

PARK COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL FY2022 ANNUAL REPORT

TRAVEL REBOUNDS. MARKETING NAVIGATES OBSTACLES.

The Covid-19 pandemic heavily impacted our tourism businesses and economy in fiscal year 2021. After tourism saw over one third of the industry related revenue decline, Park County needed travel demand to return to pre-pandemic levels to help our community get back on track. **We needed a bounce back year... what was received was a record breaking year.** The predicted travel trends of fiscal year 2021 came to fruition and travel demand sharply increased for both Park County and the state of Wyoming from the prior year.

The Park County Travel Council's marketing effort leaned into travel trends, highlighting areas where our destination wins. We used CARES destination marketing relief funds to promote how to travel safely and responsibly as restaurants, retailers, accommodations and guide services saw demand soar, signaling that travel was officially back. During implementation of our fiscal 2022 marketing plan, we focused on the following trends as we navigated through a record breaking year:

- Increased numbers of visitors from our feeder market destinations and repeat travelers.
- New national and international markets emerged, as our destination continued to be on trend for post-pandemic travel.
- International visitation gradually increased as travel restrictions lifted.
- Domestic travel demand soared.
- Campgrounds saw high demand as RV travel, camping and drive vacations continued to be enormously popular.

In response to pent up demand, we promoted our destination with renewed interest and excitement. Social media, print, audio, digital video and connected TV campaigns centered around our destination's pillars; authentic western experiences, history, world class outdoor recreation and wildlife. To meet the trending travel demands in these areas, the Park County Travel Council:

- Created a monthly web series called *Outside Yellowstone* to promote local

outdoor recreation.

- Created a campaign through locals that assembled packages of outdoor recreation gear known as Park County Packs. These packs were sent by locals to family and friends encouraging them to visit our destination and experience our world class outdoors.
- Collaborated with a local video production company, Cactus Productions, to produce the Emmy Award winning marketing campaign "Find Your Moment."
- Expanded our social media presence to include Tik-Tok, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Snapchat.
- Returned to industry trade shows for the first time post pandemic, which allowed Park County Travel Council to promote Cody Yellowstone face to face once again.



In a relationship based industry, getting away from Zoom meetings and back into in person sales missions allowed PCTC to rebuild relationships with travel professionals and showcase our availability and capability to host visitors. Shows attended include:

Small Market Meetings Conference, Wyoming Hospitality & Tourism Fall Summit, National Tour

Association Travel Exchange, Wyoming Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Conference, American Bus Association Marketplace, The Great American West International Roundup and International Powwow

As a result of these efforts, we saw a record amount of earned media which produced regional and national coverage featuring our destination. Park County was featured in magazines, newspapers, podcasts, live TV segments, social media and blogs.

Partnerships with Yellowstone National Park

The Park County Travel Council and Xanterra Yellowstone National Park partnered on a variety of publicity-generating projects during fiscal year 2022. The projects included a small group press trip (August 2021), Outdoor Writers of America pre-conference trip (May 2022) and the larger scale Cody Yellowstone Road Show, a special event to promote strategies to visit Cody Yellowstone in 2022.

This media event was organized by Mesereau Travel Public Relations on behalf of the Park County Travel Council (Cody Yellowstone). Presenters included Ryan Hauck, executive director of Park County Travel Council, Rick Hoeninghausen, director of sales and marketing for Yellowstone National Park Lodges, Wes Allen, owner of Sunlight Sports and Bob Richard, book author, photographer, retired park ranger, third generation Cody resident and living legend. Media attendees included 22 writers, photographers and broadcasters.

The purpose of this event was

to create a buzz in front of high-level media about the growing outdoor recreation scene in Park County. The speakers discussed slow travel and human powered experiences. This refers to what you can do straight out of your car, using only what you've brought with you and requiring no additional gear. There are so many ways to explore Park County, especially utilizing our 80% public lands. Presenters talked about exploring the Thoroughfare, enjoying the less explored areas inside and outside of the Park and taking advantage of some of the most unique landscapes in the world, such as Clarks Fork, Sunlight Basin and Kirwin. Another focus was

Continued on page 2



Emmy Award winning marketing campaign "Find Your Moment."

traveling with soft footprints. We love Park County just the way it is, and we want our grandchildren's grandchildren to experience the lands of the county as we see them now. It takes education and a concerted effort to make sure visitors keep the county beautiful as we take on more foot traffic and travelers. The final talking point was about finding inspiration to travel. We feel that any type of traveler, any size group and demographic

can find inspiration to travel to Park County.

