



WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

TAKING A SNAPSHOT OF YOUR SITE

In this phase you will carry out an assessment of **the site** you want to bring tourists to. Following the steps below as completely as possible will make each additional step easier. Use the links from the “Assess Your Raw Materials” web page to help you.

Step 1. Form a Team. Even if you are working with a **single site**, you need to get input from all the potential stakeholders. In this step you must identify all your potential partners in this venture, and others who may be affected. The first form in this packet will help you to identify these people. We recommend that you use this list to form a working group who will collaborate on the rest of the assessment and planning process.

Step 2. Create a Market Profile. To effectively promote your site and develop it to best suit the needs of both visitors and residents, you should decide who your desired audience is. What sorts of people are visiting now, and what sort of people do you *want* visiting? Once you have a handle on this, it will be easier to develop a plan to market your site to the right people. Use our forms to create your own “resource directory” of travel statistics.

Step 3. Inventory Your Site and Community. At this point you need to get away from your computer screen and out on the ground. A **site assessment** form has been provided that should capture the important viewable wildlife species and habitat information and any potential sensitivity issues that might exist. Remember to work closely with your local natural resource agencies for this aspect. But you also need to figure out what other related tourism resources your community has and where they are located. You can be more successful at bringing and holding people in your area if your site is integrated with other nearby attractions and places to stay and eat!

Step 4. Map Your Site. This step involves translating your inventory onto a map, to help you prepare to guide visitors through a satisfying experience. Getting some mapping supplies will make this a lot easier. If they aren't available locally, we have provided a link for where to get what you need. If you can't afford professional stuff, that's okay: make do - butcher paper, markers and a map of your site will be fine.

Step 5. Create a Calendar. You have mapped your site in space: now map it in time. What attractions are at their best during which months or seasons of the year? Are there any special events or festivals that you would like to draw people to? What times of year do you need extra income? Having this data will enable you to determine which attractions you should be promoting.

1. FORMING A TEAM

Many people around your site will be impacted by successful nature tourism, either positively or negatively. By creating a thumbnail sketch of the interested parties, you will gain a better idea of how to approach each of them, and who should be brought into the planning process. In the chart below, list the relevant groups or individuals for each category, and try to think of all the ways each party will be affected, both positively and negatively, by nature tourism at your site, and how they could help you in the planning process.

Remember that you may be dealing with sensitive ecological systems and potentially threatened or endangered species. Therefore, it is essential that you work with the legal authorities, such as the state and federal Departments of Fish and Wildlife and of Natural Resources, as you proceed with your planning process.

People to consider:

Land owners/neighbors

Local governments

Tourism organizations

Recreation groups

Conservation groups

Private sector tourism operators

Students

State/federal wildlife agencies

Native American Tribes

Chamber of commerce

Opinion leaders

Teachers

Local businesses and industry

School youth

2. CREATE A MARKET PROFILE

Marketing strategy checklist

- Use your vision and assessment materials to define your community and or site and surrounding area.
- Identify your target audience or users
- Establish the marketing category (e.g., RV traveling seniors, high-end ecotourists, casual nature travelers, etc.)
- Determine whether your community/product will be a market category leader, follower, challenger, or specialized niche item.
- Describe the unique characteristics of your nature experiences and/ or services that distinguish them from the competition.
- Define whether your pricing will be above, below, or at parity with your competitors and establish whether you will lead, follow, or ignore changes in competitors' pricing.
- Identify the distribution channels through which your products/services will be made available to the target market/end users.
- Describe how advertising and promotions will convey the unique characteristics of your products or services.
- Describe any research and development activities or market research plans that are unique to your business.
- Describe the image or personality of your community and its products or services
- Use a visitor site survey (one is provided) to maintain visitor information once your site is open to public visitation

Site Visitor Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in our visitor survey. Your answers will be held in confidence; however, summary statistics will be used to improve services for you and other visitors.

1. How many times, including today, have you visited this location during the past 12 months?

2. Other than today, when have you visited this location?

Spring Summer Fall Winter

3. Usually, what is your main mode of transportation to this location?

Commercial Airline Personal car Other:

4. How many days and nights did you stay in our area during the last year?

Trip 1: _____ days, _____ nights

Trip 2: _____ days, _____ nights

Trip 3: _____ days, _____ nights

5. What three things did you like most about your visit?

1.

2.

3.

