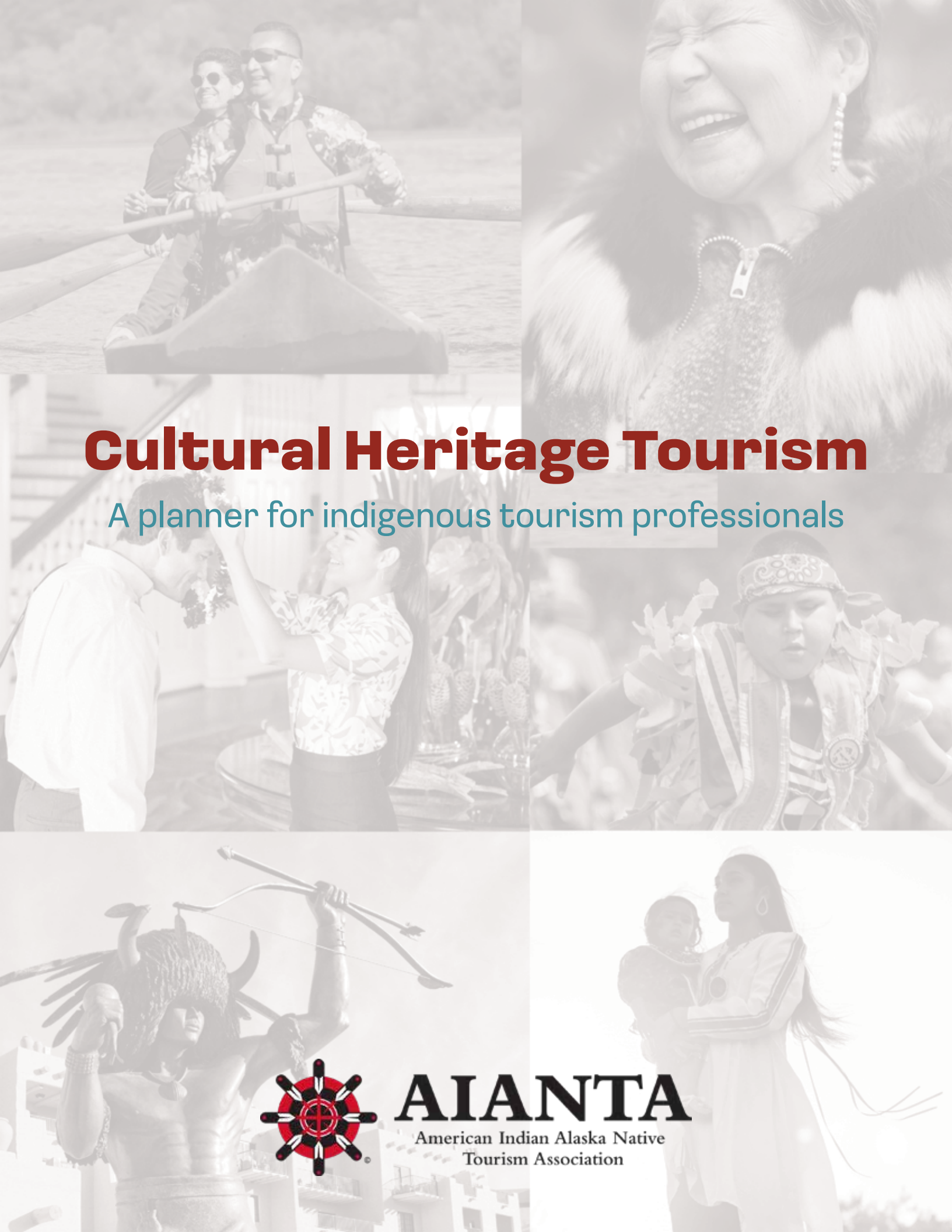


Cultural Heritage Tourism

A planner for indigenous tourism professionals

AIANTA

American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

Table of Contents

Letter from AIANTA's Chief Executive Officer, Sherry L. Rupert

Dear Members and Friends,

The planner you are about to read is a celebration of the ingenuity, hard work and perseverance of the tribes, culture bearers, small business owners, artisans, indigenous thought leaders and the many other industry advisors who work collectively to build a better future for their communities through cultural heritage tourism.

Since AIANTA was born nearly 20 years ago, we have heard and witnessed the many barriers that tribes and Indigenous business owners face when building or growing their hospitality industry. From lack of support at a leadership level, to scarce funding and human resources, to concerns about cultural appropriation, to simply not knowing where to start, these are very tangible roadblocks.

But we have also seen the tremendous passion and creativity of the individuals invested in building a better future for their communities and the amazing results realized by Indigenous communities who stay the course. The creation of new jobs, the perpetuation of culture, expanded global recognition and the growth of local economies are just a few of the tangible benefits of a sustainably built hospitality industry.

For Native organizations who remain unconvinced of the merits of tourism, I encourage you to read the stories and idea exchanges in this guide. Each of the dozens of examples within highlight the successes—large and small—of the many Native organizations actively welcoming local, regional, national and international visitors.

I am so grateful for the many people who loaned their Native wisdom for this guide. Their stories confirm that the challenges that face our Native communities are very real, but that we can persevere despite these challenges.

This sharing of wisdom is one of my favorite parts of working with the Native tourism industry. No matter what obstacles we face, there is always someone nearby willing to lend a helping hand.

Each chapter in this planner includes an original story written by AIANTA freelance writers, who conducted research and first-hand interviews with the Native tribes, communities and professionals featured. Each feature story is followed by smaller idea exchange stories that celebrate successes while providing tips, how to's and checklists.

We encourage you to read each chapter to build upon your own learnings and to be inspired by others that are forging similar paths as you.

Please also visit our Cultural Heritage Tourism page at www.aianta.org/cht for additional resources, learning tools and links to the other cultural heritage tourism publications that helped inspire this guide.

I also encourage you to explore NativeAmerica.travel, our consumer website, which provides inspiration, itineraries and ideas for visiting American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian destinations. Listings on the site are available without charge to tribal enterprises and Native-owned businesses engaged in the hospitality industry, so be sure to claim your free listing.

As you pass your own milestone markers, please let AIANTA know, so we can celebrate your successes in future publications.

Boneedwa,

Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/Washoe)
Chief Executive Officer
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association

Introduction to Cultural Heritage Tourism

Despite the awesome economic power of the global travel and hospitality industry, there are few terms that drive such a negative reaction as the word tourism. The expression has come to be so powerfully synonymous with mass consumption and careless disregard for community and culture, that consumers and hospitality marketers alike avoid using the label.

As with all things, tourism comes in many shapes and sizes and the negative association is just one view of a dynamic, multi-faceted industry. The negative connotations, however, become especially harmful when entire communities avoid growing or managing their hospitality industry for fear they will attract hordes of people intent on validating centuries-old stereotypes while trampling on sacred sites and ceremonies.

Consumers are also avoiding the "tourist" label as they seek out new and distinctive experiences. In today's service-starved society, more travelers are skipping the "mass market" experience in favor of face-to-face interactions. This connection is especially powerful when travelers are personally invited to explore cultures different from their own.

This traveler, loosely defined as a "cultural heritage traveler," is especially important to Native tourism marketers. Although research on cultural heritage tourism is relatively sparse, a recent study (September 2021) conducted by University of Hawai'i researchers found that travelers are overwhelmingly willing to pay more for travel that includes authentic and sustainable Native Hawaiian experiences.

Sharing Native culture with travelers is not synonymous with "selling out." Setting a price on cultural experiences is a way of defining the value of the culture bearers, elders and hospitality professionals who create the experiences travelers desire.

What's more, elevating culture bearers is the very antidote to the false narratives that prevail and are often magnified by the tourism industry.

Within the pages of this planner are the stories of the many tribes, Native business owners and other hospitality professionals who are taking control of their narrative, elevating their culture bearers, reclaiming their histories and driving better economic opportunities for their citizens while doing so.

Sharing Native culture with travelers is not synonymous with 'selling out.' Setting a price on cultural experiences is a way of defining the value of the culture bearers, elders and hospitality professionals who create the experiences travelers desire."

Chapter 1:
Assess the Potential for Heritage Tourism

Sharing the Spirit: Planning for Cultural Tourism

How the Akwesasne Nation worked with local artisans to develop their tourism plan

Sitting on the border of the United States and Canada in northern New York, the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation seeks to share its history and culture with visitors as part of the Tribe's cultural tourism plan. While visitors already know the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort and the annual international powwow, the Tribe believes cultural tourism can further be showcased through its citizens' artwork and a new tribal heritage complex.

"We are a rather large reservation, people-wise," said Penny Peters, Tourism Industry Development Manager. "We don't have a huge land base…we have a few islands available. When we went through our marketing, we determined that our art is what makes us special."

Akwesasne Nation

The Akwesasne have long been the keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, commonly known as the Iroquois. As members of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Nation, the Akwesasne Mohawks originally called northeastern New York, southern Canada and Vermont home.

Mohawks settled along the banks of the St. Lawrence River, as well as near the St. Regis River. In the 1750s, French Jesuits established a mission along the St. Regis River, in the Akwesasne area. Today, the Akwesasne Mohawks work within three governments – St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (United States), Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in the North (Canada) and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs (traditional).

Sharing the Spirit

Located along New York Highway 37, the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation is in a prime location for tourism.

Thousands of people visit the casino annually, as well as another 6,000-7,000 people who attend the annual powwow. Believing they can leverage those visitors into longer stays or increased room nights, Akwesasne leaders started an initiative in 2008 called "Sharing the Spirit," which eventually led to the Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Strategic Action Plan (ACTSAP), according to Peters.

After years of polishing ideas, the Tribe finalized the ACTSAP in 2014, which led to the formation of a community working group. Since then, three other tribal officials, along with Peters, have been working to implement the plan – Latoya Rourke, Tourism Business Incubator Manager, and Cail McDonald, Akwesasne Heritage Complex Project Developer. Raeann Adams later joined the team as the Project Director/Community Planner.

"When we went through our marketing, we determined that our art is what makes us special."

Each person manages a piece of the cultural tourism action plan, which was funded through a grant by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), said Peters, whose role as project manager ensures the plan is properly implemented.

The team has spent the past four years working on several key plans for the foundation of the ACTSAP. These plans include a tourism interpretive plan, infrastructure plan, a branding plan and marketing strategy, as well as historical references and cultural guidelines.

"I'm on the business side, Akwesasne Travel, which we are calling our DMO (Destination Marketing Organization), that will eventually be the main hub to market our destinations," said Peters.

continued on next page

A business plan for the future DMO will have a focus on sustainability. An interpretive plan to build a tourism infrastructure includes possible attractions and a historical resources report. Part of the infrastructure plan includes developing a department that will help market the reservation's attractions.

Business Incubator

With the business implementation plan in place, tourism officials set out to identify and help develop visitor attractions, creating a business incubator in the process. Working with local entrepreneurs and artisans, such as basket makers, the business incubator program seeks to provide tourism support to these businesses.

"We're going to create an art park and art gallery in a 92-year-old hydroelectric building that can also be used for cultural and community events."

The business incubator program consists of classroom and online business courses, as well as mentoring sessions with a business consultant, said Latoya Rourke.

Participants can enroll in classes, scheduled every two weeks, which cover topics ranging from creating a marketing plan to developing a business plan. Participants can also take advantage of mentoring sessions in-between. In addition to Rourke, mentors include representatives from the Small Business Administration.

The mentorship program involves determining if the entrepreneur fits the tourism model or may be better suited for a different business structure. Keeping the incubator program small, Rourke typically works with just a few businesses at one time, like the history museum, basket makers and up to four additional artisans.

"We have more than 100 artisans in our community," Rourke said. "We narrowed [that pool] down to meet a tourism goal. We looked at if they had a storefront (for year-round opportunities). Some [artisans] just like to enter juried art shows, or they just want the vendor support."

"Our artisans who participated in the program have found that they now have time to develop their product. Before, they were busy trying to run their business."

Art is the driving force for tourism development, Peters said.

Akwesasne Heritage Facilities

Another development from the Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Strategic Action Plan involves constructing a new heritage complex, said Gail McDonald. The 53,000-sq. foot Akwesasne Heritage Complex will include a museum, library, archive and classrooms, as well as classes, children's powwows and other cultural events. The Heritage Complex project doesn't have a set timeline yet, but leaders understand its importance to the Reserve's tourism.

"It's going to be a real help to the community," said McDonald. "It will help develop downtown Akwesasne. We're going to create an art park and art gallery in a 92-year-old hydroelectric building that can also be used for cultural and community events. It has great potential."

As the programs and attractions take hold, the Tribe is turning to others for assistance in marketing, including the Native North American Traveling College, which is located on the reserve. The college also assisted in creating a new tourism-based website, Peters said.

"They've been doing this for 52 years," Peters said. "Their focus is to educate outsiders on who we are and why we're here. We'd like to be marketing directly to tours. We're looking to find the right fit."

With about 4.5 million vehicles traveling through the area, and located within two hours of Montreal, Ottawa and Burlington, Vermont, as well as a day's drive from New York cities, such as Albany and Syracuse, the tourism team believes they can draw 3,000-14,000 new visitors annually. The community believes this is an acceptable target.

"Our community doesn't need us to be Disneyland," she said.

Written by Tim Trudell

Akwesasne Lacrosse

Long before the 1500s, Mohawk men would gather for a game of stickball using long sticks that resembled spoons with netting crafted from animal products or leather. Teams would play the sport using a small ball, which was passed between players using the sticks. The first European viewing of the game reportedly occurred in the mid-1600s, when Jean de Brebeuf, a French Jesuit, wrote about the experience, referring to the game as "crosse," the French word for stick.

Mohawk Lacrosse on Cornwall Island, an Akwesasne reserve business, has produced lacrosse sticks for almost a century. It was once the world's top wooden stick maker, with nearly nine of every 10 sticks used in the sport coming from the reservation company. As the sport turned to plastic sticks, the need for wooden ones declined. Although the company turned to producing plastic sticks to remain competitive, it has also seen a slight increase in interest for wooden sticks. Each wooden lacrosse stick is handmade, including the netting.

The A'nowara 'kowa Arena, on Cornwall Island, is home to the Akwesasne Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

Explore Possible Themes

Cultural resources are often connected to historical events. Consider your key historic time periods when developing tourism in your community. Or develop tourism programs based on cultural themes. Examining these distinctive themes can help you tell your community's unique story.

Also recognize you're now in the business of crafting "great story" moments. Make sure your offerings are story-worthy to ensure visitors will be excited about sharing their experiences with friends and family.

Competitors can often also be allies when attracting visitors to your destination. Give your visitors tips on what to see and do nearby, and where to eat. Consider packaging your offerings with neighboring destinations to make it easier to convince potential visitors to stay longer.

Historic Time Periods

- Pre-Columbus
- European Contact
- Lewis & Clark Expedition
- Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition
- Oregon Trail
- American Revolution
- Pueblo Revolt
- Civil War
- Spanish American War
- Trail of Tears
- World War I, II
- Civil Rights Movement
- American Indian Movement

Cultural Themes

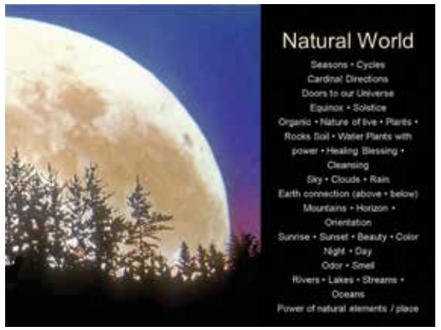
- Agriculture/food sovereignty
- America250
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce and trade
- Cultural life
- Conservation
- Entertainment
- Historic routes/canoe journeys
- Traditional games
- Monuments/historic markers
- Scenic routes

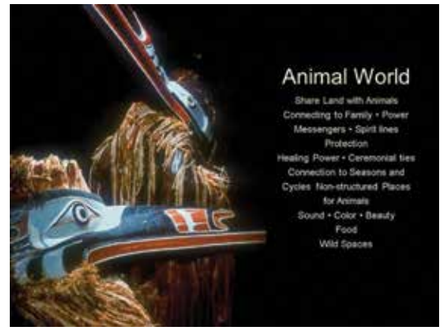
Cultural Framework for Diversity

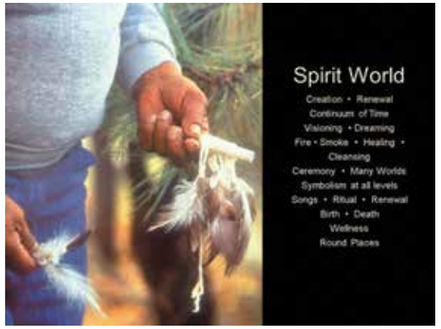
Renowned architect Johnpaul Jones (Choctaw-Cherokee), FAIA, provides Indigeneous Native American cultural planning and design, and as a partner with Jones and Jones Architects he has led the design of numerous famed Indigenous facilities, including cultural and heritage centers, museums and educational institutions.

"In our work we pay deep respect to regional architectural traditions that help lead to the understanding of Indigenous people and their rich cultural heritage in this country. He tries to incorporate both the practical and the spiritual into planning and design which helps heighten human sensitivity to Indigenous cultural and environmental issues."

His designs, including his 12-year engagement as overall lead design consultant for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall in Washington, D.C., have won widespread acclaim for their reverence for the earth, for paying deep respect to regional Indigenous architectural traditions, Native landscapes, and for heightening understanding of Indigenous People and their cultures of America.







Johnpaul has received numerous awards for his work, including the National Medal of Arts in 2009. In 2014, President Barack Obama awarded Johnpaul the National Humanities Medal for "honoring the natural world and Indigenous traditions in architecture."

Johnpaul shared the cultural framework he uses to design facilities for tribes. He uses these concepts as he approaches both the diversity of the four worlds and the diversity of the people he works with. He said the framework helps bring Indigenous people together to help them approach planning and design.

"There is no place in America without a tribal story. Native people of this country know every habitat of our tribal land, every plant, every animal. We know the water, the rocks, the sky and the clouds, the wind. A lot of this knowledge is in verbal stories, and these are gifts from our tribal ancestors and their experience over thousands of years, and they are worth sharing.

"We do share this through our storytelling, our songs, our poems and our dances. These verbal gifts are interesting and engaging to tourism, and we are allowed to share some of these stories."

"When we think of tribal tourism, we usually think about facilities, such as museums. Many of our verbal gifts are inviting and engaging for tourism and can offer a better connection to our Native values and ways than a big costly facility.

Johnpaul's Choctaw mother and his grandmother shared with him the story of the four worlds, which he uses today when he plans and designs facilities—the Natural World, the Animal World, the Spiritual World and the Human World. Visitors appreciate learning about these connections.

"When I design, I ask which of the elements of the four worlds the tribe wants to share with its visitors. What I have found is that it does not take much of a facility to bring visitors to special areas on our homelands, and have our storytellers share their stories."

For tribes with limited budgets, Johnpaul recommends they draw upon their Native architectural heritage to build a shelter, trellis or a simple Native structure—anything that represents their heritage. It only has to be a place where they can start tours, and begin the sharing of stories about the richness of their heritage and knowledge with visitors. You don't need a big, expensive facility to get started.

Inventory of Tribal Cultural Assets

When building your tourism business plan, it helps to start at the very beginning. Take stock of what cultural and heritage attractions you have.

Don't forget your human resource assets who can help interpret these sites. A tribal elder can easily serve as a lead in developing tourism programming as could students when developing family-oriented activities. Be sure to consider all possibilities. To help get you started, use the below list to begin your own planning.

Cultural & Heritage Attractions

- Museums, cultural centers, libraries, art galleries
- Historic monuments or landmarks
- Historic buildings
- Annual festivals, events or performances

Local Tours & Interpretation

- Tour operators/outfitters
- Cultural center employees, docents or volunteers
- Scenic driving tours, National Scenic Byways
- Historians available for presentations
- Other experts available as step-on guides
- Artisan studio tours

Natural & Scenic Attractions

- Nearby national, regional or state parks
- National or local trails
- Marinas, water sports, boating tours
- Fishing and hunting
- Wildlife watching & photography
- Rock climbing, skydiving, ziplining, other adrenaline or endurance activities

Accommodations & Overnight Stays

- Accommodations (hotels, resorts, casino resorts)
- Campgrounds and RV Parks
- Ranch stays or other alternative lodging
- Airbnb, VRBO or other home-share accommodations

Culinary

- Restaurants, cafes
- Food trucks, food kiosks
- Celebrity chefs/cooking classes

Agritourism

- Farm tours/demonstrations
- Farmer's markets/U-pick opportunities
- Food/harvest festivals

Visitor Services

- Visitor center/information kiosk
- Chamber of commerce
- Rest stops/restrooms

Finding Success in Agritourism

As Johnpaul Jones mentioned in the previous article, a brick-and-mortar cultural center or museum isn't necessarily the only path to attracting travelers. Many tribes are diving deeper into agritourism, placing a welcome mat in front of their food sovereignty initiatives and traditional farming practices. Below are six tribes finding success in creating a welcoming place for visitors in their agriculture infrastructure.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Although the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has long collected pecans or Oksak Fvla (shelled hickory nut), it wasn't until 2016 that pecans became an independent business for the Tribe. Choctaw Farms now grows 150,000 pounds of pecans annually. The success of the Tribe's agritourism ventures has led to the opening of three Choctaw Country markets, including one in the same redbrick building that served as the Tribe's capitol building until 1907.

