

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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EXPLOREWY.COM



OUR MISSION:

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

BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

FRONT ROW

MELISSA HUTCHINSON
Board Member

BRIDGET BERNARD
Board Chair

JENISSA MEREDITH
Chief Executive Officer

ALLISON VOLCIC
Industry Relations Manager

DAWN DALE
Flaming Gorge Bus Tour Guide

BACK ROW

CHEZNEY GOGLIO
Marketing & Operations Manager

GRACE BANKS
Admin Assistant/Grant Specialist

KIM STRID
Board Member

DEVON BRUBAKER
Board Treasurer

MARK LYON
Board Vice-Chair

CORY GARDNER
Board Member

RANDALL DALE
Board Member

NOT PICTURED

STACY COLVIN
Board Secretary

DOMINIC WOLF
Board Member

ANGELICA WOOD
Board Member

BRAD RANEY
Board Member

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 1991, local voters have approved the renewal of the tax every 4 years. It was recently 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.*

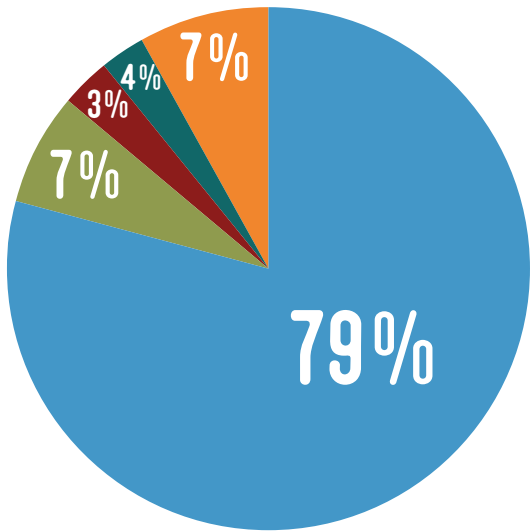


LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism operates the Explore Rock Springs and Green River, Wyoming 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
2015-16	\$961,006	37%
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	<7.6%
2021-22	\$1,292,540	32%

* 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 2020 & 2021 EVENTS:



2021

- SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL & JR. HIGH RODEO
- RUDY GUNTER MEMORIAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- QUILTING ON THE GREEN
- SWEETWATER BLUES N' BREWS
- ART ON THE GREEN
- GREEN RIVER KNIGHTS INVITATIONAL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
- ARTEMBER
- RIVER FESTIVAL
- RED DESERT ROUNDUP RODEO
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- ROCK CHALLENGE SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- DECEMBER DUNK BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- SNOWMAN STROLL
- RUN THE RED
- 36TH ANNUAL BUD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- RSAHA HIGH SCHOOL STATE B DIVISION TOURNAMENT
- DROP IN HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- WIND & MUD HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- SOUTHWEST WYOMING BMX RACE WEEKEND
- SHIVER IN THE RIVER

2022

- BLUES N' BREWS
- SWEETWATER CLASSIC AQHA & OPEN SHOW
- WYOMING DENTAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SESSION
- AMERICAN LEGION WYOMING CONVENTION
- FLAMING GORGE DAYS
- GREEN RIVER KNIGHTS INVITATIONAL
- SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL & JR. HIGH RODEO
- RUDY GUNTER MEMORIAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- SWEETWATER USMS WESTERN REGIONAL
- ARTEMBER
- SNOWMAN STROLL
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT
- ROCK SPRINGS ENCORE - WY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- 4A STATE GOLF TOURNAMENT
- DECEMBER DUNK BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
- THE ROCK CHALLENGE SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- 4A REGIONAL TENNIS
- QUILTING ON THE GREEN
- 37TH ANNUAL BUD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- WYOMING SUMMER COUNTY ASSESSOR'S MEETING
- SHIVER IN THE RIVER
- 1ST ANNUAL JR. COWGIRLS ALL OUT BALL OUT
- MARCH MAYHEM 4 ON 4 YOUTH HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- ST. PATTY'S SCRAMBLE 4 ON 4 SENIOR CO-ED HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- USA YOUTH SWIMMING DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS
- WESTERN SHOOTERS COUNCIL MID MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