Date: _____

6. What three things did you not like about your visit?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

7. When seeking information about an area, would you rather (mark just one)

Read about it in the: newspaper book brochure directory

Ask a: friend or acquaintance travel agent visitors bureau

Watch/hear a: TV program radio program TV ad radio ad

Word of mouth: while still at home while traveling in the area

Other:

8. What sources of information did you use in preparation for this trip?

9. How far in advance did you plan your trip?

spur of the moment 1-2 months 3-6 months over 6 months

10. What is your home town? _____

3. INVENTORY

Now you need to get out onto your site and figure out what resources you have. Enlist the help of your newly formed team to do this. Local knowledge of your area is invaluable in this step. If there are tour guides or naturalists in your area, see if they can arrange a tour for key people on your team, so you can really get a feel for what the assets of your site are. If there are birders, hunters, fishers or other recreational users of wildlife that already use your site, talk to them about what they see and use there. In addition to assessing potential tourist attractions, you will need to assess the tourism infrastructure to which your visitors will have access. Use our inventory sheet to help you in this process.

Site Inventory

Geographic Information

Site name:

Acres: _____

Nearest town/city: _____ Miles away: _____

Geologic Information

Significant geologic features/events with visual evidence:

- Metamorphic mountains
- Sedimentary Mountains
- "Ice Age flood" scouring

- Volcanic activity
- Columnar basalt cliffs
- Glacial scouring
- Glacial erratics
- Moraines
- Fault lines
- Mima mounds
- Caves
- Other: _____

Cultural/Historical Information

- Native American site/trail
- Famous homestead/settler structures/sites
- Lewis & Clark site
- Early trade route/cattle trail
- Other:

Habitat Information

- Forest Big game winter range Big game summer range
- Shrub steppe/arid grassland Western Washington grassland Fresh water wetlands/streams
- Marine/estuary Agricultural Small game
- Endangered species (specify): _____ Other: _____

Fish and Wildlife Viewing Information

Use "E for an excellent chance of seeing the species in a 15 minute visit during the appropriate season, "M" for a moderate chance of seeing the species in a 2-hour visit. For less than moderate, leave blank. You may need to expand this list for birds and wildlife of your site.

Wildlife: Spring _____ Summer _____ Fall _____ Winter _____

Salmonids

Chinook _____ Steelhead _____

Coho _____ Chum _____

Elk

Olympic _____

Rocky Mountain _____

Deer

Black-tailed _____

White-tailed _____

Mule _____

Other large mammals

Bighorn sheep _____ Mountain goats _____

Moose _____ Bear _____

Marine mammals _____

Waterfowl _____

Ducks _____

Geese _____

Swans _____

Shorebirds _____

Songbirds _____

Migrants _____

Residents _____

Raptors _____

Bald eagle _____

Peregrine falcon _____

Golden eagle _____

Grouse _____

Sage _____ Sharp-tailed _____ Blue _____

Ruffed _____ Spruce _____

Small mammals _____

Reptiles & amphibians _____

Turtles _____ Snakes _____ Frogs _____

Invertebrates _____

General _____ Butterflies _____

Other (specify) _____

Existing Condition

Estimated use by visitors:

Spring _____ Summer _____ Fall _____ Winter _____

Primary user conflicts:

Roads Open to Public: _____

Miles by type: Paved _____ Gravel _____ 4WD _____ ATV _____

Road hazards:

Winter access Yes/No

Number of pull-offs: Paved _____ Gravel _____ 4WD _____

Parking: Adequate _____ Inadequate _____

Approximate number of spaces for each type of parking:

Paved _____ Gravel _____ 4WD _____

Signs

Directional signs from: Federal highway State highway County roads City roads

On-site signs: Entrance sign at all major accesses Entrance sign at one access Pull-offs

Trailheads Interpretive displays

Property boundary (select one) Clear and regularly marked Good, but needs improvement

Poorly and irregularly marked None

Trails (number of miles): Foot: _____ Horse: _____

Mountain bike: _____ Winter: _____ Boardwalk: _____

Wheelchair: _____ Cross-country skiing: _____

Restrooms (number): Flush, ADA _____ Flush, non ADA: _____ Concrete vault: _____ Pit: _____

Other (number): Picnic areas: _____ Campground: _____ Viewing structures: _____

Boat ramp: _____ (condition: _____)

Needs

General suitability of site under existing conditions to sustain increased wildlife viewing use:

Excellent

Good

Moderate

Poor

Already overcrowded

Highest priority need to accommodate increased wildlife viewing recreation:

Additional needs (be specific):

1.

2.

3.

What simple project could be undertaken that would quickly increase wildlife viewing opportunities?