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

For California's Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, the idea for an olive vineyard first blossomed when Tribal Chairman Marshall McKay read reports about the poor quality of olive oil being produced in the U.S. Now the Tribe's prime California location in the Capay Valley is home to more than 3,000 olive trees. The award-winning olive oil is sold at the Séka Hills Tasting Room, where guests also learn about the Tribe's history. Several tribal gift shops sell the olive oil, as well as other Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation agricultural products including the Séka Hills wine label.

Icy Strait Point (Alaska)

Icy Strait Point, the Alaska-Native owned destination operated by the Huna Totem Corporation, was born from a restored 1912 Alaska salmon cannery. Now a seasonal cruise ship destination, Icy Strait Point offers more than 20 experiential adventure tours, including two signature culinary experiences, *In Alaska's Wildest Kitchen*, led by former commercial fisher, Dodie Lunda, and the more experiential *The Tlingit Kitchen: A Taste of Southeast Alaska*. Three on-site restaurants further serve up local culture, with menu items ranging from smoked salmon to reindeer chili and fries.

Pueblo of Santa Ana

Known for its blue corn products, sold at the award-winning Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa, the Pueblo of Santa Ana is also gaining recognition for its grape varietals. The 30-acre vineyard grows 140 tons of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier grapes. At 5,200 feet above sea level, these are the highest-grown Pinot Noir grapes in the world. Interestingly, New Mexico was the first wine country in what is now the U.S., dating back to the early 1600s, when Franciscan friars traveling with the Spanish first planted grapes to make sacramental wine.

Oneida Big Apple Fest

Apples have been a staple crop of the Oneida Nation for hundreds of years, although Oneida's orchards were destroyed by British sympathizers in retribution for the Nation's support of the Colonists during the American Revolution. By reclaiming apple orchards, the Oneida Nation is using agritourism to honor its roots. The annual Oneida Apple Fest invites the public to celebrate the harvest and learn about the Tribe's cultural traditions, including a tour of an Oneida Longhouse and log home. Since its 2009 beginnings, Big Apple Fest has seen an 87% increase in attendance and collected more than $70,000 in sales.

Iroquois White Corn Project (Seneca Nation of Indians, New York)

Founded in the 1990s, the Iroquois White Corn Project was designed to reintroduce a healthy and culturally important crop back to Tribal members. In part, the crop had been decimated by missionary insistence that men do the farming. (Traditionally, it was Seneca women who would plant and tend the cornfields.) In the present day, the Iroquois White Corn Project based at the Ganondagan State Historic Site, encourages Seneca farmers and volunteers to grow and prepare this versatile grain.

For more information on these and other tribal agritourism programs, please download AIANTA's *Case Studies in Tribal Agritourism* at www.aianta.org/agritourism.

Chapter 2
A Sense of Place: Preserve, Protect & Manage

Celebrating Land & Location in Cultural Heritage Tourism

The Yurok Tribe's enviable location amidst the California Redwoods sets the stage for incomparable hospitality experiences.

In Yurok country, everything is so big, it's not difficult to picture yourself in the center of the world.

Ancient redwood giants point to the sky with great round trunks of unimaginable diameters. So tall that large trees grow underneath them, and smaller trees underneath those trees and large swaths of ferns unfurl and cover the high walls of foggy creeks and canyons.

These redwoods are so old that they may still remember what it feels like to have a grizzly bear rub up against their fibrous bark. And in silent solidarity they remain, standing with their original caretakers, the Yurok people. The lushness of this landscape is fed by the massive waters of the Klamath River, just before it empties into the sea, the culmination of a journey that feeds 5.6 million acres of river basin on its way home to the Pacific Ocean, passing through Yurok country at the finish line. And the Yurok people, like the land they steward, are doing big things.

With the completion of the Redwood Hotel and Casino in Klamath, the Yurok Tribe immediately set plans in motion to increase tourism opportunities for adventurers looking for an outdoor experience not found anywhere else on earth. With a laser focus on improving ecological tourism, they have built a unique cultural education piece into their strategy, one that centers the voices of the Yurok people and the land itself.

In 2014, after the opening of the hotel and casino, they built the Yurok Country Visitor Center, an informational hub offering travelers an opportunity to discover the Yurok Scenic Byways—five tribally designated roads within Yurok ancestral territory. They then purchased the Klamath Jet Boat Tours and adjacent RV Park in 2015, touting a 50-mile guided trip up the river where guests are treated to local wildlife sightings and a bit of adventure right on the Klamath River.

But Yurok Country is vast and so are their plans, including an important historic agreement between the Yurok Tribe and California State Parks to operate the Stone Lagoon Visitor's Center, located 30 miles south of Klamath and 30 miles north of Arcata. The Tribe recently renamed the facility Chah-pekw O' Ket'-toh (Stone Lagoon) Visitor Center.

"Yurok people have been holding ceremonies and dances at Chah-pekw O' Ket'oh (Stone Lagoon) since time immemorial," says Rosie Clayburn, who is the Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer for the Tribe. She also notes that the Yurok village site has been in continual use for millennia and the Tribe's traditional Jump Dance is still being performed there.

This government-to-government agreement between the Tribe and the park is the first of its kind in California and comes with joint powers of authority. "It is the highest power of classification of agreement that I could enter into," said Victor Bjelejac, North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent. "Nobody has ever done this before."

In preparation for opening, Rosie oversees a renovation of the Visitor's Center that will include multimedia displays, exhibits and interpretive staff who will greet visitors and share the Tribe's story in its own words. They will also offer basket weaving classes, traditional story-telling events and kayaking on the lagoon.

This historic partnership between the Yurok Tribe and Bjelejac doesn't stop with Chah-pekw O' Ket'oh, it has also extended into Sumêg Village (Patrick's

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Point State Park) where gatherers have previously struggled with access to their traditional gathering places due to conflicts with State Park personnel. Now the park has interpreters on-site, and tribal citizens are able to come and gather more freely.

Along with these historic partnerships, the Yurok Tribe is making history in other ways as well. They recently acquired the Mad River Brewing Company in Blue Lake, a craft brewery located a few miles east of Arcata.

Linda Cooley, COO of the Mad River Brewing Company, is overseeing exciting developments, including the revitalization of an intertribal-trade opportunity with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Casino in southern California, east of Los Angeles. This partnership will bring in vital resources for the Yurok people in regard to economic development, and as with all of their endeavors, environmental sustainability will be a cornerstone component of the brewery's growth strategy. The site itself is a thriving local taproom, and fans of the classic Steelhead Ale can be found all over the world. Linda also has plans to have the Tribe begin growing their own hops while expanding the reach of potential partnerships with other tribes.

Also on the Klamath River, a project near and dear to Yurok Tribal Chairman Joseph L. James' heart, is the Redwood Yurok Canoe Tours. Showcasing the unique boatbuilding talents of the Yurok people, these redwood dugout canoes are meticulously handcrafted and helmed by two Yurok guide captains narrating a river experience full of wildlife and historical sites, while guests glide up and down the Klamath River as the Yurok people have done for thousands of years.

"We received an incredible response when we first announced the canoe tours—more people are visiting national parks, and we're seeing that here as well," said Chairman James. Chairman James believes that singular cultural experiences like the canoe

"We received an incredible response when we first announced the canoe tours—more people are visiting national parks, and we're seeing that here as well."

- Joseph L James Yurok Tribal Chairman

tours will be a draw for international travelers and adventurers alike.

The Yurok Tribe has even more intriguing projects in the works. One of them isn't about tourism numbers, but rather bringing home some cherished relatives, the California Condors. The Tribe's condor release program recently completed the final environmental review, and the Tribe will soon begin building a release facility on a previously selected site.

The Tribe proposed this historic endeavor and built the program from the ground up. Over the course of a decade the Yurok Wildlife Department team conducted all of the scientific studies and completed the multitude of requisite tasks associated with reintroducing a critically endangered species. Returning prey-go-neesh (condor) to their homeland is an opportunity to reconnect a piece of an ecosystem that has been missing for more than a century. With tall trees, wide wingspans and a vast river system, the most populous Tribe in California is laying the foundation for a truly world-class, culturally centered tourism experience.

By Sara Calvosa Olson

Preserving History & Language Through Maps

"When it comes to creating authentic destination stories, desk research is not enough. Go into the community to have deep, thoughtful conversations with people to discover the 'lore' and traditions of the place," say the tourism marketers for Canada's Newfoundland and Labrador province in a recent Skift.com article.

One person doing exactly that is Maine-based cartographer Dr. Margaret Pearce, who is devoted to narrative map design and building dialogue about Indigenous geographies and climate action. She is working with tribal nations throughout the U.S. and Canada to develop projects like *Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada*, a map that re-envisions Canada through the language and geography of its Indigenous peoples.

Pearce, a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, spent fifteen months collecting Indigenous place names from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. These ancient names indicate gathering places, communities, sites where treaties were signed, and special places of danger, beauty or spiritual significance.

The project was deeply connected to the goal of creating respect for Indigenous homelands and sovereignties, and a deeper understanding of the place names. The names on this map are shared with the permission of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and people that Pearce worked with. Although the map reclaims many Indigenous names and Nations across Canada, there are many more and the list is ever-growing as more information is learned from the tribes.

"More indigenous territory has been claimed by maps than by guns. This assertion has its corollary: more indigenous territory can be defended and reclaimed by maps than by guns."

— Bernard Nietschmann, geographer

Pearce requested that the information for this map be provided by the tribes on their own terms, relying on what was acceptable for each one to share. Some tribes chose not to provide information. Other tribes made decisions on what they wanted to tell, and how extensive their story might be. In this way, maps like *Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada* provide the opportunity for tribes to provide their own perspective and tell their stories in whatever way they choose.

Traditional western mapmaking largely relied on property ownership and reinforced power structures—a story of conquerors. That methodology led to the widespread erasure of Indigenous people from their traditional lands.

The process of decolonizing maps provides cartographers a chance to correct inaccuracies and include the tribal story. These maps are a strong tool for tribal planners, aiding in the preservation and protection of cultural history, heritage and legacies.

Reclaiming traditional names provides a sense of place, and a stronger understanding of the land and its people.

Mapmaking in the Digital World

Native Land Digital is an Indigenous-led organization that fosters conversations about the history of colonialism. Their website, Native-Land.ca, features worldwide Indigenous place names. The company strives to go beyond old ways of talking about Indigenous people and has developed a platform where communities can represent themselves and their histories on their own terms. Margaret Pearce serves on the Native Land Digital Advisory Council alongside many experienced cartographers, researchers, educators and communication experts.

Developing a Tourism Business Improvement District

The saying "there's strength in numbers" aptly describes the power of Tourism Business Improvement Districts, commonly referred to as TBIDs or TIDS, which have revolutionized destination marketing funding.

Since originating in California in 1989, TBIDs have spread to 153 destinations across eleven states. By providing stable, dedicated funds for destination marketing, Tourism Improvement Districts have forever altered the destination marketing financing landscape. For tribal tourism marketing programs, this is an excellent mechanism for generating funding to help promote tribal enterprises.

Here's how it works:

Tourism Improvement Districts are an evolution of the traditional business improvement district. The district levies an assessment on hotel room or business sales, which is collected by the jurisdiction and dedicated to funding marketing programs. The goal of TBIDs is to increase the number of overnight visitors using business and services in that area. TBID funds are usually managed by a nonprofit corporation, generally a Convention and Visitors Bureau, hotel association, or similar destination marketing organization. Typical TBID services include marketing programs to raise awareness of the destination, sponsorship of special events that attract overnight visitors, and sales programs to bring in large-group business.

"Tribal nations creating a TBID can really expand their tourism promotion. That's why West Hollywood first developed its TBID. Within a large and diverse geographical region such as the greater Los Angeles area, the City of West Hollywood felt that our tourism marketing needs would be best met if we controlled our own tourism messaging, rather than allowing larger regional associations to speak for us.

-Tom Kiely, President & CEO
West Hollywood Convention & Visitors Bureau

Tourism Improvement Districts throughout the United States were surveyed in order to provide a comprehensive report on the growing phenomenon. One key finding included the fact that destination marketing funding increased by nearly 180% after forming a Tourism Improvement District. For tribal tourism marketing organizations, increased funding such as this can help launch an aggressive program and increase economic vitality.

...destination marketing funding increased by nearly 180% after forming a Tourism Improvement District.

The many benefits of TBIDs include:

- Funds must be spent on services and improvements that provide a benefit only to those who pay
- Funds cannot be diverted to general government programs
- They are customized to fit the needs of payors in each destination
- They allow for a wide range of services
- They are designed, created and governed by those who will pay the assessment
- They provide a stable, long-term funding source for tourism promotion

Artwork of Virgil "Smoker" Marchand (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation)

What is Geotourism?

The term "geotourism" has become a popular buzzword with interest in geotourism marketing continuing to gain strong momentum.

While ecotourism has been used in the adventure travel business for many years, geotourism has a wider scope. Geotourism, as defined by National Geographic, is tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place—its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.

At the center of geotourism is the concept of sustainability and that travel should help preserve the unique character of a place. Conservation is a central value, as is preserving culture and history, and respecting diversity. Geotourism celebrates geography and human spirit and the captivating interplay between them. This synergy creates rich, authentic experiences that make travel at its best so fulfilling.

"The National Park Service has embraced the concept of geotourism to serve as an anchor for many of our projects. Making a dedicated outreach to tribes and gaining their support and involvement remains a priority."

— Dan Wiley, National Park Service

According to Dan Wiley, Senior Leader, Resources Stewardship with Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, a unit of the National Park Service (NPS), geotourism encompasses a wide range of travel opportunities that focus on culture, heritage, history, food, nature, adventure, outdoor activities, water, music and the arts. Geotourism pulls together destination stakeholders—groups including local, state, national and tribal government entities, as well as heritage and conservation organizations, CVBs, tourism companies, and residents.

As a result, geotourism marketing efforts provide a common vision for sustainable tourism development and a commitment to action. Wiley describes the goals as follows:

- Provide the public with resources to better experience Indian Country
- Bring diverse partners together to re-establish partnerships and renew collaborative efforts

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Examples of Geotourism Projects

Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail
The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Geotourism Program covers the length of the Trail from Pittsburgh to the Pacific Ocean. A collaboration between the National Park Service (NPS), Solimar International (a sustainable tourism consulting firm) and AIANTA, the project raises awareness of the experiences found along the trail, while supporting the local small businesses that contribute to the experience. lewisandclark.travel

Sedona Verde Valley
The Sedona Verde Valley region boasts an amazing array of picturesque and ecologically important landscapes, which play an important role in the local economy and are intimately tied to the region's rich Native American and Western culture. sedonaverdevalley.natgeotourism.com

Four Corners Region
The Four Corners Region Geotourism Stewardship Council has partnered with the National Geographic Society to capture the history and heritage of the Four Corners Region through an interactive website and print map. The project celebrates the region as a world-class destination, while contributing to its economic health by promoting sustainable tourism. fourcornersgeotourism.com

Photo: Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center at Cape Disapointment

- Engage Native American tribes and help develop opportunities for them to share their stories with travelers in a way compatible with their goals and cultural heritage strategies

- Support local small businesses and raise awareness of the wealth of amenities and experiences offered by Native American communities

Wiley leads the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Geotourism project, which includes promoting tribal heritage and tribal enterprises along the trail. The project dovetails with the work completed by The Circle of Tribal Advisors that took place from 2003 to 2006. The Circle of Tribal Advisors worked together during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration in order to tell the American Indian story.

This new geotourism project expands on the groundwork, contributions and learnings from the Circle of Tribal Advisors, and offers new opportunities for tribes to connect with visitors from around the globe.

The National Park Service is taking a long-haul approach to programs like these and is committed to working alongside Native American Tribes. NPS maintains a keen focus toward increasing domestic and international awareness of tribal legacies and defining tourism assets.

Helping communities thrive economically through tourism efforts, while also attracting visitors that appreciate an authentic sense of place, work in tandem. Geotourism efforts like these rely on strong participation by Native American tribes who can leverage tourism in a way that is compatible with their goals and sentiments.

Chapter 3
Celebrate Uniqueness and Authenticity

Honoring Hawaiian Culture
How Hawai'i reclaimed and promotes the Native voice

Idea Exchange
Using Culture to Develop Communities
Cultural Misunderstandings and the Things Visitors Do
Honoring Hawaiian Royalty
Showcasing Cultural Heritage at Your Businesses

Photo by Ben Ono

Honoring Hawaiian Culture

How Hawai'i reclaimed and promotes the Native voice

Imagine for a minute, the picture-perfect white sand Waikīkī beach bordered by the majesty of Le'ahi (Diamond Head) in the background. The sparkle and sweet smell of the ocean invites you to relax and listen to the Hawaiian music filling the air. Right then, you step out onto the beach only to realize you are not alone, and there is no room for you – let alone your towel.

This was the reality in 2019 when Hawai'i boasted it's highest number of visitors ever: more than 10.4 million arrivals, with nearly 250,000 visitors in Hawai'i on any given day according to data from the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA)– a sizable presence in an island community with a population of 1.4 million. Since 1778 when Captain James Cook and the crews of the *Discovery* and *Resolution* happened upon Hawai'i, tourism has continued to grow exponentially even through two world wars, multiple recessions, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and a global pandemic.

A month after Hawai'i's admission as one of the United States of America, commercial jet service began with a Pan American Boeing 707 flight, slashing travel time from the the U.S. continent in half. Hotels were built as quickly as they could in Waikīkī and elsewhere in the islands, commercializing and industrializing sleepy seaside villages. The previous week-long voyage by boat was no longer a barrier to travel, and the alluring tropical paradise became increasingly attainable for travelers.

Visitors often brought with them erroneous expectations of a culture and environment defined by Hollywood movies, the strategic importance in the Pacific of Pearl Harbor and the growth of the largest overseas U.S. military installation, as aggressive travel writers and marketers pushed propaganda of tiki culture, coconut bras and shiny cellophane skirts.

"Native Hawaiians reconnected with their heritage, rekindled ties to their history and ‘āina (land) that had been stripped through colonization, and restored the language that held their deep-seeded cultural vision for revitalization."

- Kainoa Daines
Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau

These new visitors came with the expectation of experiencing a vacation destination that was a tropical paradise playground for the rich and famous. Travel writers and marketers left out the turmoil embedded in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy in 1893 and the annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom to the United States in 1900, motivated by American business interests. In tourism and beyond, misrepresentation of Hawaiian history and disrespect of the Native culture continued to depress circumstances for Native Hawaiians for generations.

"That began to change in the 1970s," said Kainoa Daines, Director of Culture and Product Development for the Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau. During this time of cultural renaissance, Native Hawaiians reconnected with their heritage, rekindled ties to their history and 'āina (land) that had been stripped through colonization, and restored the language that held their deep-seeded cultural vision for revitalization.

The Hawaiian Renaissance of the late 1960's to the early 1980's was a time of resurgence for Native Hawaiians. Highlights of the Hawaiian Renaissance included the voyage of Hōkūle'a, a replica of a traditional Hawaiian trans-Pacific sailing canoe which navigated from Hawai'i to Tahiti in 1976 using only Polynesian voyaging techniques; the formation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in 1978 as a public trust with Native Hawaiians listed as their beneficiary which then created a means to generate income from ceded lands that were taken during annexation; and the emergence of Hawaiian language immersion education in 1983, bringing the language back from the brink of extinction and serving as a model for native language revitalization globally. Efforts such as these have given rise to pride in Native Hawaiian identity and affirms the need for a strong Native voice in Hawai'i.

"It's us," Daines says. "One, the people of Hawai'i, but two, the Hawaiian culture. You don't have it anywhere else in the world." Identifying the need to incorporate the Native Hawaiian voice in communicating, marketing, and protecting the uniqueness of their ancestral lands was fundamental in laying the foundation for a future tourism industry rooted in Native Hawaiian culture and values. This strategy flips the "customer first" mindset to one that is genuinely Hawaiian: the ho'okipa model of hospitality, where respect for place and host are held in balance with the needs of the guest.

Kainoa Daines Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau

"Hawai'i needs to be part of the equation when you're hosting," says Mālia Sanders, Executive Director of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA). By using 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian Language), creating an authentic experience, and sharing the history of place, "we help visitors realize they're in a different place. In doing so, it humbles our guests right from the get-go so they're ready to absorb the culture." Sanders and Daines stress the importance of having Native people in positions of influence to offer an indigenous lens to strategic visions for the future of tourism in their homeland.

In a time where many destinations long for tourism growth and the accompanying economic benefits, Hawai'i has hit new highs. Is there such a thing as too many visitors? Can tourism go too far? What are the opportunity costs of exponentially growing the tourism industry without the control over the balance within the community, Native culture and natural resources?

Maintaining balance sometimes means setting limits on what visitors can do, especially when it comes to sacred places. Daines quotes a bit of wisdom from his kumu hula (hula teacher): "Never share all. We have to keep back a little bit for ourselves, for our people. We don't want to give away everything." With the continued commodification of Hawai'i, its people, its beauty, its culture and its natural resources, the Native voice is more important than ever before to protect everything indigenous and sacred in Hawai'i.

