

A 10YR DESTINATION PLAN

FOR WHITE PINE COUNTY



TRAVEL NEVADA - WHITE PINE COUNTY - BETTER DESTINATIONS - NICHOLS TOURISM GROUP - SMG CONSULTING

CREATED THROUGH THE TRAVEL NEVADA DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DEMONSTRATION (3D) PROJECT AUGUST 2023



INTRODUCTION

White Pine County

CONTENTS

- 4 About White Pine County
- 5 The Purpose of The Plan
About the 3D Project
- 6 How The Plan Was Built
The 3D Steering Committee

KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

- 8 Travel Nevada Research
- 9 3D Tourism Development Study
- 10 Findings from Community Forums
- 11 SWOT Analysis
- 12 Scenario Analysis
GOED Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Report

THE DESTINATION PLAN

- 14 **The 10-Year Vision**
- 15 How This Vision Aligns with the Travel
Nevada Brand
- 16 **The Goal of this Plan**
How This Goal Will Be Achieved
- 17 **The Target Visitor**
Why This Visitor Is Right for White Pine County
High-Potential Personas
- 19 **Outcomes of the 10-Year Plan**

OBJECTIVES

- 20 Objective 1: Develop Compelling
Products and Experiences
- 23 Objective 2: Develop Visitor Infrastructure
- 25 Objective 3: Develop Organizational Strength
- 27 Objective 4: Develop Promotional Strength

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- 30 Lay the Foundation 1-2 Years
- 31 Gather Momentum 3-5 Years
- 31 Move Toward Success 6-10 Years
- 32 Ongoing Initiatives

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN

- 34 Roles and Responsibilities
- 35 Funding Opportunities
- 36 Overcoming Barriers to Implementation
- 37 Communications Strategies and Themes
- 39 Measures of Success

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES

- 40 Original 3D Concept
- 40 Stakeholder Map
- 40 Destination Asset Inventory
- 40 3D Visitor Perception Study
- 40 Custom Zartico Report

WHITE PINE COUNTY INTRODUCTION



Jim Stadler

ABOUT WHITE PINE COUNTY

White Pine County occupies a place along Nevada's eastern edge larger than the state of Massachusetts with a population of less than 9,000 and about 500,000 visitors a year. It's at the intersection of three major American highways extending coast to coast and border to border — U.S. 93, U.S. 6, and U.S. 50. Its biggest town of Ely anchors a stretch of U.S. 50 through Nevada that *Life* magazine dubbed the "Loneliest Road in America" in July 1986. Nevadans have embraced the nickname as a point of pride ever since.

Tourism grew into one of the county's most important industries after Kennecott suddenly shut down its copper mines and smelter in 1978, throwing about 1,500 people out of work and devastating the local economy. Undaunted local leaders, especially in Ely, rallied their communities to spruce up main streets and seek out new revenue sources. While mining remains the biggest local industry, by 2022 White Pine County was generating \$2.254 million a year in lodging taxes — seventh most of any Nevada county and third most based on lodging taxes generated per resident.

Its landscape is full of raw, untapped visitor experiences encompassing high desert, lakes, forests, and 151 named mountains. These include Nevada's second-tallest, Wheeler Peak, rising 13,065 feet above Great Basin National Park. Well off the beaten path, Great Basin draws 100,000 visitors a year to see Lehman Caves, the world's oldest trees, and some of the darkest skies in the Lower 48. Public agencies manage virtually all of the county's lands, meaning little property is available for private development. However, a statutory entitlement in the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) of 1998 has steered

about \$100 million in funding so far to White Pine County, spurring development of about 300 miles of motorized trails and 50 miles of non-motorized trails, with another 50 miles in the works.

The county abounds with appealing visitor attractions, including the 56-acre Nevada Northern Railway (NNRY) complex, the East Ely Depot Museum, Cave Lake State Park, the Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Site, and the Garnet Hill Recreation Area, where rockhounds can search for gems. Guests can step back in time at the White Pine County Museum, the McGill Drugstore Museum, and the Ely Renaissance Village and wander past more than 30 murals celebrating the county's history and diverse cultures. The county also encompasses the Ely Shoshone Indian Colony, home to about 200 people and host of an annual Powwow celebrating their culture.

County tourism initiatives are led by the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board, which also operates the Bristlecone Convention Center and supports about 150 community events annually with a staff of seven, including a dynamic full-time director. The 2022 budget was \$1.426 million — about 63 percent of the county's lodging tax revenues. Most of the budget was steered to community projects, with just \$120,000 reserved for marketing.

With a strong lineup of visitor attractions and potential to create even more through a focused plan for the future, White Pine County has boundless opportunities to continue building the strength of its tourism economy.



THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

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.

This 10-Year Destination Plan is intended to guide the White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board – as well as its industry, community, civic, and public land partners – in shaping the county’s tourism and recreation economy to yield even stronger returns for the county, its communities, and the State of Nevada. The aim of this plan is to double visitor spending by 2032 to generate more business earnings, jobs, and tax revenues through creation of new products and experiences that also improve the county’s quality of life.



ABOUT THE 3D PROJECT

White Pine County was among six participants selected by Travel Nevada and approved by the Nevada Commission on Tourism to demonstrate the potential of a state-funded destination development program. Each of the six 3D Project destinations was given access to a team of tourism planning professionals to guide creation of 10-year Destination Plans. The plans identify high-potential opportunities for new travel-worthy experiences and products, desirable visitor infrastructure, and advancing organizational and promotional strength.

White Pine County — along with Lincoln County and Friends of Black Rock High Rock — was among the 3D projects participating in the initial planning phase from January to August 2023. The remaining three participants — Boulder City, the Carson Cultural Corridor, and Nevada’s Indian Territory — are set to complete plans by April 2024. The project closes with a final report of findings and recommendations for Travel Nevada in June 2024.

Once their plans are complete, participants have a chance to seek funding from a one-time \$2 million EDA grant, secured by Travel Nevada to bring the 3D Project plans to life. Travel Nevada also structured the demonstration project to include participation from a multidisciplinary 3D Working Group, which includes state and federal agencies and organizations that share Travel Nevada’s mission of building rural economies.

3D PROJECT TIMELINE

MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4	MONTH 5	MONTH 6	MONTH 7	MONTH 8
Stakeholder Mapping Destination Asset Inventory		Site Visit		Scenario Analysis Destination Vision		Site Visit Strategy Development	
	Steering Committee Kickoff Research Review		SWOT Analysis Gap Analysis Research Analysis		Economic Goal Target Audiences		Deliver Final Report

HOW THE PLAN WAS BUILT

White Pine County's 3D Project Consulting Team — led by Better Destinations CEO Cathy Ritter, with Carl Ribaudo, Chief Strategist of SMG Consulting, as co-lead — worked closely with White Pine County Tourism Director Kyle Horvath and Travel Nevada Destination Development Manager Cortney Bloomer to manage the planning process.

A first step for Horvath was to use a 3D planning tool to map various stakeholders' potential level of engagement in the planning process, based on their ability to influence and implement the plan. Several key players identified as "Activators," with a high ability to both influence and act on planning outcomes, were recruited to serve on White Pine County's 11-member 3D Project Steering Committee to share oversight and input for the plan. Horvath also led use of another planning tool — the 3D Asset Inventory — to identify the county's existing tourism resources.

With four virtual steering committee meetings and two site visits, the consulting team guided the county through research and various planning exercises — including a SWOT Analysis, a Gap Analysis and scenario testing — to develop insights for the plan. Site visits in March and July 2023 also included community forums in the Bristlecone Convention Center, generating further insights from about 80 additional residents and business owners.

Travel Nevada's research program provided rich insights into economic impacts of tourism in White Pine County. The office also supplied a customized Zartico report analyzing the behaviors and spending of travelers who visited the county. Further insights were developed from the 3D Tourism Development Study fielded during spring 2023 by the consulting team to Travel Nevada's first-party database of 75,000 inquirers, yielding more than 5,700 responses.

