK SPRINGS BEAUTIFICATION/TREE
BOARD
CHAIR

FLAMING GORGE-GREEN RIVER BASIN
SCENIC BYWAY COMMITTEE
VICE-CHAIR

DMA WEST
FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER

DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL
SMALL DESTINATION TASKFORCE MEMBER/
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER

SWEETWATER COUNTY TOURISM MASTER PLAN

SWEETWATER COUNTY TOURISM MASTER PLAN

The Sweetwater County Joint Travel and Tourism Board developed the **Tourism Master Plan for Sweetwater County** in 2021. The master plan set the framework for travel industry development, cooperation, and promotion for both the public and private sectors and positioned SWCTT to be prepared to apply for funding in the future.

STATUS:

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS:

Partnering daily with local industry and organization leaders to gain mutual support and secure project funding.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: Serving on the Sweetwater Outdoor Recreation Collaborative Steering Committee working to move projects forward, implementing updates to Rock Springs Way Finding Program with WOT Destination Development funds, working to secure funding and develop turnouts/amenities around the Flaming Gorge, and facilitating conversations regarding the addition of a state park in Sweetwater County.



ATTRACTIONS & AMENITIES: Working with SEC and other local attractions to brainstorm ideas for expansion and development.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE:

Hosting Lodging Association meetings monthly to keep finger on pulse of industry needs.



FLAMING GORGE TOURS

The Flaming Gorge Bus Tour is a full-day guided tour aboard an airconditioned motorcoach that makes nine stops around the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. Lunch, water, and snacks are all included for only \$68 per person. SWCTT has hosted over 1,000 passengers since 2021 on the tours and it has received incredible five-star reviews on TripAdvisor. Tours will continue in Summer 2024.



What is Sandboarding?

Sandboarding is a boardsport and extreme sport similar to snowboarding that involves riding across or down a sand dune while standing on a board, either with both feet strapped in or while standing loose without bindings. Sandboarding can also be practiced sitting down or lying on the belly or the back.

It typically involves a sandboard, although it is also possible to use sleds, surfboards, a skateboard deck, or snowboards.

- Wikipedia

SAND BOARDING

SWCTT started selling Sandboards summer 2022 and encourages visitors to explore and "surf" the Killpecker Sand Dunes.



2023 BOARD PROJECTS

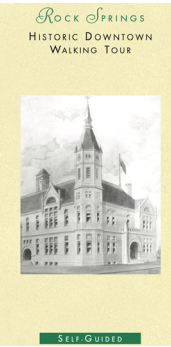


THE FLAMING GORGE SCENIC BYWAY: THE NATION'S NEWEST ALL-AMERICAN ROAD

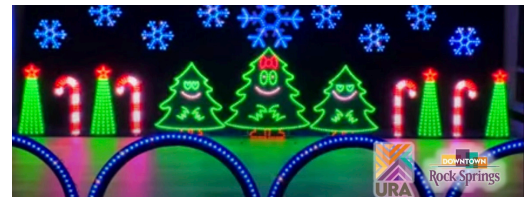


After decades of promoting the Flaming Gorge Scenic Byway, SWCTT worked with corridor partners in 2021 to update the Corridor Management Plan and submitted an application for the Byway to be designated an All-American Road as part of the National Scenic Byway Program - a destination unto itself. The application was successful, and the designation was granted later that year. It is now one of only 37 All-American Roads in the United States, and this status provides opportunities for funding to build out amenities along the Byway. SWCTT has submitted almost \$2 million in grant applications to date.

DOWNTOWN ROCK SPRINGS



Rock Springs Historic Walking Tour Brochure
SWCTT provided funding to update and reprint the brochure.



Lighted Display
SWCTT provided funding for the lighted holiday display.



S'mores Saturday
SWCTT provided funding for S'mores Saturday events in Downtown Rock Springs.

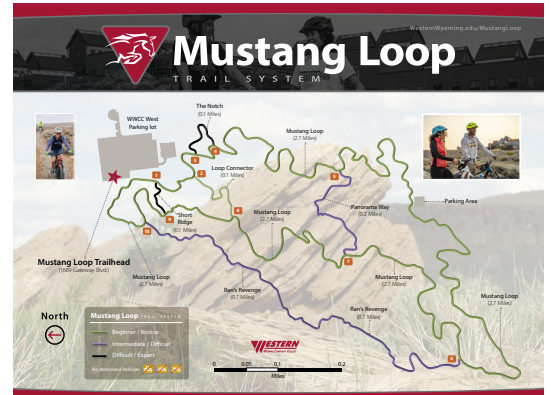


ROAD TRIPPIN'

SWCTT partners every year with KUTV Channel 2 News out of Salt Lake City. 2023 featured outdoor recreation equipment rental opportunities throughout the county.