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 SECRETARY

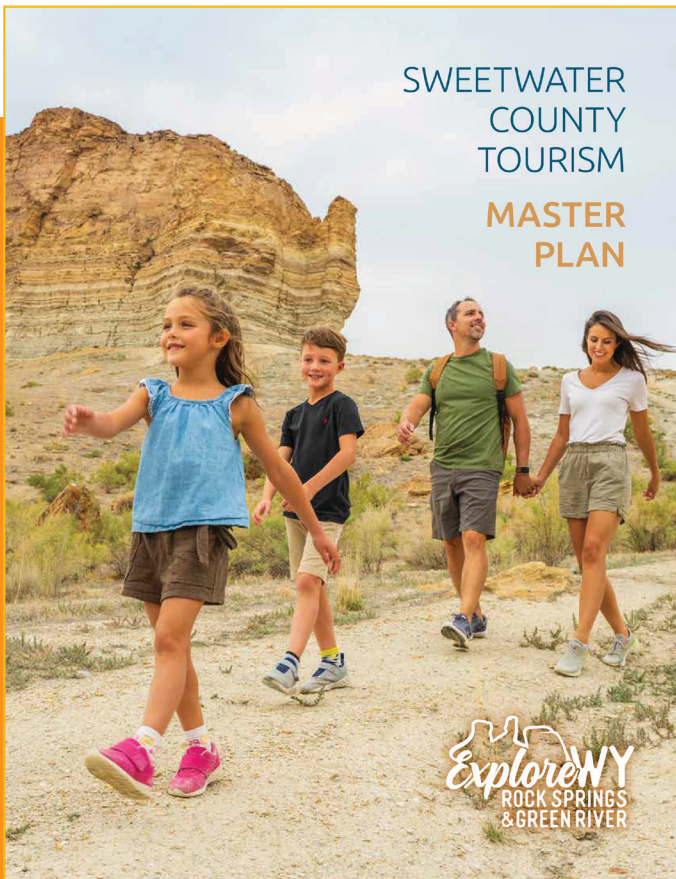
**SWEETWATER COUNTY OUTDOOR
RECREATION COLLABORATIVE**
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

**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



SWEETWATER COUNTY TOURISM MASTER PLAN

To build on the Strategic Plan developed in 2020, the Sweetwater County Joint Travel and Tourism Board began to develop a **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 SWCTTB to be prepared to apply for funding in the future.

FLAMING GORGE TOURS

The Flaming Gorge Bus Tour is a full-day guided tour aboard an air-conditioned motorcoach that makes nine stops around the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. Lunch, water and snacks are all included for only \$68/pp. SWCTT has hosted over 500 passengers since 2021 on the tours and it has received incredible five-star reviews on TripAdvisor. Tours will continue in Summer 2023.



What is Sand Boarding?

Sand boarding 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 Sand Boards summer 2022 and encourages visitors to explore and "surf" the Killpecker Sand Dunes.

2022 BOARD PROJECTS

BRAVE GIRL

SWCTT sponsored the documentary film Brave Girl in 2022. Brave Girl is about a strong young adventurer who is just beginning her journey of finding out what it takes to climb mountains. Even though she's only 6, she has an unwavering ambition to climb the biggest mountains in the world, starting with the ones in her backyard here in Wyoming.



Images are screen captures from the film made by Mark Pedri and Carrie McCarthy of Burning Torch Productions. Watch here:



FLAMING GORGE – GREEN RIVER BASIN ALL-AMERICAN ROAD

SWCTT has promoted the Flaming Gorge Scenic Byway for decades. In 2021, SWCTT worked with corridor partners to update the Corridor Management Plan and submitted an application for the byway to be designated as an **All-American Road** – a destination unto itself. The application was successful, and the byway was designated as an All-American Road in 2021 as part of the National Scenic Byway Program. It is now one of only 37 All-American Roads in the United States. This designation provides opportunities for funding to build out amenities along the byway and SWCTT has submitted almost \$2 million in grant application requests so far.



ROAD TRIPPIN'

SWCTT partners every year with KUTV Channel 2 News out of Salt Lake City and in 2022 featured the new Mustang Loop Trail system in Rock Springs as well as Sand Boarding at Killpecker Sand Dunes.