3D STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Team

MEMBERS

Samantha Elliot, *Council Member, City of Ely*

Caroline McIntosh, *Board Chair, WPC Tourism/Main Street*

Sean Pitts, *Director, East Ely Railroad Depot Museum*

Erin Rajala, *Recreation Officer, U.S. Forest Service*

Brandi Roberts, *Director, Great Basin Heritage Area*

Nathan Robertson, *Mayor, City of Ely*

Angela Stevens, *Train Master, Nevada Northern Railway*

Jessica Trask, *Owner, Perigo Cattle and Hay*

Virginia Terry, *Chairperson, Ely Renaissance Society*

Michael Wheable, *County Manager, White Pine County*

Elizabeth Woolsey, *Chairperson, Baker Business Council*

3D PROJECT LEAD

Kyle Horvath, *Director of Tourism,*

White Pine Tourism and Recreation Board



WHITE PINE COUNTY

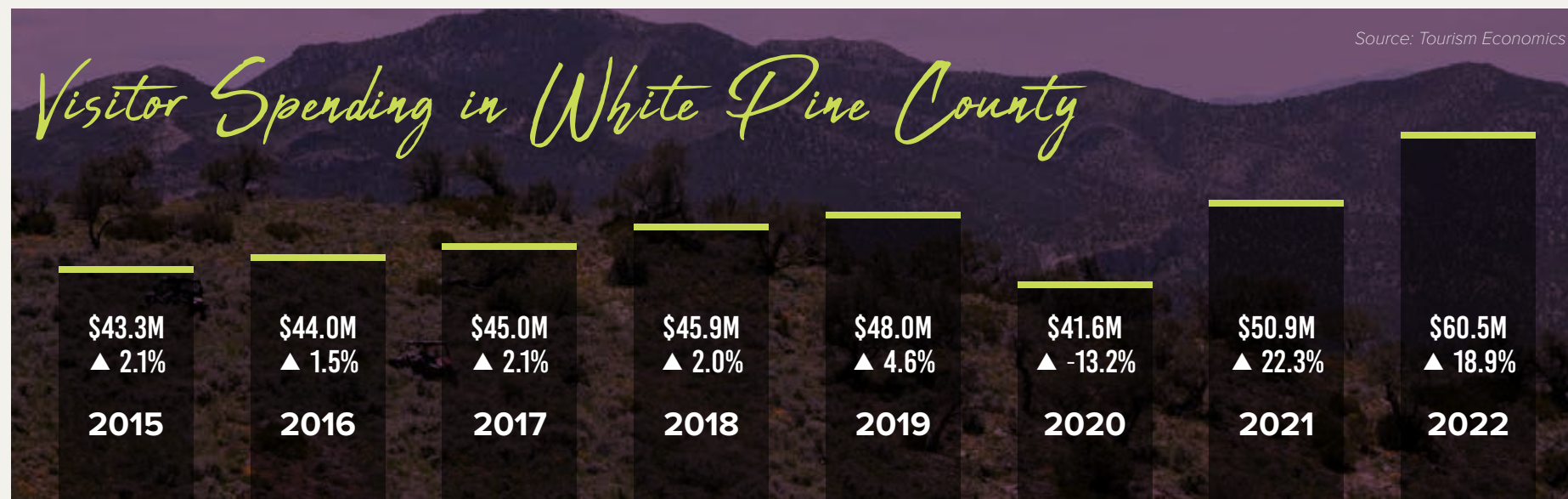
KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS



KEY FINDINGS

TRAVEL NEVADA RESEARCH

- White Pine County's total visitor spending grew 2.72% per year on average between 2014 and 2019, according to Travel Nevada's Tourism Economics research.
- While Nevada's visitor spending plunged by 50.9% in 2020 and didn't surpass 2019 levels until 2022, a different story emerged in White Pine County. Visitor spending dipped just 13% in 2020, then hit an all-time high of \$50.9 million in 2021 before reaching \$60.5 million in 2022. The county benefited from staying open to travelers and a nationwide surge of interest in the outdoors.
- White Pine County's 2022 lodging tax revenues of \$2.254 million were seventh highest of any Nevada county, validating White Pine's status as a tourism economy. The county ranks third (behind Douglas and Clark) for lodging taxes generated per resident — \$256.44 for each of its 8,788 people.
- A custom Zartico report for Travel Nevada showed visitors have an outsize influence on White Pine County's economy. In 2022, while 81% of cellular devices observed in White Pine County belonged to visitors, 93% of credit card spending came from visiting cardholders.
- Zartico found 63% of those observed in the county came from outside Nevada. Of the 18% visiting from elsewhere in Nevada, more than half (53%) came from Clark County, while 20% came from Elko County and 12% from Washoe County.
- The same report found the county's in-state visitors staying longer, spending more, using credit cards more often, and spending a smaller share of their travel dollars on gas.
- Zartico's analysis of visitors' credit card transactions showed 53% went toward gas, indicating that many visitors were just passing through. About 25% was for accommodations. NOTE: Online bookings are not included in these totals.
- More than 90% of White Pine County's visitors also were seen at one of the county's recreation sites, a strong indication that these visitors are outdoor recreationists.
- Zartico found one-third of those observed in Great Basin National Park also were seen at Zion, Bryce Canyon, or Grand Canyon. Less than 1% of visitors observed at those parks, however, were also seen at Great Basin, the county's most-visited location.
- Zartico identified the county's largest out-of-state source market as Salt Lake City (15%), followed by Phoenix (12%), Boise (10%), Los Angeles (7%), and Seattle (6%). More than 10% of visitors seen in White Pine County began their trips in Washington state.
- Travel Nevada's Rural Visitor Profile for the Pony Express Territory, which includes White Pine County, identified an average daily non-gaming trip spend of \$112 per person.



KEY FINDINGS

3D TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Travel Nevada fielded a survey created for the 3D Project to its first-party database of approximately 75,000 people who requested trip information from Travel Nevada. The office also stimulated responses through organic and paid social and digital messaging to reach younger travelers. With 5,739 responses, findings have a confidence level of 95% at +/- 2.5%.

- About 75% of respondents reported traveling in Nevada since 2020, with Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe the most frequently mentioned destinations. About 35% said they had visited a lesser-known destination.
- Respondents expressed significant interest in all six of the 3D destinations. More than half (53.6%) shared interest in visiting White Pine County, with 29.3% “Highly Likely” to visit.
- About 75% were interested in overnighing outside of Las Vegas or Reno-Tahoe if the destination offered activities or experiences they enjoyed.
- Respondents were most motivated to choose a destination because “it’s a beautiful place” (77.3%), “it offers a unique experience I’ve never had before” (64.4%), and “I like to travel to smaller, more remote places” (54.5%).
- Large numbers of respondents described themselves as Road Trippers (72%), Nature Lovers (64%) or Cultural Travelers (54%). The six 3D destinations

have strong potential to attract all of these traveler segments.

- Traveler personas reporting the highest spending per trip were Nightlife Seekers (\$1,296), Motorsports Enthusiasts (\$1,151), Family Fun Seekers (\$1,049), and Hook-and-Bullet Enthusiasts (\$1,005).
- Given a choice of lodging types, nearly half (48.8%) said the chance to stay in a historic lodging or resort would inspire them to travel. Nearly a quarter said they’d travel for a unique overnight experience, such as stargazing or a festival. A similar share said they’d travel for unusual lodgings such as treehouses, yurts, or A-frames.
- More than half – across all age and income categories – said a destination’s sustainability practices were at least somewhat important to their choice of destinations.



3D Tourism Development Study

Trip Spending by Persona



INSIGHTS

FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY FORUMS

Site visits in March and July each included a public community forum in the Bristlecone Convention Center. About 80 participants gathered for dinner and were offered a chance to weigh in either verbally or via an online engagement platform called Mentimeter.

- When asked why someone should visit White Pine County, attendees offered a wide range of reasons. Topping the list were the opportunities to escape large crowds and experience the Nevada Northern Railway (NNRY), history, and the Success Loop.
- What sets White Pine County apart? Attendees noted how the community pulls together, the focus on preserving small businesses, different ethnic groups, dark skies and clean air, authenticity and real people. One attendee noted that White Pine County is in the “Middle of nowhere and the middle of everything.”
- When asked why the county should increase tourism, many saw building the local economy as the highest priority. Also identified as “Extremely Important” were revitalizing main streets, creating new amenities for all to enjoy, and diversifying the local economy.
- Many attendees offered big dreams for what White Pine County should be by 2033. Many saw potential for the county to earn greater recognition for “epic outdoor recreation” or as a destination for mountain biking or even backcountry or downhill skiing. One saw the NNRY as a Smithsonian affiliate by then, while many others saw potential for the county to be a premier destination for astrotourism. Another desire was to see thriving, charming downtowns, opportunities for new small businesses, and better connections among communities.
- Attendees identified a host of challenges that could interfere with these aspirations. Many identified a lack of housing as the county’s biggest challenge. Other challenges included a need for more diverse restaurant offerings, more nightlife and shopping, more volunteers, business assistance programs, broadband, and childcare to support businesses and workers. Some mentioned a need for hospitality training, including ways for locals to learn more about the county’s attractions.
- Proposed solutions for those challenges included securing more funding and grants, improving existing commercial spaces and houses, and increasing the local population.

Source: Mentimeter, March 2023 Community Forum

Why should White Pine County have more tourism?

TO BUILD OUR LOCAL ECONOMY 85%

TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY 78%

TO GENERATE MORE TAX REVENUE 71%

TO CREATE MORE JOBS 65%

TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS 60%

TO CREATE NEW BUSINESSES 74%

TO REVITALIZE OUR MAIN STREETS 77%

TO CREATE AMENITIES I CAN ENJOY 73%

Key Findings

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis identifies both internal factors — Strengths and Weaknesses — as well as external factors — Opportunities and Threats — that can either advance the work of an organization or hold it back. White Pine County's SWOT Analysis was developed through input from its 3D Steering Committee and a community forum in March 2023.

Strengths include an abundance of genuine attractions, including Lehman Caves and the bristlecone groves of Great Basin National Park, one of just 17 certified in the U.S. as an International Dark-Sky Park. The destination offers an extensive trails system on vast public lands, a historic short line railroad train and depot, a collection of Instagrammable outdoor murals, and unique historic towns.

As a major Western crossroads and communication hub with a 150-year-old history as a mining center, White Pine County has attracted a mix of cultures from across the globe and can share a powerful, authentic story of the American mosaic. The region has a strong community spirit, strengthened by weathering times of economic instability. With its location at the intersection of three major U.S. highways, it's well-positioned to attract road trippers and to entice those who are just passing through to stay a bit longer.

Many of White Pine County's current weaknesses point to opportunities for the future. Its remote location along the Loneliest Road in America can be seen as a bonus by growing numbers of travelers seeking hidden gems, small town experiences and less crowded outdoor spaces. Its distance from other places also gives it magnificent dark skies. The county's shuttered buildings and lack of guided experiences point to opportunities for problem-solvers and entrepreneurs to activate main streets with new commerce.

While the county's offerings are less known outside Nevada, its mix of outdoor and cultural assets offer rich opportunities to shape a positive narrative and brand through reputation-building strategies. Other major opportunities lie in linking visitor experiences across the county, celebrating the unique stories of each community and allowing visitors to access them by trails, rails, and roadways. The county's external threats are little different from those in most rural places.

The Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Strong destination drivers
- Ready access to mountains and trails
- Strong local collaboration and leadership
- Powerful story of the American mosaic
- On the way to many places
- People who are genuine, not pretentious
- Room to grow
- Authentic community fabric

THREATS

- Economic uncertainties
- Extraction of energy and water resources
- Changing weather patterns
- Future issues with commercial use of public land
- Changing leadership priorities

WHITE PINE COUNTY

WEAKNESSES

- Low awareness (compared with outdoor destinations like Moab, Fruita, Tahoe, etc.)
- Remote location
- Shuttered buildings
- Limited lodging and dining options
- Lack of ready-to-consume outdoor experiences
- Hospitality training
- Small marketing budget
- Lack of housing, broadband infrastructure

OPPORTUNITIES

- Linking visitor experiences
- Interest in small town main streets/ rural areas/hidden gems
- Outdoor focused economic development
- Brand development
- Interest in diversity, especially for outdoor recreation

KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

SCENARIO ANALYSIS

A scenario modeling exercise was shared with the 3D Steering Committee in April 2023 to generate discussion of possible ways White Pine County could shape its tourism economy and messaging. Ultimately, Scenario 2 was identified as the most productive scenario.

NEVADA GOED ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM REPORT

A report released by the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) in August 2023 identified a need for a statewide coordinated approach to stimulating entrepreneurship and supported founding a GOED Office of Entrepreneurship to create a statewide strategy. White Pine County was among four rural counties analyzed in the report, along with Douglas, Churchill and Elko.

- White Pine's median age of 41 and household income of \$63,590 was similar to Churchill's, but with only 13% of residents holding a bachelor's degree, had the lowest educational attainment rate of the four counties. Elko's median age was 35.
- White Pine, however, was the only one of the four to experience a net increase in businesses between 2016 and 2021, with 73 new business starts and 35 closures. Elko had 146 new starts and 343 closures, for a net loss of 197 businesses.
- White Pine residents had the least access to bandwidth connectivity. Only 48% had access to cable, fiber or DSL, while 22% had no internet access and another 17% had cell-only access. In Elko, 61% had cable, fiber or DSL access, while only 12% had no access.

What kinds of tourism opportunities/ travelers do you think would be the best fit for White Pine County?

DESTINATION
WHITE PINE COUNTY

SCENARIO 1

Stay As We Are

SCENARIO 2

Focus on Outdoor Recreation + Culture & Heritage

SCENARIO 3

Focus on Culture & Heritage + Outdoor Recreation

SCENARIO 4

A Different Scenario?

Scenario Analysis

WHITE PINE COUNTY

THE DESTINATION PLAN



10YR VISION

FOR WHITE PINE COUNTY TOURISM

White Pine County is renowned as a place where outdoor adventure – especially trail-based recreation – is paired with unexpected experiences connecting visitors and residents with stories of its communities, its culture, its famed dark skies, and abundant natural lands.



10-YEAR VISION

HOW THIS VISION ALIGNS WITH THE TRAVEL NEVADA BRAND

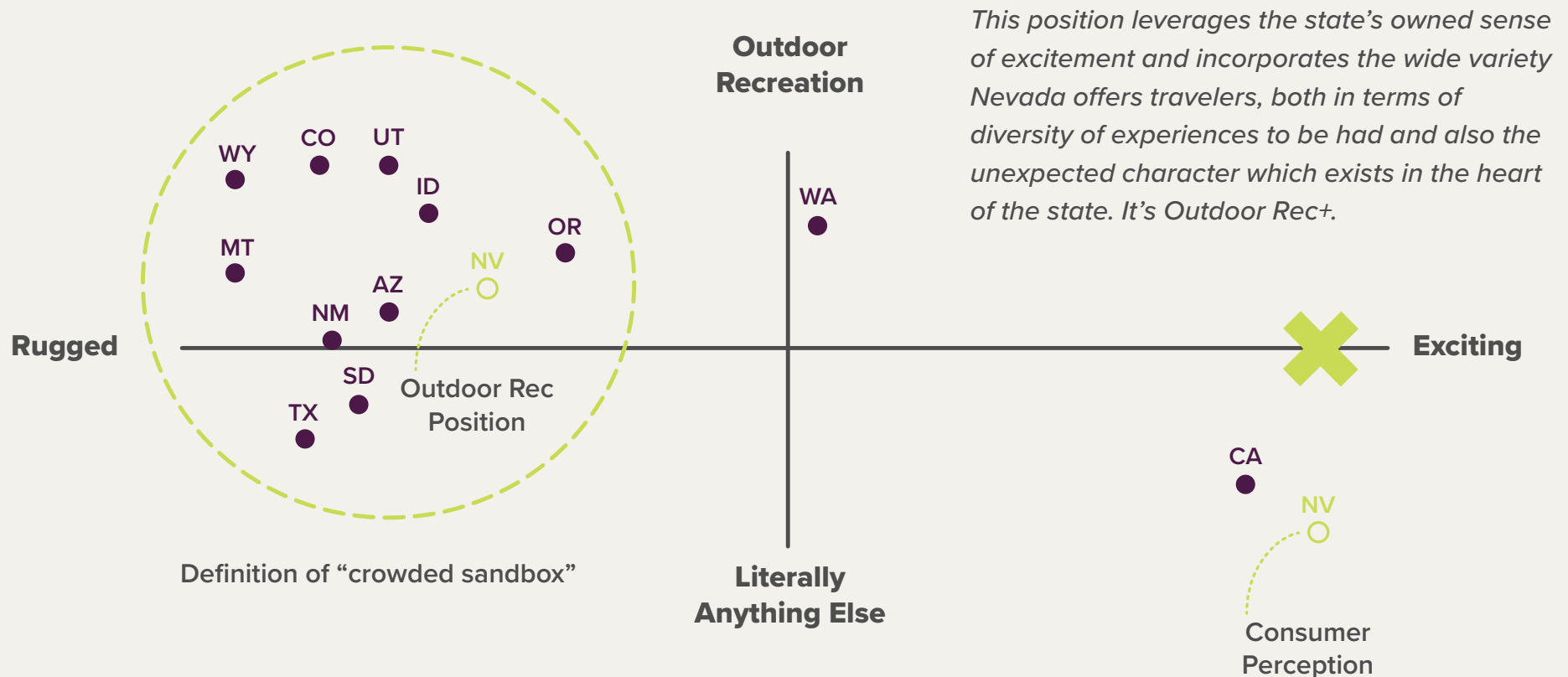
Travel Nevada's latest brand research shows the Silver State amidst a pack of Western states renowned for outdoor adventure, with one major exception. Nevada also is seen as Exciting. The state's brand agency calls Nevada's secret weapon "Outdoor Rec+." That positioning speaks to Nevada's opportunity to share a diversity of

outdoor experiences PLUS its unexpected character. Nevada's brand personality was unique among its competitive set -- not just resourceful, independent and down-to-earth like so many other Western states, but surprising, creative, offbeat, and wild at heart, too.

In fact, Nevada's personality is much like that of White Pine County, a destination that has been pairing experiences in creative, unexpected ways for years. Its one-of-a-kind Race the Rails event, for instance,

invites mountain bikers and cyclists to see if they "have the steam" to ride an historic train to a drop-off point and then beat it back to the depot.

With a multitude of scenic Western destinations working as fast as they can to rebuild extraction-based economies on outdoor recreation, Nevada and White Pine County have endless opportunities to set themselves apart through ingenious pairings and Outdoor Rec+.



GOAL OF THIS PLAN

White Pine County will double total visitor spending* from \$60.5 million in 2022 to \$121 million in 2032 by creating expanded rails and trails systems, more lodgings and overnight stays, vibrant Main Streets, and engaging visitor experiences across the county.

White Pine County is in much the same position as Moab 20 years ago. It has many of the same opportunities to build a powerful recreation-based economy, but can learn from the experience of many successful outdoor-focused destinations to manage the impacts.

- **Give Visitors More Ways to Spend.** The county is well-equipped to generate significant additional economic impact from tourism, mainly by providing travelers with far more opportunities to spend money when they visit or pass through.
- **Create Guided Experiences.** One high-potential opportunity is to spark development of guided day or overnight experiences making it easy for visitors of all abilities to enjoy the county's many hundreds of miles of motorized trails and singletrack. Local land managers are open to permitting guided hikes, bike rides, OHV experiences, stargazing tours, horseback rides or camping trips, and much more. Making more rentals available is another promising way to generate spending. Visitors who don't bring along a horse, an OHV, or a mountain or e-bike on their travels far outnumber those who do.
- **Stoke Interest in the Train and Depot.** The Nevada Northern Railway has capacity to double its ridership, but sales of its wildly popular stargazer tours are constrained by limited access to dark skies guides. A pending \$7 million renovation of the Nevada State

Museum's Freight Building will offer a new venue for cultural, social, and other events, including weddings.

- **Boost Occupancy.** Lodgings are sold out at times, especially in summer, but more off-season travel will fill more rooms. Creating unique lodgings while renovating and re-activating existing inventory – especially historic roadside motels remodeled to the tastes of younger and outdoor recreation travelers – could expand availability while inspiring more visitors to make White Pine County their destination for fun.
- **Un-Shutter Buildings.** Another high-potential opportunity is to re-activate commerce in shuttered storefronts and commercial buildings. By motivating property owners to lease or sell inactive buildings, the county can convert non-productive built spaces into restaurants, shops, or even a craft brewery or distillery. Activating existing real estate is especially vital in a county where less than 5% of land is in private hands.
- **Build Reputation.** Most of all, the visitor economy can grow by convincing travelers that White Pine County is a destination well worth a long drive.

* Based on Travel Nevada's Tourism Economics data, assuming an average 4% growth rate and 3% rate of inflation compounded.



THE TARGET VISITOR

Outdoor recreation lovers who also enjoy learning as they travel – whether about Western history and heritage, diverse cultures, geology, dark skies, or ancient Bristlecone pines.

WHY THIS VISITOR IS RIGHT FOR WHITE PINE COUNTY

Creating a sharp focus around a desired category of traveler is a highly effective way for a destination to create a distinctive image. Plus, by targeting visitors who appreciate what they have, destinations can attract visitors whose interests fit well with what locals value.