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NaHHA was formed in 1997 by a group of island leaders who knew the Aloha Spirit was attracting visitors from around the world, and that sustaining that spirit required thoughtful stewardship of Hawai'i's people, culture, and natural resources.

That's where Sanders' organization comes in. The Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA) was formed in 1997 by a group of island leaders who knew the Aloha Spirit was attracting visitors from around the world, and that sustaining that spirit required thoughtful stewardship of Hawai'i's people, culture, and natural resources. Through training, advocacy, consulting, research, and collaboration, NaHHA ensures that the tourism industry has resources at its fingertips to guide the appropriate, authentic and consistent incorporation of Native Hawaiian culture and values in the visitor industry.

"Lamakū Ho'okipa (Cultural Resources) are both needed and necessary in the visitor industry to share the kuleana (responsibility) of strategically planning the future of tourism in a way that benefits all and ensures balance," says Sanders.

"The Native voice cannot be an afterthought, it should be there from the beginning and at the decision-making table to infuse our values into every aspect of the industry." Thanks to NaHHA's programs and the support of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Sanders estimates that between 2011 and 2021, the number of personnel serving as cultural resources in the visitor industry rose from just 12 to more than 100. Many of these professionals stay in regular contact with NaHHA, sharing evolving applications and innovative new experiences that incorporate Native Hawaiian culture and values into their work and roles within the industry.

Sanders and Daines emphasize staying true to your roots and that maintaining who you are requires ongoing reflection. Stakeholders, partners, communities and economics can pull you in a multitude of directions simultaneously. Additionally, there are a few large events throughout history that alter the course of the future forever. After the COVID-19 pandemic halted tourism throughout most of the world, Hawai'i started work on a regenerative strategy to rebuild their tourism industry, led by John De Fries, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority's first-ever Native Hawaiian chief executive.

Mālia Sanders, Executive Director of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA)

The HTA is now working to incorporate community-minded perspectives respectful of the destination's natural resources and promote the Native Hawaiian voice. What began as a cultural renaissance in the 1970's, is gaining traction today as the visitor industry shifts to re-think what differentiates Hawai'i from other tropical destinations.

"We are working diligently to infuse Hawaiian culture and values into every aspect of our hospitality," says Daines who recommends having benchmarks. His "cultural conscience" is his grandmother who worked as a tour guide in Waikīkī. When reviewing promotional materials, he thinks about how she would feel about the stories being told, and asks himself, "Would our ancestors be proud of us?"

This story was written through a collaboration of Native Hawaiian voices of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association and by Susan Myrland, a freelance writer based in Southern California who has covered art, heritage and cultural tourism.

Tips from the Pros

"Embrace the Native voice. Tell your stories, share your experiences, respectfully incorporate that in everything you're doing. That's what will differentiate you."
Kainoa Daines, Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau

"It is so important to have Native people in positions of influence who have the ability to correct culturally insensitive and inappropriate advertising. This is imperative to the future of regenerative tourism and a strategy that is focused on authenticity of culture, sustainability and works towards creating balance."
Mālia Sanders, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association

"Bilingual content is empowering. Use both the Native language and English, especially in written materials."
Zita Cup Choy, 'Iolani Palace Historian

Using Culture to Develop Communities

Diverging from modern urban planning and instead developing communities to honor the people that inhabit them in a way that is culturally meaningful and representative is the cornerstone of Ted Jojola's practice.

Theodore (Ted) Jojola, Ph.D. (Pueblo of Isleta) is an educator and practitioner in urban and regional planning and other related subjects, with a particular specialty in indigenous community planning at the University of New Mexico. There, Jojola founded the Indigenous Design and Planning Institute and co-founded the Indigenous Planning Division of the American Planning Association.

"The one thing that I think is really important to understand about indigenous people is that we're very much attuned to this concept of place and home," said Jojola. "Many of our origin stories are invested in the idea that our people emerged in a very deliberate way, attuned to protocols and attuned to sacred places."

Many, if not most, indigenous communities were disrupted in colonial times--stripped of their culture and forced into a predominantly white society. Indigenous planning is essentially attuned to how culture is represented and according to Jojola, it is not that indigenous communities never had the ability to plan their communities in their own image, but rather the disruption attuned them to processes and styles of development that are not inherently natural to them.

So, for Jojola, the first step in indigenous community planning is getting back to the fundamentals. Remembering how things were done before colonialism and then planning communities around tradition and culture in a way that is equally representative and meaningful.

Jojola follows a "seven-generations model" in his planning strategy. This is similar to the "ten-year" type plan traditional planners use, but it differs in that instead of thinking about planning in terms of time, he follows Native traditions in thinking about planning in terms of familial generations.

"When you talk about it in terms of generation, it raises a whole different level of conversation. What can you imagine that your children are going to inherit, and their great-grandchildren? When you stage it in terms of that conversation, it takes on a whole different tone and brings out different types of perspectives and thinking. You understand that if we as individuals start something now, we may not actually end up living to see it completed. When it is completed, [we want to make sure] it's beautiful, it's functional, it has meaning and it's loved by everybody."

Cultural Misunderstandings and the Things Visitors Do

When people leave the comfort of their own home, they occasionally also leave their good sense behind.

News headlines are filled with careless things visitors say and do, from applying spray paint to historic monuments to attempting to befriend wild animals to dumping trash where it just doesn't belong. And let's not even get started on what happens when people ignore clearly marked signage, such as "keep off the cliffs."

When it comes to visiting indigenous communities, a lack of cultural awareness can lead to even greater transgressions—like a visitor walking into a tribal resident's home without first asking for permission.

These follies—small and large—aren't just a problem for visitor destinations. Scroll chat boards on sites like TripAdvisor and Travelocity, and you'll find that even visitors are seeking advice on what they should do when they see stupidity in the making.

Most importantly for tribal communities is that even a well-meaning comment ("I like your costume") could be found offensive by a tribal elder or other culture bearer, which may lead to a re-opening of a conversation about whether tourism is really worth the effort.

How then, to mitigate the possibility of an unfortunate cultural misfire?

Start with querying your cultural heritage professionals, tourism professionals, frontline workers and anyone else who might have direct interaction with visitors. From them, create a list of the most common cringeworthy moments they've heard visitors say or seen visitors do. We've started a list below, but naturally it will vary from community to community.

Then use that list to create a two-prong solution. First, train your customer-facing personnel on the best responses to each of the scenarios on the list. Hear someone complimenting your "costume?" Perhaps you thank them for the compliment and explain the important tradition and history of the regalia and how it isn't a costume at all.

Second, create a list of Visitor Etiquette expectations that you make readily available everywhere, from your website and social media channels, to print flyers available around your visitor destinations, museums, casinos and anywhere else a visitor may tread.

Need inspiration?

Check out the Pueblo of Acoma's "*Guidelines and Etiquette*", which is available in English, Spanish, Italian, German and Japanese at acomaskycity.org/page/guidelines.

Now, start creating your own etiquette guidelines below.

Comment/Action	Your Response
"I like your costume"	
Walking into someone's residence without asking permission	
Taking photos without asking permission	
Clapping at inappropriate times during a dance or prayer	
Can you give me an Indian name?	
Tipping or not tipping performers, guides and other workers	
Saying "Thank you" (Okay, saying thank you isn't bad, but why not give visitors a few words in your Native language and see what happens if/when they try them out?)	

Honoring Hawaiian Royalty

The site of some of Hawai'i's happiest celebrations and somber periods of history, 'Iolani Palace was the official seat of the Hawaiian kingdom during the time of Hawaiian monarchs King Kalākaua and his sister and successor, Queen Lili'uokalani. The 'Iolani Palace represents a time of Hawaiian global strength and self-determination, along with painful memories of the coup d'état that removed Queen Lili'uokalani from power. She remained under house arrest for nearly eight months. The Hawaiian Kingdom lost its independence as a nation and Hawai'i became a U.S. territory, and later a state.

In the years following the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the 'Iolani Palace was used as government office space and allowed to deteriorate. In the 1970s, the nonprofit Friends of 'Iolani Palace began to restore the building, undertaking repairs and tracking down treasured artifacts that had been sold or lost. The 'Iolani Palace opened to the public in 1978 and became one of the region's most popular attractions.

The COVID-19 shutdown had a serious impact. Building an endowment had never risen to top priority given decades of steady income from ticket sales. Suddenly, staff had to be laid off, programs cut and events postponed. The 'Iolani Palace used the time to reconnect with locals, many of whom had not visited since elementary school field trips.

Paula Akana, Executive Director says they retooled admission prices and tour packages, created new programs focused on the Hawaiian language and worked with other museums to attract locals with the message, "This is your time to rediscover these special gems in Hawai'i." The community responded, and tours filled up.

The shutdown also meant the 'Iolani Palace had to lean on volunteers more than ever before. Zita Cup Choy, 'Iolani Palace Historian, oversees the docent program with an average of 35 volunteers each week. She relies heavily on referrals from current volunteers to ensure the docent program continues to educate the public so that the 'Iolani Palace can continue to thrive.

She says the challenge to maintaining authenticity is keeping materials and docent scripts accurate, respectful and balanced, along with finding diplomatic ways to correct guests who offer fallacious statements. "Cultural sites must be careful not to fall into the trap of telling inaccurate or disrespectful stories just because that's what guests want to hear," she adds. "Cultural tourism must reflect the culture of the site and not what guests think or expect it to be."

Lili'u: Tribute to a Queen // PA'I Foundation

Showcasing Cultural Heritage at Your Businesses

In a survey conducted by Mandala Research, more than half (52%) of leisure travelers surveyed indicated they would "spend more on cultural and/or heritage activities while on a trip." Additionally, 49% of respondents indicated they would pay more for lodging that reflects "the cultural and/or heritage destination they are visiting."

This data is backed up by another, more recent study conducted by University of Hawai'i researchers in September 2021. The study found that respondents were willing to pay more for sustainable and authentic cultural experiences in Hawai'i. More than 75% of respondents said they would pay more to enjoy "authentic Hawaiian cultural experiences,"

Hotels that embed local or cultural experiences into their programming, or at the very least point guests to these types of activities are uniquely poised to capitalize on the growing demand among travelers who are looking to ditch the "cookie cutter" travel experience. Tribes interested in expanding their cultural offerings can find inspiration from the below properties:

Salish Lodge, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe

In a historic inter-tribal agreement, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe purchased the luxury Salish Lodge from neighboring Muckleshoot Tribe in 2019. The lodge, known as the filming location for the iconic television series "Twin Peaks," is located alongside the scenic Snoqualmie Falls which is one of the most culturally significant sites to the Snoqualmie people.

Plenty of public hiking and outdoor activities are available to the public on these sacred lands, but as the region continues to grow in popularity, the Tribe has seen "severe ecological damage due to outdoor recreation."

In July 2021, the Tribe unveiled its Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement, including an invitation for

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individuals to sign a pledge on Change.org to "Protect, Respect and Restore Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands." A one-page introduction to the movement is available in six languages and a kid's activity sheet can also be downloaded. snoqualmietribe.us/snoqualmie-tribe-ancestral-lands-movement

Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Cultural Tourism, Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Rather than allowing partner organizations to speak on its behalf, the award-winning Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort controls its own messaging through its internal Cultural Tourism department. Guests can sign up for scheduled programs that explore the cultural heritage of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and neighboring Nez Perce Tribe. Previous programs have included painting classes with local artisans, moccasin making using Pendleton materials and an evening of tribal culture with traditional foods, storytelling, dance and drums. The cultural tourism department also creates customized cultural programs for groups, which include additional resort and casino incentives such as complimentary airport transportation and a charter boat cruise on Coeur d'Alene Lake with a minimum four-night stay.

Buffalo Thunder, Pueblo of Pojoaque

The iconic art of Po'suwae'geh Owingeh (water gathering place), also known as the Pueblo of Pojoaque, is front and center at the Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder, where the massive one-ton Buffalo Dancer statue welcomes guests. The statue is so iconic it inspired Buffalo Dancer II, the first statue to represent Native Americans on the National Mall in Washington D.C. Both were sculpted by former Pueblo of Pojoaque Governor George Rivera, who also founded the nearby Poeh Cultural Center. Today the Poeh Cultural Center curates the resort's entire art collection, which includes hundreds of pieces of art, sculpture, pottery, paintings, mosaics, weavings, architecture, landscape and design elements. Every hotel room includes furnishings that are hand designed by local Native American artists. Day visitors can also take a self-guided tour of the resort's public art.

Buffalo Dancer. Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder

Talking Stick Resort, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community

The four diamond Talking Stick Resort, owned and operated by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, is an iconic Scottsdale getaway. The luxury high-rise casino is so popular with spring break and spring training travelers, it might be easy to miss the resort's cultural elements at first glance. But Talking Stick Resort is one part of the 12-stop, self-guided Salt River Art Trail. Throughout the resort are priceless pieces of Native American art, with much of it concentrated in the on-site Cultural Center, located in the resort lobby. The resort collection is recognized as the largest Native American art collection outside of a museum. The Salt River Art Trail also includes art exploration at 11 other sites, including the Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, Roadhouse Cinemas and other area hotels.

Chapter 4

Historic Preservation

Sharing the Difficult Legacy of American Indian Boarding Schools

A long-term vision for a cultural center on the site of an Indian Boarding School has allowed the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum to share the real history of boarding schools with the general public.

Idea Exchange

Preservation Resources
New Uses for Historic Buildings
Reframing the Message

Sharing the Difficult Legacy of American Indian Boarding Schools

A long-term vision for a cultural center on the site of an Indian Boarding School has allowed the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum to share the real history of boarding schools with the public.

The history of Native American boarding schools is complex, and commemorating the diverse experiences of former students a difficult task. The Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum (SISCCM) in Carson City, Nevada, addresses these challenges by sharing the history of the Stewart Indian School through the voices of its alumni and telling the truth about their experiences during the 90 years the school was open.

Native American Boarding School History

Beginning in 1879, the U.S. government established a network of off-reservation boarding schools across the country to assimilate and "civilize" Native American children. These children were stolen from their families, baptized as Christians, prohibited from speaking their languages, and compelled to alter their physical appearances. Children were targeted for this program as a means of instilling white social norms at a young age, and with the hope they would attempt to restructure their communities according to white standards after their graduation. Boarding schools were based on white supremacy and explicitly characterized Indigenous people as inferior to white Americans.

The Stewart Indian School was part of this system, and opened on December 17, 1890. Initially, the student body included children from the Washoe, Western Shoshone, and Northern Paiute nations, though eventually students from across the West attended the school. Stewart functioned as a military academy during its first four decades; children were forced to march, participate in drills, and were subjected to violent punishments. Students' school days were split between academic lessons and vocational training, and they were also expected to help clean and manage school facilities.

Periodic reforms allowed for greater cultural expression at boarding schools beginning in the 1930s. In the late 1960s and 1970s, these schools were no longer as regimented as they once were, and some students from this era recall largely positive experiences. By the time the Stewart Indian School closed in 1980, it differed dramatically from its early years.

Following the Stewart Indian School's closure, the state of Nevada purchased the campus from the federal government. Local tribal citizens opened a small museum adjacent to the school in 1982, and hoped to eventually expand onto the Stewart campus, where two buildings were reserved to commemorate the school's history. However, the museum changed hands repeatedly during the 1980s and 1990s and lacked funding. In the late 1990s, a series of legal disputes over ownership of the museum emerged, leading to its closure in 2001.

Commemorating the Stewart Indian School

In 2002, the Nevada Indian Commission (NIC), a state agency mandated with improving relations between tribal nations in Nevada and state and local authorities, moved its headquarters from Reno to the Stewart campus. The NIC hoped to eventually open a new museum dedicated to the school, and in the meantime devised other ways to share its history with the public. In September 2008, the organization unveiled the Stewart Indian School Trail, a self-guided audio tour that allows visitors to walk around the school grounds and learn about the daily experiences of those who attended or worked at Stewart. This tour was created by former NIC Executive Director Sherry L. Rupert, who personally recorded and edited the interviews with former students and staff. The trail takes visitors to 20 locations around the Stewart campus, and allows them to learn about the school primarily through the voices of former students. The public response to the trail was, according to Rupert, "amazing." The tour "introduced people to the campus and the history of the school," she recalls, and was an opportunity for visitors to learn the "real history" of boarding schools from Stewart alumni.

Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/ Washoe), AIANTA CEO and former NIC Executive Director

As the Stewart Trail generated increasing interest, Rupert began building support for a new museum on the school grounds. She recalls that the trail was an important step to "get people talking" about Stewart that increased the number of visitors to the campus. After launching the trail, Rupert gave numerous presentations about Stewart's history, and took these opportunities to share her vision for a permanent, state-funded museum on the campus. This outreach was crucial in generating broader support, and allowed Rupert to determine who was most interested in assisting her efforts.

Among Rupert's chief allies who supported a permanent museum was former Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval. Rupert met with Sandoval prior to his 2011 inauguration and found him to be connected to the Stewart Indian School. Sandoval, who played basketball at the Stewart Indian School in his youth, was enthusiastic about Rupert's plans, and supported state funding for a permanent facility. The growing interest in boarding school history also worked to the NIC's advantage. The Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, installed a temporary exhibit on the history of these schools in 2000. However, because of the unprecedented "positive response," notes Director of Research Dr. Ann Marshall, the exhibit became a permanent part of the museum.

After years of discussion, the 2015 Nevada state budget included long-term funding for the SISCCM. In 2017, after a campus visit from Sandoval, $4.5 million dollars was allocated to renovate two campus buildings: the school's administrative building, which became the museum and cultural center, and the former campus post office, its welcome center. With this funding, plans to create the SISCCM became a reality.

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Importantly, while funds for the SISCCM were provided by the state of Nevada, the vision for the museum and the decisions regarding its exhibits and content were left entirely to the NIC, which consulted regularly with Stewart alumni and tribal governments. Rupert emphasizes the importance of building trust in this regard, and suggests that her personal connections with the school – she has multiple relatives who attended Stewart – contributed to her credibility. To further solidify these relationships, she also provided quarterly updates to tribal governments about the project, and underscored that the SISCCM would belong to Stewart alumni and tell their stories about the school.

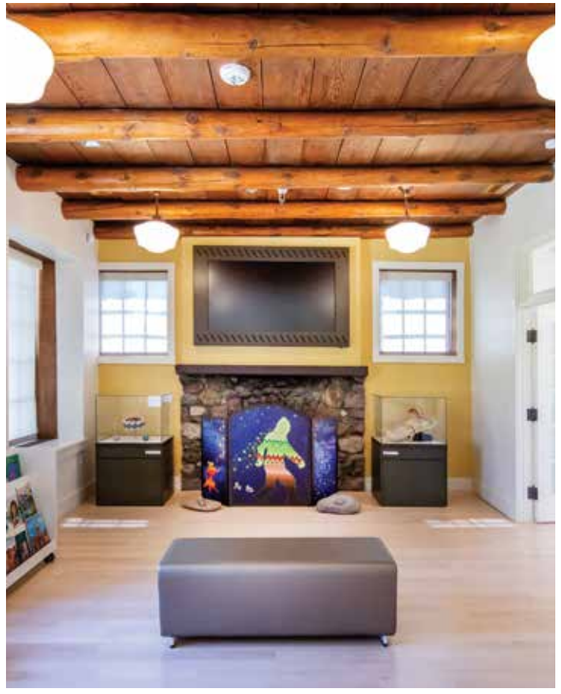
During the planning stages, alumni were repeatedly asked for input and invited to share their views as the SISCCM evolved. Rupert emphasizes that the "foundational value" of establishing the SISCCM was making sure those personally connected with the school knew the "whole story" would be told and their need for healing addressed. Boarding school survivors needed to know that the SISCCM would tell the truth, recalls Rupert, and this assurance is what "made it worth it for people to tell their stories." A 2020 update to the Heard exhibit takes a similar approach, and is, according to Marshall, driven by "storytelling through Native voices."

The Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum opened to the public on January 13, 2020. Alumni and their families have visited in large numbers, and the museum has attracted local and national attention for its unflinching examination of boarding school history and attention to the experiences of Stewart Indian School students. Stewart alumni, Nevada's tribal governments, and the Nevada state government are united in their support for the SISCCM and its approach toward a complicated chapter in Native American history.

By Samantha Williams

Building Support

- Build connections with state tourism offices. State and local visitors' bureaus may help with photocopies, graphic design for fliers, and marketing. Rupert notes, "If your project is compelling, it will be an easy sell."
- Consider varied types of funding for your project, including those from historic preservation agencies or arts organizations.
- Set aside enough time to plan and fund your project. The amount of time it may take depends on the project scope, amount of funding required, and whether personal and political connections are already in place.
- Solicit responses about your project plans. Marshall relayed that many ideas for the Heard's 2020 exhibit update came from a kiosk through which patrons left feedback.



Credit: Pueblo of Taos // Pixabay

Preservation Resources

North America is home to more than 4,500 historical societies, 7,000 history and house museums and more than 1,000 downtown and main street groups, all of which can provide invaluable intel when it comes to preserving and restoring historic buildings.