MEDIA, MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS SUMMARY

TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

Print/Billboard/Direct Fulfillment/Broadcast

- 2022 Wyoming Travel Journal
- That's WY – Spring integrated insert campaign (newspaper / online / emails)
- Utah Life Magazine
- Elevation Outdoor (Denver/Front Range)
- 5280 Magazine
- In-state Radio (Big Horn Radio Network, Cowboy State News Network, TownSquare Network)
- Wyoming Press Association (40 newspapers throughout WY)
- 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)
- Group Tour Magazine
- Leisure Group Travel Magazine (State CO-OP)

ONLINE ADVERTISING

- WyomingTourism.org
 - banners, listings, deals, and calendar
 - emails (featured partner) and custom emails
 - online video page and custom content page
 - Road Trips paid social
 - 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
- Near (Uber) mobile geo targeting banners
- Elevation Outdoor – eNewsletters, custom emails and homepage banner
- Connected TV (SLC & Denver)
- Google PPC
- Facebook / Instagram / Facebook Boosts – ads, custom audiences, retargeting, videos
- YouTube

TRAVEL GUIDE FULFILLMENT

- 2,398 total Travel Guides fulfilled between July 2021-June 2022
- 2,179 Digital Travel Guide Views (up 7.2% from 2021)
- 2,398 Travel Guide Orders from TourWyoming.com between July 2021-June 2022 (up from 2,306 in 2020-21 = 3.99%)

DATABASE MANAGEMENT & E-NEWSLETTER

- 20,037 total leads July 2021-June 2022 (up from 19,293 in 2020-21)
- 469 is the total people that signed up to receive emails
- 28,700 average active email subscribers in database (monthly email distribution)
- Average monthly email open rate is 19.4% and 8.15% CTR
- Redesigned Leisure and Industry email templates to align with the updated brand.

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT (JAN.-DEC. 2022)

- 123,600 Website Users (down 18.64% from 2021)*
- 151,372 Website Sessions (down 17.47% from 2021)*
- 2,603 Goal Completions (up 2% from 2021)

Goals are Contact Us, Email Signup, and Visitor Guide Order
* CARES Funding ended Dec. 2021, lowering the 2022 marketing budget from prior years. DMO's across the board are seeing website traffic down YoY due to pent up travel demand in 2021.

Reskinned website to meet industry accessibility standards and refreshed the design to match brand standards

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

- In 2022, three new pages of content were created, and four existing articles were optimized. Content is consistently optimized to stay top of mind, ensuring that information in itineraries and articles is updated, accurate and best serve the visitor.
- In 2022, there were 50,483 ExploreWY.com website visitors from organic search, compared to 51,789 in 2021, remaining relatively flat.

NEW CONTENT

- 7 Must-Try Eats
- Sandboard Rentals
- Winter Adventures in National Parks

CONTENT/CREATIVE EFFORTS

- Crafted updated brand guidelines with updated photography, text treatment, and visual style
 - Developed creative sets for digital placements to run in FY22-23
- Created guide for annual content updates
- Updated Free Summer Events in Rock Springs and Free Summer Events in Green River pages
- Updated Guide to Wyoming's Big Show
- Updated Guide to Holiday Events
- Flaming Gorge pop-up
- Regular listing updates including hotels and restaurants
- Seasonal website updates

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (JAN.-DEC. 19, 2022)

- Travel guide orders increased 63.59% YoY (1,752 vs 1,071), while the conversion rate for the travel guides increased 150.47% (8.25% vs 3.29%)
- Total goal completions from paid search efforts (travel guide orders, e-newsletter signups, contact us) increased 58.10% YoY (1,796 vs 1,136), while the overall conversion rate increased 142.07% (8.46% vs 3.49%)
- Spend was down 16.16% YoY

PAID SOCIAL (JAN.-DEC. 19, 2022)

- Total Impressions = 1,129,291 (vs. 2,965,719 in 2021)
- Clicks = 25,203 (vs. 20,654 in 2021)
- Click-Through-Rate = 2.23% (vs. 0.70% in 2021)
- Spend was down 24.42% YoY

This Is How We GORGE IT

Reserve Your Tickets for the Flaming Gorge Bus Tour

Breathtaking Views on A Designated All-American Road.