In aiming at Outdoor Recreation Lovers – which encompasses outdoor adventurers, motorized vehicle users, and nature-loving hikers, campers, and horseback riders -- White Pine County is playing to a strength that is valued by large segments of travelers, including Road Trippers. The county's customized Zartico report underscores the value of this positioning, finding that 59% percent of the county's visitors in 2022 visited an outdoor recreation site elsewhere in Nevada.

By refining the target further – to Curious Outdoor Recreationists, who also enjoy learning about the places they visit – White Pine County can set itself apart from all of the other Western mountain destinations offering fine outdoor recreation experiences. It's also a way for the county to tap into the strength of Travel Nevada's Outdoor Rec+ strategy.

Targeting a Curious Outdoor Recreationist also positions White Pine County to appeal to many of the traveler personas identified in the 3D Tourism Development Study, including the three largest – Road Trippers, Nature Lovers, and Cultural Travelers. It's also a natural fit with Outdoor Adventurers, as well as with high-spending Motor Sports Enthusiasts and Hook-and-Bullet Enthusiasts, all of whom spend nearly \$1,000 or more per trip. Many of these personas also can be targeted as off-season travelers.

High-Potential Personas for White Pine County

HIGH VOLUME

- The Road Tripper
- The Nature Lover
- The Cultural Traveler

HIGH SPEND/HIGH AFFINITY

- Outdoor Adventurer

HIGH SPEND

- Motor Sports Enthusiast
- Hook-and-Bullet Enthusiast

Target Visitor

OUTCOMES OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY 10-YEAR DESTINATION PLAN

GOAL OF THIS PLAN

White Pine County visitor spending will double between 2022 and 2032.

THE VISION

White Pine County is renowned as a place where outdoor adventure – especially trail-based recreation – is paired with unexpected experiences connecting visitors and residents with stories of its communities, its culture, its famed dark skies, and abundant natural lands.

Stronger Reputation

Accelerated Visitor Spending

DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

Trails • Rails • Dark Skies
• Arts & Culture • Events
• Winter Activities

DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Lodgings • Vibrant
Downtowns • Outdoor-
Friendly • Beer • Experts-
in-Residence

DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Funding • Training
• Certifications •
Stewardship • Diversity

DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

Unexpected Experiences
• Collaborations • Clear
Focus • High-Impact/Low-
Cost Tactics

TARGET VISITOR: CURIOUS OUTDOOR RECREATIONISTS

WHITE PINE COUNTY OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

A. Build out the county's system of rails, trails and roadways to create iconic experiences and connect visitors with White Pine communities, outdoor recreation opportunities and points of interest countywide.

i. Advocate for thoughtful expansion of trails systems to create new experiences for a range of skill levels, allow ready access from communities and neighboring counties, close gaps, and mitigate user conflicts.

ii. Engage an expert resource to develop a comprehensive plan for a countywide system of recreational trails, including naming and identification of iconic trails, to create premier trail experiences across the county.

iii. Identify and create an iconic experience, such as a Great Basin Loop and hut system, to elevate the county's reputation as a premier outdoor recreation destination and attract a range of recreationists.

iv. Support expansion of Nevada Northern Railway (NNRY) offerings and platforms to create new experiences and deliver more riders to White Pine communities and points of interest.

v. Support development of the Freight Building as an exciting new venue for special events and connection point for other White Pine County experiences.

vi. Support development of interpretive signage to facilitate wayfinding, strengthen connections, deepen appreciation for experiences, and serve those who love to learn.

vii. Develop and leverage exciting Outdoor Rec+ events to activate use of and build the reputation of the county's rails and trails system.

B. Foster local entrepreneurship and generate economic development by advancing trail-based recreational opportunities.

i. Support creation of guided experiences, including hiking, horseback riding, camping, dark skies, and mountain biking, to attract and serve both expert- and non-expert visitors.

ii. Expand availability of rental equipment to engage non-expert users and road trippers in White Pine County experiences.

iii. Drawing learnings from prototypes in Boulder City and Carson City, consider development of a Nevada Adventure Center as an incubator for outfitters, guide services, and other outdoor-related businesses and services, whether in a new or existing space or on wheels.

iv. Expand resources for local entrepreneurs and businesses through partnerships with federal and state government agencies and nonprofits.

C. Develop more unique ways for visitors to enjoy growing interest in dark skies experiences.

i. Support expansion of the Nevada Northern Railway's stargazing experiences to meet demand and connect visitors to more of White Pine County's unique attractions.

ii. Support development of other experiential and immersive stargazing opportunities — whether offered by outfitters, local organizations or public land managers — such as nocturnal animal tours, Shoshone or cowboy storytelling, or night sky artistic events.



OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

D. Expand the murals initiative to communities across White Pine County to share local history, culture, and pastimes and foster a countywide sense of place.

i. Convene a countywide murals planning committee similar to the Ely Renaissance Society to provide oversight of murals development beyond Ely.

ii. Supplement audio tours with interpretative signage for existing and future murals to build a richer experience and increase engagement.

iii. Develop a self-guided mural trail with wayfinding and an interpretive brochure or map.

iv. Offer guided mural tours periodically and in conjunction with major events.

v. Consider development of other public arts installations or experiences to share the county's spirit and history and provide visitors with photo opportunities.

E. Leverage outdoor recreation assets to position White Pine County as a center of excellence for best practices, create a focus for economic development and events, and attract business-related travel.

i. Seek resources and partner to found a White Pine County Trail Building Institute to attract business travelers, build the reputation of the county's trails and expertise, and foster development or attraction of trails-related commerce and outdoor manufacturing.

ii. Consider attracting major product testing events — such as OuterBike for mountain biking or a similar OHV event — to build the reputation of White Pine County's trails system in the outdoor recreation industry and among travelers.

iii. Seek ways for NNRY to be recognized as a national model for how a historic short line railway can connect communities, support outdoor recreation, and preserve U.S. train history.

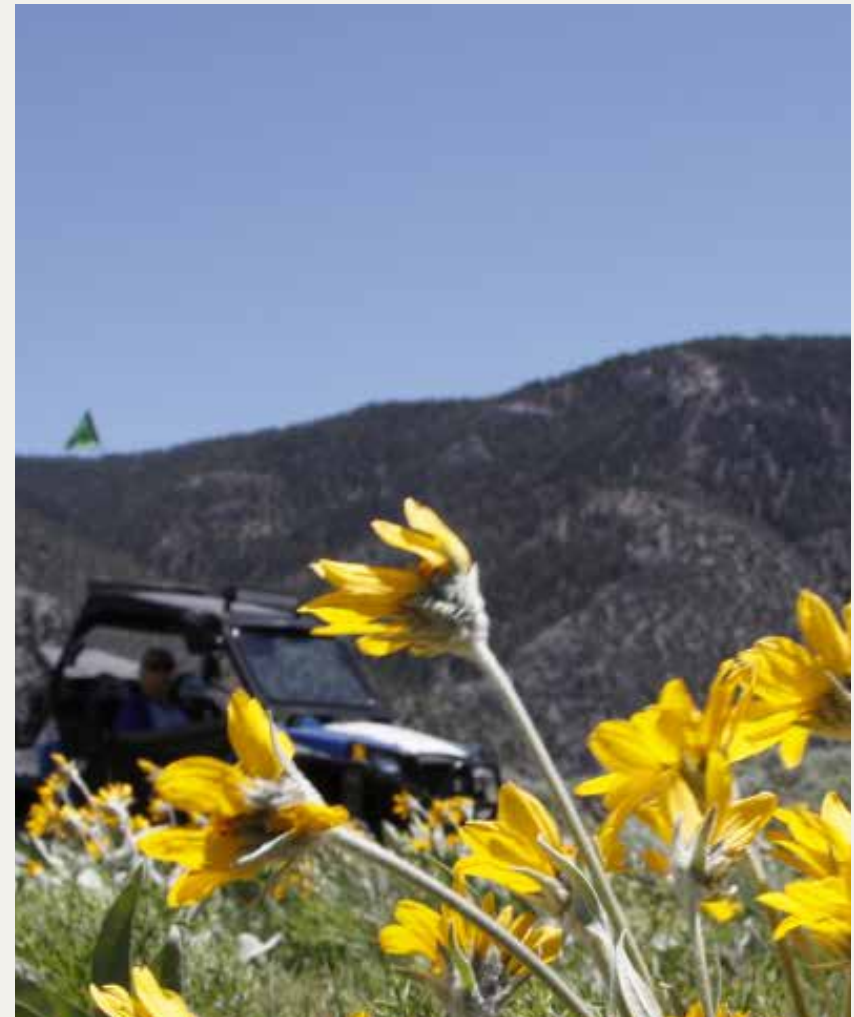
iv. Explore other opportunities to leverage the excellence of White Pine County's trails, rails, and other outdoor assets to stimulate tourism and economic development.

F. Seek opportunities with the Shoshone tribe to create and enhance experiences sharing their tradition and culture.

i. Share support for the annual Shoshone Powwow and for other cultural experiences open to all.

ii. Support opportunities for Shoshone tribal members to share their tradition through eco- and cultural-focused initiatives developed and offered by Nevada's Indian Territory.

iii. Support opportunities for Shoshone tribal members to generate economic and other benefits from tourism.



White Pine County already has secured about \$100 million in grants from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, investing much in development of trails and rails systems. Community leaders and land managers are collaborating on ways to create trail and rail access directly from communities, link existing systems, and mitigate potential user conflicts.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

G. Expand cultural offerings through live music and entertainment.

- i. Develop strategies to expand and support live music offerings, such as Schellraiser and the Summer Concert Series.
- ii. Pair venues with entertainment in unexpected ways, such as a demonstration match between UNLV and UNR on McGill's newly refurbished baseball field.
- iii. Explore strategies for pairing live music with experiences of the county's unique outdoor assets, such as concerts on public lands, touring national parks performances, or music events in the resonant Ward Charcoal Ovens.

