

Opportunities for Ecotourism in Slovakia: Engaging Stakeholders September 17, 2020



Riverwind Foundation



Presentation Overview

- Characterization of our Natural & Human Environment
- Sustainable Development in Jackson Hole
- Challenges & Lessons Learned

Teton County, Wyoming

- Jackson Hole, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, National Forests, and the National Elk Refuge



Teton County, Wyoming Natural Environment

- 4,214 square miles / 1.1 million hectares
- 97% of Teton County is federal land
- Of the remaining 3% of land, only approximately 1/3 of that has been developed or is available for development. The rest is protected by conservation easements through active programs led by land trusts and zoning by Teton County government.



Teton County, Wyoming

Human Environment

- Population:
 - Year round = 23,500
 - Summer = ~ 68,000
- Annual Visitation:
 - Yellowstone NP = 4 million
 - Grand Teton NP = 3.4 million



Federal Lands

- Yellowstone National Park (1872)
- Grand Teton National Park (1929)
- National Elk Refuge (est. 1912)
- Bridger-Teton National Forest (1897)
- Caribou-Targhee National Forest (1891)
- Snake Wild & Scenic River designation (2009)
- 4 Wilderness Areas Designated (since 1964)



Summary of Sustainable Development in Jackson Hole

1. Conduct Baseline Assessment & Asset Inventory
2. Create Vision
3. Establish destination stewardship council structure and scope, and develop action plan (goals, strategies, actions, schedule, budget, & metrics)
4. Implement action plan
 1. Stakeholder training
 2. General public education and engagement
 3. Business technical assistance, recognition, and certification
 4. Destination recognition and certification
5. Sustainability policy and tourism management plan development and implementation

Conduct Baseline Assessment & Asset Inventory

2012: Teton County, Wyoming (Jackson Hole) became an early adopter of the the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's sustainable destination criteria – resulting in:

- a comprehensive assessment against 120 criteria
- an inventory of sustainability plans and policies, programs and projects, and facilities and services
- a performance baseline from which to create an action plan

2014 and 2019: Conducted follow up inventory to update and expand inventory established in 2012

Create Vision

2013 and 2017: Conducted individual interviews and group meetings to identify, discuss and develop, and update:

- a community/destination-wide vision statement for sustainability
- challenges and opportunities for sustainability and sustainable tourism
- vision for the future of tourism in Jackson Hole
- objectives for a sustainable destination development program

2017: Town of Jackson and Teton County passed a resolution formally establishing the vision for “Jackson Hole to be a world-leading sustainable community and destination” and support initiatives that contribute to this vision

Establish destination stewardship council structure and scope

2013: Created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the Jackson Hole & Yellowstone Sustainable Destination Program, strategic council and tactical steering committee. Signers / endorsers included:

- Federal land management agencies
- State & local government
- Key businesses and influencers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Schools

<u>Trevor Stevenson</u> Executive Director, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance	5/30/2013 Date
<u>Candra Day</u> President, Vista 360	5/30/2013 Date
<u>Jim Waldrop</u> General Manager, The Wort Hotel	5/31/2013 Date
<u>Jim McCaleb</u> Vice President, Parks North, Xanterra Parks & Resorts	5/31/2013 Date
<u>Scott Horn</u> Vice President, Human Resources & Safety, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort	6/6/2013 Date
<u>Steven F. Jobst</u> Deputy Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park	6/4/2013 Date
<u>Stephen Price</u> Chair, Teton County Travel & Tourism Board	6/6/2013 Date
<u>Alex Klein</u> Vice President, Grand Teton Lodge Company	6/11/2013 Date

Create action plan

2013-14: Created first annual plan:

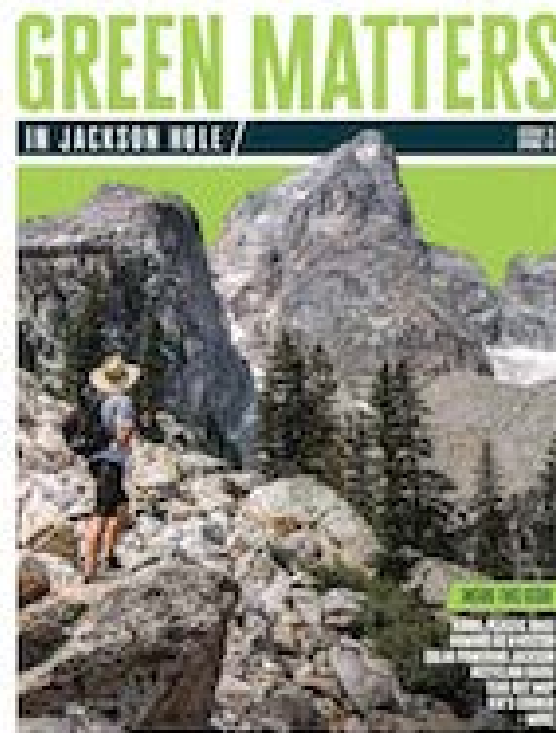
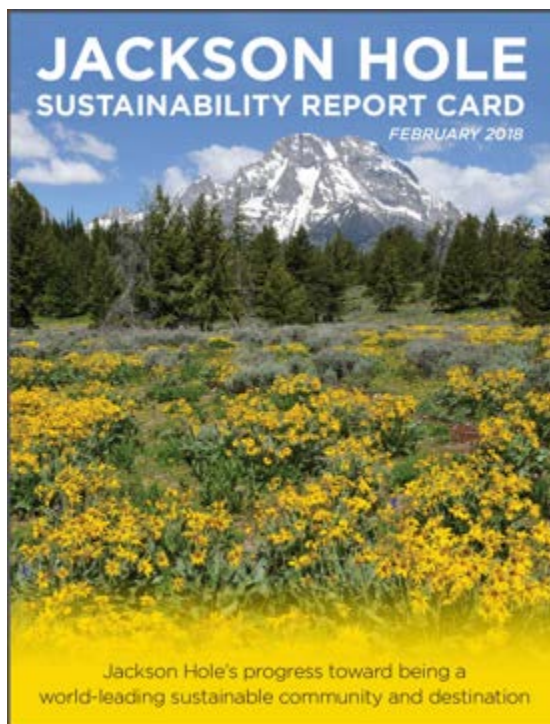
- Vision and goals
- Target areas and projects
- Partnership and team assignments
- Schedule and budget
- Performance metrics
- Definitions of sustainability, sustainable tourism, and responsible travel



