



Fact Sheet & Update

August 2009

The *Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies* are ten spectacular drives through some of North America's most scenic mountains, lakes, charming towns, and historic places. The routes traverse four All-American Roads and fourteen National Parks, Monuments, and Recreation Areas, connected by four National Historic Trails.

The Drives & Trails

The ten scenic drives are the following:

1. Beartooth All-American Road (MT/WY)
2. Circle the Continental Divide Driving Tour (WY)
3. Hells Canyon All-American Road (OR/ID)
4. Hot Springs Circle Tour (B.C.)
5. International Selkirk Loop All-American Road (ID/WA/BC)
6. Montana Scenic Loop (MT)
7. Northwest Passage Scenic Byway (ID)
8. Salmon River-Sawtooth Scenic Byways (ID)
9. Waterton-Glacier Internat'l Peace Park Loop (MT/ALB/BC)
10. Yellowstone-Grand Teton Loop (WY/MT/ID)

The four connecting historic trails are:

David Thompson Historic Route (ALB, BC, MT, ID, WA)
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail (WA, OR, ID, MT)
Nez Perce National Historic Trail (OR, ID, MT, WY)
Oregon National Historic Trail (WY, ID, OR)

Why It Makes Sense

The *Top 10 Scenic Drives* provide a convenient new way for travelers and travel trades to research and plan incredible Rocky Mountain adventures. It is *demand driven* - based on the tastes and preferences of targeted travelers, particularly in off-peak seasons. The effort is backed by state, provincial, and national tourism research on scenic drivers, heritage/cultural travelers, recreationists, and Geotourists,¹ and test marketing to domestic and international tour operators, travel agents, and media.

How It Began

The concept of the "*Top 10 Scenic Drives in the Northern Rockies*" began in 2005 after the International Selkirk Loop and Northwest Passage Scenic Byway joined the Beartooth Highway and Hells Canyon Scenic Byway in achieving All-American Road status (the highest level scenic byway designation). The Selkirk

Loop was the first international All-American Road. Top 10 partners formed a Steering Committee to oversee project development and implementation. The Committee analyzed traveler research, test-marketed the Top 10 concept, outlined a strategy and budget, and sought National Scenic Byway funding to seed the project. A \$428,000 grant was awarded in late 2007, with matching funds from partners, and Phase 1 work began in 2008.

The Top 10 Partners

The Top 10 Scenic Drives is a collaborative effort involving more than 450 partners and suppliers:

- ◆ State, Provincial, and Tribal Tourism Offices in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alberta
- ◆ Regional Tourism Councils, Chambers, CVBs
- ◆ State & Federal Agencies: National Parks, U.S. Forest Service, Depts of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, BLM, Fish & Wildlife
- ◆ Businesses: lodging, dining, outfitting, retail, attractions, resorts, artisans, transportation
- ◆ Nonprofit organizations: byway groups, history, economic development, arts, conservation.



Benefits to Travelers & Partners

The Top 10 seeks to achieve the following:

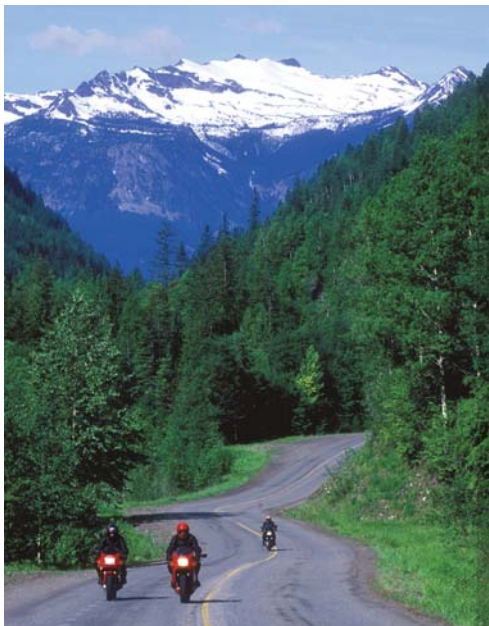
- ◆ Match targeted travelers with Top 10 destinations based on their activity tastes and preferences.
- ◆ Offer and implement a high quality experience – backed by a customer satisfaction guarantee.
- ◆ Build and extend off-peak and shoulder seasons.
- ◆ Drive bookings and web site traffic to partners.
- ◆ Produce higher yields (increase visitor spending and length of stays) to businesses and communities.
- ◆ Create a highly visible destination across geo-political boundaries, showcasing rural communities.
- ◆ Leverage PR and advertising expenditures with partners' efforts to maximize return on investment.
- ◆ Implement geotourism principles - raise awareness and practice of sustainable tourism, include suppliers based on geotourism standards.
- ◆ Track and measure results and return on investment (ROI) against baseline data for sales, visitation, employment, sustainability, satisfaction.