H. Encourage development of winter outdoor recreation to support a year-round experience, build occupancy, and broaden White Pine County's competitive position.

- i. Support development of winter activities on public lands and in indoor spaces to build awareness for White Pine County as a fun destination for winter recreation.
- ii. Collaborate with public land managers to develop snowshoe and cross-country ski experiences with wayfinding and experiences for different skill levels.

iii. Develop or attract more wintertime special events, such as a Kite Flying on Ice event or a Birkebeiner Cross Country Ski Race, to build winter season awareness.

v. Position White Pine County as the gateway to eastern Nevada's emerging backcountry ski terrain.

vi. Continue to assess the potential for a Ward Mountain ski resort as a destination for downhill, backcountry, or guided snowcat skiing.



OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Build inventory of lodgings, RV parks, campgrounds, and ranch stays to accommodate more visitors over the next decade.

i. Support development of new lodging properties, especially in places with close access to trailheads, potentially including a hut system.

ii. Seek investment in restoring and revitalizing historic buildings and roadside motels, potentially as VRBOs or other shared lodgings, to fit the tastes of outdoor recreationists and cultural travelers.

iii. Seek development of additional RV parks and campgrounds, potentially through SNPLMA funding for needed infrastructure.

iv. Consider supporting expansion of online lodging marketplaces such as HipCamp and Boondockers Welcome as a temporary means of increasing lodging supply.

B. Revitalize main streets and expand opportunities for restaurants and retail by activating unused storefronts and commercial buildings.

i. Secure a third-party appraisal of vacant storefronts and commercial buildings to stimulate sales or use by increasing understanding of the properties' true value and condition.

ii. Continue offering microgrants matched all or in part by property owners to stimulate private investment into improving storefronts and commercial buildings.

iii. Provide absentee owners with no-cost options for showing empty storefronts and commercial buildings to potential buyers or lessees.

iv. Encourage activation of storefronts and commercial buildings with engaging window displays celebrating local art, culture, history, geology, natural areas, or outdoor recreation.

v. Advocate for enforcement of fire safety and other codes to prevent vacant commercial stock from falling into disrepair and posing safety hazards.

vi. Engage the local business community and attractions in establishing consistent hours of operation, especially during peak visitation times and special events.

C. Advocate for improved water and sewer infrastructure at the gateway to Great Basin National Park to support worker housing, development in Baker, and more lodging, including an RV park.

D. Develop an “Expert-In-Residence” program and other incentives to fill knowledge gaps and advance product development initiatives.

i. Expand capacity for offering dark skies experiences by creating an “Astronomer-in-Residence” to help meet demand for NNRy’s stargazing tours and develop other new dark skies experiences.

ii. Consider identifying other “Expert-in-Residence” positions to expand product offerings by addressing shortages of local talent.

iii. Consider addressing other talent gaps, including a shortage of skilled construction workers, through innovative incentives such as temporary housing or a free mountain bike or other outdoor gear, paired with experiences for temporary workers.



OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

E. Create local amenities to support outdoor culture.

i. Collaborate with owners to equip lodgings with conveniences important to outdoor recreationists, including in-room or on-site storage for bikes and other outdoor gear.

ii. Collaborate with White Pine Main Street and community leaders to equip communities to meet the needs of trail users, including staging areas for OHV users, bike racks, bike washes, and repair stations for mountain and gravel bikers and recreational cyclists.

iii. Encourage and educate local businesses to address the retail needs of outdoor recreationists.

iv. Encourage adoption of pet-friendly policies – whether in lodgings or public spaces – as support for White Pine County's outdoor brand.

v. Improve trailhead amenities such as restrooms, parking, mapping/information resources, trash receptacles, shade structures and picnic areas, as well as user-specific facilities such as equestrian water sources, pet facilities, and bicycle repair stations.

F. Consider recruiting a craft brewery or distillery to create stopping power for visitors and an important amenity for many outdoor recreationists.

i. Consider funding a feasibility study to recruit investment in a local brewery or distillery.

ii. To keep startup costs low, pilot a beer garden or other brew or spirits concept by facilitating relationships with crafters willing to bring their products to a White Pine County venue, perhaps on a rotating basis.



The Stargazer Inn and Bristlecone General Store offers a unique lodging experience and store packed with delightful things to buy in Baker, the tiny gateway to Great Basin National Park. Across the street is Sugar, Salt & Malt, an eatery run by two sisters who worked as chefs in top restaurants. Local hiring and further development of housing, lodging and amenities are challenged by limited water and sewer infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

A. Develop additional funding for marketing to fulfill White Pine County's potential while supporting new business development.

- i. Consider dedicating future incremental lodging tax generation to the White Pine County Tourism & Recreation Board's marketing budget.
- ii. Consider extending the county lodging tax to include shared accommodations and camping.
- iii. Consider engaging a grant writer or liaison to identify and develop applications for state and federal funding opportunities.

B. To build an army of promoters, increase local appreciation for attractions and equip locals to be inspiring ambassadors.

- i. Develop a hospitality training program, whether locally or in partnership with Travel Nevada, to increase awareness of local attractions, elevate customer service, and advance stewardship.
- ii. Establish and support an ongoing system of rewards, such as free train rides, guided hikes or rides, or social hours to create a community spirit around participation in trainings.

iii. Develop a volunteer or intern recruitment strategy to expand hours of operation for key attractions and support special events.

iv. Consider creating training to increase sensitivity for different cultures and backgrounds and to build the county's reputation as a place that is welcoming to all.

v. Establish periodic community meetings to share progress reports on destination plan initiatives and seek ongoing local input.

C. Continue building on White Pine County's unique story of the American mosaic to attract cultural travelers and groups, especially those committed to introducing diverse audiences to outdoor recreation.

- i. Position the county as an ideal location for events sponsored by outdoor recreation groups committed to diversity, such as Latino Outdoors, Black Outside, or Native Women's Wilderness.

ii. To foster diversity and secure a reputation for inclusiveness, reserve a portion of entries for major events to stimulate registration by lesser-represented groups, including women.

iii. Activate the Renaissance Village by capturing and sharing narrative stories and oral histories to foster visitor connections with the county's unique ethnic and cultural history.

iv. Advocate for reviewing place names and changing those that are out of step with community goals of fostering a warm welcome for all.

v. Seek opportunities with Shoshone tribal members to share their tradition and enhance understanding of their influence in White Pine County.



OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

D. Seek national recognition and a promotional boost from major certifying bodies.

i. Pursue an International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) Ride Center designation to elevate the quality and prestige of the local mountain biking experience, secure resources, and achieve recognition as a top destination for mountain bikers.

ii. Seek International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) certification of White Pine communities to express the county's exceptional dedication to preserving the night sky.

E. Establish stewardship messaging and initiatives to safeguard community and natural assets and build on growing interest in responsible travel.

i. Convene a Stewardship Committee of land managers, business operators, and community members to identify priorities.

ii. Establish a shared strategy for delivering key stewardship messages to protect and improve cultural and natural assets.

iii. Develop more "voluntourism" programs giving travelers a way to connect more deeply with White Pine County, share their own passions, and learn from important initiatives, while building the county's reputation for caring about the quality of its experience.

iv. Guide and support partners in creating infrastructure that helps to achieve stewardship goals and signals the county's commitment to stewardship, such as water bottle refilling stations to reduce plastic waste.

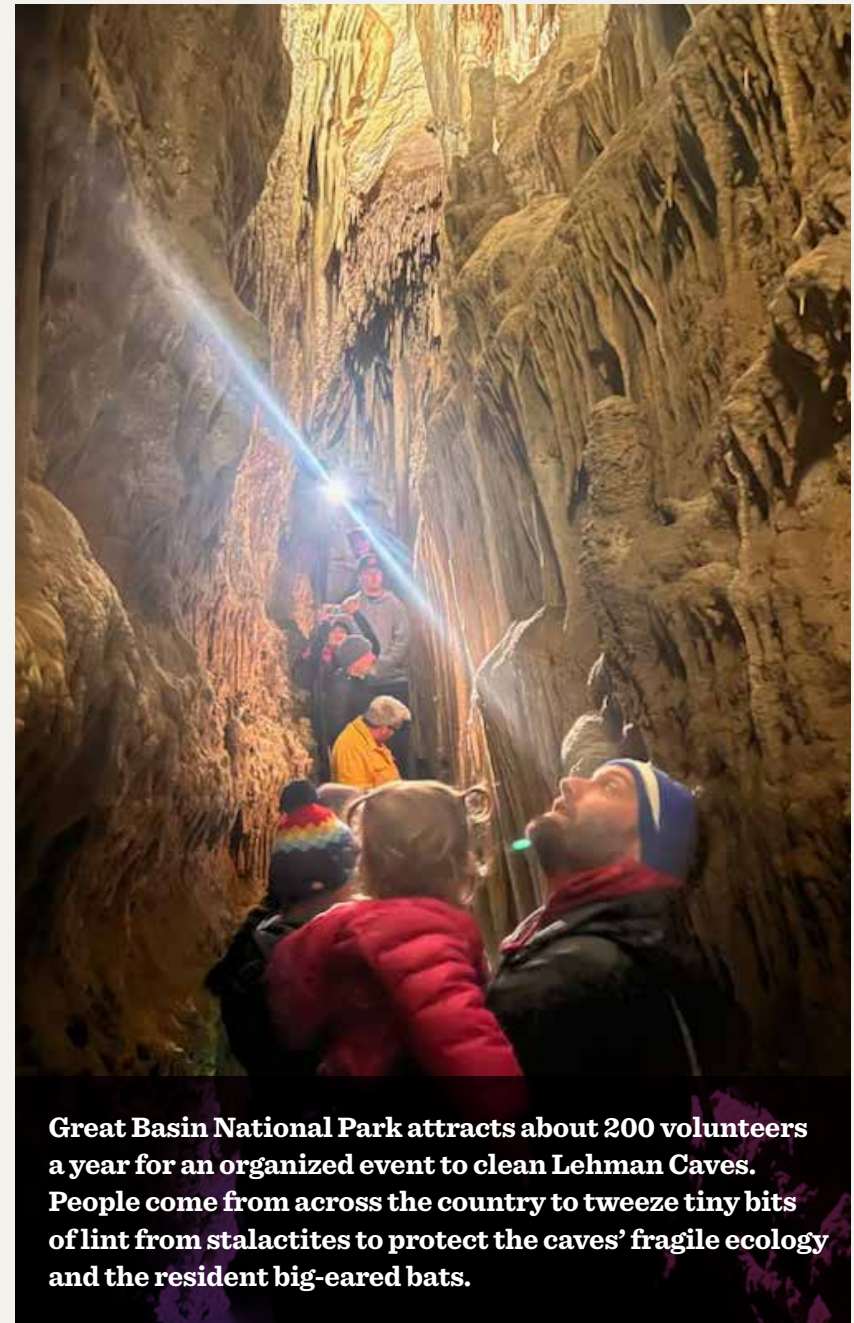
v. Consider creating a volunteer Trail Host or Trail Patrol group to serve as ambassadors, reinforce trail stewardship messages, and assist hikers, bikers, and equestrians experiencing difficulty.