Through these partnerships with Xanterra Yellowstone National Park, we produced 44 published stories and national live TV segments from 22 media attendees. The total reach from these partnerships was over 700 million in readership and viewership. Stories continue to be developed from these partnerships into fiscal year 2023.



Northern Yellowstone June 2022 flooding

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Fiscal year 2022 brought record numbers of travelers and a historical best in spending throughout Park County. However, the year ended on a low note with water levels not seen in the last 150 years flooding and devastating the northern part of Yellowstone, taking two entrances with it. Although Park County was unaffected physically, our tourism economy took a huge hit. We saw thousands of premature cancellations as the national media portrayed the entire park and all gateway destinations as a natural disaster. The Wyoming Office of Tourism and the Park County Travel Council knew we had to pivot quickly to salvage

our peak season months. The Wyoming Office of Tourism brought in one million dollars from next year's fiscal budget to this year's and partnered with Xanterra Yellowstone to create a campaign combating the negative national media attention. The Park County Travel Council marketed and sold regionally, increased use of user generated content to show present conditions, and created a travel alerts web page to advise travelers on the latest park news and updates. We also ran an average of three news releases per week to inform media that Park County remained wide open to visitors and encouraged them to write stories to their own audiences about

traveling to our county. Next, we partnered with Xanterra Yellowstone for a *We're Open* campaign that specifically targets our feeder markets both regionally and nationally. Slowly, we have seen travelers come back, but not to the record levels we all expected due to Yellowstone's 150th Anniversary. Today, our industry's summer is over 20% down from last year. With the north and north east entrances in question for independent and motorcoach travel, we maintain outreach with our advocacy groups both domestically and internationally to reroute travel through our east gate for the remainder of this year and leading into 2023.

PCTC Helps Communities and Events Promote Themselves

The Park County Travel Council promotes Park County in its entirety under the name "Cody Yellowstone," which includes the communities of Cody, Powell, Meeteetse, and East Yellowstone Valley. In addition to this marketing, individual communities and non-profit organizations within Park County are awarded matching grants to purchase their own advertising. PCTC awards generous grants to support the visitor centers for Cody, Powell and Meeteetse. This includes funding for staff, advertising, marketing and website maintenance. Because Yellowstone National Park is not eligible for grant money, the park's collections are used to enhance the grants awarded to each community and to fund the countywide marketing plan. Many Park County conventions, events and sport tournaments received sponsorships from the Park County Travel Council, including 18 events for fiscal year 2022.



You may recognize this logo. In order for grantees to be reimbursed for their advertising expenses, it must appear on all printed ads, TV commercials and other promotional materials. This logo also appears in printed programs and at facilities that host sporting events which are funded in part by the Park County Travel Council.

MEDIA AND TRAVEL TRADE HIGHLIGHTS

The PCTC office provides information and helps coordinate individual visits from national and international travel writers and influencers, photographers, tour operators and travel industry representatives. These visits to our destination resulted in published and online articles as well as travel brochures and catalogs. The Wyoming Office of Tourism, the PCTC public relations team - Mesereau Travel Public Relations and the office of Rocky Mountain International rely on support from the PCTC office to host and escort these important guests.

- Articles about Cody Yellowstone were published in 39 magazines, 43 metropolitan newspapers and 74 additional online

sites. Cody Yellowstone was highlighted in 15 live television segments.

- USA Today Travel Guide, AAA TourBook, Good Sam Guide Series, national consumer magazines, as well as several city guides featured Cody and Park County.
- In cooperation with the Wyoming Office of Tourism, Rocky Mountain International (RMI) and other marketing organizations, PCTC hosted 39 travel writers/social influencers. Writers represented a variety of newspapers, magazines, online publications and television networks.

PARK COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

The Park County Travel Council administers the 4% Park County lodging tax revenues with the exception of the 10% share returned to the Park County Treasurer. State statutes dictate the revenues be spent on tourism promotion only.

