

# Southern Oregon Coast Regional Tourism Network

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Minutes by: Rasha Aridi, OSU Intern and Julie Miller, Network Manager

## How We Got Here

Alexa Carey, Community Based Service Specialist for Travel Oregon gave a brief history on the rural tourism studio and its importance to Travel Oregon.

The Studios are designed to be a robust training program to help rural communities develop and offer high-value, authentic experiences to travelers – in a sustainable and manageable way.

It strives to:

- Strengthen Oregon's position as a premier destination
- Stimulates the local economy
- Protect and enhance local resources
- Foster community pride Alexa Carey

Jodi Fritz, Gold Beach City Manager, outlined the studio process and gave a brief outline of the Wild Rivers Coast and South Coast Rural Tourism Studios.

Two studios were held in the Coos, Curry and Coastal Douglas area. Out of those studios came several accomplishments.

- OSU put its first tourism extension agent on the South Coast
- Coos County created a its first promotions organization with a regional reach, Travel Southern Oregon Coast (TSOC)
- The Network was created
- Action Teams were formed in
  - Outdoor recreation
  - Marketing
  - Culinary & Agritourism

## OSCRTN Network Framework

**Who We Are:** We are a region-wide, cross-sector of independent individuals and organizations who collaborate to enhance economic development through sustainable tourism.

**What We Do:** We focus on leveraging relationships, opportunities and dollars. We work to create consensus around priorities that will set up other tourism organization for success. We collaborate with regional tourism organizations in a strategic direction that will lay the groundwork to develop the Southern Oregon Coast into a destination.

**Where:** We engage the counties of Coos, Curry and Coastal Douglas. All areas share similar landscape, economy and tourism opportunities.

**When:** Now! Now is the time to collaborate. Now is the time we commit to participate in the network.

**Why:** We are doing work that has not been done in this region before. We have completed two Rural Tourism Studios, created four regionally focused tourism jobs and have successfully gained the support of the state tourism agency, Travel Oregon, through our extensive regional collaborative accomplishments.

**How:** We work to build region wide trust by; strengthening relationships, respecting diverse perspectives, collaborating around shared opportunities, sharing information, creating value for our member and informing our stakeholders of the importance and value of tourism as an economic driver.

**Outcomes:** The Network will become an informational hub for tourism, work to create consensus around priorities, projects and outcomes that will set up tourism organizations for success. It will move the needle to understanding on how tourism is an economic driver and when organizational success is difficult the network can provide a space where collaboration assists project success. The network will provide value to its members.

**Accountability:** The network will measure the number and specifics of members expressions of increased trust through a third party base line evaluation. It will measure the number and type of explicit partnership activities between network members and collect and measure member feedback regarding how the network has impacted individually defined metrics for their own operational success.

## Tools to Help Us Tell the Story of Why Tourism Matters

Janice Langlinais, director of the Coos Bay-North Bend Visitor and Convention Bureau outlined for the network how to successfully tell your story using her success during National Tourism week, gain media coverage and where to find the resources necessary to help you tell your story.

1. Brainstorm – Highlighted tools we all need to tell our story and spread the message that tourism matters.
2. Table Exercise – Each table took three minutes to create a list of tools needed and shared with the group.
  - a. Room Taxes
  - b. Web Analytics
  - c. Visitor Stats
  - d. Media Connections

- e. Marketing Tools
  - f. Social Media
- 3. Case Study – Coos Bay –North Bend and Charleston VCB was used as a an example of successfully telling your story and advocating for tourism during National Travel & Tourism week and semiannual council updates
- 4. Resources – Identified where to find the information and materials needed to tell your story.
  - a. Travel Oregon research – industry.traveloregon.com, down load Economic Impact study and sign up for Travel Barometer
    - i. Dean Runyan Interactive Site – [www.deanrunyan.com/ortravelimpacts/ortravelimpacts.html](http://www.deanrunyan.com/ortravelimpacts/ortravelimpacts.html)
  - b. OCVA/TSOC/OSCRT – Regional Organizations can provide data, support materials – including photography

## Connections

The Network was asked to write down who they have connected with during this meeting, since the last Networking meeting and who they would like to be connected with.