ExploreWY.com (307) 382-2538

THIS IS HOW WE DUNE IT

Set your heart to Rock Springs and Green River. In our corner of Southwest Wyoming, singing sand dunes meet Flaming Gorge Country and there are plenty of adventures to go around. Explore the dunes, take a scenic gorge tour and experience our wide open spaces.

EXPLOREWY.COM • 307-382-2538

PRINT

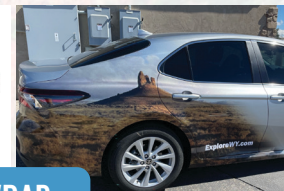
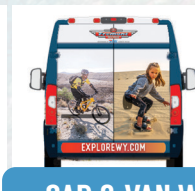
ExploreWY ROCK SPRINGS & GREEN RIVER

TOUR THE FLAMING GORGE

Your Bucket List Experience In Southwest Wyoming

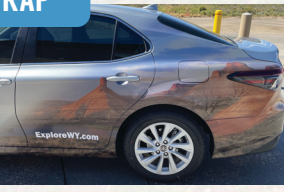
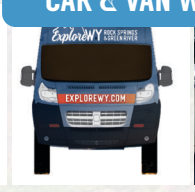
Flaming Gorge Scenic Byway

ExploreWY.com



FLAMING GORGE BUS TOURS

ExploreWY.com



700+ EVENTS EVERY YEAR

ExploreWY ROCK SPRINGS & GREEN RIVER

ExploreWY.com

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

SURF THE DUNES

Get your Sandboard at the Visitor Center

ExploreWY.com

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

ENJOY THE GLIDE

Surf The Dunes in Southwest Wyoming

ExploreWY.com

Let's Go

ENJOY THE GLIDE

Back to the Basics

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism

Unbeatable vistas, tranquil waters and towering rock formations make Flaming Gorge Country one-of-a-kind. Reserve a guided bus ...See more

EXPLORE Flaming Gorge Country

All Inclusive Bus Tour Experienced L. Learn more

On An Inclusive

Richard Pruitt and 6 o... 1 Comment 1 Share

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism

Experience the best of Flaming Gorge Country on an all-inclusive, locally-guided tour. Enjoy the spectacular views and leave the ...See more

Flaming Gorge BUS TOUR

BUY TICKETS

tourwyoing.com Tickets Only \$68 Plan your summer adventure Book now

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism

Plan an epic outdoor adventure, without the crowds. This is how we explore it in Rock Springs and Green River, Wyoming.

SOCIAL & DIGITAL

tourwyoing.com Explore Southwest Wyoming Learn more

Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism

Get tips, tricks and itineraries with a free travel guide to Southwest Wyoming. Order online or visit us in person to plan your adventure.

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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 because these employees are truly the backbone of the Sweetwater County Tourism industry.



The Sweetwater County Tourism Ambassador program is a multi-faceted 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 120 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 and Tourism commissions an annual travel impact study to determine the effectiveness of the marketing campaigns administered with lodging tax dollars.

ADVERTISING
INFLUENCED
ALMOST

\$65

MILLION
IN VISITOR
SPENDING

ADVERTISING
INFLUENCED
OVER

46,000
VISITS

ROI FOR EVERY
ADVERTISING
DOLLAR SPENT:

\$399

AVERAGE # OF
DAYS SPENT
IN SWC:

3

DAYS

AVERAGE
TRIP SPENDING
PER PARTY:

\$1,400

AVERAGE # OF
PEOPLE IN
TRAVEL PARTY:

2.7

PEOPLE

AVERAGE # OF
ACTIVITIES
IN SWC:

4.1

AN
INCREASE IN
ADVERTISING
AWARENESS
BETWEEN 2021 AND
2022 RESULTED IN
A MORE POSITIVE
OPINION OF THE
AREA.

TOP 5 SWC VISITOR ACTIVITIES:

1

YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL PARK

2

WILDLIFE
VIEWING

3

GRAND TETON
NATIONAL PARK

4

SELF-GUIDED
DRIVING TOURS

5

OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES

FISHING, HIKING, CAMPING,
HUNTING.



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