



3D Project Cohort 1 Funding Recommendations

Executive Summary

The 3D Project provides rural communities across Nevada with the **opportunity to expand their tourism economies through an eight-month process** of discovery and reflection with our expert team of consultants followed by a project implementation phase funded through grants by Travel Nevada. Six projects were selected from sixteen applications to participate in the initial round of the 3D Project through a competitive process in October of 2022. The six projects were divided into two Cohorts: Cohort one began their consulting process in January of 2023.

The three Cohort 1 destinations – **White Pine County, Lincoln County, and Friends of Black Rock High Rock** – completed their consulting phase in August 2023 and received their 10-year Destination Plans. In December of 2023, each applied for a share of \$1 Million in 3D Project funding from Travel Nevada.

Those applications have been carefully reviewed and evaluated by a panel of experts including representatives from the **University Center for Economic Development, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, the Nevada Arts Council, The Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, the Nevada Small Business Development Center, the Bureau of Land Management, and Travel Nevada**. The panel considered each destination’s proposal based on selection criteria outlined in the project guidelines (attached), including alignment with the destination’s strategic goals and the recommendations outlined in the 10-year Destination Plan; feasibility through thoughtful planning, including a realistic timeline, clear budget, measurable outcomes and a capable and experienced implementation team; preservation and celebration of the destination's culture, heritage, and character and delivery of an authentic visitor experience.

Following lengthy discussion on the merits of each application, the working group offers the following funding recommendations for each destination.

White Pine County

Request amount: \$350,000

Recommended award: \$350,000 to fund branding, directional, and interpretive signage for three urban trail heads and 100 miles of existing and future non-motorized singletrack trails to improve visitor experience and connect to White Pine County's target visitor: Outdoor recreation lovers who also enjoy learning as they travel.

Recommended award percent: 100%

Feedback from the Working Group: This project aligns with the 10-year Destination Plan, is **feasible and likely to succeed, and addresses specifically the target traveler identified during the planning process.** While the proposal is not novel, it does represent a step towards improving the visitor experience and building reputation for the destination.

Project Summary (from White Pine County's application):

The community stakeholders for White Pine County completed a successful destination development process in partnership with Travel Nevada and our consultants. The results of that plan took into consideration the **results of the recreation asset mapping and gap analysis** we did with the National Park Service's River Trails and Conservation grant. The final 3D plan illustrates a clear picture of opportunities and the path the community should pursue in order to achieve the desired goals of the project. With the impending investments **expanding our outdoor recreation infrastructure** it was no surprise that our future involves providing exceptional and unique experiences that tie together recreation and education. There is an amazing opportunity here to **create the needed branding, directional, and interpretive signage** to that will be placed in our 3 urban trail heads and 100 miles of existing and future non motorized singletrack trails. These trail systems support hiking and mountain biking and connect into our downtown, tourism attractions, and lodging properties. Trail head and directional signage is an obvious need but we are most excited to use signage to tell our story to trail users. **Interpretive signage would include historic, geologic, Native American, and biological information.** It is recognized by trail user groups that good signage can make or break someone's experience. Adequate signage has been a long-identified shortfall in our trail user experience and does draw critique from many first time visitors. In cooperation with our land managers, city, Shoshone Tribe, and county and in partnership with the International Mountain Bike Association we are applying for funding to **design and fabricate county wide trail head and trail signage that would create the cohesive experience and the marketable identity that will allow our destination to grow and accomplish our tourism goals.**

Lincoln County

Request amount: \$398,195

Recommended award: \$348,720 to fund positions to build capacity for LCAT to implement initiatives outlined in the 10-year Destination Plan; equipment, materials, and supplies to offer unique and engaging visitor experiences, and funding for an assessment to reduce unproductive retail space in Lincoln County communities.

Recommended award percent: 88%

Not funded: Video production, Depot webstream

Feedback from the Working Group: The proposal is **ambitious, but closely ties to many of the objectives of the 10-year Destination Plan and pressures the local government to expand their tourism investments in line with their CEDS plan.** The working group recommends an award condition of working with SBDC to develop a plan for the tour startup. **The depot webcam is not tied to driving tourism or improving the visitor experience and does not connect to the destination plan. Video production could be more appropriately funded through a rural marketing grant during a future cycle.**

Project Summary (from Lincoln County's application):

The 3D 10-year plan clarified a vision for the expansion and enhancement of Lincoln County tourism objectives. We plan to attack our weaknesses and build on our strengths with creative approaches and compelling products and experiences. The projects that we plan to focus on will be developed independently with all of them reaching a main goal: to **generate increased revenue.**

- 1. Develop compelling products and experiences – Create guided experiences and bundled packages** that will encourage longer stays and stronger utilization of local services. This project concept will target each community to profile their strengths and uniqueness. This will also include downloadable guided tours, video shorts, key events, improved wayfinding, full mapping and stories to enrich visitor experience. The plan includes the development of a method of tracking visitation through services and visitation markers.
- 2. Address the issue of unused storefronts and buildings – Provide 3rd party assessment for “as-is” value and “prospective value” of shuttered and underutilized buildings** to encourage selling, leasing, or improving the spaces to enhance the first impression visitors have and provide locations for new businesses to develop.
- 3. Develop tourism organizational strength – Contract a professional (grant writer, lawyer, etc.) to develop a plan for a sustainable funding source for the Lincoln County Authority of Tourism** and establish County and City support for tourism's organizational strength and financial viability and create a staffed, more sustainable tourism organization in Lincoln County. Results will be seen in dedicated support of the tourism organization objectives, enhanced training offerings, and growth of new events and experiences.

Friends of Black Rock High Rock

Request amount: \$378,113

Recommended award: \$262,353 to fund a projects and grants manager to oversee project activities, initiatives to develop a sense of place and community identity through public art, efforts to restore and preserve cultural heritage elements of Guru Road, and expansion of tours and guided offerings.

Recommended award percent: 69%

Not funded: Existing staff salaries, printing costs (not eligible), items not directly related to the proposed project, items for which backup was not provided.

Feedback from the working group: This application **lacks thoroughness and there are concerns with the eligibility of certain items.** The backup provided was difficult to sort through and some things were missing, however, their **proposed projects** are closely aligned with the 10-year Destination Plan and will likely **generate “small wins”** to help build community support.

Project Summary (from Friends of Black Rock High Rock’s application):

Travel Nevada created the 3D Project, its statewide destination development initiative, in spring 2022 to reimagine rural Nevada's attraction for travelers in new and exciting ways and lay a foundation for incorporating destination development into its mission. We are thrilled to be a part of this bold plan. As our consultants aptly said, **Black Rock will be renowned for its awe inspiring natural beauty, rugged outdoor recreation, unique cultural experiences and its connection to one of the world's most creative events.** The region is filled with inspiring opportunities for discovery--whether it is camping under a canopy of stars, or a game of croquet on the playa the Black Rock offers a unique sense of place and playfulness. The community of Gerlach considers itself 'The Center of the Known Universe,' a big boast until you get to know us. Walk around town and see props from Far From Home (Drew Barrymore), or stop at the Empire Store and perhaps connect with Brandy Wilber, who appeared as local flavor in Nomadland. **Our Destination Development plan simply amplifies and articulates our sublime vastness, our varied and unique landscapes our quirky and idiosyncratic sense of humor.** We are not the first to notice both assets and challenges of this rural community at the gateway to the largest conservation area in the US. But what makes this proposal and these projects exceptional is the **commitment of the community and the support of a wide array of stakeholders as well as a thoughtful understanding and approach that values the priorities of those who call the Black Rock home.**