If you're looking to establish official recognition for your historic property, the National Park Service-managed National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) offers a comprehensive How-to Guide on Listing a Property.

- First, determine if your building, structure, or site is more than forty-five years old and eligible to be listed in, or already listed in, national, state or local preservation registers.
- Also, according to the NRHP, check in with your State Historic Preservation Office.
- The National Park Service offers additional resources through its Tribal Preservation Program.
- Then, find funding support and grant programs such as National Trust Preservation Funds, National Endowment of Arts (NEA) funding and Tribal Historic Preservation Grants.
- These grant and funding programs are highly competitive, so if you don't have a grant writer on staff you may need to hire a professional grant writer or at least enroll a staff member in a grant writing workshop/class.

Additional Resources

- Department of the Interior, Historic Preservation Resources
  doi.gov/pam/programs/historic-preservation
- State Historic Preservation Offices (NPS)
  nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/state-historic-preservation-offices.htm
- Publications of the National Register of Historic Places
  nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/publications.htm
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, Grant Programs
  savingplaces.org/grants
- Tribal Historic Preservation Grants (NPS)
  nps.gov/thpo/grants/index.html
- PreservationDirectory.com
  (a comprehensive non-government resource)
  preservationdirectory.com

New Uses for Historic Buildings

Historic buildings provide a view of the past and with careful planning can serve well into the future. Even despite neglect, many abandoned historic buildings can stand the test of time. With vision and creative reuse planning, they can usher in many more years as valuable resources to tribal communities.

Restoration—the process of restoring a building to its original state—is not the only path to preservation. Adaptive reuse, which changes the intent of a structure to meet a new need, can incorporate the restoration of the building's façade or parts of the interior to maintain its historical look.

Bypassing the wasteful process of demolition and reconstruction can make adaptive reuse an attractive option. Environmental benefits, combined with energy savings and the social advantage of repurposing a place with valued heritage, make adaptive reuse an important step in sustainable development.

In addition to creating a new space for fresh endeavors, adaptive reuse often results in new gathering places for the community. A sense of pride grows around them in their new form as they become symbols of accomplishment. Most often, they share a Tribe's culture to a wider audience through story and art.

The Desert View Watchtower. Photo credit Pixaby

Recent Examples of Adaptive Reuse

- A Native American boarding school becomes the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum. www.stewartindianschool.com
- A former salmon cannery at Icy Strait Point evolves into a major Alaskan cruise ship and adventure hub. www.icystraitpoint.com
- An 1800's Masonic Hall is converted to the Great Nemaha River Trading Post.
- A two-story brick linen supply building (and the former Portland Arts Center) becomes home to the Center for Native Arts and Cultures.
- The Desert View Watchtower becomes the cultural gateway from Grand Canyon National Park to the Navajo and Hopi reservations.

Repurposing Historic Buildings, Boarding Schools and Other Properties

- [ ] Identify the structure for reuse, and most importantly, the plans for how it will be used.
- [ ] Form an integrated sustainability team that includes a preservation professional to ensure that the character and integrity of the historic building is maintained during any upgrades.
- [ ] Identify ways to reduce energy use, such as installing fixtures and appliances that conserve resources, including energy-efficient lighting or lamps, low-flow plumbing fixtures, and sensors and timers that control water flow, lighting and temperature.

More Information

Check out the Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Secretary of the Interior) www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitationsustainability-guidelines.pdf

Red Cloud Indian School

Reframing the Message

In this chapter's feature story, we see that after years of partially implemented plans to create a cultural center at the Stewart Indian School, the project took its first true steps towards reality when then Nevada Indian Commission Executive Director Sherry Rupert created an audio walking tour that gave visitors and former students a real vision of what a boarding school experience as a visitor attraction might look like. Instead of focusing wholly on the end result, Rupert reframed the project by creating an attainable goal that could solidify the idea of the project in the minds of stakeholders.

For any stalled project, sometimes the best idea is to take a step back and reframe the message.

What does it mean to "reframe?" Framing is how a proposed project has been initially introduced and perceived, and reframing is the process of considering a project from a new position. It relies on a fresh message and view.

Reframing happens when you create a new "frame" for discussion. An example of a hurdle to overcome might be the position that "My tribe doesn't understand why they should invest in tourism." They might question the benefit and the cost. Or if tourism will jeopardize their cultural sites and important places. Or they might not just understand how to get started.

In this case, examples go a long way to support your position. Show how similar projects have succeeded, and how tribal tourism creates a strong return on investment. The monies generated can actually help protect sensitive lands and sites, and the educational value will also aid in protection. Most importantly, share your vision and make sure that others understand the possibilities.

The way a project is posed, or reframed, should align as closely to the attitudes and beliefs of your audience. Remember, there are often emotional factors to most projects that involve the community, so you need to earn early "buy-in." The group must feel as though they have invested in the plan, and therefore want it to succeed.

Knowing and listening to a group's concerns is critical. Be specific, provide examples and facts, and get everyone involved or in agreement—define how they can be part of the solution.

Understanding a Group's Concerns

- [ ] Understand and explain the entire scope of the project
- [ ] Establish "common ground" for the proposal
- [ ] Determine who will be actively involved and who will champion the project
- [ ] Detail exactly what will be needed and earn trust (no surprises)
- [ ] Provide "real time" updates (no late news)

Chapter 5

Identifying Cultural Advisors

From Planning to Visitor Guide

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa recruited community leaders and other culture bearers to develop its visitor guide.

Idea Exchange

Cherokee National Treasures
Forming a Tourism Committee
Ideas for Sharing Culture
Incorporating Culture
Building a Speaker's Bureau

From Planning to Visitor Guide

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa recruited community leaders culture bearers a to develop its visitor guide.

Located at the northern tip of Wisconsin, with Lake Superior as its backyard, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa offers visitors picturesque scenery and a variety of cultural and natural attractions.

Whether visitors wish to explore the trails along the Tribe's Frog Bay Tribal National Park or enjoy kayaking alongside the beautiful Apostle islands, Red Cliff encourages people to visit year-round.

Anishinaabeg

Situated along the shores of the legendary waters of Gitchi Gami (Lake Superior), the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation is located on what's now known as the Bayfield Peninsula and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. These lands and waters are renowned for their pristine environment, sparkling waters, wilderness areas, and unique scenic beauty.

The gi-chi-b-waa-tig (People of the Big Water) remain here today, at the hub of an historical, spiritual and cultural crossroads which extends back more than 4,000 years.

The Anishinaabeg (Original People) originated from the northeastern United States. A prophet led them to move west, settling on Madeline Island. The island has long been considered the spiritual center of the Anishinaabeg (also referred to as Chippewa). As Europeans settled the area and treaties were signed,

continued on next page

Chief Buffalo negotiated a new home for the Red Cliff Band, a small area of reservation along the lake's southern shore.

Forming a Tourism Team

With its scenic location and distinctive cultural heritage programs, Red Cliff has plenty of attractions to lure visitors; however, the Tribe lacked a unified way of promoting them, said Nathan Gordon, Vice Chairman of the Red Cliff Tribal Council.

Joining Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW) as a board member in 2016, Gordon came away with several ideas on ways to improve tribal tourism.

"They talked about a lot of things, having tools, like a brochure," Gordon said. "I kept thinking that we didn't really have anything. We had bits and pieces."

Armed with ideas, Gordon sought to create a tourism team at Red Cliff, consisting of community members and tribal employees. Seeking to include all segments of the Tribe, Gordon recruited elders, representatives from the Legendary Waters Resort and Casino, planners and grant writers, historical preservation representatives, Treaty Natural Resources Division employees, and members of the Business Development Corporation.

Gordon realized that tourism affects every tribal department, from health and safety to education, so he wanted a diverse group inputting ideas on how to develop tourism. Residents recognized the importance of tourism and accepted the invitation to become part of the tourism committee, Gordon said.

"It's a diverse group, everybody has the passion to push anything tourism-related, whether it's an initiative, to tell a story, promoting small businesses in our area," Gordon said. "We live off the beaten path, and it's a destination people want to visit but may need more information to plan their trip."

Nathan Gordon, Tribal Vice Chair

Among the first initiatives for the Tribe was to develop a visitor guide.

In 2014, tribal leaders met with other Native nations to discuss collectively what they were doing to promote attractions. The group determined creating a visitor's guide to share with others was ideal. Red Cliff executed its first travel guide, but it soon became outdated as the attractions grew, Gordon said.

After joining NATOW's Board, Red Cliff decided it was time to update to a comprehensive visitor's guide. The tourism team met weekly for more than three months--creating the new guide with the help of a contracted graphic design company. The guide was published in 2017 and includes advertisements from area businesses and suggestions of year-round activities.

"This guide will help all visitors to understand the structure, services, heritage, culture and beauty of Red Cliff and we hope it helps you experience a full and meaningful visit!"

"It's a tool that we use to promote the area," said Gordon. "I, and others, can talk about the area, but then you can hand them something so they can do a little more research about what we're talking about. There are pictures with attractions, so they can see for themselves.

"I used to manage the campgrounds and the marina, and people used to ask how close they could get to the water. I would say, "How close do you want to be to the water? We're right on the water. Do you want to wake up with your feet in the water? I can get you that close.'"

The visitor guide, which Red Cliff plans to update on a regular basis, embraces the use of Chippewa traditional language and helps continue the goal of teaching people the Tribe's language and way of life. It is divided into sections that reflect the four seasons and includes attractions to draw visitors year-round.

"Following the annual Apple Festival in the fall, Bayfield tends to shut down for the year, but we want people to visit us year-round," Gordon said.

Ziigwan (Spring) includes attractions and events such as maple syrup making, smelting, the annual Chequamegon Bay Birding and Nature Festival and farmers markets, as well as hiking, kayaking and Northern Lights viewing.

"The Treaty Natural Resources Division does public events," Gordon said. "They collect the maple sap and process it into syrup at their farm, showing the process of how it's made."

Niibin (Summer) events include the annual Red Cliff Pow Wow, boat tours to the Apostle Islands, geocaching, kayaking, fishing, camping, berry and fruit picking, hiking and swimming, biking, as well as other activities such as the birch bark harvest, garden tours and scenic motorcycle rides.

Dagwaagin (Fall) activities involve apple picking, corn mazes, the Bayfield County Fair, wild rice harvesting and Northern Lights viewing. The Tribe hosts the annual Red Cliff Cultural Days on the third weekend of September.

Biboon (Winter) is a great time to visit Red Cliff, Gordon said. The area is perfect for snowshoeing, cross country skiing, dog sledding, ice fishing, snowboarding and snowmobiling. Outdoor enthusiasts can also explore ice caves and take the ice road or wind sled to Madeline Island.

Frog Bay Tribal National Park

Frog Bay Tribal National Park and Conservation Management Area covers 300 acres on the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation in northern Wisconsin. The only tribally-owned national park in the United States, the original 80 acres were sold to the tribe in 2011 with the understanding they would remain intact for eternity.

"A visit to the park is heartfelt," said Nathan Gordon. "You see trees that have been there for hundreds of years, and will continue to be there. It's breathtaking to walk out there and see what our ancestors saw so many years ago. You have to take it in yourself. It's beautiful. It's rejuvenating."

Frog Bay is home to a rare boreal forest, along with coastal wetlands and a sand beach. The park has about two miles of wooded trails, as well as nearly 4,000 feet of undeveloped shoreline and views of five of the Apostle Islands. In 2017, the Red Cliff tribal council created a Conservation Management Area to protect the headwaters and surrounding area, restricting access to only tribal members. Visitors to Frog Bay Tribal National Park have an opportunity to view wildlife, such as eagles, beavers, deer, coyotes and bears.

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Popular Red Cliff Visitor Attractions

Red Cliff's top attraction is Frog Bay Tribal National Park, the first tribal national park in the United States. Created in 2012, the park's land was formerly owned by a non-Indian couple. They sold 80 acres of land to the Tribe, donating half of the land value.

The park's boreal forest is rare in the contiguous United States and the forest is home to old-growth trees, as well as nearly 4,000 feet of shoreline along Lake Superior with views of five of the Apostle Islands. It has about two miles of trails that wind through the forest and along the lakeshore.

The annual Red Cliff Chippewa Pow Wow welcomes up to 2,000 visitors each year. Hosted the first weekend in July, the celebration attracts dancers from around the Midwest and Canada, as well as drum groups and vendors.

Red Cliff Cultural Days remains a top event each September, attracting up to 300 people. Cultural Days includes a mini Pow Wow, canoe races, demonstrations, traditional music, a three-on-three basketball tournament and a carnival.

With natural attractions, major events and seasonal activities, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa finds its tourism industry enhanced by working with area communities, such as Bayfield, in promoting their attractions, as well.

By Tim Trudell

Cherokee National Treasures

Each year, Cherokee Nation honors tribal citizens who are keeping its art, language and culture alive.

The Cherokee National Treasure distinction was established in 1988 to recognize individuals who actively work to preserve and revive Cherokee traditional cultural practices that are in danger of being lost from generation to generation.

Nominations are accepted every spring in nearly 30 categories, ranging from traditional foods and bow making to beadwork, basketry, graphic arts and more. Recipients are recognized annually during the Cherokee National Holiday in the capital city of Tahlequah, Oklahoma over Labor Day weekend.

As some of the greatest stewards of Cherokee culture, Cherokee National Treasures are often selected to work on special projects for the Tribe.

In 2019, Cherokee Nation opened the largest tribal outpatient health center in the U.S. and allocated a percentage of the construction budget to support art enhancements throughout the property. The new addition features more than 600 pieces of Cherokee art, including work by 64 Cherokee National Treasures.

To date, the Tribe has awarded 107 Cherokee Nation citizens the honor of Cherokee National Treasure.

The Cherokee National Treasures program offers educational and mentorship opportunities to help foster the preservation and promotion of Cherokee art, language and culture. The program is supported by Cherokee Nation Cultural Tourism and led by an internal group of National Treasures.

By Whitney Dittman, Cherokee Nation

Forming a Tourism Committee

When it comes to tourism planning, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa lets the community do the talking.

The Tribe's tourism team, which is not an official tribal department but rather a volunteer group of tribal members, is led by Tribal Vice Chairman Nathan Gordon. The committee brings together representatives from various tribal departments and programs, including Legendary Waters Resort & Casino, Frog Bay Tribal National Park, Red Cliff Fish Company, Tribal Marketing and Communications, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Mino Bimaadiziiwin Citigaanin Tribal Farm, the Economic Development and Recovery Coordinator, the Red Cliff Business Board and more. Outside organizations, such as the Native American Tourism Organization of Wisconsin (NATOW), are also invited to attend.

Gordon realized that tourism affects every tribal department, so he wanted to bring together a diverse group of people to input ideas on how to carefully and sustainably develop tourism. The committee, which meets monthly, discusses ongoing and future tourism offerings.

Committees are commonly used across the hospitality industry, relying upon experienced volunteers to help govern and advise on a variety of topics. Visit California, which oversees one of the largest state tourism budgets in the country, seeks input through 14 public committees, ranging from the California Welcome Center Committee to the Snow Committee to the Rural Committee.

While committees can be used to advise upon marketing and outreach efforts, they are also a highly valuable tool when it comes to setting policies around cultural perpetuation. The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is governed by two committees, the Museum Advisory Committee (MAC), which reviews the content and verbiage of public displays, and the NAGPRA Committee, which handles the acquisition of new items for the permanent collection as they pertain to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

While museum staffers also offer curatorial expertise, the advisory committees ensure that the perspectives of multiple Seminole citizens and multiple clans are represented throughout the facility's displays.

As in the case of Red Cliff, tribes can layer or broaden their approach to tourism by inviting outside or neighboring organizations to participate on their hospitality committees. inviting outside partners to join select committees, especially those in the area of marketing, can help extend the tribe's tourism marketing message.

Supreme Court Museum, Cherokee Nation.

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Whether a tribe is just starting out or an experienced industry partner, below is a list of possible committees or agenda items to aid in tourism planning.

Tourism Content & Policy

- Protecting content, culture and traditional knowledge
- Governing sacred spaces
- Cultural center and museum content and programming
- Historic interpretation/preservation
- Crisis planning

Marketing & Outreach

- Domestic marketing
- International marketing
- Group travel and motor coach marketing
- Digital marketing and social media policy
- Website development
- Media relations outreach

Small Business Development

- Artisan promotion
- Restaurant/culinary development
- Tour guide, tour program training and creation
- Cultural and sporting activities

Events & Planning

- Annual conferences
- Annual festivals and events
- Attracting groups, conferences and meetings
- Committee governance, minutes & planning
- Hotel planning and needs

Finances & Budget

- Finance committee
- Fundraising and grants planning

Human Resources & Personnel

- Personnel and volunteer hiring policies
- Cultural training and awareness
- Nominating committee

Partner Outreach

- National, regional, state and local parks
- Scenic byways
- Area hotels, restaurants, universities, libraries
- State tourism organization, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce
- Local and regional tourism committees and alliances
- Public programs
- Legislative outreach

Ideas for Sharing Culture

Sharing culture does not always require a formalized tourism program or an extensive marketing campaign. Below are ideas that may require just one or two experts who are willing to welcome visitors and (occasionally) overlook their lapses in knowledge.

Public Powwows or Other Events

Public Native events, especially those incorporating sacred elements, are a tremendous way to share culture. But visitor discomfort can lead to cultural misunderstandings, or may encourage the visitor to stay away altogether. Why not emulate the feel of "being part of the family" by providing a Powwow Ambassador (for a fee) to guide visitors through the experience? Not only does this create employment opportunities for local community members who can help authentically share Native culture, but it also provides a comfort level for visitors who are worried about making a cultural misstep. Extend the experience by providing meal tickets to a local restaurant or food truck. A gift certificate to the local fair leads to one-of-a-kind souvenirs for visitors, while generating additional revenue for area artisans.

Local Meals or Cooking Classes

Near the Lake Superior shoreline in Michigan, Jerry Jondreau of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Katy Bresette of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe are reinvigorating traditional Ojibwe foods on their maple and sugar farm, Dynamite Hill Farm. They love it, they say, when people want to learn what they are doing and that ends up in everyone taking a meal together.

School Programs

While seasoned culture bearers are an amazing resource, some visitors can be intimidated by meeting elders. Presenting cultural heritage from a youthful point of view is an excellent alternative. Local school groups can share dance performances, language lessons or arts and crafts demonstrations. Or take it a step farther and emulate the high school students at the Fort Washakie School in Wyoming, who helped build an audio tour of the Wind River Reservation.

Evening Gatherings

Collecting a group of tribal members who sing, dance or participate in other cultural activities for an informal gathering at an area hotel or restaurant can provide a deeply powerful experience for visitors, especially when they are encouraged to participate in or ask questions about the activities. Top off the activity with a campfire gathering or a reading (in a Native language) of a local story or poem.

Cultural Meet Up

Board game meetups have dramatically grown in popularity over the past decade, as have book clubs and other social programs connecting strangers in virtual and real life arenas. Use a forum like MeetUp.com (or even your own tribal website) to encourage the public to attend open events that

Chief Joseph Ride, Nez Perce Tourism

share culture. A demonstration of a local sporting activity, a gardening technique or a reading by an area author can draw visitors from near and far. Provide attendees with a list of more things to do, local shops to visit and places to eat while they're in the area to extend economic opportunities for the entire community.

Virtual Experiences

Airbnb and similar platforms have created new revenue streams for local experts. While many of these programs, which usually incorporate some cultural elements, can unfold in real time, they can be limited to virtual "experiences" as well.

Multilingual Materials

A renewed emphasis on preserving Native languages has led to an increased demand for marketing materials in multiple languages. From road signs to museum displays to websites to coloring books, these bilingual materials not only provide employment for local language masters, they also drive a need for the next generation to learn the language.

Three Sisters, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin.

Incorporating Culture

When it comes to blending culture and tourism programming, provide visitors with multiple ways to experience your culture. Below are a few ideas to get you started.

Human Resources & Training

- Provide culturally related (traditional or contemporary) work apparel for front line staff that reflects your community
- Offer training for front line staff and heritage interpreters on what sites and activities the public can view and which are deemed appropriate for tourism purposes
- Encourage/incentivize front line staff and heritage interpreters to actively promote local sites and activities when talking with visitors
- Encourage front line staff to obtain additional training and/or certification in tourism and hospitality
- Provide training and ongoing information for outside guides, tour operators, media or local partners who may interpret your culture through blogs, websites, social media or other avenues
- Ensure visitor information is up-to-date, publicly available and easily accessible to ensure non-Native partners have current knowledge of the culture they are sharing

Cultural Content

- Incorporate tribal elements into the guest experience (artwork, design, architecture, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for visitors to interact face-to-face with cultural representatives (i.e. artisans, craftspeople, storytellers, hosts, dancers) of your tribe
- Host workshops, lectures, seminars and webinars by cultural experts
- Create youth programming so the next generation can share their cultural knowledge with visitors
- Offer traditional foods and/or food products
- Create and promote in-person cultural events, festivals, sporting activities, traditional games and other interactive activities that showcase culture
- Incorporate bilingual signage throughout your community
- Showcase cultural spaces to share your culture with visitors
- Feature written information regarding your culture, history and community (via presentations, website content and/or brochures)
- Recognize the tribal members (i.e. tribal elders, tribal educators and/or tribal leaders) who were involved in developing cultural protocols

Her Moccasins Talk mobile walking tour along the Niagara River in Artpark, New York, features a variety of performers and culture bearers; Kakekalanicks arts and consultancy company.