The Park County Travel Council strives to fuel market demand and drive a healthy tourism economy through our mission; the promotion and facilitation of increased travel to and within Park County.

A Joint Powers Board comprised of ten volunteer board members makes up the Council. Four members are appointed by Park County Commissioners, two by the Cody City Council, two by the Powell City Council and one by the Meeteetse Town Council. A representative from the Wyoming Tourism Board, or a designee, also sits on the Travel Council. Approved budgets are funded by the previous fiscal year's lodging tax revenue.

Ryan Hauck, executive director of the



Ryan Hauck, Executive Director of PCTC

Park County Travel Council, implements and oversees a variety of marketing strategies for Park County. Hauck assists in the selection of publications for advertising buys, coordinates visits, escorts media and travel industry representatives, assists in the development of display ads and brochures, coordinates all

television promotions and features and works closely with the public relations team generating press releases and monthly Adventure Logs. Ryan also represents Park County at trade and travel shows in the U.S., Europe and Canada, and acts in an advisory capacity regarding funding and

administration of all PCTC grants.

Amanda Keyes, administrative assistant, tracks and fulfills all visitor requests including bulk mailing to visitor centers and AAA travel offices. She maintains printed and digital data for the Group Travel Planner,

Press Guide, Facilities Inventory and the PCTC website www.CodyYellowstone.org. Amanda ensures all county visitor centers have PCTC materials for summer distribution, coordinates the PCTC rack card distribution for Park County non-profits and prepares materials for board meetings and work sessions.

Katrina Southern joined the team early in the current fiscal year as PCTC's marketing manager. She grows and manages Tik-Tok, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn and coordinates overall management of the remaining four social media platforms. Katrina also runs the local ambassador program #WildWatch that includes 2-10 local ambassadors that assist travelers in seeing our destination through a local lens. Katrina also executes



Katrina Southern, PCTC Marketing Manager

Cody Yellowstone's social media takeovers highlighting a select number of events throughout the year and helps with graphic design and video production as needed for advertising and social media content.

Communities, County Use Lodging Tax Dollars

Park County collected \$35.1 million in sales taxes in 2021. Over 31% of those taxes, \$10.9 million, was generated by travelers. The local & state travel generated taxes relieved the tax burden on Park County residents by \$1,811 per household.

Park County residents benefit from the lodging tax in another way. Park County and its municipalities receive 10% of the Park County lodging tax collected. The collections are distributed by the Park County Treasurer back to the communities and county at the same

ratio they were collected. There is no restriction on how this 10% can be spent.

In FY2022, a total of \$341,692.85 was returned to Park County for distribution to the City of Powell, the City of Cody, the Town of Meeteetse and Park County.

The City of Powell received \$6,081.26, the City of Cody received \$165,026.89 and \$1,066.72 was received by the town of Meeteetse.

Park County receives the portion of the funds that are collected outside Park County municipalities totaling \$169,517.98 in fiscal year 2022.

The Park County Travel Council and Social Media

Cody Yellowstone's social presence grew exponentially in Fiscal Year 2022! Follow us on seven platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and LinkedIn, in addition to our ever-growing YouTube channel. Each platform continues to grow each year with the newer ones showing great promise.

The CodyYellowstone.org website also features an "Adventure Log" encouraging readers to explore Cody Yellowstone.



2022 PARK COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL

Mike Darby, *Chairperson* | Park County Appointee

John Parsons, *Vice Chairperson* | Park County Appointee

John Wetzel, *Treasurer* | City of Powell Appointee

Ruffin Prevost, *Secretary* | Park County Appointee

Sandy Newsome, *Past Chairperson* | City of Cody Appointee

Rick Hoeninghausen | Yellowstone National Park

Emily Swett | City of Cody Appointee

Christine Merz-Gleason | Town of Meeteetse Appointee

Michaela Jones | City of Powell Appointee

Quintin Blair | State Tourism Board Representative's Appt.

Local Partners

Without the continued support of local businesses, The Park County Travel Council would not be able to host and assist with as many media groups as we do. This support – donated lodging, meals, admissions and tours – allows the Travel Council to spend more on advertising, partnerships and transportation for travel writers and television crews. Members of the Council understand that these donations cost businesses and truly appreciate our local partners' cooperation.