## Regional Tourism Organization Panel

During the Networks travels around the region it became evident that there was confusion around what role each of the seven regional organizations working in tourism played on the South Coast and how our Network could effectively access and tap into their resources.

Julie Miller, Network Manager led a regional tourism panel discussion with;

- Sam Baugh, South Coast Development Council (SCDC)
- Miles Phillips, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension
- Jon Paul Bowles, Travel Southern Oregon Coast (TSOC)
- John Bacon, Southwestern Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Marie Simonds, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance (WRCA)
- Arica Sears, Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA)
- Questions/Answers
  - Why do people spend more money on the north/mid coast than the south coast? Is there someplace I can go, as a member of economic development & say that we need kayaks/skateboards/bikes, and somebody can come take care of that issue?
    - John: GORP
    - Jon Paul: creating paths and trails will encourage businesses to provide for those experiences; create packaged experiences that are monetized

- When dealing with potentially conflicting opinions from the public, how do you go about making sure you have all the right people around the table that will fight with you?
  - Jon Paul: the culture and community makes this place what it is, and we need to do some more work to engage folks who have been here for a long time, not just to convince them that tourism will help economic development, but to honor the place and its history. We need to serve the communities first before others.
  - Marie: we are looking at tourism and economic development, but we cannot exclude our locals. How do we create a pathway that provides for tourists to enjoy but to provide the space for locals to feel like they are welcome, as well? We don't have competing agendas but have to find the places we overlap.

## Successes

- Whiskey Run bike trail
- Board of Port Orford including tourism as one of their uses for the new infrastructure being developed
- Photography project—Barberstock photo library to provide content for advertising to promote the area
- Coos County area transit has a budget for a 101 Trolley; benefits locals & also gets ahead of management issues (traffic)
  - Bandon is also working on this
- South Coast Food Trail
- REEF Project
  - Co-location of similar organizations; small business development & partners located at SWOCC
- Food Trail Passport program for 2019 funded by Travel Oregon grant
- ODOT helped fund bike routes for people biking the coast
- Fat bike brochure for Travel Oregon
- Photo project
- Coquille River water trail
- Dave Lacey's position with OCVA focusing on South Coast Destination Development
- Sea Grant & OSU interns becoming familiar with tourism
- Main Street work in Port Orford
- Gold Beach Main Street

## Opportunities

- History trail
  - Can help develop that section of the GORP program
- Travel Zoo—Dungeness crab tours

- Kid entrepreneurship—trails and tours
- How to expand shoulder season & off-season opportunities
- Industry information campaign
- Stewardship & marketing
- Grant-writing training & support
- Reprinting of brochures that are out of print
- Community ambassador program to be done for each community
- Work with extension to develop the south coast as a destination for university field courses
- Tribal grant program, begins September 1
- Regional brand & web presence
- OCVA summit—October 8 & 9

## Live Survey Results

Miles Phillips, OSU Extension Agent facilitated a live survey the results are as follows;

80% of Network was interested in meeting quarterly

Network increased their understanding of what role each regional tourism organization played in the area

86% of the Network was interested in single topic meetings and trainings in-between the Network meetings

Top 4 training sessions the Network would like to see

1. Social Media Marketing for Tourism
2. Media Communications
3. Tourism Economics
4. Using Google Analytics

What will keep you active in the Network?

- Building Trust
- Alignment of organizational goals
- Coalesce Actions
- Collaboration that works
- Information sharing
- Coordination of efforts
- Media buy meetings
- Local food and Beer tasting
- Meetings with outcomes
- Shoulder and off season outdoor recreation opportunities
- Stakeholder outreach