Building a Speaker's Bureau

"We are still here," is a frequent sentiment expressed by Native American communities reminding visitors that Native culture is not something relegated only to a bygone era.

Indeed Native cultures are a vibrant mix of performance, art, gatherings, ancestral knowledge, sacred and scenic lands and so much more. Why, though, are so many non-Natives doing the speaking on behalf of tribes and Native peoples?

In a 2020 Smithsonian blog article, *How Native Americans Bring Depth of Understanding to the Nation's National Parks*, Otis Halfmoon, who was raised on the Nez Perce homeland, reminisces how he used to go to "the park" to listen to the "Anglo interpreters talk about [his] people."

"Through the years," he says, "it has been Anglo ethnographers, anthropologists, etcetera, telling our stories. I realized that's what I was doing all along: telling our side of the stories."

Finding authentic speakers, even for culturally conscious non-Natives, can be a challenge. Increasingly, tribes and Native organizations are introducing Speaker Bureaus or similar platforms that provide users with a comfort level that speakers will be experts in their field.

Indian Country Today, a daily digital news platform, highlights its editorial team through a Speakers Bureau that provides expertise on such topics as indigenous journalism and media, inclusion and diversity, national politics, marketing, leadership and more.

A more culturally focused speakers platform has been created by the Brooklyn-based Redhawk Arts Council. Their site showcases dozens of dancers, speakers, performers and educators, who offer guidance on topics ranging from hoop dancing, silversmithing, film making, cultural preservation, journalism and so much more.

Akwesasne has taken the promotion of artisans one step further. Although the Akwesasne travel site is not a speaker's bureau in the traditional sense, the site does identify top culture bearers through its tour programs. Additionally, featured tours are offered only by tribal citizens who have successfully completed the Tribe's tourism training program.

Building a formal culture-sharing program can help perpetuate culture through speaking engagements and media programming, but the program can also lead to new economic opportunities as visitors look to experience these one-of-a-kind cultural activities first hand.

Chapter 6
Interpretation

Cultural Interpretation: Prioritizing Tribal Citizens

When building its cultural tourism programming, from its tribal RV park to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, the Seminole Tribe of Florida first turns to its citizens.

Idea Exchange

The Importance of Preserving Language
Inter-tribal Collaborations
Historic Villages

Cultural Interpretation: Prioritizing Tribal Members

When building its cultural tourism programming, from its tribal RV park to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, the Seminole Tribe of Florida first turns to its members.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is as deeply rooted in their homeland as the Everglades itself. Like the region's famous sawgrass marshes, Seminoles and their ancestors have thrived in the peninsula's tropical climate for thousands of years.

These days, as balmy weather draws visitors from around the world, the Seminole people invite travelers to learn more about their heritage through several tribally owned operations under Florida Seminole Tourism. Big Cypress RV Resort provides camping sites, cabins, an outdoor pool and related amenities, Billie Swamp Safari offers animal exhibits and guided wetlands tours on airboats and swamp buggies, while the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum presents Seminole history, culture and perspectives on contemporary issues.

The question of interpretation is critical throughout. How do Seminole communities tell their stories through these attractions?

Dante Blais-Billie, Seminole citizen and assistant director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, explains that visitor-facing institutions must, first and foremost, prioritize the needs of the Seminole people.

"It's really about preserving the agency of our Tribe," she said. "When we're looking at decolonizing what cultural tourism is, it's about respecting the boundaries of what the tribal members want to show."

When we're looking at decolonizing what cultural tourism is, it's about respecting the boundaries of what the tribal members want to show.

This means that every exhibit and activity on offer is subject to the approval of Seminole tribal members through both formal and informal channels.

Formal Tribal Oversight

All of Florida Seminole Tourism's operations are overseen by the Tribal Council, which includes representatives from each of the Tribe's six reservations. The Council has approved current

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programming and no significant changes can take place without official authorization.

For Billie Swamp Safari and Big Cypress RV Resort, which focus on experiences of the landscape and wildlife, day-to-day functioning is generally consistent. However, at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, new rotating exhibits and an ever-growing collection require regular oversight to ensure that decision-making is culturally appropriate.

"The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum offers a work experience program in which Seminole teenagers from the nearby Ahfachkee School gain on-the-job mentoring in areas like archaeology, collections management and conservation for class credit."

This oversight is conducted by several committees that bring together both museum staff and tribal community members. The Museum Advisory Committee (MAC) reviews the content and verbiage of public displays, while the Acquisitions Committee handles the acquisition of new items for the permanent collection, and the Tribe's NAGPRA Committee ensures the wider Southeastern collection remains in co-ordinance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

While museum staffers offer curatorial expertise regardless of tribal affiliation, it's critical that these committees include the perspectives of multiple Seminole tribal members and their lifelong cultural knowledge.

"One of the main messages of our museum is that Seminole culture is widely diverse," Blais-Billie notes.

"We have different clans. We have different beliefs and customs, amongst even just two families within the same clan. We're always aware of having that kind of diversity among our tribal member advisors, to make sure that all groups of the Tribe are being represented."

Informal Community Relationships

In addition to the formal oversight of the Tribal Council and relevant committees, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, Billie Swamp Safari, and Big Cypress RV Resort all benefit from their sheer proximity to the Seminole citizens they serve on the Big Cypress Reservation.

"You drive through the neighborhoods of these tribal members when you come to our attractions," Blais-Billie said. "We're amongst our community members, and part of that community."

She emphasizes that Seminole people are encouraged to use the museum as a resource for exploring their own heritage and identities, and to engage freely with staff during their visits.

"A tribal member can always feel comfortable and safe to reach out to staff, even if we're just standing in the museum, and say, for example, 'I don't know if

you've gotten a perspective from Bear Clan about this object, but I don't think that this should be preserved this way,'" she said.

"We've never actually gotten to that stage," she added, "because before that would ever happen, we already take those precautions really far in advance."

Hiring and Training

From official procedures to casual visits, the engagement of Seminole tribal members is particularly important because the majority of employees at the attractions are not themselves Seminole.

Across visitor operations as well as other departments, the Seminole Tribe of Florida has a hiring preference first for Seminole tribal members, followed by citizens of other Native nations. They also run job fairs and work experience programs to recruit Seminole youth and mentor them in their fields of interest.

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in particular offers a work experience program in which Seminole teenagers from the nearby Ahfachkee School gain on-the-job mentoring in areas like archaeology, collections management and conservation for class credit. In addition, Seminole students from any school can secure a paid internship with the Museum through the Seminole Tribe's Student Work Experience Program (SWEP). The Tribe has seen participants of these programs go on to work full-time for related departments.

Even with these programs in place, at this time much of the tribe's visitor-facing workforce is non-Native. To ensure staff are prepared to reflect well on the Seminole Tribe, as of 2019 all new hires are required to participate in a museum tour and cultural training conducted by the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's education coordinator.

"One of the main messages of our museum is that Seminole culture is widely diverse."

This is true regardless of individuals' tribal citizenship or background—and not just for standard customer service roles, but every position from accounting to construction management. Even if certain employees don't require cultural knowledge to perform their duties, they're expected to be respectful representatives of the Tribe both on and off the job.

"We're ambassadors of the Seminole Tribe of Florida," said Carrie Dilley, marketing and advertising coordinator of Florida Seminole Tourism. "At every step, we need to make sure that we're representing the Tribe the way the Tribe would want to be represented. We work for the Tribal Council, but by the same token, we have more than 4,000 employers—the individual Seminole tribal members."

Serving the Tribe

When it comes to cultural tourism, "authenticity" is often top of mind for both site operators and visitors. After all, no one wants to engage in encounters that are inaccurate or exploitative.

On the other hand, "authenticity" may connote capturing a moment in history to preserve under glass, rather than meeting communities on contemporary terms.

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Family of basket makers Linda Beletso (center) and her daughters Lenora Roberts (left) and Lorraine Posada (right) at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's Seminole village. Photo courtesy of *The Seminole Tribune*.

Empowering Artisans in the Shade of Chickees

Since the local ecosystem is fundamental to Seminole culture, no visit to their homeland would be complete without experiencing the Everglades. That's why the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum offers a mile-long boardwalk through a 66-acre cypress dome.

Along the way, visitors pass a chickee village reminiscent of encampments built through the early 1900s. The chickees provide shade for several Seminole artisans working on crafts like sweetgrass basket-weaving. These individuals offer not only goods for sale, but the opportunity for visitors to chat and ask questions about their work.

Unlike staff elsewhere across the Seminole tourism attractions, the artisans in the chickee village are exclusively tribal members who have been recruited for their lived experiences and traditional skills. Because the museum's goal is to empower traditional artisans, they each set their own schedules and sell their wares directly.

For her part, Blais-Billie sees the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum as a place not only for visitors to learn about Seminole history, but for Seminole people to host an ongoing discourse about their present and future. Whereas outside institutions may invite them to contribute exhibits on the vague theme of "Seminole identity" or "Seminole culture," they can use this space to curate programs that focus on more granular subjects of interest, as with a recent exhibit on tattooing.

"The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum [is] a place not only for visitors to learn about Seminole history, but for Seminole people to host an ongoing discourse about their present and future."

"At the end of the day, our entire purpose is to serve the Tribe in whichever way they see fit," she said. "If tomorrow the entire Tribe decides they don't want us to do what we're doing now, we have to go back to the drawing board and figure out how we can be the best institution we can be for them."

For now, a combination of proximity, formal oversight and general community engagement ensures that Florida Seminole Tourism is offering visitors an immersive Everglades experience that's mutually beneficial for all involved.

By Karie Luidens

Frog Bay Tribal National Park, credit: Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The Importance of Preserving Language

Native languages in the United States have been on the decline since the advent of European colonization. According to World Atlas, the United States was once home to some 300 Indigenous languages. Of those, 133 have already been declared extinct. By 2050, it is estimated that only 20 indigenous languages will remain in the U.S.

"The beauty of a Native language is something that has been passed down from generation to generation, but the federal government has fallen short on resources to teach these languages. I learned some Keres from my grandparents and my mom, who still speaks our language fluently, but we're at risk of losing the language and the traditional knowledge that comes with it.

Deb Haaland (Pueblo of Laguna)
Then-New Mexico Congresswoman
Interview with *Language Magazine*

So critical is the issue of language preservation, it has become a key talking point among global organizations--from the National Endowment of the Arts to the United Nations--with myriad funding programs cropping up that encourage the teaching, sharing and perpetuation of Native languages.

In April 2021, CNN spotlighted the issue in an interactive video entitled *Losing languages, losing worlds*, which interviewed Justin Neeley, director of language at the Citizen Potawatomi National Cultural Center.

Tourism programming, when built correctly and sustainably, can be a contributor to language preservation, especially as travelers increasingly look to expand their language skills. According to an article in Travel+Leisure, the Duolingo language app reported some 30 million people attempted to learn a new language during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Duolingo has some experience in indigenous languages, after releasing language programs for ʻōlelo Hawai'i (Native Hawaiian) and Diné bizaad (Navajo) languages in 2018. While both courses have been criticized for being "incomplete," Duolingo reported huge increases in downloads for both in 2020. In fact, the ʻōlelo Hawai'i course was the second-most downloaded course (following Spanish) for residents of the state of Hawai'i.

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A Celebration of Native Languages

As travelers look to expand their language skills, tribes can capitalize on this interest by creating new and innovative multilingual programming, which can lead to new economic opportunities for language masters and culture bearers.

The use of Native languages can manifest itself in small ways, including a simple welcome or thank you in Native languages.

Tribal communities are producing larger quantities of bilingual (or even multilingual) printed interpretive materials for residents and visitors alike. Multilingual signs along roadways, park trails and other public areas; translated signage and brochures at museums and cultural centers; and even interpretive storytelling, campfire programs, poetry readings and other verbal programming are becoming ever more visible in Native communities.

Successful programming includes:

- "Inage'i" (In The Woods), an animated series produced by Cherokee Nation.
- Multilingual park signage at the Frog Bay Tribal National Park (Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa) showcases local fauna and flora.
- Owamni by the Sioux Chef--the newest eatery by Sean Sherman and Dana Thompson--features menus and web pages written entirely in the Dakota language.
- The Hawai'i Tourism Authority's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, which was published in ōlelo Hawai'i, the Hawaiian language.

Inter-tribal Collaborations

Global travelers are a goal-oriented, checklist-loving group of people.

Whether using a mobile app to track destinations visited, or updating a scratch-off National Parks map, a large subset of travelers use these tools to help meet their ultimate goal of "doing it all." To aid travelers in their pursuit of experiencing everything, some of the most successful destinations are packaging multiple experiences into one easy-to-follow itinerary.

Cross promoting destinations--Native or non-Native alike--not only provides visitors with more reasons to visit an area, but it also benefits all participating organizations through increased marketing efforts and amplified awareness.

Tribal organizations already tapping into the collaborative spirit include:

Native American Tourism of Wisconsin (NATOW)

NATOW is an inter-tribal consortium that was launched as a statewide initiative to promote Native American tourism in Wisconsin. Tribal reservation lands in Wisconsin occupy more than a half million acres of prime forest and marsh lands, lakes and rivers, with each of Wisconsin's 11 tribes celebrating their own art forms, dialects, oral histories and traditional practices. NATOW helps promote each tribe's tourism initiatives by building collaborative marketing campaigns and multi-destination suggested itineraries. Collectively, Native Wisconsin is made up of Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa: Forest County Potawatomi: Ho-Chunk Nation: Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians; Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin; Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Sokaogan Chippewa Community); Oneida Nation of Wisconsin; Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin; and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians.

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC)

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, serves as a gateway to the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico. It is responsible for the preservation and celebration of Pueblo culture and advancing the understanding of the Pueblos and their people throughout their evolving history. The cultural center is located at the heart of nearly 80 acres of land owned by the 19 Pueblos and governed by the 19 Pueblos District, a sovereign government formed by the Tribal Councils of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico. IPCC programming includes permanent and rotating museum exhibits, a popular restaurant, gift shop, artisan fairs, feast days and cultural demonstrations, all of which serve as an introduction to Pueblo culture.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC)

Located in Anchorage, Alaska, the Alaska Native Heritage Center "preserves and strengthens the traditions, languages and art of Alaska's Native People." The center celebrates all of Alaska's Native cultures, including Iñupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Athabascan, Eyak, Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit, Unangax, Alutiiq, Yup'ik and Cup'ik. The center's programming includes permanent exhibitions, life-sized village sites and a variety of education programs that serves as a resource for Alaska Natives, while also providing a platform that promotes greater awareness among visitors and non-Natives.

Nikwasi Initiative

At its core, the Nikwasi Initiative promotes, interprets and links the cultural and historic sites along the Cherokee Cultural Corridor. The project stretches 60 miles along the Little Tennessee River, from Cherokee to Franklin, in the original Tennessee homelands of the Cherokee people. The initiative relies upon regional partnerships--with Native and non-Native organizations--in the pursuit of cultural preservation and economic development. The first piece of the project, an information kiosk overlooking the Cowee Mound, was unveiled in 2018. It was followed in 2020 by a second kiosk at Noquisiyi Mound in downtown Franklin. Signage at both sites is written in English and the Cherokee syllabary — and gives visitors a sense of Cherokee culture that has existed for hundreds of years in western North Carolina's mountains.

Cultural map of Alaska; Alaska Native Heritage Center

Self-Guided Interpretation

As seen in the Nikwasi Initiative example, not all interpretation requires the use of human resources. Other ways to build awareness that don't include the use of full-time personnel include:

- ☐ Unstaffed visitor kiosks/information stations
- ☐ Wayside exhibits and interpretive signage
- ☐ Campground bulletin boards
- ☐ Brochures with tour/trail maps
- ☐ Self-guided trails
- ☐ Self-guided cell phone walking tours
- ☐ Auto tours and/or audio tours
- ☐ Website information
- ☐ MP3/Podcast downloads

When building self-guided programs, be sure to include Native languages in the programming. Also consider using phonetic spelling so visitors feel confident saying words that will likely be unfamiliar to them.

Cultural Performance, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation

Historic Villages

Every Tribe has its own story to tell. What better way for visitors to experience that culture than through an in-depth, hands-on program? The following are a few carefully crafted historic villages built to showcase the very essence of Native culture.

Chickasaw Traditional Village

Located in Sulphur, Oklahoma, the Chickasha Inchokka' (Chickasaw house) Traditional Village was built to share the story of the Chickasaw people in an interactive way and showcase what life was like in the 18th century. Visitors of the Chickasaw Traditional Village can sign up for village tours, blowgun and archery demonstrations, cooking classes, language lessons, storytelling, stomp dance demonstrations, traditional games, food festivals and more.

Oconaluftee Indian Village

As visitors arrive at Oconaluftee Indian Village, they are immediately transported to 1760's Cherokee, North Carolina. A Cherokee expert leads guests through the Village to explore traditional Cherokee lifestyle and history. Here, visitors can interact with villagers as they hull canoes, sculpt pottery, weave baskets and fashion beadwork. The Village offers numerous free and paid experiences, including cultural dances, sacred ritual sites and Cherokee dwellings. Nearby add-on activities include biking, bird watching, fishing, horseback riding, waterfalls and much more.

Tataviam Interpretive Village

In Piru, California, on the grounds of Rancho Camulos Museum, the Tataviam Interpretive Village was built under the guidance of Tribal citizens. The village provides a space rich in culture that can be utilized by the Tribe for cultural and spiritual practices, as well as occasional open-to-the-public cultural experiences. Camulos was traditionally known as Coaynga, an ancient Tataviam village translating to "place of food." The Village features a kitc (traditional home dwelling) and a hoyatsu (sweat house) that was originally heated by a center fire where the spiritual leader would facilitate sacred ceremonies. A haramokngna (gathering place) in the center of the Village is the site where government meetings among the Coaybit lineage-members would occur. The village is also home to several native plants that are still used culturally.

Native Village of Eklutna Interpretive Wayside

The site, located in current day Anchorage, Alaska, is more traditionally known as Tak'at, a fish camp by the original Dena'ina Athabascan people The Interpretive Wayside features a bronze statue modeled after Grandma Olga Nikolai Ezi, a well-respected elder of Ahtna Athabascan descent who married a Dena'ina chief, Simeon Esia. They had five children and established much of the lineage of the Tribe.

Chapter 7

Tours

From Vision to Reality: Starting a Native Tour Company

Nez Perce Tourism was created after CEO Stacia Morfin had a vision from one of her elders who told her she was to open a tourism business on the reservation.

Idea Exchange

Are You Ready to Welcome International Visitors?

Itineraries vs. Packaging

From Vision to Reality: Starting a Native Tour Company

Nez Perce Tourism was created after CEO Stacia Morfin had a vision where an ancestor directed her to open a business in cultural preservation on ancestral Nimiipuu homelands.

With a homeland that originally encompassed 19 million acres, including parts of present-day Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, Nevada and Wyoming, the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) continue to travel along ancient routes to sacred locations. Their modern-day travels take them east to hunt buffalo along the Great Plains, and west to fish for salmon near the Celilo Falls (a sacred fishing and gathering site covered by the construction of the Dalles Dam in 1957). Today, the Nimiipuu continue to gather, guide, hunt and fish all across their ancestral homelands.

From a Vision

On these homelands, the privately owned Nez Perce Tourism, LLC, was started after CEO Stacia Morfin had a vision in 2017. Through the vision, one of her ancestors appeared and directed her to lead an initiative in cultural preservation.

"When I was given this directive by my ancestors, I felt like I wasn't equipped," said Morfin. "But when your elders tell you to do something, you don't sleep on it, you do it as soon as you are told with zero hesitation."

"When I was given this directive by my ancestors, I felt like I wasn't equipped. But when your elder tells you to do something, you don't sleep on it, you do it as soon as you are told with zero hesitation."

Sharing the Nimiipuu culture is no small task.

"Nimiipuu culture, as we know it, is the world's oldest continuous culture," said Morfin. "Generations of Nimiipuu people have accumulated thousands of years of ancestral knowledge, wisdom and spiritual strength.

It was a challenge she was ready for, she said.

"My ancestors encourage me to preserve the old teaching. Storytelling while using our language, singing, drumming, dancing, sharing art techniques, even the very act of trading goods and services is who we are. We have done these things since even before human memory can remember. "

She also emphasizes that tourism is not new to the nation. "We have always and will always be known for our vast connection to the land from which we originated. Guiding and sharing parts of our wisdom is in our DNA."

What's more, Morfin found that her business would fill a huge void.

After doing an inventory of local businesses in 2018, she discovered that there were 164 tourism businesses in the Lewis and Clark Valley. Some 90% of them were telling the story of Nez Perce. But none of them were owned or operated by Nimiipuu or Nez Perce.

She discovered that there were 164 tourism businesses in the Lewis and Clark Valley. Some 90% of them were telling the story of Nez Perce. But none of them were owned or operated by Nimiipuu or Nez Perce.

Through two years of intense market research, Morfin uncovered a huge opportunity in the travel and tourism industry.