Implement action plan

Resident and Visitor Education and Engagement

- Create and distribute the Jackson Hole Sustainability Code of Conduct
- Create and distribute the Jackson Hole Sustainability Report Card
- Publish Green Matters in Jackson Hole



Implement action plan

Stakeholder Training

Group workshops, panel presentations, and webinars, including:

- Sustainability management planning
- Energy efficiency and conservation
- Waste management and recycling
- Alternative fuels and transportation
- Local and whole foods



HOLE FOOD RESCUE



**ENERGY CONSERVATION WORKS
JACKSON HOLE**



Implement action plan

Business Technical Assistance, Recognition, and Certification

- Reduce, Recycle, Reuse (RRR) Business Leaders sustainability program
- Business Emerald Sustainability Tier (BEST) Certification program



JACKSON HOLE
BEST
SUSTAINABILITY
CERTIFIED

Implement action plan

Destination Recognition and Certification

Group workshops, panel presentations, and webinars, including:

- Apply for and leverage awards for increasing stakeholder and general public awareness, education, and engagement
- Pursue and achieve destination certification to drive innovation and improvement, and establish credibility for sustainability claims



Sustainability policy and tourism management plan

Challenge: sustainability – related policies distributed across numerous federal and local plans

Opportunity: Integrate existing policies into one central document

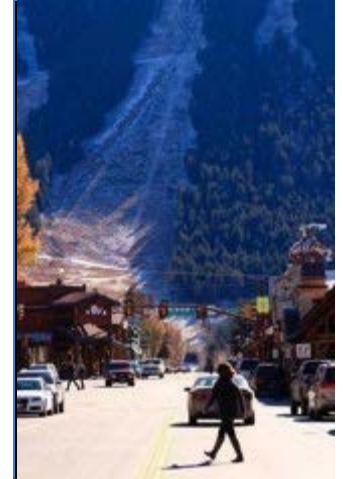
Status:

- Town of Jackson has approved overarching sustainability policy while county commissioners are reviewing it*
- Destination/tourism management plan funding from lodging tax planned for 2021*

*Required to maintain EarthCheck destination certification

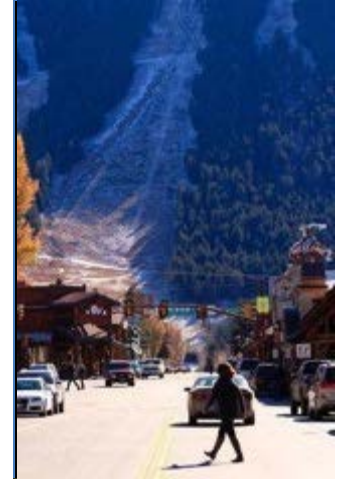
Lessons & Opportunities

- Establish a vision early that all stakeholders embrace and are inspired by, and regularly articulate it, e.g., to be a world-leading sustainable community or eco-tourism destination
- Consider an initiating event(s) to create or build momentum for stakeholder and public engagement
- Destination management and integration is dependent on relationships – take the time to build relationships with one-on-one and group meetings



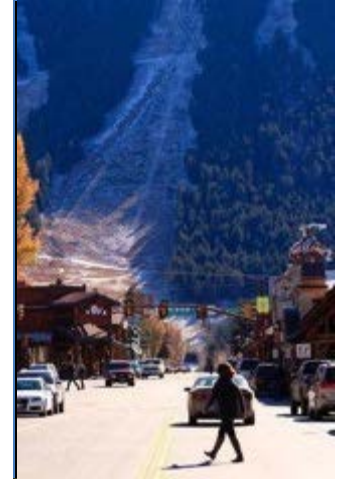
Lessons & Opportunities

- Communications to destination stakeholders need to be regular and content-rich. Do not under-resource communications. Coordinate communications with key sustainability stakeholders
- Educate, educate, and train. This builds stakeholder sustainability literacy, interest, and involvement
- Diversify funding streams: Federal and local government grants, national and private foundation grants, private cash and in-kind contributions



Lessons & Opportunities

- Strengthen local capacity whenever possible. Minimize the export of work and reliance on outside parties for management and technical support
- Focus on understanding strengths and areas needing improvement for destination, and place priority on building and sustaining collaborative partnerships (rather than competing with existing organizations and programs for resources)



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www.sustainabledestination.org



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