F. Explore possibilities for creating or enhancing accessibility of White Pine County indoor and outdoor attractions to serve growing numbers of travelers with disabilities and their travel companions.

i. Review accessibility of existing attractions for travelers and locals with mobility or sensory-related disabilities and develop recommendations for operators.

ii. Consider developing trails and other experiences specifically for outdoor recreationists with disabilities, drawing inspiration from such models as Trails for EveryBODY in Truckee or the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation.

iii. Ensure that ElyNevada.net meets accepted standards for website accessibility.



Great Basin National Park attracts about 200 volunteers a year for an organized event to clean Lehman Caves. People come from across the country to tweeze tiny bits of lint from stalactites to protect the caves' fragile ecology and the resident big-eared bats.

OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

A. Build White Pine County's reputation by differentiating it from other outdoor recreation-focused destinations and creating unexpected experiences.

i. Consider developing a tagline or catchphrase — such as 'Certified White Pine Tough' — to define the rugged nature of the outdoor experience and resilience of its people.

ii. Continue attracting earned media and building awareness by linking White Pine County experiences in unexpected ways, such as Race the Rails, Stargazer Trains, and winter cornhole competitions.

iii. Build the brand and generate visitation during low-occupancy periods by creating new unexpected experiences, such as a winter kite flying competition, a gravel ride on the Pony

Express trail, seasonal music experiences in the Ward Charcoal Ovens, or a big social event to celebrate the upcoming 40th anniversary of the "Loneliest Road."

B. Lead collaborations to create meaningful White Pine County experiences for large visitor segments.

i. Collaborate with partners in Las Vegas, Reno, Salt Lake City, Boise and Phoenix to build and co-promote tour itineraries with stops in White Pine County.

ii. Collaborate with National Park partners to promote Great Basin as the first or last stop for visitors on the way to or from Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Grand Canyon.

iii. Collaborate with U.S. 50 partners in Nevada to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the "Loneliest Highway" with a must-do tour itinerary and special events.

iv. Collaborate on promoting White Pine County as the base camp for state or bi-state mountain biking, gravel grinder, or OHV events on the Pony Express Trail.

v. Advance the Park to Park in the Dark initiative to create revenue-generating experiences of Nevada's night skies from Ely to Beatty.

vi. Work with public land partners to build awareness of the county's winter outdoor activities, including snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, back-country skiing, and snowshoeing.



OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

C. Shape marketing, communications, and events to target key audiences – especially outdoor lovers who enjoy learning as they travel.

- i. Create a clear focus for White Pine County marketing by shaping messaging, marketing, and PR activities to target the Curious Outdoor Recreationist.
- ii. Develop and maintain a list of the top 20 media outlets to target, including outlets in key source destinations. Shape stories and pitch regularly to engage Curious Outdoor Recreationists in visiting the county.
- iii. Enlist local business partners — including gas stations and restaurants — in sharing White Pine County’s messaging to convince visitors in-market or passing through to stay longer.
- iv. Craft interpretive signage to satisfy the desire of Curious Outdoor Recreationists to acquire knowledge and understanding and strengthen sense of place.
- v. Consider shaping the sales strategy for the Bristlecone Convention Center to attract outdoors, trails-focused, or cultural events and organizations to connect attendees with White Pine County offerings.
- vi. Ensure that messaging shares guidance on how to care for the county’s cultural and natural treasures.

D. Align marketing strategies with Travel Nevada’s brand, priorities, and initiatives to maximize the benefit of the state’s national tourism campaign.

- i. Maximize opportunities to advance the White Pine County brand and strategies through the state’s cooperative marketing program.
- ii. Identify and create White Pine County experiences that align with Travel Nevada Outdoor Rec+ positioning — currently, “Get a Little Out There” — to generate larger awareness of White Pine County from the state’s marketing and PR initiatives.

E. Focus on high-impact, cost-effective marketing tactics to amplify White Pine County’s messages.

- i. To leverage White Pine County’s location at the intersection of three major U.S. highways, use billboards and place messaging at restaurants and gas stations to interest passing travelers in staying longer or coming back.
- ii. Address rising interest in short-form video by embedding brief clips from the county’s extensive library into ElyNevada.net, digital storytelling, and other cost-effective digital and social communications.
- iii. Reposition and refresh content on ElyNevada.net to engage outdoor recreationists.
- iv. Consider collaborating with local partners to create a portal on ElyNevada.net pointing users to tickets, guided adventures, and voluntourism opportunities.



Since 2017, White Pine County’s “Race the Rails” event has pitted pedal power against an antique steam locomotive, winning the county mentions in top outdoor publications. By cloning this thinking to create unique pairings of outdoor experiences and local cultural history, the county can drive awareness and visitation and leverage the power of Travel Nevada’s Outdoor Rec+ positioning.

WHITE PINE COUNTY

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Suggested timeframes for initiatives are recommended based on anticipated availability of WPCT&RB resources and willingness of partners to take the lead on certain initiatives. Timeframes may shift over the life of this plan based on emerging priorities and availability of resources.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING

LAY THE FOUNDATION (1-2 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Aii. Consider engaging an expert planning resource for trail development.
- Bii. Expand availability of rental equipment.
- Ci. Support expanding the NNRY's stargazing experiences.
- Di. Convene a countywide murals planning committee.
- Dii. Supplement audio tours with interpretative signage for existing and future murals.
- Div. Offer guided mural tours.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Aiv. Consider supporting expansion of online lodging as a temporary measure.
- Bi. Secure a third-party appraisal of vacant storefronts and commercial buildings.
- Biii. Provide absentee owners with no-cost options for showing empty storefronts and commercial buildings.
- Bv. Advocate for enforcement of fire safety and other codes for vacant buildings.
- Bvi. Engage the local business community and attractions in establishing consistent hours of operation.
- C. Advocate for improved water and sewer infrastructure at the gateway to Great Basin National Park.
- Di. Expand capacity for offering Dark Skies experiences by creating an "Astronomer-in-Residence."
- Eiv. Encourage the adoption of pet-friendly policies.
- Fi. Consider funding a feasibility study to recruit investment in a local brewery or distillery.
- Fii. Pilot a beer garden or other craft brew or spirits concept.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Ai. Consider dedicating future incremental lodging tax generation to the WPCT&RB marketing budget.
- Aii. Consider extending the county lodging tax to include shared accommodations and camping.
- Aiii. Consider engaging a grant writer to develop funding.
- Bi. Establish a hospitality training program.
- Bii. Establish and support an ongoing system of rewards for local ambassadors.
- Bv. Consider scheduling periodic community meetings to share progress and receive feedback.
- Ei. Convene a Stewardship Committee to identify priorities and establish a shared strategy.
- Eii. Establish a shared strategy for delivering key stewardship messages.
- Fiii. Ensure that ElyNevada.net meets accepted standards for website accessibility.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Ai. Consider developing a tagline or catchphrase.
- Bi. Collaborate with partners in Las Vegas, Reno, Salt Lake City, Boise and Phoenix to build and co-promote tour itineraries with stops in White Pine County.
- Bii. Collaborate with National Park partners to promote Great Basin as the first or last stop for visitors on the way to or from Zion, Bryce Canyon and Grand Canyon.
- Ci. Establish a clear focus for White Pine County marketing.
- Cii. Develop and maintain a list of the top 20 media outlets to target.
- Eii. Address rising interest in short-form video by leveraging WPCTRB's extensive library.
- Eiii. Reposition and refresh content on ElyNevada.net to engage the target traveler.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING

GAIN MOMENTUM (3-5 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Av. Support development of the Freight Building.
- Bi. Support creation of guided experiences.
- Biii. Consider development of a Nevada Adventure Center.
- Cii. Support development of other unique stargazing opportunities.
- Diii. Develop a self-guided mural trail.
- Ei. Partner and seek resources to found a White Pine County Trail Building Institute.
- Fii. Support opportunities for Shoshone tribal members to share their tradition through tourism initiatives created with Nevada's Indian Territory.
- Hii. Collaborate with public land managers to develop snowshoe and cross-country ski experiences.
- Hiii. Develop or attract more wintertime special events to build winter season awareness.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- C. Continue to advocate for improved water and sewer infrastructure at the gateway to Great Basin National Park.
- Dii. Consider identifying other "Expert-in-Residence" positions.
- Ei. Collaborate with owners to equip lodgings with conveniences important to outdoor recreationists.
- Eii. Collaborate to equip communities to meet the needs of trail users.
- Eiii. Inspire local businesses to address the retail needs of targeted outdoor recreationists.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Biii. Consider developing a volunteer or intern recruitment strategy.
- Biv. Consider creating training to increase sensitivity for different cultures.
- Ciii. Activate Renaissance Village for diverse visitors by capturing and sharing narrative stories and oral histories.
- Dii. Seek International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) certification of White Pine communities.
- Eiii. Consider developing more "voluntourism" programs.
- Eiv. Guide and support partners in creating infrastructure to achieve stewardship goals.