She traveled throughout the sacred lands of the Nez Perce and soon after conducted an internal needs assessment documenting recommendations for secret, sacred, commonly known and widely shared information. She was warned she would face people who did not agree with what she was doing and was told to thank them, as they were only concerned about protecting the tradition of their ways.

On March 29, 2019, Stacia officially opened the doors to Nez Perce Tourism.

The business offers a variety of interactive tours that connect visitors to Nimiipuu culture. Programs include boat tours, Appaloosa horseback riding, rafting on the river beds of the Nez Perce, as well as multi-day and customized tours where visitors can experience a comprehensive Nez Perce experience, including petroglyph viewing, wildlife and bird watching, cultural demonstrations and more.

Expanding in Times of Crisis

In 2020, just like the rest of the world, Nez Perce Tourism had to pivot to continue to meet their goals.

While many businesses closed their doors temporarily or for good, Nez Perce Tourism expanded its business

model to open Nez Perce Traditions, a cultural gift shop. The gift shop allowed the business to operate at a limited capacity while supporting Native and local artisans in person and online.

"During this critical hour in history, Traditions Cift Shop has brought back the trade hub legacy of our people and created an income stream for many families," Morfin said. "We opened our doors on August 8, 2020, and work with many skilled artists who are offering their authentic trade goods to peoples from all over the world."

Nez Perce Tourism also strengthened its business model by collaborating with other organizations in their region.

One such partnership is with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, also located in Idaho. This collaboration brings dual Native perspectives and strengthens one another's narrative when presenting to visitors.

In the Footsteps of Lewis & Clark

Nez Perce Tourism also shares some of the oral stories passed down from generation to generation about the new humans who first visited Nimiipuu Country in 1805.

Through oral history, it is said that the Lewis and Clark Expedition spent more time with the Nez Perce than any other tribe they encountered on their journey. Although the Nez Perce were initially apprehensive about these people they had never seen before, they saved the expedition from starvation.

Through oral history, it is said that Lewis and Clark spent more time with the Nez Perce than any other tribe they encountered on their journey.

Today, as part of a multi-day tour, Nez Perce Tourism takes visitors to the Lewis and Clark Discovery Center to honor the spirit of friendship and peace, and to commemorate the vital role Nez Perce ancestors played in aiding the expedition.

Nez Perce Tourism also invites Allen Pinkam, Sr., the tribal coordinator for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council, to serve as a cultural presenter during many of their tours. Pinkham, a member of the Nez Perce tribe, is a tribal historian and storyteller and adds rich education and history about Lewis and Clark and the Nez Perce in Nimiipuu country.

While Morfin, a gifted storyteller, enjoys sharing Nimiipuu legends, history and ways of life, she always reminds her guests that indigenous people aren't just a thing of the past.

"We are still here today and we have a voice," she stresses. "Knowing that, people are interested in learning more about us."

"We are still here today and we have a voice," she stresses. "Knowing that, people are interested in learning more about us."

Appaloosa Horses

The leopard-spotted Appaloosa horses are believed to have been around since prehistoric times. Often referred to as the "Nez Perce horse," Appaloosa horses were first obtained by the Nez Perce people around 1730. By the mid-1700's the Nez Perce had gained a reputation among the Native Americans and Europeans for their beautifully-spotted, high-quality horses.

Alaska Native Heritage Center.

Are You Ready to Welcome International Travelers?

Welcoming travelers from international markets frequently involves building strong relationships within the travel trade network. A casual approach to attracting this business can quickly lead to frustration and failure. Check all the below that apply to see how ready you are to welcome international business.

Legal and Operations

- My business understands and follows international consumer protection laws.
- My business has and communicates alternate plans for variations in schedule, such as tribal closures, weather disruptions, global crises, and/ or loss of a guide or key cultural work, etc.
- Our contracts are reviewed by legal counsel with expertise in contracts and our tribal jurisdiction.
- My tribal tourism business holds required and valid operating licenses, permits and insurance.
- We understand that the insurance needs of our international trade partners may vary and are able to accommodate their individual requests.

Business Operations

- My tribal tourism business has been in operation for two or more years.
- My business has an updated business plan.
- My business can guarantee price and capacity up to 18 months ahead of visitor arrival.
- My business has sufficient operating capital to cover the 18-month to five-year period before we receive payments from contracted travel trade business.

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Fort McDowell Adventures, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

Rates

- Our general rates and/or admission fees are printed and publicly available.
- We offer rack rates (generally the advertised rate of a room or package, but the price factors in/allows for discounting by the travel trade.)
- We can accommodate net rates and commission payments in our posted rates.
- We offer travel agency (net) rates, commissions or fees.

Visitor Infrastructure

- We have directional signage for visitors to locations and events.
- We have adequate parking for visitors and access for motor coaches.
- We have handicap-accessible facilities that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards (i.e. exhibit aisles wide enough for wheelchair access, grab bars in restrooms, in/out ramps, roll-in showers, etc.).
- We have restroom facilities available and accessible for use by visitors.
- Our restroom facilities are regularly attended with assigned staff and schedules.
- Our business/event has emergency supplies and/or access to medical care.

Travel Trade Marketing & Materials

- We have a marketing plan for targeted international markets.
- We work with receptive/inbound operator(s) and international wholesalers.
- We attend international trade shows.
- We have the capacity to host group tours (60 or more per tour).
- We have professional marketing staff and/or consultants to identify key markets and conduct outreach in these markets.
- This staff is authorized to sign contracts and negotiate rates with industry representatives and receptive/inbound operators.
- We work with the Department of Commerce, U.S. Commercial Service offices, and/or federal trade representatives in our region.
- We can accommodate/host familiarization tours to promote our tribal tourism product during peak seasons.
- We can accommodate/host familiarization tours to promote our tribal tourism product during the off-season.

Multilingual Marketing Materials

- We offer marketing materials translated for our targeted international markets.
  - Multilingual brochures and guides.
  - Multilingual website and social media information.
  - Multilingual proofreaders and editors to check the above materials.
  - Multilingual guides and docents.
  - Multilingual marketing staff to handle outreach to these markets.

Itineraries vs. Packaging

When it comes to building the perfect tourism itinerary, the mechanics are fairly simple. Travelers need something to see and do, somewhere to eat and, if the schedule calls for it, a place to spend the night. For tribes and businesses taking their first steps in visitor outreach, marketing can be as simple as building a tourism website that highlights these activities.

When tourism activity reaches a certain level, marketers must make the decision as to whether they wish to work with the industry known collectively as the "travel trade." There are pros and cons to working with this complex network of tourism business and technology providers. Working with the travel trade provides tourism businesses with an expanded outreach network that can provide additional marketing and outreach support, but these services can have a hefty price tag attached to them.

Before any decisions are made, hospitality businesses should understand the difference between creating an itinerary and creating a package.

Building an Itinerary

Crafting an itinerary is as simple as formally outlining a suggested activity list, usually encompassing anywhere from one to five days. This list can limit itself to just activities offered by one business or it can create suggestions that include nearby communities as well.

For each day, suggest an itinerary that follows the same general format

continued on next page

Early Morning Activity

List one or two suggestions of what people can do before breakfast. Light physical activities like a sunrise walk or morning yoga are especially popular with travelers.

Breakfast

Suggestions of where (and what) to eat. Generally breakfast is in the same location as the previous evening's overnight location, but if there is an area restaurant specializing in breakfast/brunch, include it here. Be sure to include specialities or favorite menu items from the restaurant.

Morning Activity

For the first day, consider including an introductory area tour to give participants an overview of the destination. Point out the highlights during this tour, even if they aren't included on the main itinerary. This is also an excellent time to include the most physical activities before people become too tired. Tours of museums and cultural centers are also best when attention levels are high. Don't forget to include a mention of famed area art or other notable activities to help drive sales at area businesses.

Lunch

Lunch can be incorporated into the morning or afternoon activity, like a picnic or meal at a museum or cultural center. Schedule permitting, this is generally lighter than the evening meal, but remember to include a unique area specialty, farm-to-table experience or other distinctive dining opportunity.

Afternoon Activity

Traveler attention spans may start to wane during the afternoon, so this is a good time for a hands-on activity, like an arts or crafts lesson, visiting a local school for a language lesson, enjoying a treasure hunt or bingo-style activity in a local outdoor area and/or a meeting with a local culture bearer or tribal elder.

Dinner

This is the time to celebrate your tribe's culinary heritage. A buffet in a local casino can work, but include speciality stations or items that celebrate the talents of your Native culinary team. You can also bring in a visiting chef to share the delicacies of your region or community and the history behind those delicacies.

Evening Activity

An evening program need not be overly active, but it is a great time for some star gazing or storytelling. Perhaps tribal leaders might share a drum performance or school children can perform a Native dance. Not all visitors will participate in this activity, especially if it is their first night after a long international flight, so plan accordingly.

Overnight Stay

Where will your guests be staying? Remember to describe the unique and cultural aspects of the property or overnight spot. An overnight stay doesn't always require a hotel. RV parks, campgrounds, ranch stays, airbnb/VRBO properties are all excellent overnight options.

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Itineraries vs. Packaging

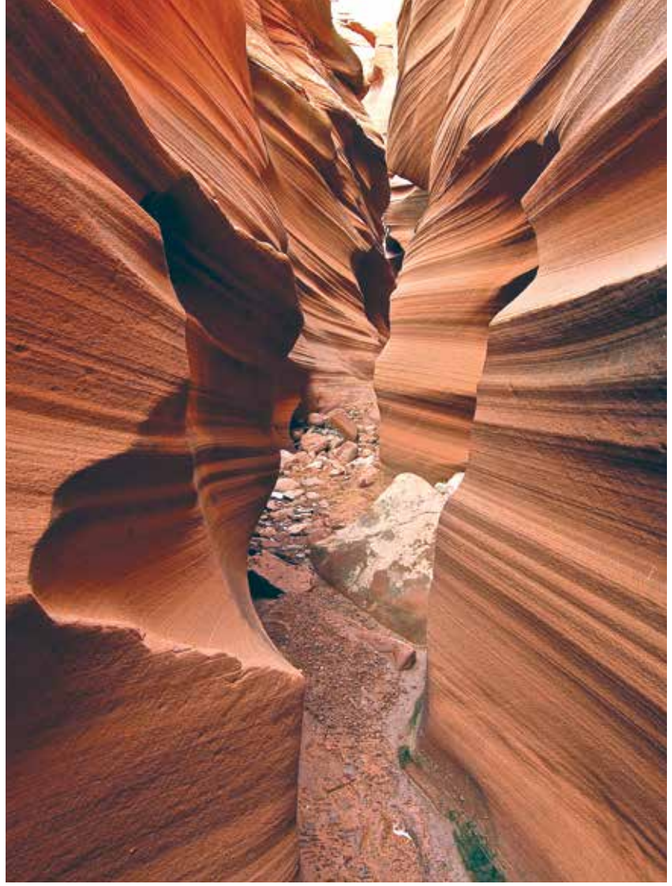
What's the difference between an itinerary and a package?

The difference is nothing more than the saleability of the collective items on an itinerary. Selling a package on a site like Expedia.com to FIT (Free and Independent Travelers), for example, may only include overnight accommodations, breakfast and admission passes to a local museum or attraction. For larger groups or seasonal travelers, it might be possible to "sell" more exclusive experiences such as passes to a powwow or an evening with tribal elders. No matter what can and can't be sold, always give guests suggested ideas of other activities to help drive awareness and sales for area businessess.

When working with the wholesale market, especially with group travel, packages usually need to include many more elements than just hotel stays and meals. This involves much greater planning on the part of the supplier.

For example, how can the services of a culture bearer be included in the package? Are their fees based on an hourly rate or a per-visitor rate? What steps do suppliers need to take to ensure the culture bearer is available when the group is in town, so travelers aren't left disappointed? This type of arrangement may be made easier when working in tandem with a local museum, who has these services already built in. But when promising a drum performance from tribal elders, be sure you can deliver, and that the package pricing you create includes compensation for this service, even if it doesn't exist as a public offering.

Packaging is not always a viable option for suppliers as it requires considerably more behind-the-scenes work and planning than selling a hotel stay online. Either a tribe or a hotel or a destination marketing organization (DMO) will need to manage and control the inventory to ensure travelers get the right meal tickets, attraction passes and other activities



Adventurous Antelope Canyon Photo Tours

promised, complete with validity dates that match their travel dates.

Suppliers with especially low admission fees may not find value in pursuing this type of relationship unless they can partner with an area hotel or activity. If you're not sure if you're ready to package your program, review AIANTA's readiness worksheet *Are You Ready to Welcome International Travelers* or reach out to AIANTA's Visitor Outreach Department for free guidance and counseling on next steps you should be taking.

Whether or not you're ready for packaging, endeavor to include suggested itineraries on all your outreach materials to continue to build awareness for your area businesses.

Chapter 8

Revenue & Fundraising

The Road to a Self Sustaining Economy

Starting with limited revenue streams, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have become an economic engine in their region.

Idea Exchange

Resources to Fund Your Cultural Heritage Tourism Programs
The Kellogg Logic Model
How To's of Grant Writing
Expanding Revenue Through Agritourism

Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts by Bruce Rettig

The Road to a Self Sustaining Economy

Starting with limited revenue streams, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have become an economic engine in their region

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla people, have an epic story to tell.

Their story reaches back more than 10,000 years and covers a homeland that spans both sides of the Columbia River's big bend where the giant river, originating in Canada, abruptly turns west and makes its run to the Pacific Ocean.

This rich salmon-spawning river and its tributaries was once a primary North American route of inland trading, reaching from the Pacific Ocean all the way north into Canada and east into present-day Montana and Wyoming. The ancestors of today's Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla peoples welcomed travelers for millennia, long before they hosted the Lewis & Clark Expedition on both the outbound and return journeys a mere two centuries ago.

Today the river, made navigable by a series of dams and locks, continues to drive commerce in the region, primarily to ship wheat grown on the plateau downstream and to provide irrigation for hot-weather crops and wine grapes. And, because the region is rich with tribally owned attractions, three national historic trails as well as scenic corridors and rivers, tourism has become a major source of revenue.

Visitors arrive, during peak years, on more than 100 cruise ships sailing on the Columbia River, as well as by bus and car on a network of freeways, blue highways and scenic back roads adjacent to rivers and through farm country. Visitors are drawn here because of a concerted marketing effort by all the players in the region who package a solid core of entertainment, history and agritourism to keep travelers in the area for days at a time.

One of the anchor attractions in the region is Tamástslikt Cultural Institute that tells the story of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla peoples, from ancient teachings to contemporary challenges. And of special interest to many visitors, the museum exhibits share the story of the westward expansion of the United States from the Tribal point of view. As a matter of fact, Tamástslikt is the only tribally owned interpretive center on the Oregon National Historic Trail.

The Tribes' homeland was a 6.4-million-acre complex mosaic of sheltering water-rich valleys, tended meadows, alpine timber slopes, all with a rich variety of fish, game, fowl and edible and medicinal plants covering an area about the size of Maryland. Because of immigration, the three tribes reluctantly ceded more than 4 million acres to the United States government in 1855.

The confederacy of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla was formed by the U.S. treaty-makers for the convenience of the government. These peoples were forced to relocate together on what was promised to be 512,000 acres at the foot of the Blue Mountain range, along the Umatilla River, a 94-mile tributary of the Columbia.

Over time, many Congressional acts diminished their reserved lands and then the 1885 Slater Allotment Act gave the government permission to target the Umatilla Indian Reservation, thereby creating what would become one of the top 25 Indian Country checkerboards of Indian and non-Indian ownership within the reservation's diminished boundaries. Cut off from many food gathering locales and their expansive land base, the economic situation for the Tribe was "dire." It remained dire through the 1960's War on Poverty when the Tribe's first envisioned building a hospitality business to be called Indian Hills. By the 1980s, unemployment hovered around 42%.

In 1981, Antone Minthorn became the Tribe's General Council chairman. He wanted two things: to restore the land back to its original treaty boundaries and to build a self-sustaining economy.

Bobbi Conner

One of the first people hired in a new economic development position was Dave Tovey, fresh out of college, who had been given a $2,500 scholarship by the Tribe to complete his degree in finance. "They saw something in me," said Tovey, "but at the time --not having been raised there-- I didn't even know that tribal government and the BIA were two different entities. And we virtually had no money."

"The first year on the job," he said, "all these less than stellar investors came before the Tribe to make proposals promising a 50% split on some crazy thing, like manufacturing plastic bullets or making coffins."

"Instead we zeroed in on what we wanted and made a list of ten capital improvement projects that included a casino, RV Park, golf course, museum and a hotel," said Tovey.

To build the project, the Tribe targeted a parcel of 640 plowed acres within sight of Interstate 84, the major freeway route between Portland, Oregon and Salt Lake City, Utah. "This is the rural challenge," said Tovey. "If people can't see what you have from the freeway, they will blow right past you."

This is the rural challenge. If people can't see what you have from the freeway, they will blow right past you.

The Tribe held on to their vision, refining it over the next decade with a master plan, hiring architects and a design team to create a blueprint for what they were going to do. “It became a great marketing tool, we just locked on to that vision,” said Tovey. Tovey’s mentor, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Chair Ron Allen, described the Tribe’s plan as “the cause that grabs your heart.”

Collateral first began to jell prior to the approval of the 1984 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, when the Tribe operated a small bingo program in the community gym. Open one night a week, it brought in about $20k or so a year,“ said Tovey. “We thought we’d expand and build a major bingo hall with some card tables in a large, simple Quonset hut. We tried contacting local banks and couldn’t even get an appointment.”

“In the old days the attitude was patronizing to pandering,” says Tovey. “You cute little Indians and your sovereignty thing, out there (on the Reservation).” So, it was back to square one.

The Tribe found some money from the BIA and USDA and bought the local “Lucky 7 Trailer Park,” keeping the reliable tenants of retired, elderly people living there. They had earlier partnered with Pendleton Flour Mills to build a substantial project: a huge concrete grain elevator near a railroad spur on the Reservation to store the soft white wheat grown in the region. Bankers took notice.

In the early 1990s, many things dovetailed in the Tribe’s favor: The Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial’s committee’s plan to build four museums along the Trail in Oregon to tell the story was adopted. They agreed that the Tribes’ planned cultural center was ideal for the Indian perspective on the impact of westward migration.

In spite of raising nearly $4 million for the project from private and public sources, and in spite of former Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield’s advocacy, the Senate Appropriations Committee said they didn’t fund Indian interpretive centers.

When the BIA guaranteed a $6.5 million loan and the Oregon Lottery kicked in $600,000, the museum broke ground on its 48,000 square-foot building in 1995. Simultaneously, the State of Oregon approved video poker machines, opening the door for slot machines in Indian casinos. The Tribe scrapped their Quonset hut plan and opened their first casino, managed initially by Capital Gaming International, Inc.

Also coinciding with the Tribe’s plan was the marketing of the nearby Walla Walla wine region, first planted with grapes in 1859, but not ripening into a major production or visitor destination until the early 1980s.

Cruise ship operators, lured by Washington and Oregon state tourism marketing, realized the Columbia River and its many nearby attractions could be bundled, marketed and sold to eager passengers with discretionary income.

With fully developed plans, projections and possible partnerships in hand, the Tribe went after the Bureau of Land Management and other federal and state agencies, foundations, investors, corporations for more funding.

Today, said Tovey, “The Tribe has 342 separate funding partnerships with state, local and federal agencies, banks and private investors totaling over $110 million annually.”

The Tribe has 342 separate funding partnerships with state, local and federal agencies, banks and private investors totaling over $110 million annually.

The original modest Wildhorse Resort & Casino has expanded ten-fold with fine dining restaurants, a five-plex cinema, bowling alley, and children’s activity center. The adjacent hotel expanded from 100 rooms to an additional ten-story tower with 210 rooms. Another ten-story tower and a performance amphitheater are planned. The RV Park and a championship, 18-hole golf course were also built.

Now one of Umatilla County’s top two employers, the Tribes recently purchased the Pendleton Country Club with a unanimous vote of club members. They also bought a downtown Pendleton icon: Hamley’s Western Store & Saddle Shop and Hamley’s Steak House, Café and Saloon. Both businesses are off-reservation but headquartered under Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

A couple of decades ago, the Tribes acquired more than 700 acres around exit 216 on Interstate 84, including Arrowhead Truck Stop. They created Coyote Business Park for commercial and retail development, and the Park is now home to the US Forest Service, USDA food storage, Cayuse Holdings and many other tenant businesses with more than 170 acres of shovel-ready lots for lease.

The Tribe also bought a fleet of buses for their Kayak Public Transit that provides free transportation throughout the sprawling rural area–including 45-minute rides to Walla Walla and to LaGrande, both college towns, from which some Tribal employees commute to work.

The jewel in this increasingly sparkling crown is Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, the 45,000-square-foot beauty with a handsome round lobby built of basalt and timber. As envisioned, the museum showcases the cultures, languages, knowledges and technologies that have sustained the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla people throughout history and into today. The Institute features an expansive Museum Store, tribally inspired menus in Kinship Café & Catering, meeting rooms, archives, research library and vaults to protect the increasingly large collection.