Phase 1 Timeline

Key milestones for Phase 1 of the Top 10 project:

- May 2009: Top 10 brand unveiled and adopted
Micro-site and PR launch to travel trades
- Jun-Sept: Complete map, web site, media placement strategy, continue PR efforts
- Oct 2009: Launch web site, eMarketing campaign
Conduct fall press trips, desk-side briefings
- Nov-Dec: Implement offline/online ad campaign
Continue PR efforts (incl. link to Olympics)
- Jan 2010: Implement co-op ad campaign
PR efforts (incl. link to Winter Olympics)
- Feb-Apr: Continue PR, ad placements, tracking and reporting, finalize Phase 2 strategy
- May 2010: Conduct spring press trips, reporting

¹ Longwoods, USTA, ITRR, Global Insight, National Geographic



The Top 10 Geotourism Commitment

The "Top 10 Scenic Drives" is more than a marketing gimmick – it is a Geotourism initiative that promotes sustainable (green) travel, authentic destinations, and customer satisfaction, emphasizing off-peak seasons. Geotourism is defined as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.”²

Tourism suppliers (private/nonprofit) who wish to participate in the Top 10 Scenic Drives as “featured businesses and attractions” are asked to sign a Geotourism Supplier Agreement and complete a Sustainability Practices Checklist. The Agreement asks for a 3-fold commitment:

1. Support the principles of Geotourism.
2. Guarantee customer satisfaction for Top 10 travelers.
3. Report Top 10 bookings/visitation for tracking and measurement of program effectiveness and ROI.

The Top 10 program also incorporates outreach and education efforts to assist Top 10 partners and suppliers with “best practices” in effective marketing techniques and sustainability practices.

² National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations

The Top 10 Strategy

The Top 10 Scenic Drives project strategy includes the following elements:

Project Goals, Target Markets, and Marketing Plan: The project goals, objectives, target customer segments, and marketing plan are based on consumer market research, partner priorities, and opportunities to leverage existing partner marketing efforts and investments.

Top 10 Brand: The Top 10 market position and brand are designed to appeal to targeted domestic and international visitor segments: scenic drivers, heritage/cultural travelers, RVers, motorcycle tourists, and outdoor recreationists. The logo is reminiscent of the WPA art style, consistent with the heritage of the Top 10 region.

Benchmarks and Tracking: Program evaluation is based on baseline data (benchmarks), against which metrics are developed and results measured. Tracking methods will measure progress based on the benchmarks and metrics.

Geotourism Supplier Agreements: Featured Top 10 private and nonprofit businesses and attractions are committed to sustainable tourism, authenticity, and high quality visitor experiences (see information at left).

Web Site: The Top 10 web site is the centerpiece of the marketing strategy and measurement of results. The web site will feature best practices design, the Top 10 Personality-Centered Drive Matcher to help travelers find the routes best suited to their tastes and preferences, interactive maps, featured attractions and suppliers, a booking widget, imbedded TripAdvisor.com, social media elements, and state-of-the-art tracking and reporting.

Publicity (PR) Campaign: The intensive Top 10 PR effort includes 60+ hours per month of story pitching, press trips, desk-side briefings, online press kit, internal PR initiatives.

Driving Map: The large driving map, which features information and photos about each drive and trail, will be distributed to media, travel trades, and Top 10 travelers.

Advertising Campaign: The advertising campaign features keyword research, search engine optimization (SEO), and offline and online ad placements (pay-per-click, banners, social media) targeting general and niche markets.

Vacation Packages: Itineraries and packages will be promoted to tour operators and niche markets (Hike the Top 10, Bike the Top 10, Ski the Top 10, etc.).

Reporting: Project status and results of Top 10 efforts are reported to partners via monthly update conference calls/webinars and email communications with partners. Quarterly Reports provide details about project activities and expenditures.

Project Funding

Phase 1 (project development and launch) is funded by a \$428,000 National Scenic Byway grant, a proportionate share of cash match from each state/province, \$5,000 each from the ten scenic drives, and co-op ad partners. **Phase 2**, which begins in mid-2010, is funded by continued partner investments, co-op advertising partners, sponsorships, and additional grants for marketing, education, and sustainability initiatives.

Partner investments pay for the PR campaign, press trip coordination, story pitching, online marketing and reporting, map design and printing, and online/offline advertising. Co-op advertising funds will extend the reach of the ad campaign to priority niche markets

Top 10 Contacts

Each drive/trail has a Key Contact to provide a link between local partners and the Top 10 marketing team and project coordinator. The Key Contacts serve on the Steering Committee, and submit information about their drive/trail for Top 10 marketing efforts.

Scenic Drive and Historic Trail Key Contacts

Beartooth All-American Road: Mimi Lockman, Red Lodge
 Circle the Continental Divide: Paula McCormick, Lander
 Hells Canyon All-American Road: Alice Trindle, Haines
 Hot Springs Circle Tour: Chris Dadson, Kimberley
 International Selkirk Loop: Carol Graham, Bonners Ferry
 Montana Scenic Loop: Corlene Martin, Choteau
 NW Passage Scenic Byway: Kelly Dahlquist, Lewiston
 Salmon River-Sawtooth Byways: Rene Toman, Salmon
 Waterton-Glacier Park Loop: Steve Thompson, Whitefish
 Yellowstone-Grand Teton Loop: Reid Rogers, Driggs
 David Thompson Route: Alana Messenbrink, Libby
 Lewis & Clark Trail: Margaret Gorski, Missoula
 Nez Perce Trail: Sandi McFarland, Orofino
 Oregon Trail: Laura Nowlin, Cheyenne; Susan Doyle, Pendleton; Becky Smith, Montpelier

Marketing Team

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