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Sustainable Tourism Challenges: Change Management - Teton County

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CHALLENGES: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

TETON COUNTY

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Teton County created a vision of sustainability that is lived by the community and then relayed it to the destination's visitors and throughout the community.
- Teton County has worked collaboratively with both their public and private sectors in order to create change management for sustainable tourism.

THE CHALLENGE:

Implementing sustainable tourism in a destination is a challenging exercise in collaboration and change management with the tourism system.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE: TETON COUNTY



Image: Jesse Gardener - Unsplash

Change is one of the great management challenges, and that is particularly true when introducing sustainability to a destination community. Tim O'Donoghue and the team in Teton County, home to Jackson Hole and the Grand Teton National Park, have several key activities to support moves that make the destination more sustainable. As Tim notes “community leaders must recognize that change can be hard on people”.

CREATE A SHARED VISION

Tim O'Donoghue and his team created a vision of sustainable tourism for Jackson

Hole and Teton County through consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders in the destination community. Engaging stakeholders on meaningful tasks, including the creation of the Jackson Hole Sustainability Code of Conduct, generated shared commitment to sustainability and improved cooperation between organizations.

The commitment to engaging a broad group of stakeholders extended beyond business leaders. Over 230 local students and a steering committee of business people worked to create a code of conduct that would drive the vision of Jackson Hole and guide the community toward social responsibility, economic pursuits, and environmental stewardship. When the vision of sustainability is embraced by the destination community, the message resonates deeply with visitors and supports responsible travel in the region.

ADVOCATE, EDUCATE AND BUILD THE TEAM

Creating awareness in the community about the vision of sustainability is the starting point. However, where to begin implementation is the next question. In Teton County, they began with a sustainability inventory to show them where all their major resources were and then started work, with both the public and private sectors, to pool together these resources. Finding businesses that were already implementing sustainable practices was important to the process of educating the community. Tim O'Donoghue and his team used these businesses to hold events to educate both the public and private sector about how to implement sustainability. Another important activity was the development of a "Sustainability Report Card", which showed key stakeholders local successes as well as areas for improvement.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

The foundation of the sustainability program is ongoing communication with all the stakeholders. The Code of Conduct, available as a poster, flyer or a brochure, is shared widely within the community and to visitors. It's message guides community efforts to sustainability. It is supplemented by [Green Matters](#), a newsletter highlighting progress on sustainability in the region, and other resources. The commitment to not only sharing news, but listening to the stakeholders – businesses, community members and government organizations – has been critical to the development of the program. Communication, including respectful listening to stakeholders, is key to creating meaningful change.

TETON COUNTY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAM

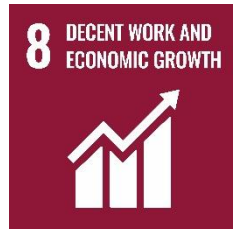
The Riverwind Foundation created the Jackson Hole & Yellowstone Sustainable Destination Program to unify the different programs and policies dealing with social responsibility, economic development, and environmental stewardship of Teton County. They have worked with the local stakeholders of Teton County including the community, government, and businesses. The program was created to address:

- The results of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Destination Criteria Early Adopters Program in 2012
- The resolution passed by the Town of Jackson and Teton County for Jackson Hole to be a world-leading sustainable community and destination in 2017
- The findings from EarthCheck Destination Certification Program in 2019.

The program has been very successful since its implementation and in March of 2020 Teton County became the first destination in North America to become certified by EarthCheck.



KEY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) AND GSTC CRITERIA



GSTC D2.0 A4: **Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards**

LEARN MORE ABOUT TETON COUNTY

- [The Riverwind Foundation](#)
- Article in Good Tourism Blog : [Two tourism democratization challenges to consider as we plan for Recovery](#)

Prepared for:

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