Like the Tribes, Tamástslikt relies on more than one source of funding. Along with earned income is contributed income from donors, sponsors, foundations and competitive grants from agencies. As a non-profit sub-entity of the Tribal government, Tamástslikt benefits from an annual Tribal budget appropriation as well as tax deductible contributions of objects, documents and cash gifts per the Indian Tribal Government Tax Status Act.

“There’s no room for blue sky” when it comes to attracting investors, banks, or foundations, said Bobbie Conner, who was hired just before the museum was completed and has remained its director for more than 23 years. “You have to have solid projections, plans for infrastructure, budgets, and collateral,” warned the former Small Business Administration director.

Partnerships are crucial. Tamástslikt has reciprocity agreements with AAA, the Oregon Historical Society, Fort Walla Walla and other attractions in the area. Corporate sponsorships also help provide funding.

Conner and staff write multiple grants a year. They jointly promote with Travel Oregon, Washington Tourism Alliance and the Department of Commerce, and local and adjacent chambers of commerce. Conner has attended the World Trade Market in London and ITB in Berlin with colleagues and elders to network with tour operators from all over the world.

“Tour operators matter immensely whether domestic or international,” said Conner. “As well as local partners who have the capacity to meet the demands of travelers.”

International travelers make up a small but significant amount of the total gate; car travelers come in from California on Highway 97 and from Salt Lake on I-84, and a solid core are residents living within 100 miles who bring their visiting guests to the museum.

"Financially, it's always going to be a challenge," Conner said. Even small changes can have major consequences:

"When 9-11 hit there were 144 vessels putting passengers on multiple buses to us. Then all airports shut down. Cruise ship companies went bankrupt, then the 2008 recession hit, and eventually we reemerged. When-Covid-19 hit in March 2020, 118 tours were canceled."

But other seemingly small things have consequences, too. At one time cruise ships charged for liquor onboard their boats, but shore excursions were wrapped into the package price. Then they switched tactics: Liquor was free and shore excursions were extra, which meant an almost 50 percent drop in cruise ship visitors." Those lower numbers were reflected in gift shop sales that dropped from an average of $30 per person per day to around $9.

"It even makes a difference in your sales if you are first on the cruise ship itinerary or last," said Conner. It also makes a difference if the staff selling the side trips for the cruise line, is knowledgeable enough to interest passengers to pay for a trip to Tamástslikt.

With an annual operating budget of $3 million, the Tribes support the priority to care for its collection and educate its visitors, and subsidizes it. "From net gaming revenues, the Tribes' disburse 20% to tribal citizens, and 80% is reinvested and used for community services," said Tovey. "Usually it's the other way around."

By Jan Halliday

Resources to Fund Your Cultural Heritage Tourism Programs

The following federal agencies and programs offer funding that could support cultural heritage tourism programs.

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides unified information from all U.S. federal agencies that manage grant funds. Below is a listing of federal agencies and some of the major funding programs they manage.

U.S. Department of Interior (doi.gov)

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (bia.gov)
  - Division of Transportation
- Office of Indian Services (bia.gov/bia/ois)
  - Office of Indian Economic Development
  - Division of Economic Development
- Bureau of Land Management (blm.gov)
  - Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program
- National Park Service (nps.gov)
  - Tribal Historic Preservation and Tribal Heritage Grant Programs
  - National Register of Historic Places
  - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
  - Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division
  - Save America's Treasures
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (fws.gov)
  - Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
  - Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Department of Commerce (commerce.gov)

- Economic Development Administration (eda.gov)
  - Planning and Local Technical Assistance
- International Trade Administration (ita.gov)
  - National Travel & Tourism Office
  - U.S. Commercial Service
- Minority Business Development Agency (mbda.gov)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (noaa.gov)

U.S. Department of Agriculture (usda.gov)

- U.S. Forest Service (fs.fed.us)
- Rural Development (rd.usda.gov)
  - Community Connect Grants
  - Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program
  - Rural Business Investment Program
  - Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
  - Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant
  - Strategic Economic and Community Development
  - Value-Added Producer Grants

Small Business Administration (sba.gov)

National Endowment for the Arts (nea.gov)

- Challenge America
- Our Town
- Grants for Arts Projects (variety of disciplines, including folk and traditional, design, presenting, visual, museums and more)

National Endowment for the Humanities (neh.gov)

- Challenge Programs
- Digital Humanities
- Preservation and Access
  - Documenting Endangered Languages
  - Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions
  - Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections
- Public Programs
- Research

Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (imls.gov)

- Accelerating Promising Practices for Small Libraries
- Inspire! Grants for Small Museums
- Museum Assessment Program
- Museums for America
- Museums Empowered
- Native American Library Services: Basic and Enhancement Grants
- Native Hawaiian Library Services Grants

Environmental Protection Agency (epa.gov)

- Local Growth
  - Brownfields Program
  - Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (hhs.gov)

- Administration for Native Americans (acf.hhs.gov)
  - Active Native Youth Initiative for Leadership, Empowerment, and Development (I-LEAD)
  - Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS)
  - Native American Language Preservation and Maintenance

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (hud.gov)

- Indian Community Development Block Grant
- Office of Economic Development
- Office of Native American Programs (ONAP)

U.S. Department of Transportation (transportation.gov)

- Federal Highway Administration
  - National Scenic Byways Program
  - Office of Tribal Transportation
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants

The Kellogg Logic Model

Before submitting any proposal for funding, it is important you clearly define your need, the activities you plan to accomplish to solve that need, and the impacts and outcomes that will occur as a result of those activities.

Below is a logic timeline based upon one developed by the Kellogg Foundation. It can help you think through your proposed activities and the resources you need and make sure you identify the outcomes you want to reach your vision.

Resources/Inputs

What are the human, financial, organizational and community resources that can be used towards doing the work?

Activities

What will the program do with the resources? (processes, tools, events, technology, and actions)

Outputs

What are the direct products of the defined activities?

Outcomes

What are the specific changes in a participant's behavior, knowledge skill, status and/or level of functioning?

Short-Term Outcomes (1-3 years)

Long-Term Outcomes (4-6 years)

Impact (7-10 years)

What are the fundamental changes in organizations, communities or systems as a result of the program activities?

First Americans Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

How-To's of Grant Writing

Grant writing is not a secret talent. Anyone can write a grant, you just need to be inspired and listen to your community, understand your needs, envision your outcome and understand what the funder wants. Then develop an organized approach to reach your vision.

Usually the larger the grant award, the more time you will need to prepare. Getting ready to submit a substantial proposal means starting early--months--not weeks--before a grant is due. Below are a few steps to take to prepare a successful grant proposal.

Understanding Needs

- What is the need in my community we want to address?
- What evidence can I show that the need exists?
- How was the need identified?

Envision Your Outcome

- Who will be responsible to implement the program?
- How much money will it take to do what we want to do?
- Where will the money be spent?
- Where will the activities take place?

Listen to Your Community

- How can I get feedback from the community on the need and proposed activities?
- Is the community interested and do they support the proposed activities and outcomes?

Once you have identified your need, identified your outcomes and gathered support from your community, start planning the activities and determine the resources you need to achieve your vision.

Whether you are submitting a proposal to a foundation, private corporation or federal agency, following their directions is critical. Make sure your project addresses the priorities of the funding source.

continued on next page

Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Request for Proposals (RFP) provides the critical information: contact person(s), due date, length of proposal narrative, required format, total amount funded and specific information as to what activities the funder will support.

The general outline usually includes the following. Be sure to use the outline from the funder:

1. Proposal
   - Title
   - Project Summary
   - Project Narrative or Description
   - Overview (background or history)
2. Purpose Statement
   - Evidence supporting your conclusions
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Significance of Project
5. Work Plan
   - Methodology (Activities)
   - Timeline
   - Personnel
6. Products / Deliverables / Outcomes
7. Budget and Budget Narrative
8. Support Documents: Letters of reference, résumés, permissions, letters of support

Remember, the people reading your proposal are probably reading many with similar requests.

"As a reviewer, I've read from a dozen to a box of more than 50 proposals," said Gail Check, AIANTA Tribal Relations and Outreach Manager. "The first thing I would do is go through and separate those that didn't follow the rules and then those that did not seem to fit the guidelines. Then, I would focus primarily on the proposals that met the rules."

More Tips

- Make your proposal stand out—be clear, concise and compelling. Make sure your project is organized and well-planned and that all your statements support the outcome.
- Have others proofread your proposal and see if it makes sense to them. Give yourself time to have others review your proposal.
- Take advantage of agency review opportunities. Many federal agencies will review your proposal and give you feedback. Their advice can make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful award.
- Be sure to allow time to complete the submission process. Most foundation grants and almost all federal grants require electronic submission; be sure to finish your proposal early so there is enough time to upload all the required documentation in the proper formats.

For ideas about where to find funding, visit AIANTA's Funding Resources for Cultural Tourism webpage at www.aianta.org and sign up for the Funding Opportunities newsletter.

Fort McDowell Adventures, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

Historic Cannery, Icy Strait Point, Alaska

Expanding Revenue Through Agritourism

Sometimes the direct path to new funding is not by partnering with outside agencies, but rather by adding new and expanded revenue models to existing operations. In the case of agricultural producers, creating visitor-focused activities is an excellent example of how an unrelated industry can benefit from tourism.

Agritourism, or agricultural tourism, is a commercial enterprise where a working farm or ranch creates programs specifically for the enjoyment and education of visitors. The programs generate supplemental income for the ranch of farm owners on top of what is made through crop or livestock sales.

Agritourism ideas can include

On-Farm Direct Sales

- You-Pick
- Farm stands
- Other farm products that include tasting stations (olive oil, cheese, jams and jellies, etc.)
- Christmas tree farm

Entertainment

- Wagon rides
- Farm-to-table meals
- Prepared picnic baskets
- Concerts in the field
- Agricultural festivals and fairs
- Petting zoo
- Corn maze
- Pumpkin patch
- Special events (weddings, reunions, retreats)

Accommodations/Lodging

- Farm stays
- Guest ranch
- Bed and breakfast
- Camping
- Cabins

Educational Activities & Tours

- Farm/ranch tours
- Micro-brewery tours
- Camps
- Classes
- Traditional farm/ranch activity demonstrations
- Historical agriculture exhibits
- Agricultural technical tours
- Beekeeping demonstrations

Outdoor Recreation

- Swimming
- Fishing
- Horseback riding
- Snowmobiling
- Biking
- Hiking
- Skiing
- Bird watching
- Wildlife photography
- Hunting
- Clay bird shooting
- Off-roading
- Boating
- Nature walks

Cherokee National History Museum

Chapter 9
Amplify Your Marketing

Finding Your Story and Amplifying it Through Strategic Marketing

In just 13 years, Cherokee Nation has leveraged its passion for education and dedication to the preservation and promotion of its heritage to develop a robust cultural tourism program that draws thousands of visitors annually to experience its award-winning cultural, specialty and event tours, six Cherokee Nation museums, two Cherokee Nation welcome centers, various Cherokee Nation retail operations and more.

Idea Exchange

The One-Page Marketing Plan
Marketing Mediums
The Perfect Press Release
Defining Your Target Audience

Saline Courthouse Museum is featured on OSIYOTV, credit: Cherokee Nation

Finding Your Story and Amplifying It Through Strategic Marketing

In just 13 years, Cherokee Nation has leveraged its passion for education and dedication to the preservation and promotion of its heritage to develop a robust cultural tourism program that draws thousands of visitors annually to experience its award-winning cultural, specialty and event tours, six Cherokee Nation museums, two Cherokee Nation welcome centers, various Cherokee Nation retail operations and more.

Throughout the 66,000 acres of Cherokee Nation, the Tribe's culture and heritage are woven into the fabric of each community. The Cherokee language, created by Sequoyah in 1821, is still celebrated today and marks each tribal building and street sign in this richly historical community.

Following the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Cherokees were forcibly removed from their traditional homelands in the Southeast and relocated to present-day Oklahoma. In 1841, Tahlequah was named the capital city and the Cherokee people began rebuilding their nation. Various buildings and cultural sites used in the Tribe's robust tourism offerings date back to the post-removal era, including two courthouses, a prison and more.

The courthouse is the oldest government building in the state, and for many years the prison served all of Indian Territory. Other buildings of interest include the Cherokee National History Museum, the John Ross Museum in Park Hill, Sequoyah's Cabin Museum in Sallisaw and the Saline Courthouse Museum in Rose.

Though remnants of the Tribe's past have always remained visible, it's hard to believe that it was just 13 years ago when Cherokee Nation began its tribal

tourism efforts. Cherokee Nation Cultural Tourism operates under the Tribe's business arm and is tasked with historic preservation, cultural promotion and sharing the story of the Cherokee people with the world.

"Cultural tourism continues to evolve, as does the way we approach how we share our story," says Travis Owens, a Cherokee citizen and director of the Tribe's cultural tourism department. "For Cherokee Nation, a lot of our museum and cultural sites are the backdrop for where our history actually occurred. That adds a lot of interest and appeal to visitors and has generated a great sense of pride for Cherokee citizens. I try not to think of tourism in itself or our culture as a product. You just have to define what you have to offer, decide what you're comfortable sharing, and discover how it appeals to visitors."

The department launched the Visit Cherokee Nation campaign in 2019 as part of an overall strategic plan that Owens says promotes an authentic understanding of the Cherokee people. The department incorporated tribal identity, Native language and culture into its brand and marketing strategies.

The campaign hopes to draw visitors to northeast Oklahoma for an immersive experience throughout the 14 counties of the Cherokee Nation. In addition to its museum offerings, the website features entertainment destinations and iconic attractions both owned and operated by the Tribe and partner agencies. Through the Visit Cherokee Nation website, guests can customize a short daytrip to the area or a weeklong experience with activities for all ages. They can even get a firsthand look at the museums with 3D virtual tours, which launched in 2020 to maintain engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As with any high-volume operation, the key to Cherokee Nation's success has involved extensive strategic planning. It also meant taking control of its historical narrative and developing the program with input from tribal citizens. The Tribe even hosted community listening sessions for about two years before defining the purpose and path for the cultural tourism program.

"You just have to define what you have to offer, decide what you're comfortable sharing, and discover how it appeals to visitors."

From those community listening sessions "it was pretty clear where the boundaries were, what information was deemed shareable, and what information was sacred to our people and our communities," Owens explains. "This is something we revisit often to ensure our efforts remain accurate, authentic and true to the Cherokee perspective."

When the Tribe began its cultural tourism program, it offered small, guided tours of buildings circa post-Indian removal, such as the prison and national capital built in 1869. An interpretive story was developed that focused on four key areas for tour development, which included Cherokee Nation History, Cherokees and the Civil War, Cherokee Old Settlers and Will Rogers.

Through a long-range, adaptable strategic plan, the Tribe began its program, which is now supported by a team of nearly 60 employees. The team includes an array of positions that range from sales, marketing, interpretive guides, historians, researchers, retail staff and more.

The marketing plan is often reevaluated and refreshed based on industry trends, research, and the ability to connect and engage with target audiences. For Cherokee Nation, the primary audience is largely a regional one, composed of a 55 and older traveler who originates from within a four- to six-hour range, according to Owens.

The cultural tourism team develops and manages the marketing approval process, including social media where Cherokee Nation has invested heavily in the past year, creating new opportunities for immersive and engaging content that educates and entertains their target audience. Media placements are based on an overall strategy that also builds brand awareness and follows an annual budget.

The department also benefits from the Tribe's Emmy Award-winning docuseries, "Osiyo: Voices of the Cherokee People," which is aired in various markets across the nation and online. A portion of each show is dedicated to highlighting the diverse ecoscapes and cultural experiences within the Cherokee Nation, which raises awareness and interest in tourism offerings. Last year, OsiyoTV premiered the first-of-its-kind, interactive Cherokee history timeline on its website that explores important moments in Cherokee history from pre-European contact to present day. Website visitors can identify any century of interest and learn more about specific events on the timeline by accessing short videos, historic images and original documents.

"These efforts have elevated education about Cherokee history and culture and amplified our presence as a cultural destination not to be missed," Owens says. "Many picturesque and historic locations are featured throughout the show, including the museums and cultural sites, as a way to introduce viewers to the robust tourism offerings available when you Visit Cherokee Nation."

Owens says the Tribe's strategic plan also includes partner organizations as the department obtains items on loan for its museums and participates in co-op advertising.

"We are thankful to have a wide range of partnerships available to help us achieve our goals, but they're not all alike. You have to find common ground, interest and purpose that align with your mission, work hard, and certainly think outside the box.

Despite its impressive growth over the past decade, the department still has challenges, including addressing and correcting stereotypes that have been prevailing for decades.

Travis Owens

"The work is really never done," Owens explains. "We have to be proactive about correcting historical inaccuracies and putting a stop to hurtful and divisive stereotypes. We want visitors to like and love the Cherokee Nation, but sometimes the first step is helping them unlearn what they've been told and help them get to know us in an intimate and meaningful way. We have a great staff, and we work hard to ensure that visitors feel safe to ask questions free of judgment. In fact, that's exactly what we want. That's why we're here."

By Kim Baca

The One-Page Marketing Plan

When it comes to building the perfect marketing plan, pundits suggest crafting 15-page (or more) guides to expertly define the scope of your outreach programs. On the other hand, a hospitality industry legend tells the story of Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines and Texas businessman Rollin King, who built the plan for the airline on a cocktail napkin. The napkin featured just a diagram of a triangle, with each point spotlighting the name of one Texas city. A year later, the low-cost airline was born.

A marketing plan is an essential tool in the building of a successful hospitality business. While a cocktail napkin may not offer enough detail for hospitality marketers, a long plan may also be impractical, doing nothing more than overwhelming marketers, causing them to abandon the lengthy planning process altogether in order to focus on more "urgent" day-to-day tasks.

To help keep your marketing on track, utilize the below one-page strategy to help keep you focused on what's important until you find the time to build the longer, more detailed plan.

Product

- Understand and define your business.
- What does your product offer? (Remember who, what, where, when, why, how)
- Who are your staff?
- What can visitors do?
- Where are you located?
- Is your product seasonal?

When it comes to defining the why in your tourism product, be sure to define your "aha!" moments. What are the experiences that will leave your visitors raving and wanting to come back for more? Not sure? Often your "aha!" moments are the experiences that have your customers exclaiming:

- That is so cool!
- I didn't know that.
- Hang on, I need to get my camera.
- You are the best.

People

Not all of your visitor experiences will appeal to all audiences. A wine tasting dinner might not be appropriate for the family market while a strenuous hike might be less interesting to senior travelers, which is why it is critical to understand the audience you are trying to reach.

- Who is your customer?
- What do they want?
- How old are they?
- Where are they from?
- How much money are they willing to spend?
- What are their needs?

Price

Setting the right price for your experience can be a make or break proposition, but not charging enough can be a quick path to failure.

On the other hand, keep in mind the following quote by Eric Dolanksky, Associate Professor of Marketing at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, "How much the customer is willing to pay for the product has very little to do with cost and has very much to do with how much they value the product or service they're buying." If your produce is special, be sure to price it as such.

Promotion

Once you've defined the above three elements, determine which are the best marketing mediums for your audience. You can find a more complete list in the following idea exchange, but a few to consider are:

- Website
- Visitor guide/brochure
- Email list
- Social media
- Public relations
- Partnership marketing

Marketing Mediums

A well-stocked marketing toolkit will utilize a variety of mediums. Below is a list of the many tools you may wish to utilize to reach your potential and existing customers.

Rather than overreaching in your marketing efforts, it is recommended you select just a few marketing tools to start and focus on doing them well before moving onto the next marketing initiative.

Traditional Marketing

These tried-and-true marketing methods are effective in getting the word out, but they can also be costly to maintain and update.

- Brochures/catalogs/fliers
- Notices in public places and visitor spaces
- Newspaper, magazine, radio and television advertising
- Billboards, area signage
- Hosting customer events or partner networking events
- Maintaining a visitor center or kiosk

Public Relations

Generating media exposure is often considered "free" advertising, but remember that building relationships with the media can take time and require special care.

- Newspaper, magazine articles
- Radio, television news announcements
- Blog write ups/articles
- External social media promotional posts/influencers
- On-site live "remotes" by radio and TV broadcasters

Online/Digital Marketing

Online marketing can be a cost-effective strategy but it requires consistent engagement and frequent updates.

- Website (dedicated to visitor offerings, not the same as a tribal website)
- Social media channels, guest posts at other social media sites
- Emails/e-newsletters
- Blog posts
- Online videos
- Banner advertising
- Listings on review sites (Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.)
- Webinars
- Consumer surveys
- Mobile apps
- Push text notifications

Relationship Marketing

Building partnerships can help you amplify your marketing message, but these relationships require careful tending.

- Hotel concierges
- Visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, state tourism offices
- Welcome centers
- Tour operators
- Travel agents
- Travel trade shows
- Local businesses for corporate events
- Other, similar marketing entities

AIANTA

AIANTA provides a number of marketing opportunities to promote your tourism destinations.

- Add AIANTA to your press release/newsletter distribution
- Sign up for a free listing at NativeAmerica.travel
- Join AIANTA at domestic and international tourism trade shows
- Ask for a social media mention or inclusion in AIANTA's newsletters
- Attend and network at the American Indian Tourism Conference

The Perfect Press Release

A press release, also called a news release, is a short (usually one page) announcement about a new or exciting activity, event, appearance, employee or other development that can be sent to media outlets for possible inclusion in an article or a news program.