- Ev. Consider creating a volunteer Trail Host or Trail Patrol group.
- Fi. Review accessibility of existing attractions for travelers and locals.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Biii. Collaborate with U.S. 50 partners in Nevada to celebrate 40th anniversary of the "Loneliest Highway" with a must-do road trip and special events.
- Biv. Collaborate on promoting White Pine County as the base camp for Eastern Nevada and bi-state adventure.
- Bv. Advance the Park to Park in the Dark initiative.
- Bvi. Work with public land partners to build awareness of the county's winter outdoor activities.
- Cv. Consider shaping convention center sales strategy to attract outdoor-focused events and groups.

MOVE TOWARD SUCCESS (6-10 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Aiii. Identify and create an iconic experience, such as a Great Basin Loop and hut system.
- Dv. Consider development of other public arts installations or experiences.
- Eii. Consider attracting a major product testing event.

2. Develop Organizational Strength

- Ci. Consider attracting events sponsored by outdoor recreation groups committed to diversity.
- Di. Pursue an International Mountain Biking Association Ride Center designation.
- Fii. Consider developing experiences specifically for outdoor recreationists with disabilities.

3. Develop Promotional Strength

- Eiv. Consider creating a portal on ElyNevada.net pointing users to tickets, guided adventures, and voluntourism opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING



ONGOING INITIATIVES

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Ai. Advocate for thoughtful expansion of trails systems.
- Aiv. Support expansion of Nevada Northern Railway (NNRY) offerings.
- Avi. Support development of interpretive signage.
- Avii. Develop and leverage exciting Outdoor Rec+ events to build the county's Outdoor Rec+ image.
- Biv. Expand resources for local entrepreneurs through partnerships with state and federal agencies.
- Eiii. Seek ways for the NNRY to be recognized as a national model.
- Eiv. Explore other opportunities to leverage the excellence of county rails, trails and outdoor assets.
- Fi. Share support for Shoshone cultural experiences open to all.
- Fiii. Support opportunities for Shoshone tribal members to generate benefits from tourism.
- Gi. Develop strategies to expand live music offerings.
- Gii. Pair venues with entertainment in unexpected ways.
- Giii. Explore strategies for pairing live music with experiences of the county's unique outdoor assets.
- Hi. Support development of activities to build awareness of the county as a winter destination.
- Hv. Position the county as the gateway to eastern Nevada's emerging backcountry ski terrain.
- Hvi. Continue to assess the potential for a Ward Mountain ski resort.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Ai. Support development of new lodging.
- Aii. Seek investment in revitalizing historic buildings and roadside motels.
- Aiii. Seek development of additional RV parks and campgrounds.
- Bii. Continue offering microgrants to stimulate main street improvements.
- Biv. Encourage activation of storefronts and commercial buildings with engaging window displays.
- Diii. Consider addressing talent gaps through innovative incentives.
- Ev. Improve trailhead amenities.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Ai. Consider dedicating future incremental lodging tax to the marketing budget.
- Cii. Consider reserving a portion of event entries to stimulate registration by lesser-represented groups.
- Civ. Advocate for changing place names out of step with community goals.
- Cv. Seek opportunities with Shoshone tribal members to share their traditions.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Aii. Continue attracting earned media and building awareness by linking experiences in unexpected ways.
- Aiii. Build visitation during low-occupancy periods by creating new unexpected experiences.
- Ciii. Enlist local business partners in sharing WPCT&RB messages with travelers.
- Civ. Craft interpretive signage to satisfy interests of curious outdoor recreationists.
- Cvi. Share guidance on how to care for the county's cultural and natural treasures.
- Di. Maximize opportunities through the state's marketing program.
- Dii. Identify and create White Pine County experiences that align with Travel Nevada positioning.
- Ei. Use billboards and place messaging at restaurants and gas stations to interest passing travelers in staying longer.

WHITE PINE COUNTY

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimately, it is up to the people of White Pine County — civic leaders, businesses, nonprofits, workers, volunteers, and other residents — to accomplish the vision laid out in this plan. By turning to its strong community spirit, White Pine County can fully realize the economic potential of its visitor economy while making its communities better places to live.

Lead Organization	White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board	Manage the plan, build connections among partners and communities, support local business success, send clear messaging to target desired visitors, build the county's reputation, rally residents and workers as ambassadors, advocate for visitor infrastructure, lead stewardship initiatives.
Partners	Attractions, community organizations, chambers	Lead designated strategies, develop offerings and messaging for the shared target, help improve visitor infrastructure, support activating main streets, champion hospitality training, join in new business recruitment, engage in stewardship.
Civic Leaders	State, county, city and schools	Fund trails and rails expansion, fund strategies to activate shuttered commercial buildings and housing, fund infrastructure to support housing and development, implement outdoor-friendly policies, support reputation-building activities.
Businesses	Lodging, restaurants, retail, agritourism	Take part in activating main streets, develop offerings and messaging for targeted travelers, join in implementing communication strategies, encourage participation in hospitality training, join in new business recruitment, engage in stewardship.
Land Managers	Federal, state and local	Collaborate on strategies for integrated trails system and interpretative wayfinding, facilitate permitting for entrepreneurs and events, partner on experience development, create stewardship initiatives.
State Agencies	Travel Nevada and partner agencies	Collaborate to support economic development and experience development in Nevada's rural places, including White Pine County.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

LODGING TAXES

White Pine County and the City of Ely rank seventh among Nevada counties for their lodging tax collections and third – behind Douglas and Clark – for lodging taxes generated per resident. Both the county and city charge a 13.5% tax on stays in hotels, motels, and privately owned RV parks and campgrounds, generating \$2.254 million in revenue in 2022 – \$256.44 for each of the county's 8,788 residents. The city also collects a 13.5% tax on shared accommodations, such as Airbnb, but the county does not. Lodging tax cannot be imposed on government-owned camping and RV sites.

Those 13.5% tax rates already are near the average rate of 14% charged by the 150 largest U.S. destinations. The county could generate slightly more revenue by extending its 13.5% tax to shared accommodations. This would impact only a small number of lodgings currently, but could position the county for greater revenue as more shared lodgings are developed. The county and city also can spur revenue growth by encouraging development. Lodging taxes can expand when new properties open, existing ones expand, shuttered properties re-open, or more rooms are filled during slower times of year.

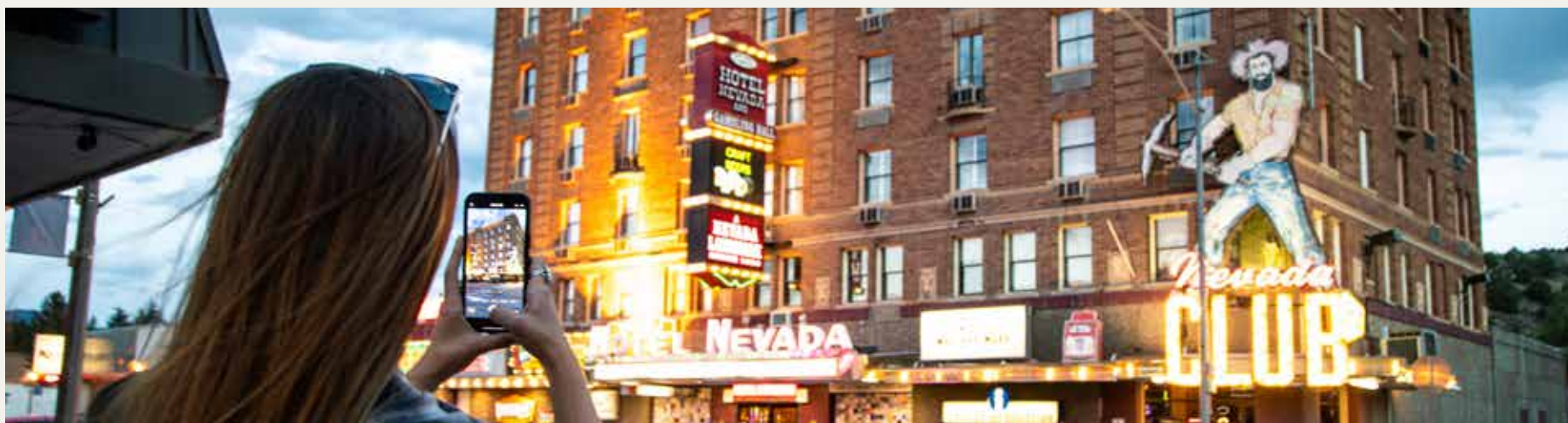
Funding for WPCTRB Marketing

Nearly two-thirds of the county's 2022 lodging tax revenues went to the WPCTRB, but just \$120,000 was set aside for marketing. The rest was allocated to support local initiatives and organizations. To build the WPCTRB's marketing power, the city

and county could consider dedicating all or a significant share of future lodging tax revenue growth to marketing activities. This would allow current initiatives to remain funded while equipping the WPCTRB to build the tourism economy faster by reaching more targeted travelers, launching initiatives to build off-season occupancy, and providing more marketing support for the local business community.

