

Dear Tourism and Recreation Industry Stakeholders and Partners,

In years past, many of you have received requests from Norma Nickerson asking for input and ideas for questions that need answers regarding the field of tourism and recreation in Montana. Well, it is time once again to solicit ideas; however, this time Norma has retired, so you get them from me.

Previously we have asked for emailed responses from each of you, but this year we would like you to visit our website (itrr.umt.edu) and fill out the very brief form that will help us categorize and consider all your questions and ideas. Please feel free to distribute this message and links to your colleagues or others that may also be interested in Montana tourism and recreation.

While you are at our site and pondering your ideas and questions, please take a look at our:

- [Spending and Economics](#)
- [Recent Publications](#)
- [Interactive Data](#)
 - Check out the new “Full Data Viz” or “Full Data Lite” features to explore enhanced opportunities to view data, including aggregating across multiple years and choose from a variety of filtering tools.
 - Check back soon for more interactive data as new reports get published.

These pages will give you a taste of what we have routinely done over the years and the recent products. Much of our research efforts revolve around:

- **Characterizing the Montana visitor:** Why do they come? Where to they go? How much do they spend?
- **Tourism impacting the local economy and community:** What is the economic impact of tourism as a whole? What is the value of various tourism niches (e.g., anglers, cyclists, skiers, Canadians)? How can tourism and recreation strengthen the Montana economy? What are the economic risks?
- **Tourism and the environment:** Montana tourism is dependent upon environmental quality. How can we better understand how each impacts and supports other?
- **Engaging Montanans:** How do Montanans feel about the tourism industry? About the tourists themselves? From the resident perspective, what are the opportunities and challenges?

As is the case each year, we seek to organize the research themes around 5 key areas:

- 1. Conservation** and its relationship to tourism, sustainability, geotourism and public lands;
- 2. Development** as it relates to partnerships with local, tribal, state and federal agencies/entities
- 3. Measurement** needs for understanding tourism jobs, businesses, public land contributions to tourism, and spending behaviors;
- 4. Travel Behavior** in regards to both resident and nonresident activities, destination choice criteria, route choice, outdoor recreation, and perceptions of Montana;
- 5. Travel Promotion** and its relationship to Montana’s image and ultimately arrival of visitors.

Finally, research conducted by ITRR should be either statewide in scope or provide an opportunity to case study local areas such that others may learn from their successes or challenges.

Please submit your ideas to us no later than **Friday, September 17th** so we can categorize and submit the ideas to the Tourism Advisory Council Research committee before the committee meets in early October. We welcome your ideas in any state of their development...even if only half-baked at this time. Let us finish the baking and please call or email if you would like to ponder and idea with any of us.

Once again, visit itrr.umt.edu to submit your research ideas.

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