MUSTANG LOOP TRAIL SIGNAGE

SWCTT secured funding from the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation to create and install a signage program for the new Mustang Loop Trail in Rock Springs.



MEDIA, MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS SUMMARY

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism continues to make significant strides in terms of media and marketing efforts, resulting in extensive media coverage from various renowned publications including Thrillist, Matador Network, KUTV2 News Road Trippin' Show, The Denver Post, and Business in Focus Magazine (to name a few).

TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

- 2023 Wyoming Travel Journal
- Utah Life Magazine
- In-state Radio (Big Horn Radio Network, Cowboy State News Network, TownSquare Network)
- Wyoming Press Association (40 newspapers throughout WY)
- Cowboy Channel (Broadcast TV) STATE COOP
- Elevation Outdoor
- Billboards: US 191 (1.1 miles north of MM 3 WS) and I-80 E .6 miles East of Rock Springs Hwy 371
- Two billboards outside of the new Visitor Center on Elk Street
- Explore Magazine (Jackson Hole/Tetons & Yellowstone OVG)
- Leisure Group Travel Magazine (State CO-OP)
- Group Tour Magazine

ONLINE ADVERTISING

- WyomingTourism.org
 - Banners, listings, deals, and calendar
 - Emails (featured partner) and custom emails
 - Online video page and custom content page
 - Paid social takeover
 - Listing, Calendar of Events
- MyYellowstonePark.com – banners, custom emails, lead generation
- Brand USA/WOT CO-OP New Enhanced City Page on VisittheUSA in 7 languages
- Trip Advisor – banners
- Elevation Outdoor – eNewsletters, custom emails and homepage banner
- Google PPC
- Facebook / Instagram / Facebook Boosts – ads, custom audiences, retargeting, videos
- YouTube

TRAVEL GUIDE FULFILLMENT

- 1,571 Travel Guides fulfilled between July 2022-June 2023
- DATABASE MANAGEMENT & E-NEWSLETTER (July 2022 – June 2023)
- 29,407 total leads July 2022-June 2023 (up from 20,037 in 2021-22)
- 9,370 is the total people that signed up to receive emails
- 29,207 average active email subscribers in database (monthly email distribution)
- Average monthly email open rate is 40.81% and 10.69% CTR (up from 19.4% open rate and 8.15% CTR)

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT (JAN.-DEC. 2023)

Jan. 1 – Feb. 14 website data wasn't being tracked – so we broke out sessions, users and goal completions to the dates when it was tracking those numbers. We put in metrics on a per-use basis in the entirety year comparison to show that there's been slight increases in user engagement on the site in 2023.

FEB. 15 – NOV. 30, 2023 (COMPARED TO FEB. 15 – NOV. 30, 2022)

- 94,560 Website Users (down 12.45% from 2022)
- 116,527 Website Sessions (down 11.66% from 2022)
- 2,022 Goal Completions (up 0.39% from 2022) Goals are Contact Us, Email Signup, and Visitor Guide Order

JAN. 1 – NOV 30, 2023 (COMPARED TO JAN. 1 – NOV.30, 2022)

- 94,560 Website Users (down 22.21% from 2022)*
- 116,527 Website Sessions (down 20.88% from 2022)*
- 2,022 Goal Completions (down 22.3% from 2022) Goals are Contact Us, Email Signup, and Visitor Guide Order*
- 54.36% Engagement Rate (up 3.95% from 2022)
- 5.37 Events Per Session (up 2.24% from 2022)
- 0.67 Engaged Sessions per User (up 5.61% from 2022)

*Jan. 1 – Feb. 14 Website Data was not being tracked and there was a lower media spend from 2022.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

When comparing Feb 15 – Dec 12, 2023, vs same dates in 2022:

- In 2023, there were 40,440 ExploreWY.com website visitors from organic search, compared to 39,192 in 2022. Slight increase in 2023.

If we compare Jan. 1 – Dec 12, 2023, vs same dates in 2022:

- In 2023, there were 40,440 ExploreWY.com website visitors from organic search, compared to 43,987 in 2022. Slight increases in 2023.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (JAN.-DEC. 12, 2023)

Due to the switch to GA4 back in July, EOY conversion data may appear off or skewed. GA4 tracks data differently than UA (Universal Analytics) did, and the changes in data measurement lead to differences in results across the two platforms. Since the switch to GA4 was made only 6 months ago, our accounts do not currently have any YoY data through the new platform.

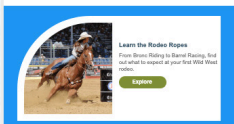
- Total conversions from paid search efforts (travel guide orders, e-newsletter signups, contact us) decreased 44.28% YoY (765 vs 1,373), while the overall conversion rate increased 0.23% (9.23% vs 9.21%)
- Top campaigns for conversions in the first half of 2023 were Things to Do, Brand, and P-Max.
- P-Max launched in May, and we saw increases in overall performance from there. Decreases are coming from:
 - Spend was down 19.77% YoY
 - No Reporting from January through mid-February due to a Google Analytic error.
 - The account was down for the majority of August due to an issue with malware on the site, so we also lost a month of performance there.