Other funding opportunities

- As one of six 3D Project participants, White Pine County can apply for a significant share of a one-time \$2 million fund to implement initiatives described in this plan.
- White Pine County is a designated recipient of SNPLMA funding, meaning the county, its public land agencies, and other organizations are eligible for significant grant funding. Future applications could be structured to expand trails and rails systems, create interpretive wayfinding, and enhance cultural assets. Local leaders could consider using SNPLMA to reduce costs of land for housing development.
- The 3D Working Group's membership of state and federal agencies includes many with resources that could advance initiatives described in this plan.
- GOED's new Office of Entrepreneurship, opening in October 2023, has a mission to connect rural entrepreneurs to capital, business resources, and learning networks. The office could point fledgling White Pine businesses, including outdoor recreation outfitters, to sources of capital and other supports.
- Travel Nevada maintains an extensive list of funding opportunities for rural tourism development at <https://travelnevada.biz/travel-nevada-partner-resources/>



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Many planning participants identified challenges that must be overcome for White Pine County to fulfill its potential as a top mountain destination for trail-based recreation and unique cultural experiences.

Barrier	Challenges	Solutions
Housing shortage	Constrains opportunity for people to build lives and open businesses and prevents employers – even Great Basin National Park – from hiring needed workers.	Convert shuttered housing stock or other buildings to livable spaces, use SNPLMA to reduce costs of affordable housing development, fund water/sewer infrastructure to spark development, create developer's toolkit.
Declining population	Erodes the supply of workers and volunteers.	Build housing supply, support entrepreneurship.
Shortage of skilled labor	Discourages development and renovation.	Facilitate housing and create incentives including cash, free outdoor recreation gear, and free experiences to invite workers into the local community.
Limited accommodations	Constrains capacity for promotion and special events, reduces lodging tax potential.	Activate and renovate shuttered or underutilized properties, create toolkit to recruit new properties, support entrepreneurs in creating unique lodgings, use online lodging platforms as a temporary measure.
Limited dining, shopping, rentals, entertainment	Lost opportunity to build economy, attract longer stays, generate spending, and satisfy visitor interest.	Activate shuttered commercial buildings, identify non-traditional spaces or venues, identify capital and business startup resources, create investor toolkit.
Limited bandwidth and cell service	Isolates residents, businesses and visitors from resources, communications, and entertainment.	Actively pursue government initiatives to expand access.
Limited awareness of White Pine County	Drive-through destinations lose opportunities for more visitors, overnight stays, travel spending, and support for attractions or businesses.	Marketing and PR, consistent messaging, unique events, reputation-building activities, hospitality training

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES AND THEMES

White Pine County and Ely are well-known in Nevada, but building awareness of a destination the size of Massachusetts on a limited marketing budget requires ingenuity and epic collaboration around shared communications strategies and themes.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- **Build reputation.** Rather than raise awareness through costly brand advertising, partners can use strategies in this plan to create stellar experiences and unique events, earn certifications, and establish centers of excellence to build credibility and fame for White Pine County among targeted travelers.
- **Generate PR.** Earned media is far cheaper than paid media. White Pine County can build its reputation with a PR strategy targeting top media outlets for Curious Outdoor Recreationists, especially in top source destinations. Creating pitches around themes below will support consistent, effective messaging to build White Pine County's image.
- **Intercept passing travelers.** Share attention-grabbing messages in-market to convince travelers passing through White Pine County to stay a while

– and enlist them in building awareness. Idea: Feature compelling White Pine County backdrops for selfies on billboards, gas station posters, or table tents urging visitors to “Stop for Adventure – and Amazing Selfies.” Create a poster with a top 10 list for selfies, along with best practices for capturing and sharing them.

- **Tell stories.** Use rising interest in digital storytelling to share brief, inspiring, unexpected White Pine County experiences, even without paid media. Idea: Create a beautiful, 17-second Instagram Reel capturing the creation of White Pine County's next mural.
- **Shape the website to the target.** Design ElyNevada.net with the Curious Outdoor Recreationist in mind. Make it easy for them to find what they want. Emphasize ways rails and trails connect communities and people with outdoor recreation and cultural experiences.

COMMUNICATIONS THEMES

- **Trails, Rails and Connections.** Every White Pine community is a starting point for trails, adventure, and unique experiences.

- **Road Trips.** White Pine County is made for Road Trippers. Give them reasons to stop in White Pine County by partnering with more well-known destinations on itineraries.
- **Make a virtue of remoteness.** Celebrate White Pine County's status as one of the least populated places in the Lower 48. Clean air, dark skies and open trails are worth the drive.
- **Authentic Hands-on History.** White Pine County is the real deal. The Nevada Northern Railway, the East Ely Depot, the Renaissance Village, and McGill's Drug Store Museum transport visitors to other times. Even more stories await at the White Pine County Museum, the Art Bank, and in the murals.
- **Unique story of the American mosaic.** White Pine County is a microcosm of places like Chicago and New York, where people of many ethnic backgrounds can find a connection with their own heritage.
- **Stewardship.** Nearly all of White Pine County is owned by the American people. It's pristine, and White Pine County wants everyone to help keep it that way.



COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

WAYFINDING

- Establish a consistent approach to wayfinding and interpretive signs for trails. Include interesting facts about geology, plant life, wildlife, and history to serve the target traveler.
- Develop a consistent approach for welcome signs at the entrance to each community to create a sense of arrival and support the White Pine brand.

GETTING AROUND

- Create and share itineraries — within communities, among White Pine communities, and connecting White Pine with other places travelers are passing through. Share them on the web and through digital storytelling.
- Develop a White Pine Murals Trail with wayfinding, interpretative signage and audio, and a brochure or map sharing a recommended path by vehicle or foot (in Ely). Also share on the website.
- Create itineraries for OHV and non-motorized trails-based recreation to connect outdoor enthusiasts with unique experiences.

EVENTS

- Share “Fears Tears and Beers” not only as the oldest Enduro in the U.S., but as one that has historically awarded equal prizes for male and female competitors.
- Develop OHV events that are connected with White Pine cultural experiences.
- To spur winter visitation, create a Kite-Flying on Ice event with expert kite flyers on hand to coach and share tips. Wrap up with a warm party in the Bristlecone Convention Center and share photos from the day.
- Celebrate ethnicities with festivals at the Renaissance Village.
- Shape events as unexpected experiences linking the county’s outdoors with its culture.
- Review current events for availability of volunteers and resources as well as for relevance to targeted travelers.

STEWARDSHIP

- Work with public land managers to establish voluntourism opportunities and invite recreationists to help out and then stay for a fun experience.
- Work with local businesses, partners, and governments to support stewardship messaging.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

To track White Pine County's progress in building its tourism economy, performance measures are provided for each development objective. It is recommended that White Pine County establish a 2023 baseline for each indicator and report progress against the Economic Goal and Indicators at least annually.

ECONOMIC GOAL*

Double total annual visitor spending from \$60.5 million in 2022 to \$121 million in 2032.

INDICATORS**

Objective 1: Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- More miles of trails and rails
- Completion of a comprehensive strategy for countywide trails development
- Expanded train ridership and visitation
- Positive net increase in tourism-related business startups
- Recognition for centers of excellence
- Expansion of music offerings

Objective 2: Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Expanded lodging inventory
- Expanded full-service restaurant offerings
- Reduction in unused storefronts and commercial buildings
- Opening of a craft brewhouse or spirits emporium

Objective 3: Develop Organizational Strength

- Increased marketing budget
- Increased participation in hospitality training and events
- Certifications from national certifying bodies
- Increased participation in stewardship initiatives

Objective 4: Develop Promotional Strength

- Increased lodging tax revenue

* The primary outcome to be attained by White Pine County from implementing this plan.

** Outcomes to be monitored for impact on achieving the goal.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Travel Nevada

Brenda Scolari	Director	Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Mary Ellen Kawchack	Chief Deputy Director	Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Cortney Bloomer *	Destination Development Manager	Nevada Division of Tourism
Kyle Shulz	Research Manager	Nevada Division of Tourism
Caroline Sexton	Chief Marketing Officer	Nevada Division of Tourism
Susan Mowers	Creative Director	Nevada Division of Tourism

3d Working Group

Denise Beronio	Administrator	Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation
Shari Davis	Director, Rural Economic and Community Development	Governor's Office of Economic Development
Miles Gurtler	BLM NV Recreation, National Conservation Lands & Tourism Lead	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Tony Manfredi	Executive Director	Nevada Arts Council
Fred Steinmann	Director, University Center for Economic Development	University of Nevada, Reno

3D Advisory Group

Myron Freedman	Administrator	Nevada Division of Museums and History
Stacey Montooth	Executive Director	Nevada Indian Commission
Rebecca Palmer	Administrator	Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
Lucas Ingvaldstad	State Rural Development Director, Nevada	USDA

White Pine County

3D Steering Committee

Samantha Elliot	Council Member	
Kyle Horvath *	Director of Tourism	White Pine Tourism and Recreation Board
Caroline McIntosh	Board Chair	WPC Tourism/ White Pine Main Street
Sean Pitts	Director	East Ely Depot NV State Museum
Erin Rajala	Recreation Officer	Forest Service
Brandi Roberts	Director	Great Basin Heritage Area
Nathan Robertson	Mayor	City of Ely
Angela Stevens	Train Master	Nevada Northern Railway
Virginia Terry	Chairperson	Ely Renaissance Society
Jessica Trask	Owner	Perigo Cattle and Hay
Michael Wheable	County Manager	White Pine County
Elizabeth Woolsey	Chairperson	Baker Business Council

Better Destinations Consulting Team

Cathy Ritter *	Founder and CEO	Better Destinations
Mitch Nichols	President	Nichols Tourism Group
Carl Ribaudo **	President and Chief Strategist	SMG Consulting

* Project Leads

** Project Co-Lead

APPENDICES

- [Application for 3D Project](#)
- [Stakeholder Map](#)
- [Destination Asset Inventory](#)
- [3D Tourism Development Study](#)
- [Custom Zartico Report for White Pine County](#)

A 10YR DESTINATION PLAN

FOR WHITE PINE COUNTY