When building this newsworthy announcement, always remember the basics: who, what, where, when, why and how. Below is a template that can be used when you build your press announcements.

Headline:
COMPANY NAME IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE SOME REALLY EXCITING NEWS

Subheader
The [who: company name] will launch this [what: exciting new product] [when: in time for Natve American Heritage Month], in partnership with another really great company.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY, STATE (Month Date, Year)

Opening paragraph: The [who: company name] will launch this [what: exciting new product] [when: when will it launch?], in partnership with another really great company. [Why: This news is important because …]. [Where: where will this event or activity take place or where did the event get its start?]

Second paragraph: "We are thrilled to [what: reiterate the product and why it is exciting] said [who: company dignitary, title]. "This is especially exciting because [what: more details about the product, expand on what was mentioned in the first paragraph."]

Third paragraph: Optional, but use this paragraph to fill in any remaining details. Also add your call to action (CTA) at the end of the paragraph. A call to action is anything you want the reader to do, ie, click here, buy now, sign up, learn more, etc.

End of Press Release – Note the end of the press release by typing three ### symbols at the very end, centered, or use a more historic end release symbol, - 30 -, which is also centered.

Contact Information: Include the contact information for more information, including contact name, title, organization, phone number and email, if appropriate.

Make sure the headline is in all caps, is bold, and is no longer than two lines.

The subheader should be in italics, no more than three lines long and should expand on what is included in the headline.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE should always be in all caps. Open the press release with the city and state, followed by the announcement date in parentheses.

Something in this paragraph should be new or noteworthy. Keep this paragraph brief but provide a complete overview. IF a media outlet only picks up the first paragraph, make sure there is enough content here for readers to understand what the story is about.

Any text you include in a release may get picked up in the story, so be careful not to include contact information (like a CEO's personal phone number) that shouldn't be seen by the general public.

Defining Your Target Audience

The U.S. Travel Association estimates that there were some 2.3 billion person-trips taken in 2019. While it's nice to assume all 2.3 billion people would be interested in your tourism product, it is unlikely that is the case.

Moreover, even if every traveler in the U.S. were interested in your tourism product, there are few businesses that have the infrastructure to handle that kind of volume.

Most companies do not have the time, budget or human resources to market to billions of travelers. Carefully selecting your "target market" or the audience that is most likely to visit your destination or enterprise can help keep your marketing costs under control while also helping to ensure you are producing a relevant marketing message.

Who is Your Target Audience?

Your target audience can be extremely limited in scope. Perhaps it's just local senior centers and travel clubs. Or it can be a more expansive group, such as global adventurers. The who is as individual as your destination, but generally incorporates most if not all of the following factors:

- Gender
- Age
- Location (local, regional, domestic, international)
- Income
- Profession
- Marital status and/or size of traveling party
- Hobbies/interests

Target audiences may vary, even for the same business based upon your offerings. Sampling a local culinary speciality will appeal to a very different traveler than an experience that involves spending the night in a rustic setting that does not come with electricity or running water.

Customer Profile/Buyer Persona

When building your marketing plan, creating a buyer persona or profile for your ideal customer(s) can be helpful in visualizing how to craft messaging for that customer group.

It helps to first narrow down your concept of what the ideal visitor looks like. Perhaps, the profile might read:

> My ideal customer is a "A 55-year-old man who lives within 50 miles of Albuquerque and who is looking to spend his retirement income on learning new things and meeting new people. In his free time, he belongs to travel clubs and enjoys live music and playing board games."

It can be easy to fall into the trap of wanting to build a one-size-fits-all, feel-good message across all your marketing platforms, but it is important to remember that lots of likes and clicks on social media do not always translate to direct sales. Certainly photos of cute pets do exceptionally well across social media. Posting a picture of your tribal chairman with a puppy may generate significant likes and possibly a feel-good moment with potential travelers, but if those travelers can't meet the puppy (or the tribal chairman), the post may do very little for your tourism marketing efforts.

The puppy example also emphasizes why understanding your audience is so important. Only you can know if the puppy image will work with your audience, but not understanding who is viewing your marketing materials is a sure way to offer a confusing narrative about what travelers can expect when they visit.

Waikikī Beach with Lē'ahi in the background by NaHHA / Vincent Lim

Chapter 10
Measuring Success

Planning for the Future

Tourism data expert Daniel Nāho'opi'i, former Director of Tourism Research for the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, discusses why quantifiable tourism data should be a part of any visitor marketing plan.

Ask any tourism marketing professional about their destination and they'll quickly share stories about the beautiful landscapes, the warm hospitality of the people and the uniquely local food, entertainment and culture.

Ask them which travelers are visiting the destination and the answers might not come so quickly. Collecting data about visitors is often at the bottom of the priority pile for busy marketers. But when it comes to collecting data, tourism is one place where the old, "I'm not a numbers person" adage just won't fly.

"It is critical for marketers to collect and understand tourism data to align the customer expectation with the destination experience," says Daniel Nāho'opi'i, the Executive Vice President at Honolulu-based SMS Research & Marketing Services.

Understanding Your Customer

At its core, tourism research consists of "gathering information about people's behaviors, ideas, attitudes and preferences," according to the *Research Guide for Tourism Operators*. The guide, released by Canada's Destination British Columbia, further states "Research also aims to measure and assess this information for decision-making purposes."

For Nāho'opi'i, a Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) who led the tourism research program at the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) for nearly 11 years, research boils down to one main objective.

"You need to understand your customer," he says.

Gathering this knowledge needs to be more than just listening to a few conversations or scrolling through social media comments.

"You need to understand your customer."

"Anecdotes and hearsay inherently have bias built in," says Nāho'opi'i. In other words, opinions are good, facts are better. Facts are especially important when they could lead to the creation (or loss) of thousands of jobs.

Take the State of Hawai'i, which welcomes more than 10 million visitors annually. Recent research shows that there has been a noticeable growth in interest in the island destination with travelers from the Southwestern U.S.

"This is a completely new market for Hawai'i, which could mean new customers and new air routes," said Nāho'opi'i.

In April 2021, Hawaiian Airlines announced new non-stop service from Austin, Texas—the first Texas destination for the airline and only the third city in Texas to offer non-stop service to Hawai'i.

The data shouldn't be a surprise to anyone who follows HTA's Tourism Industry Research on its public-facing *Symphony Dashboards* research page. The page shows that 68% of visitors to the Hawaiian Islands came from the US West in 2021, reflecting a dramatic increase in share over May 2019 numbers, which indicated just 49% of the state's visitors came from the West.

This shift in travel patterns isn't just of colloquial interest. New air routes have a significant impact on the jobs market in Hawai'i. The aviation industry supports nearly a quarter million jobs and contributes more than 20% to the entire state GDP.

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"There are a lot of shifting demographics here in Hawai'i," said Nāho'opi'i. "Hopefully the local small businesses are keeping pace."

Small businesses paying attention to these numbers have a strategic advantage, especially if they started marketing to Texas-based travelers before their competitors.

Sovereign Tribes, Connected Economies

It isn't just small businesses that can benefit from strong research.

In 2017, the *Oklahoma Native Impact Report* queried 15 of the 38 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma to create a dataset of all Oklahoma tribal production.

The survey found that Oklahoma's tribes (which make up 13% of state's population) support 96,177 jobs—tribal and non-tribal—and $4.6 billion in wages. Moreover, employment by tribes has grown by more than 10% over the six years since the report was previously released.

Clearly, Oklahoma tribes are an important contributor to the state's economy. In fact, the study found that tribal activity is the ninth-largest industry in the State of Oklahoma.

The importance of tribal economic impact is a concept that continues to stump non-Native stakeholders who don't understand that "sovereignty" does not equate to tribes not contributing to local and state economies.

While sovereignty may be misunderstood, a report showing a collective tribal investment of $200 million into the upgrade and rehabilitation of more than 27,000 miles of roads, highways and bridges, as reported in the Oklahoma study, is a much harder statistic to ignore by local and regional elected officials.

Start Small

While the Oklahoma report is impressive, its breadth should not discourage destinations and businesses looking to start their own tourism research program.

For them, Nāho'opi'i advises them to "start small."

Daniel Nāho'opi'i

At an introductory level, just understanding customer behaviors can be a good start.

"Learn what the visitor's age and ethnicity is," advises Nāho'opi'i. "Are they traveling with family or solo?"

Customers visiting gift shops or other retail locations can reveal significant intelligence. Having clerks complete a daily guest count is an easy way to gather data. A guest sign-in book can also lead to additional intelligence. Where are the guests coming from? Are they local? How did they hear about your destination or business?

Asking them to leave an email for additional follow up can lead to even more avenues for data collection. Nāho'opi'i advises encouraging customers to fill out comment cards for immediate information.

It's simple to put together a survey and occasionally send it to former and future customers. Ask them what they liked about their experiences and what they are looking for in the future.

There's one key question to ask, says Nāho'opi'i.

"Would you come back?"

Tourism marketers, even those who don't have a retail location, have other resources available to them in their data toolbox, including website and social media analytics.

Check where your digital customers are coming from. What pages are they visiting? What pages do they stay on for the longest time? What kinds of posts do they react to best? This information, he says, can provide a wealth of data to tourism marketers.

Budget

For destinations and organizations ready to move beyond DIY data collection, Nāho'opi'i advises allocating 10% of their marketing budget to data and research. The monies don't necessarily need to be allocated towards a research firm, however.

Distributing a coupon through paid advertising, and then tracking who is using the coupon can also provide valuable information.

Collective Intelligence

When it comes to collecting accurate tourism data, Nāho'opi'i, who also serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA), advises marketers to not go it alone.

Joining an organization such as TTRA can be invaluable for the networking and education it provides. TTRA advocates for "higher standards in travel and tourism research" while encouraging tourism professionals to strive for those same standards.

"The best thing about the organization is that it merges the data side with the practitioner side," said Nāho'opi'i. "When you're networking with your colleagues, you know the discussions are valid."

By Monica Poling

Sample Visitor Survey

Before collecting visitor data—whether it's a one-question checkbox or a multi-person focus group—it's important to have the entire team define what answers they are seeking and how they plan to use the data gathered.

Also, don't forget to involve front-line staff in the survey process. They have a great deal of knowledge when it comes to interacting with guests and will be especially able to define how long a customer may be willing to spend in completing a survey or comment card.

The two following survey types can provide basic intelligence for marketers planning their next survey.

Visitor Satisfaction

- Was the experience informative/fun/engaging?
- Did you feel the staff was helpful/friendly?
- Did you feel the experience was worth the admission fee/time?
- Did you feel the facility/experience was clean/well-maintained/efficiently organized?
- Were all the facilities open/available during your visit
- Did you feel comfortable experiencing a new culture/cuisine/experience?
- Would you come back?
- Did the restaurant/gift shop offer enough variety to meet your needs?
- Would you recommend this experience to a friend?

Visitor Demographics

- Where are you from (local, regional, domestic, international)
- How many people are in your party today?
- Would you recommend this experience to a friend?

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- What are the ages of the people in your party? (In general, providing age ranges result in more responses than asking an open-ended question)
- How did you hear about us?
- Why did you visit (facility, destination, city, tribe) today?
- Did you post any images/information from this experience on social media?

NaHHA's Hi'ilani Shibata leads a cultural training class, credit: Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association

Measuring Happy Communities

For the State of Hawai'i, healthy communities are an important component of the tourism marketing effort.

"Healthy communities translate into happy residents, which, in turn, makes the visitor experience even more meaningful," reads the introduction to HTA's *2018 Annual Report* to the Hawai'i State Legislature. Embedded into that statement is an important tourism metric that marketers often forget to track. Locals are a significant part of a destination's audience.

Measuring sentiment is a model Nāho'opi'i says could be an important metric for Native destinations and cultural heritage sites throughout the country. This will ensure constituents feel they are heard, he says. Tracking sentiment is especially important in communities where stakeholders—from tribal council leaders to elders to local residents—worry that visitors will disrespect heritage and culture or even downright trample on sacred traditions.

Measuring sentiment can include the following questions.

- Are indigenous communities invited to provide input on cultural programming?
- Does the tourism experience offer meaningful benefits to the community? In many cases, this response may mean more than just creating new jobs.
- If new jobs are created for tourism enterprises, are these jobs available to tribal members or community
  residents? Are jobs for community members only available at an entry level or do they have access to management jobs?
- Will Native or local community members be the "guides" who share culture with visitors? Will non-Natives also share Native culture? How will non-Natives be trained to share this culture?
- Is all content shared in a respectful manner with visitors? How will sacred spaces and place names, local-only events and resident housing locations be withheld from visitors? Who defines what is considered sacred and what will be off-limits? Who will police or monitor the crossing of boundaries?
- Will visitor programs be developed in a sustainable way that does not deplete area resources?

When measuring sentiment, it is important to remember that the survey does not necessarily measure what is true, but rather it measures what stakeholders believe to be true. Sometimes the data will reveal not the failure of a program, but rather the failure of the program to keep stakeholders accurately informed.

Secondary Research

According to the State of Indian Country Tourism, an annual study conducted by AIANTA, most Native tourism marketers (55%) rely upon their state tourism office for their tourism data. This data, readily available on most tourism office websites, can provide excellent insights into area visitors. But it isn't the only source of external data—frequently called secondary research—available to hospitality marketers. Other places to search include:

Government Agencies

- The National Travel & Tourism Office (NTTO)
- National Park Service (NPS)
  - irma.nps.gov/stats
- Tourism Industry Associations
  - U.S. Travel Association
  - National Tour Association
- Tourism Offices
  - Local Convention & Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce frequently provide free research for members and constituents. Occasionally, they will also share tribal economic impact reports upon request.

- Academic Institutions
  Places to start include AIANTA's partners such as
  - The George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies
  - Arizona State University
  - San Diego State University
  - Also check universities by topic of interest.
    - Dr. Kyle Dean of Oklahoma City University conducted the 2017 Oklahoma Native Impact Report.
    - Oregon State University and the University of Maine have excellent research on agritourism
- Professional Research Consultants
  - SMS Research & Marketing Services
  - STR
  - Tourism Economics
  - CIC Research
  - Mandala Research
  - Longwoods
- Credit Card Companies
  - American Express
  - Visa
- Media Articles
  - When in doubt as to where to start, check the Google "News" search with your topic of interest followed by economic impact or research.

Freelance Writers

Kim Baca (Navajo Nation/Santa Clara Pueblo)

Kim Baca, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and Santa Clara Pueblo, is a content creator and an occasional freelance writer, who has contributed to such publications as Indian Country Today, Civil Eats and High Country News. She's also a former writer for regional newspapers and The Associated Press, where she has written about art, business and travel.

Cail E. Chehak (Klamath Tribes)

Cail E. Chehak, a Klamath Tribal citizen, serves as Tribal Relations & Outreach Manager for AIANTA. She works to cultivate partnerships to support AIANTA's programs. Cail has worked with arts, economic development and environmental programs for the National Congress of American Indians, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the Indian Arts & Crafts Association. While Arts & Tourism Coordinator for the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Cail co-authored Native Peoples of the NW: A Traveler's Guide to Land, Art & Culture.

Sara Calvosa Olson (Karuk)

Sara Calvosa Olson is a Karuk writer living with her soulmate, raising two large teenage sons. She has a regular column in News From Native California that explores California Indian foodways and reconnection to traditional Indigenous ingredients. Chími nu'am! (Let's eat!)

Susan Myrland

Susan Myrland is a freelance writer based in Southern California. She's covered art, heritage and cultural tourism for the San Diego Tourism Authority, San Diego Union-Tribune, Palm Springs Life, and Me Yah Whae, the tribal magazine of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

Jan Halliday

Travel writer Jan Halliday has covered the west coast of North America, from Alaska to Mexico, for newspapers, magazines and guidebooks. Her articles focus on educational vacations and detailed itineraries based on readers' special interests, with recommendations for good food, lodging and sightseeing along the way. For a decade she explored Native American culture and art, and is the author of Native Peoples of the Northwest" and Native Peoples of Alaska: A Traveler's Guide to Land, Art and Culture (Sasquatch Books). She has lived and worked in New York, Arizona and Oregon. She currently resides near Seattle.

Bruce Rettig

Bruce, AIANTA's Tribal Content Developer, is an award-winning author, charged with scoping out exciting tribal tourism opportunities throughout the United States. His published works and biography can be found at BruceRettig.com. As a founding member of Tahoe Writers Works, he served ten years as publisher of their literary journal, EDGE. Bruce served as president of Charter Advertising/Design, Inc. for more than thirty-two years. During that time, his duties included copywriting for brochures, magazine ads and websites. Most of his projects featured his photography. With a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado, and an emphasis in photography, he has captured strong images for his clients. He has worked with the Duck Valley Shoshone Paiute Tribe, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Ely Shoshone Tribe, Washoe Tribe of California & Nevada, Stewart Indian School, the Nevada Indian Commission and Nevada's Indian Territory.

Mālia Sanders, Kanoe Takitani-Puahi, Ilihia Gonson, (Kānaka Maoli, Native Hawaiian) Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA)

A special thank you for the tireless efforts of the team at NaHHA for working with AIANTA to make sure we got our Hawai'i references just right. (All mistakes are ours!)

Tim Trudell (Santee Sioux Nation)

Tim Trudell (Santee Sioux Nation) is a freelance writer and online content creator based in Omaha, Nebraska. His numerous outlets include the Omaha World-Herald, Omaha CBS affiliate KMTV, Omaha Magazine, Nebraska Magazine, TravelAwaits, Living Here Midwest, Culture Crush, and RentPath. Tim and his wife Lisa have written the travel blog thewalkingtourists.com since 2011, primarily focusing on Midwest attractions. They have also co-written 100 Things to Do in Omaha Before You Die, Unique Eats and Eateries of Omaha and 100 Things to Do in Nebraska Before You Die.

Samantha M. Williams

Samantha M. Williams is a writer and historian who focuses on the history of the Native American Boarding School system. She has a PhD in history from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and served as a research consultant for the recently established Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum. Her book on the history of the Stewart Indian School will be published by the University of Nebraska Press in spring 2022.

Karie Luidens

Karie Luidens is a writer of criticism, commentary, and current events. She has lived and worked in all corners of the country, from the Northeast to the Southwest and back again. Between writing projects, she also dabbles in drawing and graphic design.

Monica Poling

After having spent more than a decade as a journalist with one of the leading travel trade news websites, Monica Poling turned in her daily byline in order to manage AIANTA's marketing, public relations and content development efforts. In her role as Marketing & Public Relations Manager for AIANTA, she works to bring awareness of Indian Country tourism.

Jacqueline Robledo

Jacqueline works as AIANTA's Content and Social Media Coordinator. She holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communications from Arizona State University. Before joining AIANTA Jacqueline spent time reporting on the health team for PBS affiliate, Cronkite News where she wrote about health disparities in the Southwest. Jacqueline also reported for Times Media Group, contributing to multiple news publications in the Phoenix Area.

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Working With AIANTA

For Native-owned hospitality businesses and tribal enterprises, AIANTA offers a variety of promotional, marketing and education programs, many for no charge. Below are just a few programs that might be of interest.

American Indian Tourism Conference
Held every fall, the American Indian Tourism Conference (AITC) is the only tourism conference in the U.S. dedicated to Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism and is a premier showcase for sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices. www.aianta.org/aitc

Education, Technical Assistance & Training
AIANTA works closely with the hospitality industry to provide educational opportunities to help tribes and Native-owned businesses build authentic cultural tourism experiences.

AIANTA Webinar Series
AIANTA produces robust training webinars on a variety of topics, in partnership with tribal and tourism industry experts. www.aianta.org/webinar-series

Go International
For Indian Country destinations and enterprises looking to attract an international audience, AIANTA produces the annual Go International training every spring. www.aianta.org/go-international

Cultural Heritage Certificate Programs
AIANTA partners with several universities to offer professional certificates in Cultural Heritage Tourism. www.aianta.org/cultural-heritage-certificate

Visitor Outreach
AIANTA has been connecting tribal tourism destinations and experiences with overseas buyers and media since 2009. www.aianta.org/international

Marketing & Public Relations
AIANTA provides a strong voice for tribes by sharing Indian Country's unique tourism stories and experiences to media audiences in the U.S. and abroad.

NativeAmerica.travel
NativeAmerica.travel, AIANTA's consumer-facing destination website provides ideas and inspiration for visiting Indigenous communities and businesses in the U.S. Federally recognized tribes, state-recognized tribes and Native-owned hospitality businesses can claim a page on the website and contribute their experiences, accommodations, attractions, annual events and destinations. www.nativeamerica.travel

AIANTA Funding Opportunities
A monthly newsletter produced by AIANTA features available grant and funding opportunities that may support funding for cultural, heritage, recreation, tourism and related programs. www.aianta.org/funding-for-cultural-tourism/

Tribal Relations & Outreach
Need assistance navigating AIANTA's resources? The Tribal Relations & Outreach team are available to assist. Start with an email or a Zoom call to learn more about AIANTA programming. info@aianta.org

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