PAID SOCIAL (JAN.-SEPT. 30, 2023. ADS PAUSED STARTING IN OCT.)

- Total Impressions = 1,614,236 (vs. 1,129,291 in 2022)
- Clicks = 18,671 (vs. 25,203 in 2022)
- Click-Through-Rate = 1.16% (vs. 2.23% in 2022)
- Spend was down 13.89% YoY



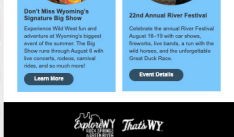
WELCOME TO SOUTHWEST WYOMING
Discover hidden gems to see and do... from seasonal hiking to scenic views and 13 varieties of fresh breads to award-winning and locally-sourced craft beer. Some of these gems become one of your favorites.



Learn the Rocky Ropes
From Bronco Riding to Barrel Racing, find out what it's like to be a cowboy. It's a fun and exciting experience that you won't forget. [Explore](#)



Take a Two-Wheeled Journey
Whether you're a mountain biker or a road cyclist, there's nothing more fun than exploring the beautiful scenery of Southwest Wyoming. [Explore](#)



Make Family Memories Before School Starts
Spend the last days of summer on a guided Flaming Gorge River Tour. It's a fun and scenic experience that you won't forget. [Get Tickets](#)



Family Thrills Await at the Dunes
Experience the thrill of sandboarding at the Dunes. It's a fun and exciting activity for the whole family. [Learn More](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS
Don't Miss Wyoming's Signature Fall Festival. Celebrate the annual River Festival with live music, food, and fun activities. [Learn More](#)



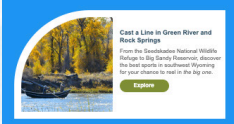
UPCOMING EVENTS
Riverside Harvest Festival. Enjoy a week-long celebration with live music, food, and fun activities. [Learn More](#)



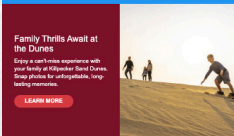
UPCOMING EVENTS
Rock Springs Grizzlies. Enjoy a day of fun and excitement with live music, food, and fun activities. [See a Game](#)



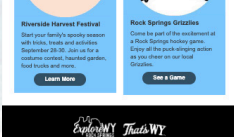
WELCOME TO SOUTHWEST WYOMING
Fall is one of the best times to visit Green River and Rock Springs. Discover all there is to see and do. [Learn More](#)



Do It All This Fall
Fall is one of the best times to visit Green River and Rock Springs. Discover all there is to see and do. [Learn More](#)



Up in the Green River and Rock Springs
From the Sandboarder National Wildlife Refuge to the Snake River Overlook, discover the best of the Southwest. [Explore](#)



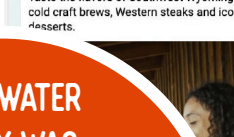
Things to Do When Your Hunter is Away
For a relaxing day of an adventure, spend a fun day in Green River and Rock Springs with your family. [Learn More](#)



MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER
Sign up for our monthly newsletter to receive the latest news, events, and offers. [Sign Up](#)



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SWEETWATER COUNTY WAS MENTIONED OR FEATURED IN OVER 240 ARTICLES IN 2023 WITH A TOTAL EARNED MEDIA VALUE OF \$14.5 MILLION

R.E.A.C.H. AWARDS

RARE AND EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE IN HOSPITALITY



The Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism Board recognizes outstanding customer service in the local lodging industry through the R.E.A.C.H. Awards Program. The importance of these efforts warrant consistent recognition. The R.E.A.C.H. awards luncheon is conducted each quarter of the year to celebrate the employees who truly are the backbone of the Sweetwater County Tourism industry.



The Sweetwater County Certified Tourism Ambassador program is a multifaceted program that serves to increase tourism by inspiring front-line employees and volunteers to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. When visitors have a positive experience, they are more likely to return in the future and also share their experience with others. Everyone benefits - the visitors, the industry, the local economy, and most importantly, the front-line workers. There are currently over 110 Sweetwater County Certified Tourism Ambassadors.

COST/RENEWAL

There is a one-time, non-refundable, non-transferable application fee of \$39 and an annual renewal fee of \$19 per person. In addition to the renewal fee, CTAs must log 50 CTA points throughout the year, earned through a variety of activities.

CLASS SCHEDULE/ENROLLMENT

For a class schedule and online enrollment, go to www.ctanetwork.com. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact allison@tourwyoming.com or call (307) 382-2538.