Surrounding Area

List the approximate number of the following that are within a 10 minute walk or drive of your site:

Hotels:

Motels:

Bed and Breakfasts:

Total beds:

Locally-owned restaurants:

Total restaurants:

Grocery stores or convenience stores

Other tourism destinations:

List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the number of the following that are within a half-hour walk or drive of your site:

Bus stations:

Train stations:

Airports:

Gas stations:

Other tourism destinations:

List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. CREATE A MAP

At this stage you are going to create a map of your site and the surrounding area, upon which you will base future planning activities. The process discussed is a simplified version of a more elaborate community mapping guide offered by the Sonoran Institute. The “quick-and-dirty” process outlined here will provide your group with a useful tool for planning for tourism, while the Sonoran Institute’s guide will help you create a high-quality set of maps suitable for presentations. Our web site has links to an order form for the Sonoran Institute’s guide, and to sources for mapping supplies.

You will need the following materials:

Maps of your region showing parks and protected areas, trails, historical and cultural attractions, streets and political boundaries, zoning and any other areas of interest.

Aerial photos and topographical maps, if available.

A 36” x 24” vellum mapping sheet

Pencils and erasers

Straight-edged rulers

Masking tape

Colored pencils

1. Choose a scale for your map. You should map your entire site, plus a surrounding area of a size you expect visitors to your site to use or want to know about.
2. Choose one of your maps that is approximately the same size as the vellum mapping sheet. Lay it under the mapping sheet and trace the map boundaries and significant physical features
3. Create a legend of symbols and colors that will represent specific types of information on the map. Keep it simple. Endeavor to have no more than 5-7 colors and 15 symbols on your map.
4. Using the site and community inventory completed previously, and the colors and symbols you have just agreed on, map your site’s assets. Stick with assets that scored an “M” or higher.

Use the maps to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

1. What areas do I want to focus on bringing tourists to? What areas are especially sensitive and may need to be protected from increased visitation?
2. What type of infrastructure - e.g. viewing blinds, trails, boardwalks, platforms, etc. - do I need, and where?
3. Do any of these areas require special attention in terms of protection, preservation, accessibility or enhancements?
4. Is there sufficient tourism infrastructure to ensure that visitors to the site will have their needs met and have a pleasant experience?
5. Are there neighboring attractions that will enhance the quality of visitors’ experience?
6. What is the overall quality of these resources? Consider cleanliness, safety, diversity of recreational and educational opportunities, authenticity, existing levels of use, etc.

5. CREATE A CALENDAR

In this step you will review the attractions that will bring tourists to your site, and figure out when the tourists should be coming. Take out your inventory and go through the items that you marked as an M or an H. Highlight up to 30 that you think tourists will be most likely to come see, or that you are most eager to share with others. Skip the section on services and infrastructure.

Write down each of the attractions in the appropriate column on the following page. Then put an "X" in the row next to the attraction, under each month that the attraction is available for viewing. Below is an example of this sort of "time-mapping."

When you're finished creating the calendar chart, there are two things you can do with it. First, you can use it to determine what months will be best for tourism at your site, by simply looking for the months that have the most attractions. Second, your team can discuss during seasons your community would most benefit from additional tourism. Then you can use your chart to determine which attractions you should be marketing, to bring tourists to your site when they're most wanted.

For example only

Washington State Wildlife Area:

	Sandhill Crane Staging	Waterfowl Migration	Heron & Egret Colony	Bald Eagle Nest
January				○
February				○
March	○		○	○
April	○	○	○	○
May		○	○	○
June			○	○
July			○	○
August	○	○	○	○
September	○	○		○
October				○
November				○
December				○

WEB LINKS

Here are some links to help you through the assessment process. These links are also available from our web page.*

1. Forming a Team

Federal Agency Index: www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov.html

State Agency Index: access.wa.gov/government/awstate.asp

Washington Tribes: www.wa.gov/wdfw/tourism/tribes.htm

Washington Counties: access.wa.gov/government/awco.asp

Washington Cities: access.wa.gov/government/awcity.asp

Regional Resources: access.wa.gov/government/awreg.asp

2. Baseline Economic Data

Travel Industry of America, Publications and Products: www.tia.org/pubs/domestic.asp

Census 2000 Data for Washington State: www.census.gov/census2000/states/wa.html

Washington Department of Tourism: www.experiencewashington.com/industry

Washington Department of Transportation: www.wsdot.wa.gov

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife: www.wa.gov/wdfw

4. Mapping Your Community

Maps:

The Map Store.biz: www.themapstore.biz/home_about.htm

The Map Store.com: www.themapstore.com

Mapping supplies:

Drafting Deals.com: store.yahoo.com/draftingdeals/index.html