Special thanks to Yellowstone National Park Lodges, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody Nite Rodeo, Cody Firearms Experience, Cody Trolley Tours, Old Trail Town, The Cody Cattle Company, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, Wyoming River Trips, North Fork Anglers, Tread N' Trails, Blair Hotels, The Cody, Best Western Ivy Inn & Suites, Best Western Sunset Inn, The Irma Hotel and Restaurant and The Chamberlin Inn – just to name a few of our 2021/22 partners.



Park County Travel Council
 FY2022 Annual Report
 P.O. Box 2454 - Cody, WY 82414
 www.CodyYellowstone.org

PRST STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 CODY, WY 82414
 PERMIT NO. 19

POSTAL PATRON

FY2022 GRANTS/PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FY2021 LODGING TAX COLLECTIONS

	GRANTS	COLLECTIONS
CODY COLLECTED.....		\$1,650,310.86
Cody Country Chamber of Commerce	\$132,450.00	
Visitor Center	\$128,450.00	
Visitor Center Advert.	\$3,000.00	
V.C. Mngr. Training	\$1,000.00	
Buffalo Bill Center of the West	\$24,950.00	
Buffalo Bill Dam & Visitor Center	\$5,170.00	
Cody Stampede Board	\$23,218.00	
Museum of the Old West & Trail Town	\$3,028.00	
Yellowstone Quake	\$3,000.00	
TOTAL CODY GRANTS	\$191,816.00	
POWELL COLLECTED.....		\$60,825.53
Powell Valley Chamber of Commerce	\$51,618.76	
Visitor Center	\$50,000.00	
Ag Tours & Mailings	\$1,618.76	
Heart Mountain Interpretive Center	\$14,825.00	
TOTAL POWELL GRANTS	\$66,443.76	
MEETEETSE COLLECTED.....		\$10,569.19
Meeteetse Visitor Center	\$19,600.00	
Visitor Center Staffing	\$16,000.00	
Advertising	\$2,100.00	
Website Maint.	\$1,500.00	
Meeteetse Museum District	\$2,800.00	
TOTAL MEETEETSE GRANTS	\$22,400.00	
PARK COUNTY COLLECTED.....		\$333,247.06
East Yellowstone Valley Chamber of Commerce	\$50,000.00	
Yellowstone Regional Airport	\$10,000.00	
TOTAL COUNTY GRANTS	\$60,000.00	
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK COLLECTED.....		\$1,440,000.00
(YNP Lodging located in Park County Only)		
Yellowstone is not eligible for PCTC Grants	\$0.00	
TOTAL GRANTS	\$337,864.76	
UNIFIED MARKETING	\$1,486,973.00	
ADMINISTRATION	\$221,243.00	
TOTAL GRANTS & PROGRAMS	\$2,046,080.76	

Year-Round Marketing

FISCAL YEAR STATISTICS COMPARISON

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST	134,723	141,774	177,238
HEART MTN. WWII INTERPRETIVE CENTER	12,376	8,524	14,975
YNP EAST ENTRANCE	395,935	459,619	453,459
CODY NITE RODEO	80,301	83,694	129,452
BB DAM & VISITOR CENTER	58,978	57,586	74,011
CODYYELLOWSTONE.ORG	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
WEBSITE SESSIONS	395,655	564,250	1,238,545
WEBSITE CONVERSIONS	19,490	40,225	196,141
VACATION GUIDE REQUESTS	91,082	61,236	69,025
DIGITAL VACATION GUIDE DOWNLOADS	2,989	5,036	7,923
PARK COUNTY VISITOR CENTERS	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
CODY COUNTRY VISITOR CENTER	82,627	75,810	95,103
POWELL VISITOR CENTER	3,546	3,562	3,417
MEETEETSE VISITOR CENTER	1,179	1,879	3,627

Travelers Spent
\$305.1 Million in
 Park County
 in 2020

Travelers Spent
\$450.9 Million in
 Park County
 in 2021



Source:
 2020 Dean Runyan
 Assoc. Report

Source:
 2021 Dean Runyan
 Assoc. Report