TRAVEL IMPACT STUDIES

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism commissions an annual travel impact study to determine the effectiveness of the marketing campaigns administered with lodging tax dollars.

ADVERTISING INFLUENCED ALMOST

\$67 MILLION
IN VISITOR SPENDING

AVERAGE # OF PEOPLE IN TRAVEL PARTY:

3 PEOPLE

AVERAGE # OF ACTIVITIES IN SWC:

4.1

AVERAGE # OF DAYS SPENT IN SWC:

3.3 DAYS

AVERAGE TRIP SPENDING PER PARTY:

\$1,309

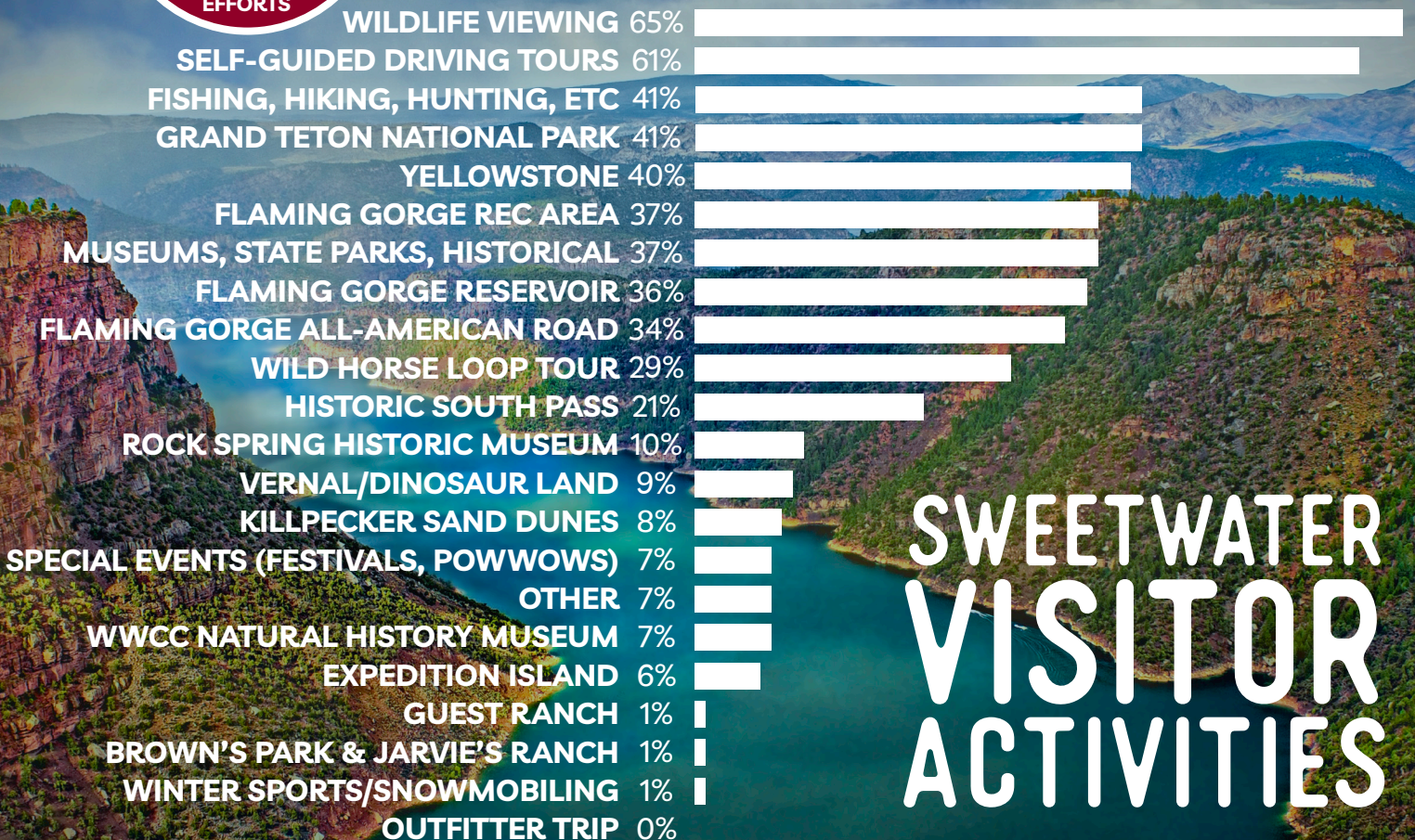
ROI FOR EVERY ADVERTISING DOLLAR SPENT:

\$490

ADVERTISING INFLUENCED OVER

51,289 VISITS

NEW DATA IS AVAILABLE TO TRACK VISITOR ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY THAT WILL HELP TO GUIDE FUTURE SWCTT MARKETING EFFORTS



SWEETWATER VISITOR ACTIVITIES

